“For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me ...”

Homelessness in El Camino Real
Dear Friends,

In this Easter season, greetings in the name of Jesus! It is with the joy of resurrection that I welcome you to the second edition of our diocesan magazine.

I heard recently that a man once said to the Dalai Lama, “I just want peace of mind!” The master responded, “that is not my problem!” This is true. No one of us can force peace of mind into another person. It is something that is experienced within as an eternal, unseen reality, not bound or hindered by any condition or circumstance of life. The practice of being conscious of the deep peace of God that knows no bounds only requires that we be fully present to a given moment. We will always find peace – now - as we release distraction from what is past and what is future. Over time, the practice encourages the peace of God to more consistently comingle with our spirit, transforming us, body, mind heart, and soul. This becomes increasingly visible in our words and actions. In the Letter to the Philippians (4:7), Paul notes that this peace will ‘guard our hearts and our minds’.

In other words, we will find our focus for living.

With such focus, we manifest powerful resurrection hope as the body of Christ, the Church. In contrast, to be bound by a lack of peace results in a lack of hope. As Christians we are called to hope BIG and LOUD in the world. Every relational encounter available to us, fleeting or lifelong, is an opportunity to share the power of the new life given to us in the Risen One.

In this issue we will hear stories from our congregations who are in relationship with those who are homeless. Close to half of our congregations are resurrection hope to those who struggle in this way. What a blessing of transformation for us all! As well, we will hear the stories of individuals navigating the formation process for ordination, helping us to know better our own focus for the Christian life. Finally, we will invite the reader’s prayerful hope as we grow closer to our strategic goal of including a new staff position that will incubate new ministry ventures, expanding our generational and cultural diversity. These stories of hope have in common that as we live our resurrection faith, the outcomes are visible in our lives, congregations and communities.

May we continue to “walk the way” together, transformed by the power of God in Jesus Christ. May we share this widely as we embody the peace, hope and new life that transforms the world.

Blessings of grace and joy,

+ Mary
HOMELESSNESS IN EL CAMINO REAL

In late January, Bishop Mary Gray-Reeves and the Diocese of Real Episcopal staff visited First United Methodist Church in downtown Salinas to experience its expansive ministries for the city’s homeless. They toured the church’s fellowship hall, food pantry, clothing rooms, computer lab, art room, and finally reached the kitchen to don gloves and assist with serving lunch.

Upon entering the kitchen, they found another church team already hard at work: members of St. Paul’s Episcopal Church in Salinas were preparing to plate the dinners they’d cooked for lunch. The team volunteers at First Methodist every Tuesday; on Thursdays, Church of the Good Shepherd in Salinas handles lunch duties. From November to April, St. George’s Episcopal Church brings weekly dinners to the city’s warming shelter at a former credit union building less than a mile away from First Methodist.

Salinas is by no means the largest example of California’s growing homeless crisis, but it’s typical of the struggles faced by cities across the diocese from San Luis Obispo to Santa Cruz to San Jose and Silicon Valley. While homeless numbers dropped nationwide between 2015 and 2016, California cities saw an uptick of three percent, according to the Department of Housing and Urban Development’s annual snapshot assessment.

As cities struggle to find longer-term solutions – permanent housing, clinical outreach on the streets, case management and supportive services – Episcopal congregations have stepped up in their communities to help, either individually or in partnership with other churches. The following pages are the result of a first-ever call for information to learn about homeless ministries across El Camino Real. The response was overwhelming, both in volume and inspiration! These stories are only a sampling of what was submitted, but we hope they will provide ideas and encouragement.

Santa Clara Valley Deanery

**Trinity Cathedral** San Jose’s homeless feeding program began in April 2001; since that time, a group of 10-15 volunteers have gathered at the Trinity kitchen on the second and third Saturdays of each month to prepare and serve a lunch to approximately 40 clients of the Julian Street Inn and Cecil B. White Center – two facilities run by InnVision/Shelter Network. Since 2010, Trinity has also provided lunch to the 20 or more families in temporary housing at the San Jose Family Shelter.

Volunteers include youngsters, teens, and adults, plus “friends of the parish” who also shop, cook and serve; the latter includes co-workers, people who find the program online, Girl Scouts, and school groups.

