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Coming Home

A Look Back At More Than A Decade Of Housing And Hope

Editor's Note: *In 1997, amidst many conversations about welfare reform and the church's response to the need for affordable housing, the Rev. Tim Patterson had the vision of a transitional housing ministry using some of the properties on Holy Trinity's block. He "sounded the call," a mission group came together, and thus began an extraordinary ongoing ministry that has had a real impact on a growing number of families and on our parish as a whole.*

Since its inception in 1998, the Transitional Housing Ministry has sponsored 11 families in the housing on our block. It relies heavily on its dedicated corps of volunteers, but the ministry is completely self-supported by residents' rent and donations from parishioners and does not require funding from the church's operating budget.

The following story first appeared in the Fall 1999 issue of Holy Trinity's Parish Profile magazine.

Sharon Chambliss and her daughter, LaQuita Blackman, became part of our parish family in May 1998, when we were fortunate to have them move into our Simpson Street house.

On Sunday, May 17, 1998, members of the Transitional Housing committee and other parish members met on the

porch of the house. Tim Patterson led a blessing of the house and welcomed Sharon and LaQuita to our midst. Over the next months we got to know Sharon better and vice-versa, and entered into a journey together. With good hearts but little experience to equip us, we made mistakes.

One of the things we learned was that we were good at being objective and "knowing" what needed to be done to have a "successful" life, and we were good at meeting physical needs.

We were able to fix Sharon's car needs. Part of her financial difficulty was a common one for so many people: without good credit and money in the bank to get a car, she was at the mercy of dealers (operating legally and even trying to help a credit-risk person get a car). She had accepted a deal for a low monthly payment for a high-mileage car, but the interest rate was astronomical. When the car began to give trouble and costly repairs had to be made, there was no way to keep up the payments, pay the repair bills, and live all at the same time.

Something had to give, and housing went by the board. Living with various relatives, having LaQuita sleep in different homes, Sharon's stresses increased. This was not a good life for a 7-year-

old, and as a mother, Sharon was under increasing stress as she tried to provide LaQuita with stability and security.

The Simpson Street house provided sanctuary. Getting the dealer to take back the car and release Sharon from the debt, and the donation of a car for her, began to put her life on a better track.

We shared with Sharon her concern about working a third-shift job where money is better, but overnight care for LaQuita was difficult. She still had to spend the night with her grandmother or other relatives and see a tired mother who would get home to take her to school and then pick her up. Seeking to find a career for herself that would allow her to support her child and build a stable life, Sharon was exhausted and pulled in many directions.

We as a committee knew that there were drawbacks to the Simpson Street house for the needs of a family. It is not located in a community with friends and playmates for LaQuita. It also is right under the nose of the church and good-meaning people who knew when Sharon was home and when she was not, but did not understand the stresses of her life. It took us a long time to

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(From left) Maragreta Ramadani, Martha Ransley and LaQuita Blackman reunite at Holy Trinity's "Witnessing to the Light" celebration January 24, 2010. Maragreta and LaQuita are members of two of Holy Trinity's earliest transitional housing families, and Martha has volunteered in the ministry since its beginning. Maragreta and LaQuita returned to Holy Trinity to thank the church for its Transitional Housing Ministry and its impact on them and their families.

build trust and understanding.

We knew we needed to have a closer link between Holy Trinity and Sharon and LaQuita. Knowing that LaQuita loved music, she became part of the Angel Choir. Ben Brafford ("Mr. Ben") and Catherine Winslow ("Mrs. Catherine") were wonderful in giving LaQuita this opportunity. The relationship was strengthened by Ben's giving LaQuita piano lessons over the summer months.

Sharon and LaQuita enjoy being with us for services when LaQuita sings and joining us for special events whenever they can. Their home church is Bass Chapel United Methodist Church, but Holy Trinity is also their church. Several of us were privileged to be asked by Sharon to stand as "godparents" at Bass Chapel this summer when LaQuita was baptized. What a joy and honor for us.

