

# PARTNERSHIPS *Across El Camino Real*

***“Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.” Galatians 6:2***

From Cupertino to San Luis Obispo, from jails to universities, congregations across the Diocese of El Camino Real are reaching beyond their churches to make a difference in the lives of their communities. And they’re demonstrating the power of partnerships, working with local nonprofits, police departments, neighboring churches, and even a school 3,000 miles away. The following stories are the result of a “call for partnerships,” and like last issue’s story on homelessness efforts, these are only a sampling of what’s taking place across El Camino Real.

As Bishop Mary notes in her message (page three), partnerships are “a key component of our Strategic Plan Remix and a most basic aspect of our Christian faith. Partnerships express the vision of what we believe is a most basic call of Christ: to love our neighbor.” We hope these examples of love will provide inspiration and encouragement.

## **St. Andrew’s EfM Jail Ministry**

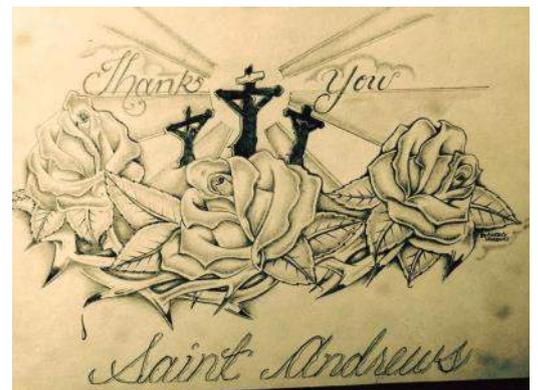
“Has anyone ever thought about bringing a college-level class in theology to jail?” asked Katy Dickinson of St. Andrew’s Episcopal Church in Saratoga three years ago. An accredited administrative mentor of Education for Ministry (EfM) — a four-year distance-learning certificate program in theological education based on small-group study and practice — Katy envisioned a four-year college-level certification course designed for lay people to engage incarcerated persons at Elmwood Correctional Facility in Milpitas. Her vision was realized: now in the third year of a thriving partnership between St. Andrew’s, the Episcopal Diocese of El Camino Real, Correctional Institutions Chaplaincy of Santa Clara County, and University of the South’s School of Theology (home to EfM), the program is the first jail-based EfM class in the country.

Co-mentored by St. Andrew’s members Diane Lovelace and Joel Martinez, the EfM jail program is not only expanding inside Elmwood, but now, upon reentry, former-

ly incarcerated EfM students continue their studies at a weekly class hosted by St. Andrew’s. Led by Dickinson and co-mentor Karen Carlson of St. Jude’s Episcopal Church in Cupertino, the class includes students from St. Andrew’s and from St. Jude’s and St. Thomas Episcopal Church in Sunnyvale.

## **SJSU Living Space Program**

As the Episcopal Chaplain at San Jose State University, The Rev. Kathey Crowe is working to change the lives of homeless and hungry students. For the last two years, Crowe has been a member of two committees on campus, one to help alleviate student hunger and a second organized by Student Affairs to assist students in crisis. She learned that among the 33,000 students that attend SJSU, approximately 300 live in their cars or “couch-surf” with friends. The actual count may be even greater because many students don’t come forward and reveal their situation.



*The EfM program at Elmwood Correctional Facility in Milpitas; a student’s artwork thanking St. Andrew’s Church. (Photos courtesy Katy Dickinson)*



Two of the university students living in the residence: Xavier Robledo, who serves as resident assistant, and Donte Brown. (Kaylee Lawler / SJSU Spartan Daily).

Crowe investigated partnerships with other communities of faith near the campus that might be interested in providing an intentional student living space. Grace Baptist Church, across from the university, agreed and rented out two large rooms upstairs in the main church building.

