Building Community Relationship: Last Green Valley

By Maggie Breen, NE Region Missionary & Photo by Jenna Beekhuis on Unsplash

Friends—the NE & SE Regions have a unique opportunity to learn about an organization called The Last Green Valley (LGV). LGV is a National Heritage Corridor (watch this 7 minute video) that stretches from Norwich, up through the east side of the SE & NE Regions, and up into parts of Massachusetts. This area is “dark”; it is a space with little light pollution and can be seen as a dark swatch from outer-space. Rev. Rachel Thomas, SE Region Missionary, and I, are inviting anyone interested in eco-justice, nature, and/or building relationships with community partners to come to a meeting on Thursday, February 28, at Christ Episcopal Church, 78 Washington St, Norwich. We will be gathering to talk about the mission of LGV and how we might join as individuals and maybe even as parishes within ECCT. If you are involved in organizations like an Audubon Society, odds are you may already know about LGV! Let’s get together and spread the word! I would encourage you to check out LGV’s website, events calendar, and 100 Fun Things To Do. And please join us on February 28th at 6:30PM!

Keep reading for more exciting news from the Region!
New Year, New Possibilities!

Welcome to 2019 my friends! I hope that all of you had wonderful Christmases with your families and friends, and that you cheered in the New Year with the people you love best. There is so much in store for us this year; the Region Leadership Team just got back from a 24 hour retreat at Incarnation Center where we spent a lot of time planning our annual convocation to be held on May 4th—so save the date! I’ve also been hearing lots of interesting thoughts in the region around such items as joint Eucharist, a lay preaching class, and a Region crafting day. So many possibilities! Stay tuned to your newsletter and your inboxes for details as they come about.

I feel strongly that 2019 will see us doing more things together as a Region, and supporting all of our individual parishes through prayer and mutual love for each other. When I think about where my favorite places are in this world, all 18 parishes come to mind! Each parish is so unique and beautiful, and I love spending time with you in these sacred spaces. I also love spending time drinking coffee and tea, so keep your eyes open for invitations from me to get together and chat. And don’t wait for me to ask you—you can call me anytime and I’d be happy to meet with you! In fact, it would be the highlight of my day! Cheers to all of you, my friends. And many, many blessings in this new year!

Maggie Breen
How to reach me: mbreen@episcopalct.org
Connect with the Region on Facebook

Rest & Refuel: Region Leadership Team Retreat

By Shannon DeMarest (Christ Church, Pomfret) & Roberta Hayes (Trinity, Brooklyn), members of the NE Region Leadership Team

The Northeast Region Leadership Team retreat took place January 2-3 at Incarnation Center in Ivoryton, CT. In addition to taking time to rest and refuel, the eight participants considered the general question as to what conditions foster team success as well as the specific question regarding the purpose of regional leadership within ECCT. Participants shared sources of spiritual inspiration and talked about how each person’s walk with God ends up being woven together with that of others as part of a “golden chord” representing the body of Christ.

Maggie Breen, NE Region Missionary and Rev. Rachel Thomas, SE Region Missionary facilitated discussion of, and planning for, the Convocation to be held on May 4 of this year at St. Peter’s Episcopal Church in South Windsor. It was decided that the format of the convocation will follow the pattern of the Eucharist, with teaching and fellowship leading up to the breaking bread together as part of the lunch provided. Attendees will be invited to share what is on their hearts personally and with regard to the direction of their individual parishes and of the church as a whole.

The NE Region Leadership Team especially hopes that convocation participants will open up about their personal needs, the needs of their parishes, as well as the needs of the larger communities they seek to serve. Are there new ways that parishes within the region could be there for one another in order to help each other achieve the goals the Lord may have laid on their hearts?

We hope that every parish will participate in this year’s annual Convocation—so SAVE THE DATE: Saturday, May 4, 2019!

“Whenever I think about where my favorite places are in this world, all 18 parishes come to mind!...and I love spending time with you in these sacred spaces.”

NE & SE Region Clericus

By: Rev. Jane Hale, Trinity, Brooklyn

Did you know that twice every year, our Bishops invite all the clergy in each region to join them for a Clericus gathering? On January 22nd, St. James in Preston, hosted Bishop Douglas and a little over 20 deacons and priests from our Northeast and Southeast Regions for a great conversation about what God is up to in our regions, in ECCT, and beyond!