From February through March 2016, Trinity joined with St. Francis of Assisi and the Winter Faith Collaborative to establish and operate a temporary winter homeless shelter for men in the lower parish hall. During this period, Trinity operated shelters on a rotating weekly basis with St. Francis. Virtually the whole congregation was involved in the program, including getting permission from City Hall to run a shelter, covering the overnight shifts, preparing meals, setting up the cots and providing security.

Home rentals are so high in Mountain View that people are finding it difficult to afford rent ... so instead they live in their vehicles. But due to county and police restrictions in Mountain View, they cannot park and sleep in their vehicles for long periods in a safe environment. **St Timothy’s Episcopal Church** in Mountain View and other faith-based organizations are working together to provide safe and stable parking areas for the city’s homeless who live in vehicles. It’s estimated that more than 100 vehicles in the area are used as homes, where these citizens -- an estimated 55% of whom are working -- live in conditions that lack water, hygiene, electricity, and most of all, dignity.

Plans are underway to implement the Pilot Safe Parking Project in Mountain View by the third quarter of 2017, using existing church lots. First steps included sending a team to Santa Barbara to observe a similar model in action, followed by locating liability insurance for parking lots. The process also includes recruiting other churches, creating rules for participants, registering and interviewing homeless clients, and publicity.
St Francis Episcopal Church of Willow Glen is operating as the first satellite food pantry for Santa Maria Urban Ministry (SMUM). St. Francis parishioners volunteer to serve every Friday from 8:30 to 11 am. Clients are provided with a food box: meat, eggs, fruits, vegetables, canned goods, dessert, fruit juice and milk. Food products are brought to St. Francis by SMUM and are provided by Second Harvest Food Bank.

St. Francis, along with several Methodist, Catholic and other churches, helped organize and initiate a four-month rotating shelter pilot project, the Winter Faith Collaborative, in January-April 2016. Their work has led to a year-round shelter called “Village House: An Interfaith Shelter of Hope,” now supported by several Episcopal churches in the deanery. The rotating shelter includes overnight accommodations and daytime warming centers for 15 pre-screened, medically fragile women. St. Francis, Good Samaritan of San Jose, and The Episcopal Church in Almaden have each hosted shelters.

Village House provides vulnerable women with a caring, loving environment. For some, it’s the first 24-hour “safe space” they’ve had in years. The goal is to help them stabilize their lives and support them to move beyond homelessness — while also offering volunteer service opportunities to parishioners and community members. At St. Francis, about 90 parishioners participated alongside dozens more volunteers from the community and other parishes, including St. Andrew’s Episcopal Church in Saratoga and St. Jude’s Episcopal Church in Cupertino.

When the warming shelter was hosted at The Episcopal Church in Almaden, a total of 237 volunteers helped at the ECA warming center, 39 of whom were ECA members. Movies, books, puzzles, coloring books and computers were provided for guests. In addition, volunteers provided activities such as creating flower arrangements, making bread, and coloring Lenten posters. Donated gift certificates for clothing and bus passes were given to guests, who even received mugs and glasses displaying their names.

The life-changing impact of Village House is movingly illustrated by the written comments of guests:

“Thank you for teaching me what God meant when he said ‘Love one another.’”

“Thank you for your warm hearts and for giving us hope!”

Every month on the first and third Friday, ECA prepares in the church’s kitchen a complete meal with dessert, then serves them at three key shelters within the city of San Jose: HomeFirst, InnVision and Julian Street Inn.

In addition to being a partner in Village House, Good Samaritan San Jose volunteers also make blessing bags of personal hygiene items for donation to HomeFirst, San Jose’s primary homeless service provider.

All Saints’ Episcopal Church in Palo Alto helped transform an impossible dream to community miracle when the Opportunity Center opened in Palo Alto in 2006. In 1997, through its affiliation with Peninsula Interfaith Action (PIA), a faith-based community organizing group, the church identified the plight of local homeless individuals as a community issue. All Saints’ leaders met with city council members, various faith leaders, Stanford University leaders, and homeless activists, all of whom eventually formed a permanent supportive housing and drop-in center with a full range of services for homeless men, women, and families. Today the Opportunity Center is a day center for local homeless families and individuals and provides 88 units of low-income housing.

The center is overseen by the nonprofit Community Working Group, a volunteer-driven organization based in Palo Alto. It’s one of three affordable housing communities

Left: Guests at The Episcopal Church in Almaden warming shelter.

Above: ECA volunteers prepare meals for area shelters.
it developed to help prevent homelessness; the others are 801 Alma Family Housing and Alma Garden. About 300 people live in these properties; one in three is a child.