With contributions from private donors, the Canterbury Board of Trustees at SJSU, Saint Andrew's Episcopal Church Women, St. Jude's Cupertino, Trinity Cathedral in San Jose, and the Diocese of El Camino Real, Crowe was able to raise enough program funds to create a living space that now houses seven students at no charge. More referrals come in weekly from the university counseling center and from SJSU Student Affairs.

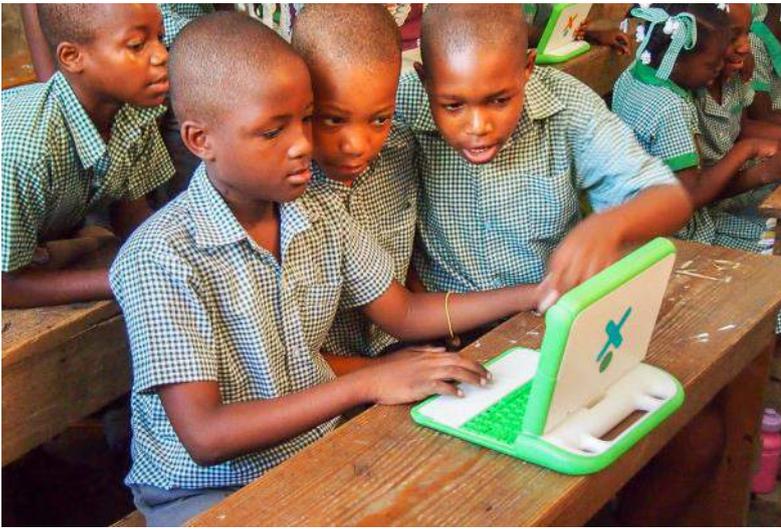
The spiraling cost of housing – both on and off campus – is out of reach for these students who have been willing to make significant sacrifices such as living in their cars, staying as long as possible at Martin Luther King Library, and using shower facilities on the campus. Every student now in residence has noted that the common living space has relieved stress and made it possible for them to concentrate on academic goals. The program's success is due to the partnership of the donor community, Canterbury Bridge Board of Trustees, Grace Baptist Church, and committed staff at the university who believe that investing in young people is an investment in the future.

### Regional Youth Ministry: A Team Effort

Since September, a team of Episcopal churches in Santa Cruz County – Calvary Santa Cruz, St. Philip's Scotts Valley, St. John's Aptos, All Saints' in Watsonville, and St. Andrew's Ben Lomond – have steadily worked together to create a regional youth ministry program. They kicked off the program with a pool party and barbecue in Scotts Valley in September (pictured below), followed by a faith formation meeting at St. John's on October 1.

"The impetus behind this project is the small number of teens and tweens in our individual parishes, which makes gathering a critical mass of youth difficult, but which is necessary for the success and long-term viability of a youth group," explains The Rev. Dr. Austin Leininger, priest-in-charge at Calvary Santa Cruz. "By combining our resources, we have more funds, more volunteers, and more participants to help make this ministry possible."





The alliance's long-range hope is to host weekly youth group meetings, periodic events and retreats, outreach to at-risk and homeless youth, and excitement among the group that inspires kids to invite their friends. By doing so the potential exists to broaden the mission field to roughly 14,000 teens and tweens in Santa Cruz County who are religiously unaffiliated.

The churches are rolling out the program with a monthly "Fun Night" gathering for food, fun, and socializing, which is planned to be interfaith on a quarterly basis -- as well as hosting faith formation meetings on the first and third Sundays of the month. While meeting times stay consistent at 4 pm on Sunday afternoons, the meeting places rotate between partner parishes.

For those seeking confirmation, the faith formation program will be preparation, and for those who have either already been confirmed or are not seeking confirmation, it is an opportunity to engage with their faith in community; for all, it is an opportunity to look at faith practically and meaningfully as it relates to real lives in the real world.

As the ministry expands, the churches have received a \$15,000 Mission Opportunity Grant from the diocese, plus \$20,000 from the Episcopal Church's Mission Enterprise Zone program, both earmarked for hiring a regional youth ministries coordinator. "We hope to have them start in January," adds Leininger, "and help build the program into a more robust and evolving ministry."

