



*The Community of Hope International*

# Connections



*Spring 2015*

## *The Servant Song*

Will you let me be your servant  
Let me be as Christ to you  
Pray that I might have the grace  
To let you be my servant too.

We are pilgrims on the journey  
We are brothers on the road  
We are here to help each other  
Walk the mile and bear the load.

I will hold the Christ light for you  
In the night time of your fear  
I will hold my hand out to you  
Speak the the peace you long to hear.

I will weep when you are weeping  
When you laugh, I'll laugh with you  
I will share your joy and sorrow  
Till we've seen this journey through.

When we sing to God in heaven  
We shall find such harmony  
Born to all we've known together  
Of Christ's love and agony.

License # 568969, Capitol CMG Publishing

## *A letter from the President...*

Community of Hope, now in its 21st year, held its first 3 day annual conference at Camp Allen 18 years ago. This year the holy wisdom of our speakers and leaders will inspire and nurture us for "Becoming Community". One hymn we sing at most every conference is "The Servant Song". It defines our role as servant ministers and reflects the words in The Rule of Benedict 36 and 53 instructing us to serve the sick and the stranger as we would serve Christ.

Whether you attend the conference to learn more about Community of Hope or have been attending for years know that your presence, your ministry and your stories are the heartbeat of our life together... we are always "Becoming Community".

Your recommendations, questions, or stories are very important to me and to the board. You are welcome to write by email, [helenappelberg@gmail.com](mailto:helenappelberg@gmail.com) or by mail, 2710 Spanish Grant, Galveston, TX 77554. We will sing "The Servant Song" at the opening service on Monday night, June 1. See you there.



*The Community of Hope International*

18th Annual Conference

*"Becoming Community"*

June 1-3, 2015 \* Camp Allen \* Navasota, Texas

Register soon to enjoy Early Bird Discount

[www.campallen.org](http://www.campallen.org)





## *Reflections on the Rule*

by Pam King

COHI Class of 2015,

Good Shepherd Episcopal Church, Dallas, Texas

I sat in the cool morning air reading my daily collection of prayers, passages, and the Rule, wrapped in a lovely, soft prayer shawl I'd just been given. Suddenly, The Rule resonated with new meaning: the community had come to me with warmth and supply. Being an active participant in communities - a part of, partner with, and leader - has always brought me deep and abiding nourishment. When Community of Hope International Board Member, Catherine Miller, recommended a Benedictine Spirituality workshop last Fall, its premise and principles resonated with me immediately. Community is about the 'y'all', as we say in Texas, not about self! Benedict's grasp of human nature is profound, his setting clear expectations and guidance surely encourage us to be our best. Now, six months into the Community of Hope studies and reflections, I have gained additional spiritual sustenance and resources, for myself and for others in this very real, wearying, and worrisome world. Ironically, recent circumstances have brought me to my knees and yet I am experiencing the embrace of community. The communion its fellowship offers - its spontaneous love, sacrifice, prayers, and gifts - have lifted me up. Loving hands made the prayer shawl, those with wisdom listened closely, some cooked, others prayed. Today, I have experienced the ear of the community's heart and its hands of help. It was Godly prompting that led me to explore and learn from the Rule of Benedict and the gentle, loving truths of the Community of Hope. Because of all of you, I see new meaning in the wisdom, care, and value we provide one another, in community.

## *How has Benedictine prayer life transformed my life?*

by The Reverend Patsy Barham

Priest-in-charge, St. Matthew's Episcopal Church  
Henderson, Texas

Serving as Chaplain and Regional Representative  
Coordinator of

The Community of Hope International



Using The Rule of St. Benedict has been transformative influence in my life. I began reading The Rule of St. Benedict as part of my morning devotions paired with Bible reading and studying, journaling, and praying. The reading and meditating on what the Rule offers each day has served as a map for practicing my faith. I am more intentional and deliberate in how I engage with others. I hold silence in higher value and practice. I am more consciously respectful in how I greet and listen to someone. I move emotionally easier in the flow of being interrupted and returning to the task or pleasure of the moment. Being Benedictine makes my life a far richer life.

## *Welcome New Centers!*

St. Thomas Episcopal Church  
Huntsville, Alabama  
March 2015

St. Mark's Episcopal Cathedral  
Minneapolis, Minnesota  
April 2015





# *A Monk's Tale*

or

## *a story of becoming community*

Have you met Br. Michael Gallagher? If you have, then you probably know that he is a very accomplished pianist, has a beautiful singing voice, and probably has never met a language that he could not master. Most of all, however, Michael is all about “becoming community”.