Thirty years ago, St. Luke’s Episcopal Church in Los Gatos began an outreach program for homeless and barely housed members of the Los Gatos community. The program has evolved from a weekly handout of groceries to its present status: a weekly hot meal, a bag of groceries, access to clothes, assistance with transportation, communications, veterans’ counseling, and more. The volunteer staff includes both men and women from various faith communities. Each client receives a weekly bag of food, plus tents, sleeping bags, and tarps as needed.

Under the guidance of Jo Greiner, Outreach Director of the program since 1996, the St. Luke’s Pantry program raises all operational funds and is supported in many ways by the parish. It thrives with the volunteer work of dozens of local volunteers, and benefits from individuals in the community, from anonymous financial helpers, and a coterie of client helpers.

Monterey Deanery

For two years St. Philip’s Episcopal Church in Scotts Valley, has opened their church facility and offered dinner every Saturday night for about 20 participants in the Faith Community Shelter, operated by the Association of Faith Communities of Santa Cruz County, of which St. Philip’s is a member. These participants share dinner, stay overnight at the church, and then have breakfast on Sunday morning. Some remain for the Sunday service and all help clean up before leaving for the day. Other churches in the area are responsible for providing food and shelter throughout the week.

St. Philips also partners with Wings Homeless Advocacy, an all-volunteer organization committed to living out our values of compassion, dignity and respect for all people by uniting the community to be volunteer advocates for those moving out of homelessness and onto a path of healing—working together to end chronic homelessness in Santa Cruz County. Working with professional case managers, Wings connects caring advocates with a homeless participant to help them obtain resources needed to become housed and self-sufficient.

St. John’s in Aptos has been actively involved in many homeless support services. The church raised funds to help build the Rebele Family Shelter, part of the Homeless Services Center (HSC), on the corner of River and Coral Streets in Santa Cruz. (The facility was named for St. John’s members Rowland and Pat Rebele.) Upon completion of the facility, the parish furnished two family apartments. The shelter accommodates 28 families with children for a maximum stay of six months, providing counseling and career exploration, and helping people find jobs and permanent housing.

Inspired by Rowland (fondly called “Reb”), St. John’s members hold the Chairperson position at both the Homeless Service Center of Santa Cruz and the Association of Faith Communities (AFC). Reb has been a funder and organizer for much of the structure of the Homeless Service Center and the AFC attending to needs of those without homes in Santa Cruz. St. John’s members have prepared marvelous meals, fellowship and Compline at St. John’s on Tuesdays as part of the AFC’s Faith Shelter.
Calvary Episcopal Church in Santa Cruz supports several homeless services. Calvary is a founding member of the Association of Faith Communities of Santa Cruz County, which operates the Faith Community Shelter, the Santa Cruz County Winter Emergency Shelter, and more. The church also hosts the Faith Community Shelter, housing up to 20 people one night every other week.

Every Monday evening, its Coffee House provides a warm meal for about 75 people. More than that, the Coffee House also offers a sustaining, helpful opportunity for those gathered to engage in music, prayer, and Bible study. Additionally, Calvary’s food pantry — now in its 44th year — provides fresh produce and nonperishable food-stuffs free of charge to 40-50 clients twice a month.

Calvary is one of the designated host sites for the Santa Cruz Warming Center, an emergency service that provides shelter on the coldest and/or rainiest nights. The church has also authorized Loads of Love (LOLO) to park their mobile laundry van in the church parking lot one morning a week. A Calvary member serves on the Board of the Homeless Garden Project, an employment training program in Santa Cruz serving individuals who are currently or formerly homeless and experiencing difficulty finding employment. The project supports an organic farm and retail shop and provides training in organic farming and retail sales.

For many years Church of the Good Shepherd, Salinas has focused much of its outreach on feeding homeless persons in Salinas in concert with other organizations. Offerings are made every Sunday, placed in the Monterey County Food Bank barrel located in the sanctuary, translating to an annual total of 5,000 lbs. of donated food.

As noted on page 4, parishioners prepare and serve lunch every other Thursday to needy people who gather at First United Methodist Church in Salinas. Typically 100-150 people are served by the lunches, which are also prepared and served by St. Paul’s Episcopal Church in Salinas every other Tuesday. Clothing, jackets, umbrellas are collected and distributed in coordination with They Are One-Local and First United Methodist. “Blessing Bags” are assembled by both Sunday School kids and congregation members — filled with items such as toothbrushes, toiletries, water bottles, lip balm, tissues, and more — and given to people living on the streets.

