

CONNECTIONS

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 4

OCTOBER, 2010



Special Points of Interest:

- *Spring Gathering 2011*
- *Carla's Corner*
- *Altar Guild*
- *Church Periodical Club*

The mission of this organization shall be to foster active communication, spiritual enrichment and education among the women of the Episcopal Church with Christ as the center.

LETTER FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Episcopal Diocese of West Texas

Dear Sisters in Christ,

The Fall Women's Gathering was an awesome and grace filled weekend. It was good to see you, old friends and new. Those of you unable to attend were missed.

The last news letter, I shared that since returning from Uganda, I had been walking around in the desert alone going through the motions of life, but not finding God. By God's grace I now realize that I have been playing hide and seek with God. I have heard him calling me and I have hidden from Him. He continues to seek and find me and I continue to run and hide. I can imagine how Eve felt

when she heard God and hid herself from his presence. Living in fear, not feeling good enough or worthy is a terrible state to live in. So I run faster and try to hide farther away. To stay in a safe place where not much is expected of me, to run, run as fast as I can (you can't catch me) to the desert and hide.

In the last news letter, I also shared that I'm not good at waiting. I like action. Sadly the action I was taking was running and hiding. Throughout my life friends and clergy have told me to wait upon God. *Be still, and know that I am God.* Soooooo I have stopped running and playing the hide and seek

game with God. I am now in a discernment process. Discerning what God is calling me to, what I'm running from and why, and exploring the fears.

I would appreciate your prayers for me as I go through this process, to discern God's will and then have the courage to follow His will and not run and hide.

Have a blessed Grace filled Advent. Hope to see you all at the Spring Gathering. I'll be prayerfully waiting.

For His Sake,
Deb

REFLECTION FROM OUR CHAPLAIN

As I sit here writing on a nippy November morning, my growing affinity for this time of year is affirmed. Do you sense, as I do, mysteries in November? November is a transitional month, beginning with All Saints' Day and ending with the advent of Advent.

November is a time to celebrate unseen and seen blessings. The sunlight has a particular angle. The nights are noticeably cooler. The air, day and night, has more energy. Many Christians believe that the extra energy in the November air carries with it the spirits of our beloveds, now departed, that they seem especially close by during the darkening days of November.

Mexican Christians say that the gate between heaven and earth is opened for a short time as they celebrate El Dia de los Muertos in early November. The Celtic Christian Church describes mid-autumn as a time when the veil between this world and eternity grows very thin. For some people this awareness may seem a bit like ghost stories around the campfire, but who can ignore the feeling that, sometimes, something Real haunts us in the dark?

This season of unseen Christian saints and souls reminds us that what is "out there"--in the dark--can be a blessing.

We also celebrate the "seen" blessings of God in November.

The fruits of the earth are ripe, and we have a special opportunity to offer thanks for God's good care of us. I am grateful for so many things--my Church, family and friends, vocation, home, and good health. I am also grateful that Thanksgiving Day has not attracted many commercial trappings. It simply requires a table filled with food and a group of people thankful for the table's offerings: turkey, dressing, cranberries, wine, and pecan pie! It's a feast fit for Jesus. More importantly, it is the way Jesus wants us to live always--in abundance and with gratitude.

Thank you, Lord, for all our blessings--unseen and seen.

From the Editor

As we are nearing the season of Advent and are looking at new beginnings, I was struck by the fact that our speaker for the Spring 2011 gathering has written the book [Between Two Worlds: Daily Readings for Advent](#). I, for one, definitely plan to include this in my Advent preparation. It never ceases to amaze me how God places things in my path just when I need them. Thank you God!

Blessings to you all.

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CONNECTIONS

CHURCH PERIODICAL CLUB

CPC Ministry

: My name is Esther H. Reynosa and I am the Church Periodical Club Representative for the Dioceses of West Texas.

So, What is CPC ???

The ministry of the Church Periodical Club is to provide books and related materials, including theological and educational text, Audio and Video tapes and software to persons, Sunday School Classes and Churches who need them.