You might wonder how it happened that this multitalented, outgoing, witty, bright and generous person came to be a Benedictine monk on the executive board of Community of Hope International. (By the way he is humble, as a Benedictine monk should be and was reluctant to have an article about him in our newsletter – a little coaxing was needed.)

A pivotal moment in Michael's life was at the local library during high school. One night he wandered into the library's music room which was equipped with a phonograph and vinyl records. He listened to Brahms's First Piano Concerto and was awestruck at the “absolute beauty” of the piece. Although he had played piano and organ for all his school years, he became a pianist at that moment.

At the University of Pennsylvania (Philadelphia) Michael majored in music. Then he received his law degree from Villanova and worked in the field of International Corporate Law in Philadelphia for a number of years. During those years of practicing law in Philadelphia, Michael taught piano to a blind nun and met Fr. Peter Funk who was chaplain to the cloistered nuns. During these same years, Michael made several trips to Europe, which often included visits to a Trappist Monastery in England.

Michael and Peter had become friends and had decided independently and almost simultaneously to go to a men's Benedictine Monastery in upstate New York. They were attracted to St. Benedict's ideas for living well in community. Unfortunately the monastery that they had joined did not have a balance of the community within and the greater community outside of the monastery. They did some research and were not able to find a men's Benedictine community that had the balance they so wished for. Michael realized when he read Joan Chittister's “Wisdom Distilled from the Daily” that Sr. Joan was in a balanced Benedictine Community in Erie, Pennsylvania. There the sisters ventured out to the neighboring community to give help and at the same time kept their cohesive bonded community within the walls of the convent. Michael received permission to go visit Sr. Joan at her Benedictine community. He told Sr. Joan, “All my life I have looked for a men's community with a balance of Community within and community outside the monastery. Where can I find such a place?” Sr. Joan replied that he would have to “Start one!”

After several years and many frustrating attempts to get permission to “start one,” Peter and Michael were invited by Bishop Galante of Beaumont to form their Benedictine Community at the Catholic Diocese of Beaumont's retreat house which they would also manage.

Since beginning their Monastery in Beaumont, Peter and Michael have reached out into the larger community in a big way. They seem to be the Rock Stars of Balance! They serve as Chaplains every year to the Episcopal Diocese of Texas annual Clergy Conference. Michael encouraged a local Catholic church to begin a Community of Hope Center. Michael has traveled near and far spreading the news of Benedictine Spirituality to Community of Hope Centers from Maine to Virginia to Florida to Arkansas and across Texas, leading retreats, teaching COH modules and giving talks to many Christian denominations including Catholic, Methodist, Episcopal, Lutheran and Presbyterian centers. Michael and Peter lead oblate training and an oblate community at the monastery. Many COH members have taken oblate training at Holy Cross Monastery. It is safe to say many people have a preconceived notion of what kind of person a monk is. That would be a cloistered, quiet, humorless, hermit-like individual. Michael is conscious of the stereotype and certainly breaks down all notions and barriers by being himself: gregarious, musical, witty, clever and reaching-out kind of fellow. Michael is “becoming community.”

# News from the Regions

## GEORGIA REGION



On January 18, 2015, Harmony Kiser, GA Regional Representative, along with The Rev. Stuart Higginbotham, Rector at Grace Episcopal, and The Rev. Dr. Cynthia Park, Assistant Rector, presented Laura Masterson with her Community of Hope International Commissioning Certificate at Grace Episcopal Church, Gainesville, GA. Pictured with Laura is her daughter, Lydia. Also attending from St. Aidan's Episcopal Church in Alpharetta, GA were Anne McManes and Kathy Bump pictured on the far left. Laura had completed the CoHI Atlanta Diocesan-wide training in April, 2014 and at time of her Commissioning Grace Episcopal was starting a CoHI training.

Harmony Kiser

## HARMONY KISER

## GREAT LAKES REGION

## REV. HELEN APPELBERG

### *"Becoming Community - In Minnesota"*

After a year's discernment about the future shape of Pastoral Ministry in our congregation, St. John the Baptist Episcopal Church in Minneapolis decided to become a Community of Hope training center. We invited the church across the lake, St. Luke's Episcopal Church, to partner with us, and in the summer of 2014, we became the Lake Harriet Community of Hope.

