

The
Community
of Hope
International



Connections

Summer 2015

A letter from the founder and president:

I want to invite all of you to adopt the 2015 conference theme, *Becoming Community*, as part of your purpose and mission for 2015-16. Please reflect with your co-pastoral caregivers and leaders ways to focus on becoming community in your daily spiritual practices, when planning Circle of Care or preparing for an annual retreat.

We all begin laying the foundation for *Becoming a Benedictine Community* as we learn to listen with the 'ear of our heart'. Then, the roots of community are nourished and deepened as each of us reads and reflects on *The Rule of Benedict* daily and discover that "It's logic is the sagacity of daily life lived in Christ and lived well". (The Rule, xiv)

Twenty-one years ago when I was discerning the direction of The Community of Hope the answer came in three parts. First, the close of the prologue in *The Rule* says, "Therefore we intend to establish a school for God's service...we shall run on the path of God's commandments." Second, Chapter 36, *Care of the sick must rank above and before all else so that they may truly be served as Christ, who said, "I was sick and you visited me" (Matt.25:36)*. Third, Chapter 53, *All guests who present themselves are to be greeted as Christ, who said, "I was a stranger and you welcomed me" (Matt. 25:35)*.

Whether you are a new training center preparing to hold your first class or have been a training center for years, breathe in the freshness of *The Rule* which calls you to *become the community* God intends, empowering you to set the world on fire with God's mercy, healing and eternal love.

In the love of Christ,

The Rev. Dr. Helen Appelberg

Exciting news from Carla Cooper, COHI Development Advisor...

We are delighted to announce that, for the second year in a row, a special friend of COHI has challenged us with an exceptional opportunity. Between now and the end of this calendar year, we have been given the chance to receive as much as \$15,000 in new support for COHI. Every dollar we are able to raise from individual donors will be matched dollar for dollar, up to \$15,000. If we raise \$5,000, we will receive a match of \$5,000; if we raise \$10,000, we will receive \$10,000 more. And so on, up to a possible \$30,000 in gift income for COHI! This is a beautiful example of the power of philanthropy to motivate and transform.

It's important to emphasize that this gift to COHI is a challenge grant. It is not just "given." It must be "earned." Last year, our community was able to more than match the first challenge grant presented us in 2014, our twentieth anniversary year. Thirty-five individuals gave a total of \$11,150 in gifts, a record for COHI. In addition, 150 items were donated and purchased through our Anniversary Silent Auction, generating an additional \$4,993 toward the match.

With these funds, we have been able to make pivotal improvements in our infrastructure and move to new level of organizational development, greatly enhancing our ability to plan and secure the resources we need to flourish in perpetuity. To learn more about the specific outcomes of this first challenge grant, please go to www.cohinternational.org.

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In this edition...

News of next year's conference

Reading recommendations

"Let's Talk New Center Training"

by Cynthia Oliphant

COHI and the May 2015 Wimberley Flood

by Connie Maverick

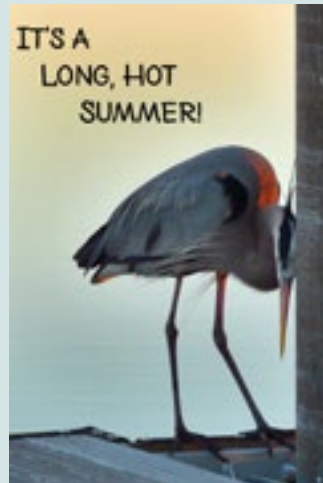
An essay on COH by a Lutheran pastor in training

by Sue Irvin

Pictures and comments from the

2015 Annual COHI Conference at Camp Allen

Region News



Welcome

New Centers!

St. David's Episcopal
Church

Minnetonka, Minnesota

May 2015

St. Stephen's Episcopal
Church

Spokane, Washington

July 2015

Exciting News...(continued from page 1)

But there is so much more to do. While we are grateful for our original institutional support, we are keenly aware that we now must function and flourish without it. It's up to us to sustain COHI and ensure that we are able to welcome and support new centers, whose volunteers will respond to the needs of our suffering world. With our current capacity and our potential, comes responsibility---the responsibility to plan prudently in accord with our mission, enlist the support required, ensure that every single penny we raise is used to advance that plan, and guarantee transparency and accountability to all COHI members and to each and every COHI donor.

