

NEWS FROM

Celebration!

A People Serving the Church

Spring 2007

Looking Forward with Hope

After a last cold and snowy burst of winter that chilled our Easter celebrations, spring has arrived and we have at last fired up the earth oven for outdoor cooking and had a first-of-the-year Sunday afternoon of lawn games and lazy spectating.



Snow-covered rowhouses



Enjoying the backyard

We are, of course, also busy gearing up for a wonderful summer of activity and fellowship. A cluster of mission initiatives thrive around us: the Church Army and the Uncommon Grounds Café; GOAL (Global Outreach for Addiction Leadership) and its

initiative to support people with AIDS in Africa is now a resident in our offices; summer volunteers from AIM (Aliquippa Impact Ministries) will once again occupy one of our row houses as they engage in educational programs with children at a local public housing area; and Crestmont Alliance Church from nearby Hopewell is seeking to establish a mission base just around the corner from us in Spring Street. Alongside our other links with the Police and Fire departments, the City Council and the Aliquippa Alliance for Unity and Development we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses!

The conference is coming up soon - hope to see you here with us. Retreats and personal visits begin to fill the summer calendar and we will again have our now customary Labor Day weekend of fellowship with those who are free to join us.

Women's Training Program

The women's program has started a new term for the spring with an average of five women from the jail traveling to work with Alison and May. Jewelry-making began while snow was still arriving in flurries but within days we were able to start the gardening course, assisted by Maggie and James.

Working with the earth and living plants is invigorating and our first session of making up planters (the women can take these away after their release from jail) provided a burst of color and animated conversation. When lives have fallen into chaos, refreshment and friendship are important steps to new or renewed self-belief and hope for the future.



Returning to Aliquippa



It is with great joy each time that I come back for a visit with the Community of Celebration. Our association of more than thirty years, prayer, work and worship together in various places and conditions, has been a central

bulwark for my own life in God, in the different directions it has taken me. The love and hospitality I receive here, which I see also being offered to so many, has made this Community a true second home.

This February, I was fortunate enough to arrive in time for the monthly Sunday evening Taizé service, an offering of reflective praise attended by many regulars from the surrounding area. The Saturday evening Eucharists with their subsequent common meal are joyous and well-attended, building up a sense of a larger fellowship. The many children are a welcome and lively addition for an old-timer like me.

The six multi-tasked chapter members, busy as they are with the administrative and maintenance work of holding

the structure of the Community together, remain open to outside missions, the needs of the town, and of their many friends and companions. I was particularly glad to be able to participate in the twice-weekly sessions of the ACE Program and was touched deeply by the openness of the women in sharing their lives, hurts and fears.

Uncommon Grounds Café, created by Church Army leader, John Stanley and his volunteers, is going strong. They serve among other things, some of the best sandwiches I've ever eaten! John and Allison say that the stability of living in the midst of the Community provides important support for their own time and energy consuming tasks.

All in all, the Community is a happy place, cohesive and vibrant. The round of daily offices, morning, noon and evening prayer, open to all, are a sustaining strength. I would pray that Celebration's Companions, especially those who have never been here, would make a special effort to come and experience what God is doing in the life of the Community of Celebration.

The Rev. Daphne Grimes serves as Spiritual Advisor to the Community of Celebration.

Annual Conference June 15 - 17, 2007

Seven Times Seventy: The Practice of Forgiveness



Christians serve a forgiving God, and as a forgiven people, are called to be a forgiving people. Yet, even though forgiveness is at the heart of Christian life, it is also one of its most difficult and misunderstood practices of discipleship.

Our summer conference will explore the biblical and theological bases of being a forgiven and forgiving people, as well as the practical applications of forgiveness in day to day life, moving from practice to habit to virtue.

Kevin Hackett, this year's speaker, is a member of the Society of Saint John the Evangelist, a monastic community for men in the Episcopal Church, where he has oversight of worship and communications. He was a member of the Community for many years prior to his entering the monastery.

News from Celebration's UK House

Phil and Margaret Bradshaw recently returned from a memorable 14-day study tour conducted by St. George's College in Jerusalem. The course, *Palestine of Jesus*, has been one of the College's most popular through the years. This photo was taken outside the doors of the church of St. Peter in Gallicantu (Cock Crowing).



During their stay, they were able to arrange a brief visit with Patricia Allen, former Community member from Houston and Scotland days, now living with the Sisters of St. Joseph in Abou Gosh.



2007 -- Celebrating another Year of Grace!

From Companion Terry Webb has come the exciting news that GOAL recently received a one million dollar grant from USAID for work with AIDS prevention in Kenya. Terry is the primary founder of this ministry organization and the GOAL Board has been meeting at Celebration for the past several years. As mentioned on page 1, GOAL is looking to set up their office in Aliquippa, and we are providing temporary office space until the renovation of the ground floor of All Saints House is complete.

We welcome Douglas Masika, from Nairobi, Kenya, as Grant Administrator for GOAL's USAID grant. He is a graduate of Kenyatta University and the University of Nairobi, with a Masters of Arts degree in Rural Sociology and Community Development. Douglas will be in residence several months of the year at Celebration while he performs his tasks for the GOAL project.





Thomas, Patrick and Caleb Erb-White enjoy play-time after the Saturday Eucharist and common meal.

Companions Linda and Robert Moore (*Newsletter, Fall 2006*) who have been here for about eight months are leaving for other calls. There has been mutual benefit in their time of living among us and they added much from the richness of their missionary lives. We wish them God-speed in their new ventures.

At the invitation of St. Luke's Anglican Chapel, Mimi traveled to East Aurora, New York, to lead a day-long workshop entitled *Singing the Psalms*. Several denominations were represented by musicians and lay people from Buffalo and the surrounding area.

In March Bill was invited by St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church to speak to the Sunday morning adult forum about community, and in particular about our contemporary expression of the Rule of Benedict. It was a good opportunity to offer our developing PowerPoint presentation on the history of the Community of Celebration.



James, May and Bill splitting logs for the earth oven.



Community Profile:

May McKeown

May hails from Glasgow where she worked as a pediatric nurse in a premature baby unit. In 1978, she and her husband, Steven, and children, Stephanie and Christopher, visited the community in Millport on the Isle of Cumbrae, Scotland. She came out of curiosity as a visitor, only to find she wanted to stay because here was a place where she could put life and work and prayer together.

Two years later the family moved to the island and subsequently chose to move to the USA when the Community relocated to Aliquippa in 1985. Because of a lengthy immigration process, the family didn't arrive in Aliquippa until 1987 and have made it their home for the past 20 years.

Though she is unassuming and doesn't blow her own horn, May does admit that in her days in the Methodist Church in Glasgow she was the first woman Senior Steward in the history of the Scottish Methodist Church.

Some of her present responsibilities include organizing hospitality, scheduling visits, maintaining the Community's database, and leading retreats. For many people contacting the community, May is the first person to whom they speak or the first to answer their letters.



Spending quality time with oldest grand-daughter, Fiona



Hospitality preparations

May has been working on the ACE (Aliquippa Community Enterprise) Women's Program with Alison Stanley since it began several years ago, offering her skills in various crafts and also patience and the ability to teach others.



Photo: Peter Frank

Assisting with the Women's Program



Working in the office

May serves as Guardian for Vocations, directing those who are investigating a possible vocation to community membership. She also serves on the chapter Council with Bill and James, executing the decisions and directions of the Chapter and administering the work of the community in the kind of detail that turns good ideas into good events.

Speaking at the Chapel Dedication



May's mother and brother, Mina and Duncan, on a visit to Aliquippa