We spent time dwelling in the Word, and the conversations flowed from there. In particular, we had the opportunity to hear collaboratively to the devastating impact of the government shutdown, to think together about how we’ll participate in ECCT’s upcoming two-year Season of Racial Healing, Justice, and Reconciliation which launches on February 10th, and to learn about the the new Joining Jesus in a New Missional Age initiative in ECCT. This was a wonderful time of prayer and open and generative conversation, and one thing is for sure...the Spirit is at work in our Eastern Regions!
Breathing In New Life: Christ the Healer, N. Stamford

By Maggie Breen, NE Region Missionary & Photo by Émile Perron on Unsplash

On Tuesday, January 22nd, I had the opportunity to witness a conversation about new possibilities regarding a church building. I drove, with my colleague Erin Flinn (NC Region Missionary), to the former parish of Christ the Healer in North Stamford. We took the journey in order to be part of a Community Conversation hosted by ECCT. People with many connections to North Stamford were invited to attend, and the meeting was created to facilitate a first step conversation about breathing new life into the building that once housed the parish of Christ the Healer.

I went to this meeting because it was an opportunity to engage in some work about reimaging our sacred spaces within the communities that we live, work, and play in. It’s no secret that changes are upon us! Some of those changes might look like church buildings in our communities closing their doors, and yet I wonder what kind of opportunities might be created within our communities when a shift like this happens. Never would I want to downplay the heartache and devastation that can accompany the closure of a church building; I know how deeply cherished our buildings are! Yet Jesus calls us to love people and build community. So I was pleased to go to North Stamford and witness a meeting where folks, including former parishioners as well as people from other faith communities, government workers, and people deeply committed to the community, came together to think about the opportunities this church building presents to the wider community.

Conversation started with introductions and people sharing what they love about their community, and moved easily into a brainstorming session about what is thriving in the community, what challenges exist in the community, and what their hopes are for the buildings future use. I was particularly interested in the conversation around the hope for the building, because this is something I frequently think about. I hope it’s something you think about too: how is the building you worship in interacting with the community? Who in your community knows you are there? Is there a way your space could be used to fulfill a need in your community?

Perhaps these are questions you have not yet pondered. I encourage you to spend a little time thinking about the community your parish is in, and the way your parish interacts with the community. Remembering that if a parish closed their doors it isn’t the end of the road for either that worshipping community or the building. I have experienced Christian relationship inside traditional churches and in less traditional spaces. Sometimes my experiences have been in the pews on Sunday mornings, or during afternoon healing services; sometimes my experiences have happened in places that look like forests, or beaches, or rail road tracks converted to walking trails. I have also had the opportunity to witness soup kitchens and dance studios make use of the beautiful sacred spaces we cherish in new and creative ways. Maybe these multi-use spaces are more blessed for having once listened and absorbed thousands of prayers and songs.

What if God is presenting us with opportunities to find new ways of being in this world we live in? The Kingdom of God is here—we live in it now and we don’t know what the future holds. Is it worth holding on to something so tightly that possibility is denied in order to keep things as they are? We are called by Jesus to love people, not things. We have things, and use them to further our work for God. But when it’s time to let go of those things, can we? I witnessed the first baby step of a new possibility for Christ the Healer. And my heart was glad to see the beginnings of change, much like the caterpillar becoming the butterfly.
*For more events and event information, click calendar or events for more details or CLICK HERE to add an event yourself to the ECCT calendar.

02/03—Last Green Valley: Winter Writing Workshop, 2-4PM, call 860-928-4948 to register, small fee to go

02/06—Brombaugh Organ Concert Series featuring David von Behren (Trinity On The Green, New Haven), St. Mark’s, Storrs, 7PM ($20/adult suggested donation)

02/07—NE Region Leadership Team Meeting. St. John’s, Vernon, 6-8PM

02/07—Faithful Futures: Parochial Reports, The Commons, 6:30-8PM

02/08—Hebron’s Got Talent (Show), RHAM High School (come see folks from St. Peter’s in the show!), 6:30-8:30PM—click here for details

02/09—Companions in Mission Ministry Network Meeting, St. Mark’s Chapel, Storrs, 9-11AM (see PAGE 3 for more info)

02/13—Brotherhood of St. Andrews, St. John’s, Vernon, 7:30PM

02/15—SING: Quiet Corner Song Swap at The Vanilla Bean Café, Pomfret, 7-9PM, FREE—bring your voices

02/18—Last Green Valley: Film series partnership with the Pomfret Green Team, showing “Trashed”, 6:30-8PM, details here

02/28—Last Green Valley: a meeting with the NE & SE Regions of ECCT, Christ Episcopal Church, 78 Washington St., Norwich 6:30PM

03/21—Safe Church Training, St. Paul’s, Windham Center, 6:30-9PM—click here to register

04/05-04/08—Icon Writing Workshop, Camp Washington—click here for details

04/06—Workshop on the history of racism, Christ Church Cathedral—call 860-527-7231x101 to RSVP

SAVE THE DATE: SATURDAY, MAY 4—NE REGION CONVOCATION, ST. PETER’S, SOUTH WINDSOR (THE BEST KIND OF FAMILY REUNION!)

Maggie Breen, Northeast Region Missionary
St. John’s Episcopal Church
523 Hartford Turnpike
Vernon, CT 06066
Phone: 860-214-0085
E-mail: mbreen@episcopalct.org