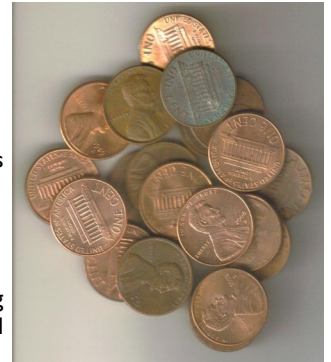
There are two different funds; one is the National Book Fund and the other is Miles of Pennies. It is Miles of Pennies that I would like to tell you about a little more. It takes \$844.40 of Pennies to make a mile.

What could one mile of pennies do?

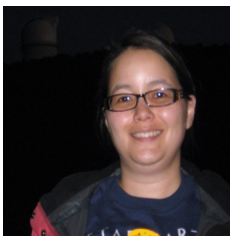
I would like to offer a challenge to all Sunday School Classes and Bible Study Groups **start collecting pennies and aim for a mile.** The Dioceses has approved for the first Sunday in May to be CPC Sunday. I urge all Sunday School Classes and Bible Study groups to tell and talk about MOP to all your friends and families. After all, WHAT IS A PENNY...??

" See a penny, pick it up, all day long you'll have good Luck" **Then donate it to CPC.**

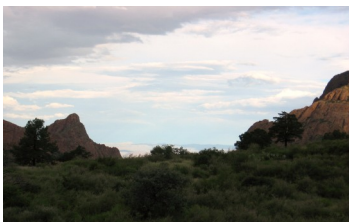
Blessings,
Ester Reynosa



over Pecos River Gorge near Marathon



Dorothy Long Parma



..... balcony at Chisos Mountain Lodge, Big Bend National Park

FINDING GOD IN THE DESERT: EXCERPTS FROM THE DIARY OF DOROTHY LONG PARMA

Thursday, September 2nd. "It's not surprising," mused **Nicholas Parma**, as we drove West on Highway 90, "that the prophets sought God in the desert." The wide open spaces, great silences, and abundance of wild Nature invited us to turn inward as we went on a journey out of the confines of the city. The **Psalm** of the day's Eucharist, **24**, seemed appropriate to read aloud as our elevation gradually increased: "*Who can ascend the hill of the Lord? and who can stand in His holy place?*" (**Verse 3**).

We arrived at Chisos Mountain Lodge around 9:30pm, after passing mule deer, a family of javelina, a few suicidal jackrabbits, a tawny-maned, stub-tailed bobcat trotting across the road, and an owl, ghosting away on silent wings in the evening cool. Lightning outlined the *Chisos Mountains* from far up Highway 385. Our room had a balcony overlooking *The Window*, where even at 10:30pm lightning continued to illuminate the *Sierra del Carmen* in Mexico, many miles to the South.

Saturday, September 4th. That morning, we hiked the *The Window Trail* down into the Basin, a 500-foot drop in elevation. There were butterflies everywhere: yellow, black with red eyes, Monarch lookalikes... we heard canyon wrens while we stopped for breakfast, and a desert whitetail deer came by to munch on leaves from a nearby tree. Near the end of the trail we started hearing running water, and passed multiple pools on our final descent into the Window.

We left Big Bend for Fort Davis

on Highway 118 North around 2:00pm, arriving at the historic (1900s) *Hotel Limpia* at 5:30. After having dinner in the hotel restaurant that evening, we attended the Star Party at the *McDonald Observatory*. That was an incredible experience, unfortunately not readily captured on digital film: instead, I offer September 7th's **Psalm 147:4**... "*He counts the number of the stars, and calls them all by their names.*"

While we seemed to be counting stars during the Constellation Tour, guided by a powerful green laser pointer

expertly wielded by one of the Observatory Professors, we also looked at Jupiter and four of its moons; places where stars were being born (Swan Nebula); where they were young (Wild Duck cluster); and the remnants of a star that had died (Ring Nebula). The Milky Way flowed in a glistening band overhead, and we could make out the Andromeda Galaxy near Polaris, the North Star, with the naked eye!





Patricia Brooke
Commission Advisor

LISTEN TO YOUR LIFE

“Listen to your life. See it for the fathomless mystery that it is. In the boredom and pain of it no less than in the excitement and gladness: touch, taste, smell your way to the holy and hidden heart of it, because in the last analysis all moments are key moments and life itself is grace.” (Frederick Buechner, *Listen to Your Life*)

This is one of my very favorite sayings and is a deep profound invitation to us all as we approach the season of Advent. How does one listen to her/his life when we are so busy all of the time. We have families to tend to, jobs to go to, errands to run, meetings to attend, etc., etc., etc. and the list goes on.