Good Shepherd is a member of the Interfaith Outreach of Carmel, supporting its Joining Hands Benefit Shop which raises funds for grants to Monterey organizations providing homeless services. Its work with the Salvation Army Monterey Peninsula Corps includes providing Christmas gifts for distribution to homeless children as well as backpacks filled with school supplies.

St. George’s Episcopal Church in Salinas has operated a weekly Food Pantry that is open to all Salinas residents on Friday mornings from 10:30 to noon. Up to 50 families a month are given food thanks to the pantry. During the cold months of November through April, St. George’s volunteers prepare and deliver a meal every month to local homeless at the Salinas Warming Shelter. In December the church also gives out gift bags filled with scarves and hats made by parishioners, plus socks, hygiene necessities, and (of course) chocolate.

See “Homelessness” on page 13
2017 Bishop’s Appeal: Taking the Next Step

Since the launch of the Bishop’s Appeal, the Diocese of El Camino Real has been richly blessed by the generosity of Episcopalians from Palo Alto to Arroyo Grande (see a list of donors on page 14). We’ve enhanced our support to 45 congregations with clergy transitions, strategic and financial planning, leadership training, congregational development, communications consulting, educational assistance, and more.

Now we’ve begun the next step in the evolution of our diocese, changing the DNA of El Camino Real into a learning, relational and dynamic Gospel presence. We’re raising the commitment and the skill level of congregations and helping them inspire leadership in one another. Many of our congregations now actively minister in their local communities, which is how they and our diocese will continue to grow. To thrive, and not merely survive, we’re committed to furthering the Kingdom of God by growing congregations, widening the scope of our ministries, and by bringing God’s healing and hope to a changing world.

The Bishop’s Council of Advice has provided Bishop Mary with guidance and expertise through the past three years of the Bishop’s Appeal. They’ve also served as a sounding board on the Strategic Plan Remix, hosting a series of conversations across the diocese in 2016.

Below are key priority areas that have emerged and need your support. Please prayerfully consider making a gift to support this work! You can give online by visiting www.realepiscopal.org or by returning the envelope inside this issue.

New Ministries Position

While this role is not yet fully defined, a broad direction has been established: someone who is groundbreaking and visionary, helping the leadership of El Camino Real imagine new ways of being a dynamic, resilient, and inclusive Gospel presence in our communities. Capable of supporting newly-planted church groups, this position will examine all aspects of growth opportunities – from youth and young adults to more expansive types of social outreach – inspiring congregations to look beyond the walls of their buildings and a singular model of Christian community.

With El Camino Real’s proven reputation for innovation and openness, this full-time intergenerational missioner will blaze a new path for our diocese, bringing non-traditional ideas about how to be the church in the 21st century.

Mission Opportunity Grants

The Mission Commission oversees this program, which is designed to provide grants for sustained growth to innovative ministries that require extra assistance. Recipients have included San Pablo Apostol, Seaside, St. George’s, Salinas, and St. Philip’s, San Jose. The focus for each of these grants was to launch or expand outreach into their surrounding communities. Grants are provided annually and may be repeated, as some programs merit ongoing assistance.

This fund also pays for continued training and consulting services by the Kaleidoscope Institute for parishes and missions, especially those in the process of merging. This training prepares future trainers who will support all parishes facing cross-cultural, inter-generational, and socio-economic issues.

Youth choir members at San Pablo Apostol, Seaside.
Conference, Education & Resources Commission

The Conference, Education and Resources Commission (CERC) is charged with supporting the educational needs of the diocese. Historically, CERC’s actions have focused on supporting diocesan conferences related to emerging trends in the Church and on providing educational resources to maintain compliance with canonical requirements — e.g., Safeguarding programs and licensure for lay ministries.

Currently, CERC is developing strategies to address two emerging initiatives: the growth of disciples into apostles and the transformation of the diocese into a learning community. We are taking the first steps in this new direction by naming the call in our strategic plan and are now designing pathways of formation that are accessible to all in our congregations. Funding from the Bishop’s Appeal will help our diocesan evolution into a learning community by bringing speakers, exploring and adapting programs, and developing materials for Christian education. Watch for the first pilot video on experimenting with opening yourself to faith conversations — coming soon to all our congregations!