### St. Dunstan's Haiti Partnership

More than 30 years ago, St. Dunstan's Episcopal Church in Carmel Valley took the first steps toward what would become a remarkable relationship with St. Andre's Parish and School in Hinche, Haiti. In 1985 and 1986 students from All Saints' Episcopal Day School, who were also members of St. Dunstan's Church, traveled to Hinche, a city of 30,000 in the Central Region of Haiti, and estab-



*Scenes from St. Andre's Parish and School in Haiti; St. Dunstan's parishioner George Lockwood with Father Walin DeCamps.*

lished a relationship with St. Andre's. The relationships that were established, the observations that were made and the needs that were identified became the seeds of a ministry that flourishes today.

Parish members travel to Hinche on a regular basis to show our love and support for the struggles of St. Andre's students and parish members. Major efforts began in 1992 to support continuous improvements to the school and to grow the school's student population. The church also works with the nonprofit Rise Against Hunger to supply daily hot meals for students.

Over the decades St. Dunstan's has expanded St. Andre's School from 37 children in 1st, 2nd, and 3rd grades to a school that spans all 16 years of education, from preschool toddlers through 13th grade. The school feeds its students a hot meal each day, and employs a school nurse who tends to their health needs, explains George Lockwood, a member of the St. Dunstan's Haiti team. The church has purchased land for expansions and built modern reinforced concrete buildings, including a sanitation system. St. Dunstan's also provides electrical power from solar panels and a diesel standby generator, as well as a clean water well and a modern kitchen with refrigeration.

## Epiphany Church & the Marina Police Department

Epiphany Lutheran & Episcopal Church in Marina enjoys a strong, diverse, and expanding partnership with the city's police department, highlighted by the following efforts:

The church stocks an emergency closet with clean tents, sleeping bags, clothing, hygiene products—and teddy bears—available 24/7 to Marina police officers to meet the needs of homeless persons and families. During the rainy season, the church hands out about 15 tents/sleeping bags per month.

Epiphany also partners with the police department and locally based Interim, Inc. (which provides services and housing to those with mental illness) to visit the Fort Ord homeless community with food and water to listen and try to respond to their needs.

The Rev. Jon Perez is listed as a police department chaplain in the Marina PD directory, and was recently asked by the city's new chief of police to respond to emergencies in the community by ministering to the needs of both victims and responding officers.

This year, Epiphany is formally partnering with Marina PD for its Christmas Eve distribution. Officers will bring the proceeds from their toy drive to Epiphany to add to the food, warm clothing, and other items traditionally distributed at the end of the church's Christmas Eve service. Officers will hand out the toys and carry Christmas boxes to cars; the church expects the combined effort to nearly double the number of supported families, reaching as high as 70. Police officers will provide a similar service at the Thanksgiving food distribution, where up to 190 families will be served dinners.

## Neighbors, Partners, Friends in San Luis Obispo

The Access Support Network (ASN) is a community based nonprofit organization whose mission is to provide support to neighbors and loved ones living with HIV or Hepatitis C, improving the independence of its clients. ASN is also a neighbor of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in San Luis Obispo. With December 1, 2016 being World AIDS Day, this led to collaboration on a special service that included music and drama as well as scripture and prayers.

While the crowd numbered about the same as an average Sunday, both The Rev. Ian Delinger, rector of St. Stephen's, and David Kilburn, executive director of ASN, noticed that only a few of their clients or parishioners were in attendance. "The only explanation is that through our cross-promoting of this deeply meaningful opportunity, we reached beyond our own supporters and into the wider community of San Luis Obispo," said Delinger.