This is what my life looks like most of the time and when I finally sit down long enough to catch my breath, I'm exhausted. I'm so busy; I hardly have time to pray! Have you ever felt like that? So the result is that I become tired, anxious, pressured, harried, and not very nice. It's not what I want to be and do. I have a deep yearning for that sense of quiet, peace, and serenity, but unless I take the time to **STOP**, it doesn't happen.

When was the last time I stopped to smell the roses in my front yard, stopped to see the sweet smile on my granddaughter's face, stopped to listen to a friend who is in crisis? That's why I particularly like the seasons of Lent and Advent. It is an invitation to **STOP**--to prepare our spiritual lives, to take strides toward growing closer to God. Each person has his or her own way to accomplish this and it can be a season of great reward. It is an invitation to “be faithful”—faithful to spending time with God every day, through study of Scripture, prayer, and life in a Christian community.

It means creating a sacred space to get ready—to watch—to pray and make a commitment—a commitment to become rooted and grounded as Paul prayed with the Ephesians (3:14-21 NRSV): “*I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, he may grant that you may be strengthened in your inner being with power through his Spirit, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, as you are being rooted and grounded in love...so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.*”

This season of Advent gives us an opportunity to discover how we can wait so that waiting itself becomes a means of grace—an emphasis on expectation and hope—a season to reflect on God's coming to us in our daily lives.

I leave you with this question: **What do you want FROM Christmas, not FOR Christmas?**

Resources for Advent:

Night Visions, Jan L. Richardson

Ponder These Things, Praying with Icons of the Virgin, Rowan Williams

Meditations on the Psalms, Barbara Cawthorne Crafton

SPRING GATHERING 2011—APRIL 8-10

The Very Rev. Kate Books
Moorehead New for Lent!

Spring Gathering 2011
April 8-10
Get Over Yourself; God's Here!

Get Over Yourself: Between Two Worlds:
How to be Deeply Daily Readings for Advent

Joyful Organic God: Lenten
Get acquainted by going to Meditations on the Words
motherkate.blogspot.com of Jesus

The Very Rev. Kate
Moorehead

Gender: Female

Industry: [Religion](#)

Occupation: [Episcopal Priest, Dean of St. John's Cathedral](#)

Location: [Jacksonville : Florida : United States](#)



The Very Rev. Kate Moorehead

CONNECTIONS

CARLA'S CORNER



*Carla Pineda
VP Programming*

Watch this space for Carla's reading recommendations.....

In the Sanctuary of Women: A Companion for Reflection and Prayer By Jan Richardson

Jan Richardson, a Methodist pastor and artist shares with us her longing and desire to connect with women across and through time. How did women articulate a longing for the Holy? How does she take us to the "edge and then bring us back to the core of spirituality"? Using resources from far and wide and her own gift of writing, Jan introduces her readers to the wisdom of Eve, a Celtic Brigid, Desert Mothers, Hildegard of Bingen, Harriet Powers, and the Bride. This book is a thin place where deep transformation, mystery, worship, and refreshment await the reader.

Enter the Story: Biblical Metaphors for Our Lives By Fran Ferder

Fran Ferder, a Franciscan sister, clinical psychologist, university professor, and writer magically draws her reader into familiar Bible stories with new ears and eyes. Using Christian feasts of the church year she takes us deeper into the significance of stories and themes such as the Annunciation, the Visitation, the Nativity, Baptism, Temptation, Transfiguration, Suffering, Easter, and Pentecost.

These stories become our stories. She challenges us to become involved in living our faith and not just proclaiming it. Read this and in the breaking open of these familiar stories you will find your own place and a blueprint for a deeper and more mature spirituality.

The Breath of the Soul: Reflections on Prayer By Joan Chittister

This small, simple book is written by the clear and bold voice of the Benedictine sister, author, speaker and international leader for peace and justice, Joan Chittister. This little jewel leads us to examine what we must bring to a discipline of prayer...whatever form it takes...so that our prayer can be authentic and real, a deep and profound part of our lives. This book will not teach you to pray. "It is a discussion of the attitudes that prepare us for prayer" (from the introduction). Her words are intended to be "absorbed" not studied, each section a way into prayer. With 42 reflections this might be an excellent Lenten resource.