In the fall of 1998, Sharon began to think about the career she really wanted. What kept drawing her was a helping profession. She is excellent with older people, those who are ill or those in need of assistance in day-to-day living. That is Sharon's career and her calling.

In January 1999, Sharon entered a GTCC program to earn certification as a nursing assistant. During that time, she studied, picked up various jobs, and worked as she could for a home health care agency.

She had experience caring for her mother, who is bed-ridden with multiple sclerosis, diabetes, and other health problems. Sharon and two sisters had long been the primary care-givers for her widowed mother. Cousins and other relatives worked together to help Mrs. Chambliss and provide care for LaQuita.

It is absolutely true that it does take a village to raise a child in many, many cases. With that "village" around her, and with Holy Trinity's support in providing a place to live and give her and LaQuita respite and a place of retreat, Sharon successfully completed her studies and received her certification on

February 23, 1999. Transitional Housing committee members happily and proudly surrounded her at her graduation.

For the next few months, Sharon tried to get a position with Cone Hospital as a certified nursing assistant. Her teachers at GTCC and others had highly recommended the Cone Hospital program, which provides a new CNA with broad

experience in many areas of hospital care and offers education opportunities for further studies to advance in the nursing field. But nothing came through.

Finally Sharon, on her own, applied for a job at Well Spring. After interviewing, she was immediately offered a job in the assisted living and skilled nursing units. She is happy and has earned the respect of supervisors and residents.

Within a very short time, she was made a team leader and has received two promotions. Sharon's long-term goal is to pursue a registered nursing degree.

Sharon has what it takes to be successful. We are privileged to have her in our midst, to learn from her, to share in her life and to have the opportunity to support her as she moves toward realizing her dreams.

She has taught us very much and has earned our admiration and respect, and most of all, we are true friends.

What a wonderful opportunity we have in being able to support her and LaQuita and celebrate in their achievements.

—Martha Ransley

Where Are They Now?

After two years in the house on Simpson Street, Sharon and LaQuita left in a much more stable financial situation. LaQuita is now a freshman at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, where she is considering a career in law or medicine. Sharon still lives in Greensboro but visits her daughter often.

Maragreta Ramadani and her family were Holy Trinity's first sponsored refugee family. They graduated from the Transitional Housing program in late 2002 and now own a home in Coble Farms. Maragreta is the manager of the McDonald's restaurant at Friendly Center and is working toward her goal of owning a McDonald's franchise.

Coming Together

Church And Community Rally To Help Three Teens In Need

Sometimes things just come together.

Several Holy Trinity parishioners and the St. Clare Episcopal Church Women chapter were in the right place at the right time this Christmas.

Before Christmas, a student at Dudley High School got the attention of a social worker there. The student, an 18-year-old boy, and his 16-year-old brother and 12-year-old sister were basically homeless. Their father had died and their mother had deserted them. They were close to being sent to three different foster homes, but the oldest was determined to keep them together.

The Dudley social worker contacted Vivian Clarke, a housing counselor at Greensboro Housing Coalition, which advocates for decent housing for low- and moderate-income people and people with special needs.

Vivian brought in Skip Crowe, a Holy Trinity parishioner and healthy homes specialist for GHC.

Skip says the oldest brother had tried to work through the department of social services and the school system. "But that takes a lot of perseverance, and he got frustrated and started to fall through the cracks."

"Preventing homelessness is complex and most families in this situation need all kinds of support," Skip says. "We provide information, referrals and education. We help find emergency shelter and rental housing or sometimes housing with support services. We might help with avoiding an eviction or foreclosure, which is expensive for the community, as well as for the family. We might help a family find legal help or we contact someone who owns affordable housing in the area."