Fortunately our financial needs are modest. Our annual budget for the foreseeable future will likely remain under \$50,000, thanks primarily to the amazing work of our volunteers. Our actual financial budget is relatively small amount considering the scope and quality of COHI's service. For more information about our 2016 goals, please go to www.cohinternational.org.

You will hear more about COHI's prospects for the future and our need to take maximum advantage of this most recent challenge in the days and months to come. But for now, we ask you to join us in thanksgiving for the gift of COHI---and the gifts from so many that allow us to grow in love and service. For any questions or comments regarding COHI fundraising, please contact our new executive board member and development advisor, Carla Cooper, at cmcooper@gvtc.com.

by Carla Cooper, Board Member and Development Advisor

Save the date!

June 6, 7 and 8, 2016

Annual COHI Conference

featuring

Michael Casey,

Australian Trappist Monk and

foremost writer on

Benedictine Spirituality



Reading Recommendations...

Books by Michael Casey

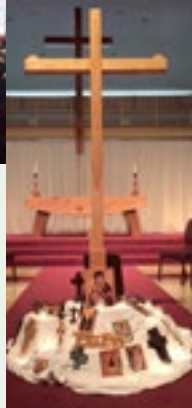
1. *Strangers to the City*
2. *A Guide to Living in the Truth: St. Benedict's Teaching on Humility*
3. *Sacred Reading: The Ancient Art of Lectio Divina*

Sister Carol Perry

Waiting for Our Souls to Catch Up

Glimpses from our June 2015 Annual Conference

The Joys of Worship and Fellowship



Community of Hope - A Testimonial



Sue Irvin, a newly ordained Lutheran minister wrote about her COH training when she was told to write about a "formative faith community" for her final approval essay (for ordination). Following is an excerpt from that essay:

I am grateful to have had the opportunity to do my Clinical Pastoral Education through Community of Hope. The program is rooted in Benedictine spirituality; we are encouraged to read from the Rule of Benedict daily, to learn to look for God in all those we encounter, practice purposeful hospitality, and to balance work, prayer, study, and leisure in our daily lives.

For me, the most valuable part of the Rule of Benedict is the section on humility. Benedict encourages us to put aside our own wishes and desire so that we can focus on our search for God in our lives and live harmoniously in community with others. Benedict offers 12 steps of humility, including recognizing that God is God, knowing that God's will is best for us, being willing to receive direction and acknowledge our faults, and manifesting humility in our bearing and in our hearts through a simple, serene life.

My COH classes and the Rule of Benedict reading were the most clear and understandable way anybody has given me about living a life guided by faith. For the first time, I was presented a set of guidelines that made sense and didn't seem impossible to keep.

Benedictine spirituality is all about being aware of the presence of God, both in our own lives and in the lives of others, and this is a cornerstone of COH training. When we can see God in others, we are more mindful of preserving their dignity. When we can see God in others, we are better able to love our neighbor, love our enemy. And when we see God in others, we can see how God is working through them. So often, we are unable to see how God is working in our own lives until after the fact, but we may be able to help encourage others to see God in what they are experiencing.

The Rule provides us guidance to nurture our own faith in a community of believers so that each of us can share God's love and the message of the Gospel with others, not just through our own words but through our very lives, through all that we do. Upholding the dignity of others, of all of God's creation, is an intentional focus for the Rule and for the Community of Hope. We continue to nurture each other after our initial training through monthly Circle of Care meetings.

Let's Talk New Center Training

Dear friends,

Personally, when I receive inquiries pertaining to starting a new center my first thought is the spiritual journey one will embark upon. Honestly, it is not the training that I think about immediately, but the dutiful commitment of one reading The Rule, praying, reflecting, meditating and the most amazing transformation that takes place within as well as those eye-opening, heartfelt “ah-hah” awakening moments one will experience, all the while deepening their relationship with God. Those are my initial thoughts. Having said that, now let's back-up and talk a minute about the training in general.

The Community of Hope International training is a 14-week, 42-hour curriculum designed for participants to take the training in the order in which it has been designed; i.e. each module builds upon the other and during your 14-week training, participants are forming community. So, when planning your training, please consider a timeline that allows for 14-weeks giving your participants the opportunity and luxury of sharing, worshiping, praying, growing and becoming community.