As we prepared for our first training cohort in the fall of 2014, other congregations began to ask about COH. Susan Barnes, the rector of St. John's and I had conversations with Helen Hansen from the Cathedral Church of St. Mark in Minneapolis, Devon Anderson of Trinity Episcopal Church in Excelsior, Kate Bradtmiller of St. John the Evangelist in St Paul, and others.

St. John the Baptist, St. Mark's, Trinity, and St. John the Evangelist together sponsored Helen Appelberg to come up to Minnesota and have a daylong workshop on the COH in February of 2015. About 30 folks attended the workshop at St. Mark's, where Helen talked about the origins and nature of the COH and answered questions about beginning new COH centers. It was a warm spot in the winter for us, while the lakes were still iced over. It was delightful to introduce Helen to the Episcopal Church in Minnesota.

When she was here, Helen was able to have a day at the campus of Episcopal Homes, touring the newly opened independent living and memory care facilities as well as the existing independent living, assisted living, and skilled nursing facilities of EH. This was another opportunity for me to spend time with Helen, and it was wonderful.

Trinity Church had its first training in the spring of 2015, and both St. Mark's and St. John the Evangelist are preparing for their fall trainings. As the 2014 cohort at St. John the Baptist is meeting as a Circle of Care, we are also finalizing plans for our second cohort in the fall of 2015. We are so grateful to Helen, Cynthia Oliphant, and Cynthia Drake for their welcoming and supportive work with us over the past two years. The Community of Hope is truly a blessing in our congregation and diocese!

by Kate Maxwell, OSB Circle of Care Coordinator for the Lake Harriet Community of Hope



# More Region News



## HERITAGE REGION

## BEVERLY DAVIS



Christ Church Nacogdoches Circle of Care sponsored a Lenten Retreat on March 7, at Joan Davis' Piney Woods Retreat. Joan led us in quiet reflections, and we walked her 6 acres of trails, in the glory of daffodil season, and walked her beautiful garden labyrinth. We were joined by friends from the congregation. During lunch around Joan's dining room table, we shared our brown bag lunches and our experiences in the silence. Joan's labyrinth, built in memory of her husband, Dr. Dale Davis, is available for groups.

Contact her at joantwin2@gmail.com

by Wanda Cuniff

### Commissioning

and

### Recommissioning



Twelve individuals representing 8 different congregations (including Lutheran, Episcopalian and Society of Friends) were commissioned as Community of Hope lay pastoral caregivers at Christ the King Lutheran Church in Houston on April 23. They were joined by other lay chaplains from both Christ the King Church and Palmer Memorial Episcopal Church in an annual affirmation of covenant, blessing of the hands, and celebration of ministry.

by Beverly Davis

### Commissioning of first class of graduates from COH training at St. Julian of Norwich, Round Rock, Texas April 26, 2015



At the early service, (left to right): Erica Anderson, Carol Davis (who joined the Episcopal church as a result of this training!), and Richard Lauzon. Father Miles Brandon, Facilitators: Pat and Scott Beachy



At the late service, left to right: Patty Ely, Roger Sessions, Father Miles Brandon, Barbara Newman

by Pat Beachy

Over the last year St. Richards has trained and commissioned 8 new Lay Chaplains making a total of 14 Lay Chaplains serving the St. Richards church family in Round Rock, TX and surrounding communities.



Aline Murphy, Barbara Geiter, Beth Gordon and Mary Flores were commissioned on April 27th with current lay chaplains, Bob Moody, Becky Freed, Janice Johnson, Jean Cothran, Pauline Hoehn, Patricia Scott and Bea DeMarquis present to receive the newly Commissioned.

by Robin Mueller



## More Region News!

### WEST TEXAS REGION

LIN BOUDREAUX

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church,  
Wimberley, Texas



On Sunday, March 1, at St. Stephen's in Wimberley the Community of Hope commissioned nine new caregivers, and all current members were re-commissioned during the two services. The new caregivers were called forward and the current members were asked to stand in place for the commissioning. The form of the Community of Hope International for Commissioning New Lay Pastoral Caregivers was used, and it was a very moving ceremony which incorporated the support of the parish.