GOD SAID IT. I BELIEVE IT. THAT SETTLES IT!

Alta Grace Rainbolt, our oldest (91) first time attendee at the Women's Gathering sums things up with those words. Alta Grace came into this world August 16, 1919, but counts her date of birth as an ordinary day in 1951 when she started her journey into grace. She was, at the time, a self proclaimed atheist. She was listening to a radio station and a man said to *her*, "If you are in trouble or despair, call me or any other Episcopal priest in town, and

we will help you through it." She couldn't put that out of her mind, so a few days later she did just that. She started attending the Episcopal church near where she lived in Houston, and continued to do so until she moved to San Antonio.

After moving to San Antonio she tried attending several other denominations, but, in her words, "God sat on my shoulder and said, "Now, Alta Grace, I placed you in the Episcopal church for a reason.",

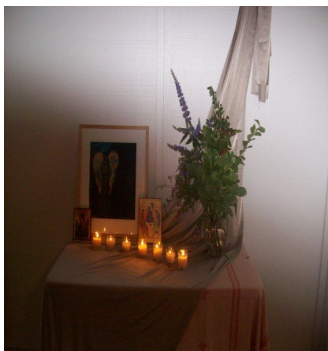
and he knew what he was talking about because I felt it was ok to smoke, drink, and do all those other things I still had a desire to do, and still receive His love. But, you know, I soon lost all desire to do them."

She continues to grow in her faith, and says she's able to stay on track as long as she doesn't "get upset and try to run ahead of Him".



*Alta Grace Rainbolt (91)
Bianca Esquivel (22)*

...AND A REFLECTION FROM OUR YOUNGEST FIRST TIME ATTENDEE



Prayer concerns left at the altar

A week has now passed since the Episcopal Diocese of West Texas Fall 2010 Gathering. Reflecting on all that I learned and prayed about last weekend, October 22 - 24, 2010, my heart is filled with gratitude and joy and I must smile. I heard of this gathering through this fall's speaker and retreat leader, Rev. Suzanne Guthrie. Not wanting to miss her retreat, I registered for the gathering. As a Roman Catholic, I arrived at Camp Capers, not knowing any members of the Episcopal diocese, trusting that it would be a great weekend and hoping that I would

meet lovely new people. I was pleasantly surprised! Immediately, I felt welcomed by the dedicated members of the Commission who offered their assistance and their company. As more women arrived, I noticed the sense of family felt by many, especially among those who have faithfully attended past gatherings. Despite the strong connections shared by most of the women, everyone was true to living the Christian way by reaching out to and inviting the newcomers, myself included.

The weekend was wonderful - wrapped in God's love, profoundly inspired by Rev. Suzanne Guthrie, nourished with delicious meals lovingly prepared, and beautifully accentuated by fellowship, prayer, tears, and laughter. This truly was a gathering of friends, united by our faith journeys and daily walk with Christ. I am highly anticipating the Spring 2011 Gathering and the chance to welcome others!

Bianca Esquivel

ALTAR GUILD ENRICHMENT

In our role as Diocesan Altar Guild Co-Directors, we would like to let you know about a couple of opportunities to learn more about the theory and practice of this ministry.

Next spring, the **Diocese of Texas** to our north will once again host its **Annual Altar Guild Workshop And Spiritual Enrichment**. Titled "His Table", this event is held at Camp Allen, a lovely conference center located in Sarasota, Texas and features seminars, workshops, spiritual exercises and worship services. Accommodations in the conference center feature double or single hotel rooms, delicious meals and a relaxing campus environment. Persons attending may come for just one day or any combination of the four day event. Dates for the Diocese of Texas Altar Guild Gathering are Wednesday, March 23 through Saturday, March 26, 2011. Last year, ten altar guild members from our diocese attended the Camp Allen gathering and found it to be a most rewarding event. Visit the Diocese of West Texas Altar Guild webpage www.dwtx.org/index.php/diocese/Diocesan_Altar_Guild for more information about the **2011 Altar Guild Gathering at Camp Allen**.