*The Access Support Network booth at St. Stephen's 150th anniversary event in September.*

The process of putting together the World AIDS Day service was followed by 11 months of seeking support from one another for various projects, bouncing ideas off each other, and working to enhance ways that both can better serve the community together. Highlights of the ongoing partnership include:

- St. Stephen's provided Thanksgiving dinner kits to Access Support's clients last year.
- St Stephen's and ASN are working with a mobile showers unit to offer this basic need in the downtown area where the homeless spend much of their time.
- ASN was a participant in the non-profit fair during St. Stephen's Jubilee 150<sup>th</sup> Celebration in July. The agency also manned a tent as part of the church's 150<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration & block party in September, promoting the organization's annual "Walk For Life."

Delinger says it's a "no-brainer" that St Stephen's will be supporting ASN clients this Thanksgiving, while planning meetings continue for the World AIDS Day Service, "to bring the secular and the sacred together to honor the wider community of San Luis Obispo, all of whom are children of God."

## St John's Chapel & San Pablo Apostol

For the last four years, two unique congregations have combined their resources and children for the summer Vacation Bible School program – and in doing so, they've shared in teachings, renewal, and blessings.

Every July, St. John's Chapel in Monterey – a traditional congregation that worships with the 1928 Book of Common Prayer – hosts the students of San Pablo Apostol in Seaside, a primarily Latino congregation. While St. John's has plenty of indoor and outdoor space for VBS, its volume of children had sharply dropped. The Rev. Bob Ott, St. John's rector, reached out to The Rev. Martin Juarez, San Pablo's vicar, with an idea.



**Left:** The Rev. Bob Ott speaks to VBS kids as Gideon while The Rev. Martin Juarez looks on. **Above:** The Rev. Robert Seifert with Fort Hunter Liggett soldiers.

“We have few kids here, but we have a nice facility,” says Ott. “On the other hand, Fr. Martin has a small facility but a lot of kids. I said to him, ‘Why don’t we be partners,’ and God bless him, he said yes!”

This July the program was in full swing, with around 20 kids gathering for morning songs and prayer, then splitting into groups for different segments – arts and crafts, outdoor games, a science-filled “imagination station,” a “Bible Discovery” segment that begins with an outdoor skit and ends in a darkened chapel with candle “torches”, and more – before regathering as a single group for the Funshop Finale, with music and lunch. There is no cost for kids to participate.

“We’re excited to do this together and we learn a lot,” said Juarez, of San Pablo. “This community helps us to have contact with other people, with other faith communities, and see how they worship and how they fellowship.”

The Revs. Ott and Juarez made a fine team during the “Bible Discovery” segment, complementing each other’s talents. With a goal of 50 kids, they are working to expand the program by reaching out to the wider community, with



a particular focus on incoming military families. For now, the congregations are sharing the benefits of partnership.

“We realize we’re the same brothers and sisters in Christ,” says Juarez. “We have different gifts, but we are on a journey together ... we are here to support each other.”

### St Luke’s Jolon & Fort Hunter Liggett

St. Luke’s Episcopal Church in Jolon, a gathering place for residents since 1883, occupies a small enclave within the boundary of Fort Hunter Liggett and has partnered with the fort for 75 years to provide spiritual support to Army soldiers, civilians, and their families. Since the base’s founding, soldiers living and training at Fort Hunter Liggett have worshipped at St. Luke’s Church over the years and the church family has welcomed them. Since 1958 St. Luke’s Church has held their annual barbeque on the first Sunday in May and soldiers have joined in the festivities.

In the 1990s it was discovered that part of St. Luke’s cemetery was on Army property; so the Army transferred two acres to St. Luke’s Church. In May of 2014, Chaplain (Colonel) Kenneth Lawson, the Fort Hunter Liggett chaplain, spearheaded a special service in conjunction with the vicar of St. Luke’s, the Rev. Robert Seifert, and the local Veterans of Foreign Wars to recognize the veterans buried at St. Luke’s. The keynote speaker for this memorable event was The Rt. Rev. James B. Magness, Episcopal Bishop Suffragan of the Armed Forces, from Washington, D.C. During the ceremony Bishop Magness, along with Bishop Mary Gray-Reeves, blessed the Veterans Memorial Cross and flagpole in the cemetery’s northwest corner (left).

