



Highlights of diocesan news in printable format — September 28, 2022

If you have email, you can sign up to receive *The VOICE Online*, currently published every other Wednesday. Visit dioceseofnewark.org/subscribe

Features

Hispanic/Latino Ministry: Diverse cultures, diverse needs

By the Rev. Dr. Miguel A. Hernandez

The waves of recent immigrants in our communities are creating a more diverse society, which implies that faith leaders have to prepare the way so that these newcomers can feel welcome in the communities in which English might not be the primary language spoken.

A significant number of these newcomers come from Latin America, one of the most linguistically and culturally diverse areas of the world. UNESCO estimates that there are 30 to 50 million indigenous inhabitants, over 650 indigenous peoples, and more than 550 different languages spoken in the 21 countries of this region. This suggests that in the USA there are congregants in our church communities who fall in this category of being multicultural and multilingual. As a Latino Episcopal priest in the United States, I am deeply involved and interested in learning how to serve these congregants who are both monolingual (Spanish and English) and bilingual (English and Spanish).

One of the challenges ministering to these multi-lingual and multi-cultural communities is the need for effective preaching that takes into account their bicultural and bilingual dimensions, so as to be able to respond to the needs of diverse congregants. It is my experience, that in terms of cultural diversity, the congregants can be Spanish speakers, but that

in itself does not mean that when I deliver the sermons, they might fully understand the meaning of the embedded messages. In this regard, I am always aware of the context, including the practices and customs, and the particularity of the language and idiomatic expressions that diverse people from various countries might use. In addition to this, I have also come to realize that there are even people in the church who cannot speak Spanish, despite their countries of origin, such as Mexico and Guatemala where Spanish is the primary language.

As a theologian and a preacher, I am sensitive to all these concerns since the sermons that I prepare and deliver, while they might be quite acceptable in grammatical terms, might be inadvertently ignoring groups of people of indigenous origin. Not taking these groups of people into account in the sermon preparation could be considered an unintentional sin of indifference.

Another important point that we need to recognize is that the new waves of immigrants have special needs, besides spiritual support, that churches can fulfill. At Holy Trinity, West Orange, we have observed that there is a need in the area of legal support. Members of the Temporary Protection Status (TPS) have approached us to have their planning meetings at Holy Trinity. There are people who are recent arrivals who are looking for food, clothing, and a place to live. The West Orange Hispanic Foundation that was founded at Holy Trinity provides constant support via a network of volunteers who are on the lookout to help those in need. Holy Trinity continues to provide support via the Soup Kitchen, the Food Pantry, the Thrift Shop,

educational ministry, and the referrals that we constantly provide to the members of our community in the areas of health, legal aid, and so on.

I am inviting you to receive the newcomers with open hearts into our communities and churches and to make every effort to respond to their needs.

As Jesus told his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few" (Matthew 9: 37).

The Rev. Dr. Miguel A. Hernandez is Priest-in-Charge at Holy Trinity, West Orange.

Agrarian Ministries Creation Care Team visits CSJB's Good News Garden

By Julie Crawford

By working to create community connections, the Garden of Hope at the Community of St. John Baptist (CSJB) has captured the attention of the Creation Care Agrarian Ministries Team from Presiding Bishop Michael Curry's office as a Good News Gardens model. Recently, five of the team members came to Mendham to see the garden for themselves:

- Jerusalem Greer - Staff Officer for Evangelism for the Presiding Bishop
- Phoebe Chatfield, Program Officer for Creation Care and Justice - Office of the Presiding Bishop
- Sarah Alphin - Program Officer for Evangelism, Creation Care, and Reconciliation, Office of Presiding Bishop
- Brian Sellers-Petersen - Coordinator, Good News Gardens, Office of the Presiding Bishop, Founder of Podcast SpadeSpoonSoul
- Charlotte Hand Greeson - Consultant, Good News Gardens, Office of the Presiding Bishop and Member of LifeLong Learning at Virginia Theological Seminary

Through collective partnerships and resources, the Garden of Hope has been renovated with three primary goals: increase yield of fresh vegetables, creation of a pollinator plot, and creation of sacred space for community use.

Partners and resources have included Brookside Community Church; Church of Messiah, Chester; The Sharing Project; Grow It Green; The Sisters of Charity; Flags of Gratitude; and members of Boy Scout Troop 1 including two Eagle Scout projects.

Produce from the garden is provided to local and regional food pantries, Chester Area Senior Housing, and is used for meals at Homeless Solutions.

The Good News Gardens program is part of Agrarian Ministries Creation Care initiative promoted by Michael Curry two years ago and has grown across North American.

Petersen, Greeson and Geer are published authors who serve the Episcopal Church in many roles. In his book *Harvesting Abundance: Local Initiatives of Food and Faith*, Petersen reminds us that as Christians, we are called to be good stewards of the land and to share its produce. His book you can learn how congregations, schools, and organizations across the Episcopal Church are reaching out to their neighborhoods to share God's story of abundance through a variety of agricultural initiatives, offering inspiration to all of us to nurture our own relationship with our creator – and with each other – by planting a garden and feeding the hungry.

Greeson is involved with Building Faith, whose mission is to equip and inspire churches and individuals for the ministry of Christian education and faith formation.

Geer's work focuses primarily on the Christian theology of place as it is expressed in both daily and congregational life including her work *At Home in This Life: Finding Peace at the Crossroads of Unraveled Dreams and Beautiful Surprises*.

Since the tour, Peterson and Geer have reached out to myself and Superior Sister Moncia Clare to do a podcast for SpadeSpoonSoul to share stories about the Garden. The Community is exploring how to create a sacred space next to the Garden of Hope to offer Sharing Circles.

Any group or individuals interested in the Good News Garden movement or Agrarian Ministry

opportunities can contact Sister Linda Clare at the Convent at srlc@csjb.org for more information about how you can transform your land to serve others.

Julie Crawford is an Associate of the Community of St John Baptist, Mendham, and a member of Church of the Messiah, Chester.

Diocesan Resources & Announcements

Clergy ministry transitions

Arrival: The Rev. Canon Robert Griner

Assisting Clergy, Christ Church, Short Hills
September 25