The Community of Hope at St. Stephen's is thriving with 35 current caregivers. There are three circles of Care with two co-leaders each and the Circle of Care leaders meet with each other monthly. They coordinate with the Rector regarding the pastoral needs of the parish, assign caregivers to care-receivers as needed, and rotate responsibility to respond to any pastoral concerns on a two month cycle. They also plan and carry out training sessions for new Community of Hope caregivers, plan a yearly quiet day, an educational seminar and a Day of Remembrance. In addition, a Blessing of Hands ceremony and a Social are planned when all of the Community of Hope members gather. The Blessing of Hands and the Social are held in the homes of Community of Hope members and include spouses and/or significant others. The Social is on a Sunday after church and the Blessing of Hands is in the evening during the week. Each includes a catered meal.

The Blessing of Hands ceremony is an inspirational time when the Community of Hope Chaplain blesses the hands of each Community of Hope member, affirming their call to serve, sanctifying their lives, and consecrating their hands so that they may be channels of God's blessing to the sick, the lonely and the lost so that all people may know God's compassion and love. The song "Here I Am Lord" is sung as an affirmation that we are available for wherever or to whomever God may send us. This is truly a "sending out" experience which fortifies each caregiver's sense of being called.

by Connie Maverick



St. Peter's Episcopal Church,  
Rockport, Texas  
Class of 2015

St. Peter's Class of 2015 after studying Module 1, led by Br. Michael Gallagher. Back row: Andrea Wise, Karen Medley, Melanie Klotzman, Connie Myers, Br. Michael, Ruth Douglas, Martha Bernhardt. In front: Eileen Vincent and Martha Berkabile. Not pictured: Mike Medley.



This was a delightful group of people. Three were from St. Francis Episcopal Church in Victoria (Andrea Wise, Martha Bernhardt and Melanie Klotzman) and they plan to begin a COHI Center there. They were commissioned on April 12 at St. Peter's and the service was led by Fr. Jim Friedel.

In the past 6 years, Community of Hope in the West Texas Region has sponsored a booth at Diocese of Texas Annual Council. This year Council was held in San Marcos, Texas.



We visit with delegates about COH and hand out COHI brochures and bookmarks. We also sell notecards. All profits from the sale are used to provide scholarships to our Annual West Texas COHI Retreat at Mustang Island in March. This year our annual retreat was led by Br. Michael

Gallagher and Fr. Peter Funk from Holy Cross Monastery in Beaumont, Texas.

(Pictured above: Connie Myers, Pam Heidt, Pinky Gonzalez and Ann Martel - all from St. Peter's Episcopal Church, Rockport, Texas)

## *Just a thought...*



During a recent COHI training class, a class member said that he was a Vietnam veteran. He made it clear that remembering or talking about his experiences during the war was not something he cared to do.

However, when one of our dear presenters (who is the social worker at one of our local nursing homes) was giving the First Practice Visit Module and she thanked our class member veteran for his service to our country and then asked him if he would like to visit one of the vets at her nursing home for his practice visit. He was delighted with the prospect.

The day of the practice visit, our vet showed up at the nursing home with his Vietnam cap on, adorned with patches. The social worker took him to a WWII vet's room. The older man was wearing his WWII cap adorned with patches. The visit brought such joy to both men that they were reluctant to end their visit. Our class member was looking forward to the next visit as he left the building. He said he will be seeing his new friend and some of the other veterans at the nursing home on a regular basis.

This man is truly enjoying "becoming community" in many ways.

Just a thought.

## *Sr. Joan Chittister writing on Community:*

"Exactly what do the eyes of Benedict and Scholastica see when they look at the human community? First, the Rule is clear: love costs. It costs the little daily things - serving the meals, providing the needs, asking for favors nicely, refusing favors gently. Second, love makes demands. It demands that we use our gifts for our own communities as well as for others. It demands that we make relationships a priority. It demands that we make community for others. It demands that we share ourselves, our minds, our insights, and our time with one another. Most of all, it demands that we allow the people in our lives to be who they are and grow as they can.

from "*Wisdom Distilled from the Daily Living the Rule of St. Benedict Today*"  
by Joan Chittister



## *Have you seen our new website?*



*Check it out today!*

[www.cohinternational.org](http://www.cohinternational.org)



## *Coming this summer The Community of Hope International Summer 2015 Newsletter*

Please send news from your center to your Regional Representative.

If you have testimonials or stories that warm the heart, please send them to your Regional Representative as well. We love to hear from you.

Here's hoping we will see you soon when we are "*Becoming Community*" at Camp Allen, June 1-3