While the current partnership is not as active as in years past, Vicar Seifert “is an active member in the Fort Hunter Liggett community relations working group,” said Amy Phillips, public affairs officer for the base, “and as a veteran, is a great supporter to our mission and troops.”

## Camp St. Andrew's & Uplift Family Services

Celebrating its 40th year, Camp St. Andrew's is a life-changing experience for the kids who attend, but it's even more special for low-income students who receive "campership" funding to attend. Since the first summer camp in 1978, 1,500 low-income kids have been helped at a total cost of \$700,000. This year saw 102 campers travel to St. Andrew's facility near Pinecrest Lake in California; half of that number were low-income kids funded by camperships, and nearly 20 were from foster families referred by partner Uplift Family Services.

The church originally worked with an organization called "Camp 4 Kids," a partnership with Estrella Family Services to connect kids who may not otherwise have the chance to experience a week of camp in the mountains. That program ended several years ago, leading to a talk between Drew Mayen, Uplift Family Services' HR Coordinator and a member of St Andrew's, and Sue Ramar, a camp co-founder and member of Uplift's board of directors. The Campbell-based organization had referred a few kids in 2011, said Mayen, and it was a hit – "so we began publicizing the opportunity to more of our foster families and they were so excited for the opportunity.



*Celebrating Camp St. Andrew's 40th anniversary in August.*

Two years ago, we expanded the opportunity to our Modesto-Stockton office and almost doubled the number of kids going to camp from Uplift. This year was our largest, with 19 kids attending from Campbell and Modesto-Stockton."

Each year, Mayan and Cara Pham of Camp St. Andrews send information about registration and camperships to families who have attended in the past, and coordinate with Uplift Family Services, Santa Maria Urban Mission, and LifeMoves to fill the 50 campership spots available. Campership families contribute what they can and Camp St. Andrew's fills in the remaining registration costs through community donations and support.

## El Camino Real's Partnership Commission

The Partnership Commission was created to facilitate "connecting our common life with the wider Church and the world" (*from our diocesan mission statement*) by creating a network of communities that work together to overcome physical and spiritual pain and suffering in the world. The commission works to nurture missional partnerships and to expand our Episcopal presence in areas of social justice.

Founded on the core diocesan values of **Christ-centeredness**, **Passion**, and **Innovation and Creativity**, the commission works with parishes to help them strengthen their missional and social justice partnerships. Members have worked with All Saints' Palo Alto as they established their partnership with La Joya in the Diocese of Southeast Mexico. The group has been active in a number of parishes as they work to help the homeless, and is beginning to address immigration and environmental issues; they also hosted a diocesan workshop on Living Room Conversations and continue to promote this technique as a healing tool.

Communications is a key element of the Partnership Commission's work; as seen on pages 4-9, many wonderful parish

partnerships exist but are largely unknown across the diocese. The commission intends to help publicize these activities as examples and to inspire new partnerships in mission and social justice action. Watch for the launch of the Partnership Commission website in early 2018.

The Commission is working with the other five dioceses in California to form an Episcopal Public Policy Network in California. The six bishops have agreed that the network is needed to fulfill the Gospel mandate to engage public policy, as too much political activity lacks a strong moral basis.

Finally, the commission aims to extend the work of several parishes with Cristosal in their work to advance human rights in Central America. The group hopes to sponsor a week-long global school seminar on April 22-29, 2018, to help understand the causes of injustice in El Salvador and learn how to promote social justice in our local context. Visit [www.cristosal.org/global-school](http://www.cristosal.org/global-school) for details.

For more information on the Partnership Commission or to join, contact Bill Shreve at [wrshreve@gmail.com](mailto:wrshreve@gmail.com).