Vivian, impressed with the boy's determination and dedication to his siblings, contacted Mike Greco, a landlord who works closely with GHC. Mike owns Shiloh Investment Properties with his wife and brother. He said he would talk with the young man.

"Growing up I did not make all the right choices but I got a second chance. I like giving others a second chance, too," Mike says. Impressed with the boy's maturity and focus to keep the siblings living in one place, Mike shared his own story and outlined the rules for staying in this apartment.

"Second chances – yes, but I do not believe in third or fourth chances," Mike told the boy.

Vivian and Skip knew the three young people needed more than a roof over their heads, and contacted the Greensboro Congregational Assistance Network, an affiliation of several area churches who come together to provide assistance to those in need.

Skip also called Ginny Herring.

"It was Christmas and Skip called and asked if they could be put on Holy Trinity's Angel Tree," Ginny says. "I

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Want To Be A Witness To The Light?

One of Holy Trinity's most unique aspects is our church's commitment to sharing the love of Christ in our community and around the world, as these stories demonstrate. Feeling inspired? Below are a few of the current opportunities for serving. For more options, grab a Witnessing to the Light brochure from one of the info stations or our Web site. If you'd like help finding a need that your gifts and talents can help to meet, contact Amelia Poole, outreach coordinator, 272-6149 ext. 269 or amelia.poole@aol.com.

Help The Hurting In Haiti

We continue to reach out to our friends in Haiti who were affected by the recent earthquake. Financial donations are extremely important and should go to one of the agencies already providing relief in Haiti. Donate online through Family Health Ministries (www.familyhm.org) or Episcopal Relief & Development (www.er-d.org). Or make a check payable to Holy Trinity, with "for Haiti" on the memo line, and we will forward it for you.

Holy Trinity is collecting travel-sized toiletries (soap, shampoo, lotion, combs, toothbrushes, toothpaste, hand sanitizer) and medical supplies (gauze pads, Band-Aids, medical tape, braces/splints/Ace bandages, latex gloves, acetaminophen/Tylenol, aspirin) to be sent to Haiti. Bring donations to the boxes in the narthex and the receptionist's lobby.

Feed The Hungry

We collect nonperishable items for local food pantries every month, but the need is greater than ever this time of year. Particular needs include peanut butter, crackers, margarine, and other foods such as canned meats, vegetables, dried beans, dried milk, macaroni and cheese, and canned soups or stews. Bring donations to the collection boxes in the narthex and the receptionist's lobby.

Make A Clean Start

Help a newly-arrived refugee by giving laundry supplies such as laundry detergent, fabric softener and dryer sheets. Donations will go to the refugee community at Avalon Trace apartments and other areas through Greensboro Housing Coalition. Monetary donations can be made to Holy Trinity, with "refugee laundry drive" on the memo line.

Welcome A New Arrival

Assist in settling refugees into the Greensboro community through the Church World Service Refugee Program. You might help furnish apartments, meet refugees at the airport, provide transportation to necessary appointments (medical, Social Security, etc.), teach English (no degrees necessary!), and help refugees find jobs. Call Church World Service at 617-0381 and ask for Kelly Dent, or e-mail Kelly at kdent@churchworldservice.org.

Money Matters

Our Treasurer's Report

With a glad heart, I am pleased to report to you that through the efforts of our staff, under direction from the Business and Finance Commission, we have developed a budget that breaks even and includes a very modest amount for needed compensation increases – since we were about to come into the third year with no provision for changes in the staff's compensation. It is a very lean budget, but with a conscious effort to keep unnecessary costs and expenses under control, I am confident that we can pull it off.

The budget is based on a pledge total of \$1,560,000. The response of the parish to the Every Member Canvass has been outstanding. As I write this, we are only \$35,000 away from our goal of \$1,600,000, which we considered to be a stretch goal. Knowing our history of getting pledges in after the first of the year, I am also confident that we will make up the difference.