Partnership Commission

The stated mission of the Partnership Commission is “to provide opportunities for congregations and individuals to build mission-based relationships which are transformational with respect to our role as Christians in the modern world.” Its charge is to strengthen our connection to one another and the wider world by cultivating relationship-based partnerships to bring hope, healing and reconciliation to local communities.

The commission’s work builds on our core Christian values of Christ-centeredness, passion, and discipleship. The Partnership Commission seeks to be a diocesan network of support, education and communication for ministries of social justice and outreach in our congregations. This network is essential to our learning process as we become a resilient and dynamic gospel presence, developing a strong ethic of apostleship and building up the Kingdom of God at home and in the world.

Specific needs include:
- Support for exploratory travel to potential partners in global mission. Right now, individuals and local parishes sponsor all travel. This prevents some from joining the team and sharing their gifts of experience and language in mission.
- Seed money to support joining with others to build a larger presence in areas of social justice and mission.

Development Director

Funding for our development program raised during the 2013-16 Bishop’s Appeal resulted in the introduction of our first-ever Development Director. Our development program raises money for the diocesan initiatives listed above while also directly serving congregations as a high-level strategic resource. While some unexpended funds have carried forward to support this program during 2017, we will allocate a portion of this year’s donated funds to support this important program in 2018.

An exciting future awaits our diocese, thanks to your gifts! Please consider giving online by visiting www.realepiscopal.org or by returning the envelope inside this issue.
Behind the Scenes of a Call to Clergy Ministry

“Let God transform you into a new person (or into a new community) by transforming the way you think. Then you will learn to know God’s will for you…” - Romans 12:2

One of the lesser-known roles of a diocese is to support individuals who feel a special call to ministry. Discernment of this call is for every baptized Christian and they can choose to pursue ministry as a lay person, a deacon, or a priest. The Commission on Ministry oversees the discernment and formation process (see page 11). While formation for ordained ministry can be time-consuming and challenging -- and is often a winding path -- those who complete it say the rewards are life-changing. Below you’ll meet some people in the diocese who are “walking the way” toward ordained ministry. No matter where they are in the process, they all share a joy of ministry in the Diocese of El Camino Real.

Bertram Nagarajah
Third-year student at Episcopal School for Deacons

Bertram Nagarajah is an electrical engineer working in the aerospace industry as a program manager for design/build/launch communications satellites.

“Initially I didn’t know what deacons do, but our priest-in-charge at the time suggested that I look into becoming a deacon,” he explains. “It’s really what I was looking for... I wanted to serve people, to bring people and their concerns into the church, and the church to the people.”

Bertram is in his third and final year at the Episcopal School for Deacons.

“The most rewarding thing about all this has been to look inside myself, to try to figure out who I am and who I am in my community,” he adds. “The School for Deacons community has something special: you can really be yourself and not have to put up any false fronts; it’s OK to open up to people.

“My greatest challenge is that it is very time-consuming. You have to plan your work. But I’ve come closer to God through this experience, more attuned to liturgy. The process of formation, especially the required Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE), has changed the way I listen to people.

“God has a specific plan for each person. So speak to your priest of other spiritual leader. Attend a Day of Discovery. Go through the process; the Deanery Discernment Committee helped me; in fact, people help you during the whole process. I believe in the process, even when there are bumps in the road.”

Jani Wild
Fourth year at Church Divinity School of the Pacific in Berkeley

Nearing the end of her studies at the Church Divinity School of the Pacific (CDSP), Jani Wild knew she wanted to be a priest from when she was a child, role-playing at giving communion to her dolls.

“Becoming an acolyte at 12 was a very big deal for me, as my Episcopal Church was my community. But it was a long time coming. I became an EMT (Emergency Medical Technician) ... while working in an ambulance, one day I realized that this wasn’t the kind of healing I was supposed to be doing. I realized I wasn’t supposed to be a paramedic,
but rather, to provide spiritual healing.

“The best thing about this process is all the people I’ve met, all the connections and relationships. Everyone has their story, and they’re willing to share it. The most challenging thing has been studying theology, writing papers, and managing my schedule and my time.

“I’m a totally different person from who I was when I started,” Jani adds. “I thought I was grounded in my faith before, but that was only the topsoil. I’m now getting into the bedrock! Every cell of my being is filled with the Spirit and knows that I am in the right place, following God’s plan. I am a better human being because of this process.