It is hopeful that when searching for faculty, you are able to utilize resources within your community or church. For example, contacting a hospital chaplain to present Listening Skills, or perhaps you have a church member that is a counselor that would be willing to present Understanding Family Systems, or a chaplain from a nursing home facility that would be willing to present Pastoral Care for Seniors. And, of course—don't forget to contact your regional representative for assistance. They are resourceful! But, when “live” faculty are not available, then the use of the on-line training videos is an excellent option.

I have touched the tip of the iceberg when sharing with you about training. There are other areas that can be discussed within New Center Start-ups; such as training can be combined with other churches of any denomination, training can be at a hospital, or as a diocese-wide training and then participants return to their church to start a new center. Also, Community of Hope International lay pastoral care ministries extend to the homebound, hospices, retirement communities, prisons, food pantry, mission trips, a listening heart when you least expect it and you may have others to add to this list.

Friends, thank you for your time and I close with a welcome. I welcome any questions or comments you may have about new centers. I can be reached via our COHI webpage at <http://www.cohinternational.org/start-a-center/>.

Ora et Labora—Pray and Work

With joy,

Cynthia Oliphant, New Center Start-Up Coordinator

More glimpses from our June 2015 Annual Conference



Bishop Wright spoke to us about “kind candor” and managing respectful conversation. His wife, Beth-Sarah shared her story of depression and near suicide. She helped her audience of pastoral caregivers understand ways in which we can support and care for those who are suffering from clinical depression. Sister Carol Perry managed to take us through the Old and New Testament with stories of the Biblical people in community. The Wrights and Sister Carol made their books available for our purchase and signed and personalized them.



News from the Regions

WEST TEXAS REGION

LIN BOUDREAU

The tragic May floods in Wimberley, Texas



and the response from the Community of Hope at St. Stephen's in Wimberley.

Early on the morning of Sunday, May 24, Wimberley, Texas was hit by a 42 foot wall of water down the Blanco River taking everything on the river in its path. The destruction of homes, trees and possessions including family antiques, photographs and memorabilia has been devastating, not to mention the loss of 8 lives. Some homes were completely swept away and others are beyond repair. Within days of the flood numerous relief agencies arrived such as the Red Cross and FEMA as well as many Christian based groups. In the aftermath of the flood, Wimberley churches, volunteer organizations, businesses and hundreds of individuals stepped up to assist in a variety of ways such as shoveling mud out of houses, providing food, meals, clothing and money, washing clothes, replacing sheet rock, recovering and restoring furniture and pictures, cleaning up debris, helping people fill out forms for insurance and funding through FEMA and other relief agencies, providing emotional support and so many ways, big and small.

St. Stephen's Church in Wimberley has over 35 church families, plus 3 families whose children attend St. Stephen's School but are not members of the church, who were flooded, some extensively, and a disaster fund was set up expressly for those families. To date the fund has brought in over \$65,000 and every cent is being used for those families from our church and the school who were flooded. In addition, the Community of Hope was asked by the Rector to see to the needs of the families. As it so happens there are 35 active members of the Community of Hope and each Community of Hope minister was assigned at least one family to contact with the commitment to not only meet their immediate physical needs, but to meet their emotional needs as well, and to be with them for as long as would be needed. It was important that each family knew they were not forgotten and especially that they did not feel isolated and alone. Little by little things are coming together, but it will take a long time for people to work through the grief of so much loss. Practical needs are being addressed and met, but more than that is the importance of having a listening ear and a presence which is precisely what Community of Hope ministers are trained to do. Without the Community of Hope at St. Stephen's, it would have been much more difficult to be able to reach out so effectively and efficiently to so many people dealing with such an overwhelming crises, and whether it is for 2 months or 2 years, we are committed to being there for as long as it takes.

Submitted by Connie Maverick,
Lay Chaplain, St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, Wimberley, Texas



St. Francis by the Lake, Canyon Lake, Texas

The first Community of Hope class will start in September. Facilitators will be Julie Chalk and Tricia Jones

Pictured at Rally Day at St. Frances, left to right: Dr. Valerie Kirk, Lin Boudreaux and Lynn Zimmerman.
Submitted by Lin Boudreaux



More Region News

ATLANTIC REGION MARLEEN McCABE



Lorton, Virginia
Pohick Episcopal Church's
Circle of Care members
were recommissioned in May.