At a recent TWIGS meeting, we received a report on our Christmas outreach, which provided a large number of gifts of material things and money to the underprivileged of Greensboro and Guilford County. Again it was you, the members of the parish, who provided the additional money to allow lots of children and adults to experience the joy of the Christmas season.

In the EfM (Education for Ministry) program sponsored by Sewanee, there is a customary thanksgiving prayer that follows a participant's annual spiritual autobiography, which clearly expresses my feelings about our canvassing and budgeting:

*For all that has been,
For all that is,
For all that is to be,
Thanks be to God.*

Finally, as I have said before, if you have questions about our church finances, please call or e-mail me: jcompton1@triad.rr.com. As your treasurer and a parishioner, I believe that the fiscal strength of our parish is important, and I am committed to making the finances of Holy Trinity transparent to all parishioners.



John Compton is a parishioner and serves as Holy Trinity's treasurer. He can be reached via e-mail at jcompton1@triad.rr.com.

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said yes, but it was late, close to Christmas.”

About the same time, Angela Berry, one of St. Clare's leaders, emailed Ginny. St. Clare had collected about \$500 to help a family at Christmas and needed Ginny's advice about finding a family.

Ginny put the two requests together and asked parishioner Annie Slaughter to be an “elf” for the children and take them shopping.

Annie got a list of what the children needed – mostly clothes – and called Vivian to work out how best to buy those items. Annie and Vivian ended up taking the children out to dinner and then shopping at Target.

“They got shirts, pants, socks, everything they needed, and – it was so cute – the oldest boy bought Homer Simpson bedroom slippers,” Annie says.

Annie spent the St. Clare money, some money from Holy Trinity, and her own money.

“The children were polite, well-adjusted and open to this happening for them,” says Annie. “They were very cautious about how much they spent, and they were so thankful.

“I asked what they were going to do for Christmas,” Annie says. “And the oldest said, ‘I'm just going to enjoy our new home.’”

Skip said four churches have come forward to help, including donating furniture and finding mentors for the children. The mentors will help the children with the growing-up issues that parents usually guide teens through.

“You put three teenagers in an apartment by themselves, and you can imagine what might happen,” Skip says. “These kids are unbelievable. They're respectful, they're engaging. The two boys have had some legal issues, but they really want to be together and we're trying to help them. We're making sure they have mentors and that they stay stabilized. We're working through those issues to give these kids a future.”

–Ruth Anderson and Harriette Knox

An Enthusiastic Thank You!

As usual, Holy Trinity parishioners responded generously to the multitude of outreach projects we took on this past Christmas. You contributed \$6,763 to the Gift Card Fund, bought dozens of honor cards benefitting various local agencies, and provided approximately 500 gifts for the “angels” on our Angel Tree.

Krissy Singleton, director of community involvement at Triad Health Project, was one of several representatives of local organizations that expressed a heartfelt thanks to our parish. “The generosity of the congregation of Holy Trinity this Christmas was tremendous,” she wrote in a letter dated January 5. “As a new employee this year, I had heard so much about the compassion of Holy Trinity but it wasn't until I saw it with my own eyes that I was truly astonished. The outpouring of gifts that we received truly reflects the genuine kindness of your congregation and we are extremely grateful.”

Thank you to all who gave to help make this Christmas a happy one for the many people in need in our community.

Finding Your Way Into A Deeper Relationship With God

How A Spiritual Director Can Help You Uncover Your Path

Many people long to find meaning in their lives, to discover their true selves, and to grow closer to God and to others. But sometimes it's hard to know just where to start. Marjorie Donnelly, a graduate of the spiritual guidance program at the Shalem Institute of Spiritual Formation, explains how a spiritual director can help.

What Is Spiritual Direction?

Spiritual direction has been part of the Judeo-Christian tradition for centuries. It is a covenant relationship with a spiritual companion occurring in a confidential atmosphere of trust and loving presence. The goal is to lead you into a deeper awareness of God's presence and movement in both the interior and the exterior circumstances of your daily life.