“If someone asked me for advice, I’d say: Get a good spiritual director. Try things out – become a Eucharistic Minister or volunteer at a hospital. Put yourself into these settings and see how it feels. See what speaks to you.”

Jim Arnold
First-year student at the Episcopal School for Deacons

A “cradle Episcopalian” raised in the Diocese of San Joaquin, Jim Arnold felt his call to “something more” as an acolyte. But it wasn’t until he was in his 50s, well established in his career as a Licensed Psychiatric Technician, that he returned to church and felt the call again.

Prompted by his rector, he went through a long discernment process, including auditing two classes at the Episcopal School for Deacons.

Jim feels the most rewarding aspect of this process is “my recognition that Jesus is calling me to serve him through serving others. It’s amazing to me that Jesus would find me worthy.”

The most challenging element has been to undergo the formation process as the requirement continue to evolve. “It feels like a series of scrutinies you have to go through; and education at the School for Deacons is only part of the process. It is up to the diocese to decide whether I’ve been ‘formed’ as a deacon.”

Formation has changed Jim, too. He says with a smile, “I have gotten out of my own way and now let the Holy Spirit drive the car!”

To those who may be feeling a special call to ministry, Jim offers this advice: “Pray about what you’re feeling, and about what Jesus is calling us to do; go on a spiritual retreat. Investigate the various vocations – lay, diaconate, priest – and ask ‘where is my heart leading me?’ Being a deacon is really about engaging and organizing the laity to live out their baptismal vows in the world.”

Susan Stanton
Postulant, planning to attend Church Divinity School of the Pacific

For Susan Stanton, the path to postulancy began the day she stopped trying to outrun her call to ministry. She now knows that the difficult times in her life have been purposeful, that they will add to her ability to answer her call. At this point she doesn’t know specifically what her work as an ordained priest will be, but is confident that “it’ll be revealed to me at God’s chosen time. I don’t have all the answers, but that’s OK.”

Susan has found that sharing the journey with people of diverse backgrounds and being intentionally vulnerable with others has become a way of strengthening her own faith.

“The friendships that I’ve picked up along the way, to help me walk this path, have been reaffirming and encouraging of my value as a person. I realize that this is nothing I could have done myself. Outstanding people have helped me through it. In fact, you can only get through it by both depending on the community and by giving yourself to the community.”

Susan enjoyed doing the application, but “I’d look up from my work and it would be 3 am.” She describes the process so far as “very consuming,” but she also notes that “the hard part is in the front end.”

To people who might be considering a call to ministry, Susan says “it’s a process that does change you, whether you get to the point of being ordained or not. The process itself is nurturing ... you will receive these gifts, no matter how it turns out.”

The Rev. Karen Cuffie
Interim rector at St. Timothy’s Episcopal Church, Mountain View

“The ordination process is not for the faint of heart … seriously,” Karen stresses.

“But for me it has been life-giving, humbling, exciting, and exhausting. Every challenge, every joy and every disappointment have been important to my formation. Whenever she would get impatient or worrisome, Karen notes, “Bishop Mary always reminded me that I was on God’s time, not my own.”

She began seriously answering a call to the priesthood
later in life, “which was good for me. The most challenging part of the process was going back to school after 30 years and the rigor of the M.Div. curriculum. I still marvel that I made it through!”

When asked for advice to others, she simply replies, “if you are feeling a call to ordained ministry, pray, pray, pray and talk to other clergy and trusted friends. Finding a Spiritual Director was also extremely helpful.”

Andrea Shortal
Graduated from seminary and is now discerning for the diaconate

For Andrea, the winding path of formation has taken a few extra twists and turns, but it’s brought maturity and clarity to her journey. She graduated from seminary at Church Divinity School of the Pacific (CDSP) in Berkeley in 2015. She is working as a chaplain at El Camino Hospital in Mountain View while doing her field education at Episcopal Church in Almaden.

“My journey with the Spirit has covered many decades and I am happy to share that as I find myself maturing and growing in my faith, I’ve been able to adjust my understanding of where God is calling me,” she explains. “I don’t think God changed the message, but I hear it more clearly now. During my years at seminary I had new experiences that changed me and my focus. I think we can stumble onto our calling sometimes, despite ourselves.”