Submitted by Marleen McCabe

SOUTH REGION PAT SHAHA



*Holy Trinity
Episcopal Church
Hot Springs Village
Arkansas*

On Sunday, May 17, Fr. Neil Kaminski, rector of Holy Trinity Episcopal Church, commissioned eight lay members as lay pastoral caregivers. Three of the members, Arlene Hodgson, Nancy Holst and Charles Hood had just completed the training course for this program. The other five members renewed their commitment. Pictured above are: Front Row, l-r, Charles Hood, Sandra Powers, Juddie Wachtel, Nancy Holst and Richard Railton. Back row, l-r, Arlene Hodgson, Pat Shaha, The Rev. Neil Kaminski and Sue Hood.

Submitted by Pat Shaha

HERITAGE REGION BEVERLY DAVIS

*St. David's Episcopal Church,
Austin, Texas*



St. David's celebrated the commissioning of 12 new lay pastoral care ministers on June 7, 2015. Pictured above (left to right) are: Larry Graham, Peter Hahn, Martha Zumwalt, Mary Clarke, Karen Vinson, Cicily Simms, Deb Archer, Lee Lopez, Vicki Kniff, Karen Vinson, Reggie Akers, Bob Davis and Amy Moehnke. Amy Moehnke is St. David's Staff Coordinator of Pastoral Care. Through 14 weeks of study and Benedictine practices, the group grew in community-bond and personal formation. The excellent teaching of more than a dozen guest professionals aided in the building of caregiving skills. The group has begun its monthly Circle of Care sessions this summer. Amy Moehnke is the pastoral care coordinator for the downtown church and deploys the team for service. St. David's is now part of six COHI groups in the greater Austin area!

Submitted by Bob Davis



Some More Region News

SOUTHEAST REGION

GUS DAVIS AND LAURIE FOWLER



St. Joseph Catholic Church, Lakeland, Florida
Commissioning a class at a Saturday mass in May 2015

My wife Jan and I had the honor and privilege of having Rev. Helen Appelberg stay with us. What a joyful experience and a blessing to have so much wisdom and knowledge shared with us, as well as many others in our parish. Rev. Helen provided us with a day of reflection for the group and an informational meeting with interested parishioners who may join in the future class this fall.

Pictured above from left to right: Rev. Helen Appelberg, Bridget Fetter (facilitator), Helen Schmidt, Marlene Smith, Coelita Haynes, Kimberly Cruz, Geraldine Tapley, Owen Devine, Jude Arceneaux (coordinator), Monica Lester, Lynda Yorio, Paul Cooke and Kate MacDonald (facilitator). Not pictured - Margaret Anne Wheeler.

Submitted by Deacon Jude Arceneaux

SOUTHWEST REGION

CATHERINE MILLER

*St. Peter's Episcopal Church
McKinney, Texas*



St. Peter's McKinney has commissioned its first class of pastoral caregivers under the Community of Hope umbrella. We had two commissionings; one at St. Peter's McKinney on May 3 and the other at St. John's Episcopal Church in Pottsboro, Texas on May 17. We have a total of 13 commissioned individuals (12 trained in our new COHI Center in McKinney and 1 trained at St. Matthew's Cathedral) who will utilize the gifts given to them by God to carry out His work. We thank God for filling their hearts with the love and compassion needed for His work!

Submitted by Deacon Betty Breyfogle and Jan Wilson



Got news?

We'd love to print your COH Center's news in the Fall 2015 Newsletter. Just send your news and pictures to your COHI Regional Representative.

Looking ahead...

South Region Annual Retreat
at Episcopal Diocese of Arkansas'
Camp Mitchell

September 18 and 19, 2015

**"Honoring the Soul's Need for Reflection:
The Medicine of deep listening"**

The speaker for this retreat is Sr. Macrina Wiederkehr, OSB, author and Benedictine monastic.

For more information, contact Pat Shaha - patriciashaha@gmail.com



**KEEP CALM
STAY COOL
AND
SAIL ON!**

www.cohinternational.org