God speaks to you not only through worship, scripture and prayer, but also in your life experiences, human relationships, dreams and creative expression. Spiritual direction is a process of deep listening that embraces both your desire for God and your desire for a transformed world through a call to both contemplation and action.

A kind of "holy listening" takes place during spiritual direction. Your spiritual director listens carefully to what you are saying, but at the same time listens to what God might be saying in and through you.

Who Is It For?

Spiritual direction is the next step in your spiritual journey if you long to grow in the spiritual life, to find meaning in the moment, to discover your true self, and to grow closer to God and to others. A spiritual director can help you satisfy those longings. Spiritual direction provides a safe place to explore your spiritual questions and helps you become more accountable for your prayer life and spiritual practices. It is an opportunity to discern God's call for your life as you grow in relationship with God, self, others and creation.

Want To Learn More?

"Being in spiritual direction has the potential to change your center of living in a profound way."

—The Rev. Timothy Patterson, Certificate in Spiritual Direction from General Theological Seminary in New York

Spiritual Direction Informational Workshop At Holy Trinity

The Servant Leadership School of Greensboro will offer Intro to Spiritual Direction on Saturday, February 20 from 10 a.m.—12 p.m. in Broome Hall. Marjorie Donnelly is a spiritual director with ten years' experience who holds a certificate in spiritual guidance from the Shalem Institute of Spiritual Formation. During this workshop, she will answer your questions and help you explore if spiritual direction is the next step in your journey. Cost: \$10. To register, call 275-0447 or visit www.servantleadergreensboro.com.

Spiritual Direction Sessions For Holy Trinity Parishioners

Take advantage of a one-hour session of exploration with Marjorie Donnelly — your opportunity to experience a beginning of the spiritual direction process — at no cost to you. Marjorie's office is located above the Sacred Garden Bookstore on the Holy Trinity campus. She is available Monday–Friday, 8 a.m.—6 p.m. by appointment. To schedule a session, call 275-0431 or e-mail innerwalknc@aol.com. While spiritual direction is helpful any time of the year, Lent is a particularly appropriate time to begin.

What Is A Spiritual Direction Session Like?

Spiritual direction is an on-going, one-to-one, trusting relationship between you and your director which typically consists of monthly, hour-long sessions.

In spiritual direction, you will talk about both the high points and the challenges of your life, but for the most part you will not dwell in "emergencies." Spiritual direction is a slow

and gentle process of listening for the still small voice of God over time that helps you recognize the everyday miracles which are occurring in your life.

Spiritual direction is really not about being "directed;" rather, it is about sitting with another person in God's presence and observing the manner in which grace is given. It is an invitation to be present to the Holy Spirit and connect to the sacred in your life.

Spiritual direction gives you the opportunity once a month to look at how God is moving you toward growth. Whatever specific topic or situation you focus on in any given session, your spiritual director will give you honest responses and pray with and for you. It is a deep privilege and responsibility as a spiritual director to journey with you as you deepen your relationship with God.

Essentially, all that happens in your life is potential material for spiritual direction, including your images of God, discernment of call, prayer life and spiritual practices, your relationships and how to find balance in your life. However, it is essential to understand that spiritual direction is not the same as psychotherapy; a spiritual director is not trained to attend to therapeutic needs.

The focus of spiritual direction is your relationship with the Divine. Tending this relationship within spiritual direction includes conversation, deep listening, time for silence, prayer, dream work, and guided imagery/visualization. Spiritual direction sessions are always confidential.

The process of spiritual direction unfolds gradually. To enjoy its benefits requires time and consistency. Every part of your life reveals your work in spiritual direction. Your whole life is your spiritual life; God is in every part of it.

—Marjorie Donnelly

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On The Polity Of The Episcopal Church Church Government Resembles United States Government

January 22–23 marked the 194th Annual Convention of the Diocese of North Carolina. It's a great time to review the polity of our church.