“My exposure to my fellow travelers has helped me a great deal,” she adds. “It’s transformative to be able to speak with other people who share your calling. It can be very affirming to connect to other people who share this special situation.” The challenge, she notes, is becoming more patient and flexible. “Those are two traits which can be challenging to develop for anyone.”

“I have a deeper sense of being personally loved by an abundant God,” says Andrea. “I have a clearer sense of being held in strong, faithful, loving arms.”

For those answering the call to ministry, she urges them to “be true to yourself and honor your calling. Speak with as many different people as you can who are doing what you feel called to do. Pay attention to how you feel when you speak with them. If you feel like you have a real connection, then you should hold onto that truth.”

-Interviews compiled by Lisa Bennett, Development Director

Photos courtesy Lisa Bennett, Karen Cuffie, Brian Nordwick, Jan Robitscher, and Susan Stanton

El Camino Real’s Commission on Ministry

These stories of formation and ordination would not be possible without the guidance and support of the Commission on Ministry, a diocesan body that assists the Bishop in providing development and affirmation of the ministry of all baptized persons in the Church. Chaired by The Rev. Barbara Miller and comprised of clergy and lay persons, the Commission on Ministry provides programs and resources that explains the orders of ministry as well as opportunities for people discerning a call to the diaconate or priesthood.

Events include Discovery Day, an annual one-day program which explores how the four orders of ministry in the Episcopal Church — laity, deaconate, priesthood, and bishop — complement and support each other. Discovery Day is followed by a 12-week Inquirers Group program for those who wish to delve more deeply into the work of the four orders of ministry. The programs are open to all interested lay persons. Individuals considering holy orders must participate in both programs.

Navigating the Discernment Process, a workshop that describes the ordination process and the Commission on Ministry’s work, is held in January of each year. The annual workshop is particularly valuable for people who are discerning a call to the diaconate or priesthood, members of vestries and congregations who have a person in the ordination process, and others. For next year’s date and more information, please email Dottie Fuller at dotfuller@aol.com.

The Commission has also developed several documents that are available at the diocesan website. The first two documents, Qualities to Consider in the Discernment of God’s Call and Discerning Paths of Ministry, are designed to assist the reader in the discernment of a lay or ordained ministry. The next document, Steps Toward Ordination, describes the process leading to ordination to the Vocational Diaconate and to the Priesthood. To download these and additional resources, visit www.realepiscopal.org/commission-on-ministry/.
SLO Deanery

St. Stephen’s Episcopal Church in San Luis Obispo is celebrating 150 years of social action serving the community. In February, the church hosted a community event titled “San Luis Obispo’s Response to the Homeless Dilemma: 1968 to 2017 and Beyond.” The gathering featured presentations from leaders of agencies that help the homeless. Following the speakers, a warm meal was shared with guests who were hosted at the church in February.

During that month St. Stephen’s served as an overflow homeless shelter for CAPSLO, the Community Action Partnership of San Luis Obispo. St. Stephen’s also provides a complete sit-down breakfast on Christmas morning for all who attend. As in past years, they collected clothing and other needed items for local homeless.

St. Benedict’s Episcopal Church in Los Osos has been active in developing and partnering with local organizations and churches to provide and serve a hot meal every other Monday, along with offering friendship from volunteers and information about available community services. The Los Osos community dinners are based on a successful program in Morro Bay of serving weekly dinners for many years through community volunteers.

The St. Benedict’s Homeless Outreach team and church members kicked off the first community dinner serving pasta on May 1. The St. Benedict’s team, through the Los Osos Cares subcommittee of the Los Osos Community Coalition and other non-profits, has initially committed to providing a dinner once every two months. The hope is to ultimately expand the program to a weekly dinner.

The church – which has a few homeless members – also provides lunch at Peoples’ Kitchen in San Luis Obispo every two months and provides breakfast foods and other items for the Day Shelter in SLO. Its thrift store is a welcoming place for those living on the edge and often provides free clothing and more, while fielding calls for financial help.

Members of St Luke’s Episcopal Church Atascadero are involved with the local Loaves and Fishes program, and also work with ECHO, the local homeless shelter.

The Rev. Susan Arnold, deacon at St. Barnabas, Arroyo Grande, regularly volunteers at a local warming shelter along with other members. This includes providing hygiene kits to be given to homeless by outreach workers.

