



The conference center of the Episcopal Diocese of Southwest Florida

DaySpring DAY MARCH 2008



*Ted Tripp, Bishop Dabney Smith,
Rosemary Benoit*

VESTRY RETREAT A “GREAT HIT”

The Second Annual Diocesan Wide Vestry Retreat was a big hit according to participant evaluations. One person wrote “Bishop Dabney’s presentation...what a blessing.” Another said, “A call to arms, outstanding.” Another, “Bishop Smith set the tone, easy, positive, enlightening.” In addition to the talks, vestry members were presented with a “Vestry Resource Guide” published by the National Episcopal Church Foundation, and given the opportunity to have individual vestry retreats for several hours Saturday afternoon. DaySpring Executive Director Rosemary Benoit

said she was extremely pleased by what everyone had to say about DaySpring including the excellent food, great accommodations and especially comments about the helpfulness of her staff. “My staff put in a lot of extra time and effort to make this event a blessing. I have never been more proud of them. I’m glad so many recognized what they did and appreciated it.” On Friday evening, Rosemary was recognized for her eight years of outstanding service as Executive Director. Last month, she announced she would be stepping down at the end of March to help husband Ray in the family woodcrafting business in St. Petersburg. Bishop Smith and DaySpring Board Chairman Ted Tripp both offered their thanks and praise and best wishes for the future. No plans have been announced about a replacement.

BLESSING THE BRICKS

The Rt. Reverend Dabney Smith presided over the blessing of DaySpring’s new labyrinth on Saturday, March 1. As the ceremony began, Smith and DaySpring Executive Director Rosemary Benoit stepped to the center of the circle. Moments before, a butterfly landed just a few steps away as if to signal God’s pleasure with the project. On hand were Mike Rivera, his wife Margaret and several dozen people who played a key role in bringing the labyrinth to life. Rivera, DaySpring’s first executive director, volunteered his time and considerable talent to the project. He and DaySpring staff members hand set over 28,000 bricks. They also built benches, installed outdoor lighting and landscaped the area. Rivera’s skill and the fund raising efforts of the Episcopal Church Women of the Diocese made the dream a reality. There are still some finishing touches, which have to wait until Rivera completes his rehabilitation from shoulder replacement surgery. Rivera said, “I needed the surgery before starting the project and really needed it when I was done.” The labyrinth is adjacent to St. Thomas Chapel. Labyrinths have been used since medieval times as an aide to walking meditation.



WORSHIP IN GOD’S GREAT OUTDOORS

DaySpring offers guests a number of options when it comes to worship, but none is more memorable than celebrating an early morning Eucharist in the outdoor chapel. Behind the chapel’s large stone altar unfolds an extraordinary vista of marshland, rare birds, palm trees and moss covered oaks as majestic as any stained glass window. Several hundred lay leaders and clergy attending the Diocesan Vestry Retreat on March 1 began their day with a worship experience they will long remember. Father Arthur Lee, rector of St. David’s Englewood, preached on the life of St. David of Wales urging lay leaders to follow the saint’s admonition to “Be joyful and do the small things you have seen me do.” The work of DaySpring’s volunteer altar guild exemplifies that. For years, Sarah Hill from St. Peter’s Cathedral and Thelma Wallis from Christ Church Bradenton along with husband Roy, have been coming to DaySpring to make sure that all the little things so important to worship are joyfully attended to.



I WILL WITH GOD'S HELP

Three-hundred sixty-seven vestry members and clergy representing 45 congregations from the Diocese of Southwest Florida attended the second annual Diocesan wide Vestry Retreat at DaySpring on February 29-March 1. The Rt. Rev. Dabney Smith entitled his presentation, "I Will With God's Help." He used the Baptismal Covenant to help illustrate how those called to leadership in their faith communities can and should fulfill their ministry. Bishop Smith said, "Baptism presumes the evangelization of people. It is the beginning of a life-long process, the beginning of a love relationship which must be shared." He offered a number of illustrations of how all baptized believers, especially those called to leadership can, with God's help, achieve extraordinary things. He told the vestry members, "You were not called just to manage money and property, you are called to live out your Baptismal vows and make decisions about the way your congregations respond to God's people in and outside of the church." Diocesan Chancellor Ted Tripp entitled his presentation, "I Won't With God's Help." As chief legal officer for the Diocese, Tripp's talk addressed the Constitution and Canons of the Church as well as civil law as it applies to service on a Vestry. Tripp said he sometimes hears "Why do we need all these rules and regulations, why can we just be church?" He answered by saying the rules were not created to inhibit but to bring order and stability to the process of meeting together, and to keep us from getting into trouble. His presentation offered numerous practical examples and made vestry members aware that the Diocese offers a number of resources if there is ever a question or doubt about what to do.



SUMMER CAMP COUNT DOWN

Summer camp is just a few months away so its time to start thinking about making reservations. Camp for youth in grades 3-6 will be June 15-20; Camp for youth in grades 7-12 will be June 22-27. The camp is again a joint venture of the Dioceses of Southwest and Southeast Florida. Activities include swimming, hiking, canoeing, the ropes course, tennis, basketball and volleyball as well as music and arts and crafts. The program is designed to promote spiritual growth, and to develop new interests and friendship, and of course have lots of fun. You can learn more about the camps on the Youth section of the Diocesan web site at www.episcopalswfl.org.

GOD BLESS YOU ROSEMARY

On March 31, DaySpring will be losing Executive Director Rosemary Benoit after eight years or service. During her time at DaySpring,



*Rosemary Benoit
Ex. Dir. DaySpring*

there has been a substantial growth in reservations and revenue. During much of her tenure, both have been in the double digits. Rosemary's contribution to the success of DaySpring is substantial. When she began in 2000, annual revenue was \$890,000. This year, revenue is expected to be \$2.3 million. Rosemary was initially hired on a contract for one year to oversee substantial repairs and renovations. It quickly became apparent her gifts and love for DaySpring went far beyond construction. Rosemary knows as much about building people as she does about building buildings. She leaves DaySpring a much bigger and better place. She is greatly loved and will be greatly missed.

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