The Episcopal Church is a democratic church. Its structure is similar to that of the government of the United States. In fact, says the Rev. Virginia Herring, many of the same people who wrote the U. S. constitution wrote the Episcopal Church's constitution and canons – and in the same hall!

“Episcopal” means “bishop” in Greek, and the Episcopal Church is governed in part by its bishops. The basic unit of ministry in the Episcopal Church is the diocese,

a geographical region. Each diocese is presided over by a diocesan bishop, who may have help from a variety of other bishops, depending on the circumstances.

Holy Trinity is located in the Diocese of North Carolina, one of three dioceses in our state. Our bishop, the Rt. Rev. Michael B. Curry, is helped by two assisting bishops, the Rt. Rev. William O. Gregg and the Rt. Rev. Alfred C. “Chip” Marble Jr.

The diocesan bishop chooses and ordains priests and deacons to serve the parishes, or congregations, of the diocese, which carry out the ministry of the diocese in their local communities. The priests lead the parish in worship, make decisions related to the sacramental life of the parish and support the ministry of the Christians that worship there.

Each parish elects a rector (also a priest) who, with the approval of the bishop, presides over the parish. An elected group

A Report From The 194th General Convention

The 194th Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina met in Winston-Salem January 22-23, 2010. Delegates included the clergy of Holy Trinity as well as John Compton, Cheryl Kendrick, Sally Anderson, Richard Cox, Cynthia Schaub and Bob Banner.

In his pastoral address, Bishop Michael Curry shared his vision that when our diocese celebrates its 200th anniversary in the year 2017, “the face of the Episcopal Church here will have begun more fully to reflect the face of the people of NC in all our variety and God-given diversity.” He invited us to recommit to and expand the ministry of deacons, and to study the book *Radical Welcome* by the Rev. Stephanie Spellers.

Convention passed a \$4.6 million budget for 2010. More importantly, we passed constitutional and canonical changes that will provide for funding the budget in a new way. In the past, a complicated formula provided a dollar amount for each congregation’s “asking” to be paid in support of the diocese. Our new method will eventually invite each congregation to the biblical standard of the tithe – simply 10% of our operating income. When all can pay this “fair share” our diocesan budget will be fully funded.

Finally, throughout the hours of Convention, we were invited to participate in bagging meals for Stop Hunger Now, a Raleigh-based organization that provides food for hungry people the world over. We were challenged to bag 100,000 meals, in keeping with the Convention’s theme of “100,000 ways to say Welcome.” By the end of Saturday’s session, the total meals bagged was 100,500.

You can learn more about the 194th Convention, along with a video of the bishop’s pastoral address, at www.episdionc.org.

–Virginia Herring

of parishioners known as a vestry serves as the legal representatives of the parish.

Like the United States, the Episcopal Church is governed by a constitution and a set of laws known as canons, which it establishes for itself by convention. However, the diocesan bishop is the ecclesiastical authority in his or her particular diocese.

The bishops of the Episcopal Church have no jurisdiction outside of their dioceses. Twice each year they meet to pray and make decisions about the life of the Church. This meeting is known as the House of Bishops.

Every nine years, the Church elects a presiding bishop, who represents the Episcopal Church in the worldwide Anglican Communion and presides over the House of Bishops. The current presiding bishop is the Most Rev. Dr. Katharine Jefferts Schori. The presiding bishop is the church’s chief pastor, but she is not an archbishop or pope. Jefferts Schori is the first woman elected to the position.

Every three years, elected representatives from all the dioceses gather with the House of Bishops for the General Convention. Here, they worship and pass legislation for the Church. The General Convention makes broad decisions about policy and worship and works to revitalize the communities for ministry in their dioceses (see “A Report from the 194th General Convention,” above).

To learn more, visit www.episcopalchurch.org.
–Whitney Crowell