For more than 20 years the People’s Kitchen in San Luis Obispo has provided a noon meal to the hungry. More than 30,000 meals are served each year thanks to over 40 serving organizations that include three churches from the San Luis Obispo Deanery: St. Stephen’s, St. Benedict’s and St. Peter By the Sea in Morro Bay. St. Peter’s also supports the Salvation Army, Community Foundation of Estero Bay, the Food Bank Coalition of San Luis Obispo County, and others.

Finally, St. James Paso Robles recently delivered a check to the Food Bank Coalition of SLO County for $10,383.15, raised at its annual “Music for the Soul” fundraiser. The donation will help Food Bank SLO continue to provide nutritious food to residents who face hunger.

These stories are a sampling of the community outreach ministries taking place across The Diocese of El Camino Real. To learn more about these programs, or to submit news of your own church’s outreach, email Elrond Lawrence, ECR communications director, at elrond@realepiscopal.org.
Thank You, Donors!

“God loves a cheerful giver.”
-2 Corinthians 9:7

We’re so very grateful to those in our El Camino Real family who gave to the diocese during calendar year 2016. We’ve listed their names below; the names shown in **bold type** are clergy members. Please forgive any errors or omissions and contact us at marybeth@realepiscopal.org or lisa@realepiscopal.org so we can quickly make corrections. Thank you for your gifts!

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Thank You, Donors!
Nancy Cohen, Chancellor

for the Diocese of El Camino Real, came a long way to be where she is today. Born and reared in the Boston area, she now lives in Palo Alto. Raised a Catholic, she found she “did not agree with all their rules and requirements,” so she decided in the early 1970s to come to the Episcopal Church. As Nancy puts it, “The Episcopal Church has the liturgy. The Episcopal Church is a community that feeds spirituality in community. It is conscious of the needs of the community and is serious about doing something to address them.”

Encouraged by a mentor, Nancy attended Stanford Law School, one of only 20 women in her law-school class. She had a successful legal career and retired in 2004.

A generous donor to this diocese, Nancy has always given to things in which she believes. She got involved early at All Saints’ Church, Palo Alto, helping with the Peninsula Interfaith Action group to address homelessness. Nancy has also served on the All Saints’ vestry, as a lay Eucharistic minister (LEM) and visitor (LEV), helping with legal matters along the way.

Nancy initially became involved at the diocesan level as a member of the Personnel Commission under Bishop Richard Shimpfky. When he heard that Nancy had retired from private practice, The Rev. Chris Creed invited her to serve on the Constitution and Canons Committee. Soon thereafter, Nancy was picked to be the Chancellor (or lawyer) for the diocese, where she works with utmost discretion and professionalism. “I help parishes think through legal issues and provide pointers on how to resolve them. I try to answer their questions and, if necessary, steer them to outside counsel.” She often provides templates of legal documents – e.g., agreements about property rentals, property taxes, and personnel issues – so parishes need not create them themselves. Nancy’s service on national committees is a testament to her legal acumen, experience and wisdom.

Nancy’s hopes for this diocese are for “continued good governance and that we continue to help people grow spiritually.” Her wide-ranging gifts of time, talent, and treasure through all these years continue to show her sincere and generous spirit.

- As told to Lisa Bennett, Development Director
Behind the Swinging Door

This issue’s cover photo was captured in February 2007, when a chance drive near Salinas’ Chinatown neighborhood revealed a row of vintage buildings lit by powerful floodlights. Closer examination found a Salinas Police Department mobile command center at the corner of Market Way and Soledad Street, a response to recent violence in the area.

Originally the Republic Hotel, the pre-1930 brick building was once known as “The Swinging Door,” home to an early drop-in service center for the homeless. On this cold evening the warm yellow paint and the “Love Loudly” lettering were aglow in the floodlights, creating a surreal scene. The friendly Salinas PD officers encouraged us to take advantage of the unusual lighting (and their presence) and snap a few pictures of the historic neighborhood.

Ten years later, in March 2017, an accidental fire struck the abandoned Swinging Door; the building is scheduled to be demolished, its final chapter almost written. And yet the message of The Swinging Door – “Love Loudly” – lives on, carried by neighboring Victory Mission and Dorothy’s Kitchen and powered by our churches in the story that begins on page 4. Their ministries to the needy aren’t confined to structures, but spread far and wide across the Diocese of El Camino Real, fueled by God’s love and Jesus’ words:

“For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink ... I was a stranger and you welcomed me.”

Elrond Lawrence