On its website, the **National Altar Guild Association** states that its purpose is to assist parish, diocesan and provincial altar guilds through information, resources and communication including a quarterly newsletter - the Epistle. NAGA meets every three years during the Episcopal Church's General Convention. The next meeting dates in Indianapolis are tentatively set for July 5 - July 12, 2012. We urge altar guild members to become members of this association and to consider joining us to attend the national meeting in 2012. For more information about NAGA, visit its website www.episcopalchurch.org/altar guild.

Ellen Martin and Pat Donegan



Give me an open mind, O God, a mind ready to receive and to welcome such new light of knowledge as it is thy will to reveal to me. Let not the past ever be so dear to me as to set a limit to the future.

Give me courage to change my mind, when that is needed. Let me be tolerant to the thoughts of others and hospitable to such light as may come to me through them. Amen.

by John Baillie, published in the New Altar Guild Book by Barbara Gent and Betty Sturges

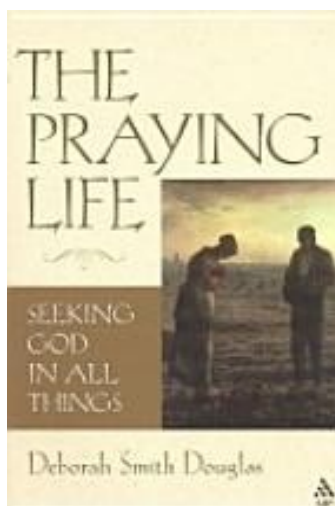
.....FALL GATHERING 2011—OCT 14-16

DEBORAH SMITH DOUGLAS

has degrees in literature and law, training in spiritual direction, and is a member of the Episcopal Church. A Camaldolese Benedictine oblate, she leads retreats in the United States and Britain. A frequent contributor to Weavings, she is the author of *The Praying Life: Seeking God in All Things* and, with her husband David Douglas, co-author of *Pilgrims in the Kingdom: Travels in Christian Britain*.

"Without my ever really intending it," she writes, "my own life -- as a wife and mother, daughter and friend -- has taught me to see God hidden in the ordinary, to watch for God under the surface of things as a fisherman watches for fish."

THE REVERAND MARY EARLE—CHAPLAIN



CONNECTIONS

COMMISSION FOR WOMEN'S MINISTRIES



Episcopal Diocese of West Texas

It is not easy to find us on the Diocesan Website, but it can be done!

dwtx.org
 Hover over [Diocese](#)
 Select [Committees and Commissions](#)
 Select [Commission for Women's Ministries](#)

REQUIREMENTS FOR MEMBERSHIP

- All members of the Commission shall be communicants in good standing of the Episcopal Church and resident in the Diocese of West Texas.
- Membership shall consist of the Board Officers, one representative from each Convocation in the Diocese, and one representative from each of those organizations within the Diocese specifically involved with Women's Concerns.
- There may also be assistants for each Convocational Representative and for each Women's Concerns Representative.
- Ex-officio members of the Commission shall consist of the Bishop of the Diocese of West Texas and an Advisor to the Commission who may be appointed by the Bishop.
- The wives of Bishops, active or retired, of the Diocese shall be invited to serve as honorary members of the Commission.

Your Commission Members

President	Deborah Gardiner
Advisor	Patricia Brooke
VP for Programming	Carla Pineda
VP for Communications	Jane Ahuero
Secretary	Linda Hollingsworth
Treasurer	Betty Graham
Chaplain	Lera Tyler
Altar Guild Co representative	Pat Donegan
Altar Guild Co representative	Ellen Martin
UTO Representative	Deborah Jenkins
Daughters of the King Representative	Karen Duerr
Hispanic Ministries Representative	Chelo Robredo
Church Periodical Club Representative	Esther Reynosa
Women's History Project Representative	Susan Johnson
Kairos Prison Ministry Representative	Louise Mayberry
Central Convocation Co representative	Linda Hollingsworth
Central Convocation Co representative	Anne Lutz
Eastern Convocation Representative	
Northern Convocation Representative	
Northeastern Convocation Co representative	Kate Pettit
Northeastern Convocation Co representative	Kathy James
Southern Convocation Co representative	Deborah Jenkins
Southern Convocation Co representative	
Valley Convocation Representative	Wendy Sulewski
Western Convocation Representative	Sherry Martin
Honorary Member	Catherine Lillibridge
Honorary Member	Patti Reed
Media Technician	Dan Hollingsworth

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 spiritual enrichment and
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