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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

A Proud Moment

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

According to the author and journalist Tom Wolfe, writer’s block is “the fear you cannot do what you’ve announced to someone else you can do.” I felt that fear after telling our staff that I would write an article on the ecumenical friendship between Anglican Bishop Tony Palmer and Pope Francis (see p. 8). The doubts came fast. I don’t know the people involved: where to begin?

After praying and then hemming and hawing, I sent an email to Austen Ivereigh, the author of a recent biography of Francis. He wrote back and agreed to tell me what he knew. He asked if I’d like to speak to Tony Palmer’s widow, Emiliana. I was amazed.

When Elizabeth Grams and I spoke to Mrs. Palmer, she told us that she rarely grants interviews, but she felt that the Lord wanted her to talk to us. I know that she spoke to us because of our membership in this body, which witnesses to the unity of all Christians. I felt so proud in that moment to be a covenanted member of the People of Praise. The story can speak for itself, but I owe Mrs. Palmer, Austen Ivereigh and, of course, the Holy Spirit a big debt of gratitude for making it possible.

Let me also thank Bob Cunningham (Servant Branch). The photos taken by Bob that appear in this issue are the fruit of his faithfulness over many years to a mission of capturing God’s glory with his camera.

In Christ,

SEAN CONNOLLY, Editor
Getting Ready for Outreach at the TRS

BY SEAN CONNOLLY

Craig Lent opened the 2014 Teaching Review Seminar (TRS) by describing two general directions that he thinks God is giving to the community: “get ready” and “turn outward.”

Getting ready includes sinking our “roots deeper into the Lord” as individuals, and “strengthening the foundations” of community life. Turning outward means relating to people outside the community, people who need the Lord, Craig said.

These two directions provided the structure for this year’s TRS, held in South Bend December 12-13. Rather than summarizing each of the 14 talks, I want to dive into the details, pulling out a few pearls.

In his opening remarks, Craig pointed to a number of recent conferences and retreats. He said they fit in with the first direction because they are means for community members to grow in their relationship with the Lord: the Love of God retreats, the Christ in You talks, the retreat on making meditations on the life of Christ, the conference on ecumenism, and the Story of the Bible series. Before we can respond to the Lord’s direction to turn outward, he said, “we want to be clear on who we are and the story we find ourselves in as a community.”

Talks on the first day of the TRS covered 10 essential elements of community. These elements are common to communities of all sorts, from a street gang to a small village to a Christian community like ours. “It would be hard for us to continue as a healthy community if we don’t protect these elements,” Craig said.

Mike Zusi spoke about the first element, the ideal. He explained that every community has an ideal, or sense of purpose, that underlies its actions, inspires its members and sustains it during hard times. He used his high school cross-country team as an example.

The team’s ideal was to maintain their school’s tradition of excellence, so they held “harder, longer practices than anyone else on our side of the state.” Mike described one practice: running 2.5 miles to a golf course, then running a 1.8-mile loop around the hilly course, then a series of 800-meter and 400-meter repeats, and finally a run back to the school. It would have been easy to lose sight of the ideal, but the coaches “would remind us that we were St. Joe’s, and this was how we stayed that way.” Holding up this ideal produced results: they never lost a meet in Mike’s four years on the team.

Phil Monaco spoke about localism, a way of organizing things “that places authority and responsibility with those who are closest to and most invested in a situation.” He contrasted localism with the Western tendency towards centralization and gave an example from his experience in business.

“I recall when one contractor I worked for lost a contract and a new contractor came in. The first thing the new contractor did was take away our functions of accounts payable and purchasing, and move them 3,000 miles away to the contractor’s own headquarters.”

The results were disastrous, Phil said. “Before you knew it, bills weren’t being paid, we couldn’t get our resources and we couldn’t do our job. Projects were stalled. When headquarters realized that we were no longer doing our jobs well, they gave us back those responsibilities and we did very well.”

Phil explained that the People of Praise is organized so that decisions can be made close to the people who will be affected by them. “Localism really says that this is our life and we are the ones responsible for it. We’re not waiting around for someone else to take action.”

Rounding out the day on Friday, Phil, Mike and Craig gave talks on the remaining essential elements of community: a sense of pride, pluralism, function, roles, hierarchy, honor, authority and solidarity.

On Saturday, the discussion turned to outreach.
Joel Kibler said that in Servant Branch brothers and sisters have been talking about how to do more outreach for several years. However, he said that some are hesitant to reach out to others beyond the community because the larger world seems “very secular, very far from God and somewhat threatening.”

But is the larger world that far from God? Joel referred to a 2011 Gallup poll, which found that in the U.S. 92 percent of people believe in God, while in Canada, another poll indicated that 80 percent do. Though there is some very public anti-Christian sentiment, Joel said these results should encourage us. “The gap we sometimes feel between ourselves and our fellow citizens is not an abyss. We do have something in common, and that should give us confidence and boldness.”

Charlie Fraga and Fred Dang described efforts that Vancouver-Portland branch members are making to get to know their neighbors. Fred shared examples from his suburban neighborhood: he and Jeannie recently gave a pumpkin pie to José, a Mexican neighbor who trims their bushes; they also invited Alverna, a widow in her 90s who lived alone, over for dinners; they have been able to babysit for a family with young children.

Charlie reflected on the experiences of branch members. “Most people in our neighborhoods are not used to interacting a lot with their neighbors. What’s new for us is new for them. Many people are lonely, experiencing problems and hardships, and if you just scratch the surface you begin to hear about those things. There are plenty of opportunities for prayer.”

Kevin Ranaghan traced the history of outreach in the People of Praise, from a focus on personal evangelization in the 1960s, before the start of the community, to the charismatic conferences of the 1970s, to the launch of Trinity Schools (initially to educate our own children) and other outreaches in the 1980s, to the spread of campus fellowships and the start of our missionary work in the Mississippi River Valley. In recent times, he pointed to community members reaching out in their local areas: the Black Rock prayer meetings in Buffalo, the feeding program in Jamaica, the Marriage in Christ outreach in Servant Branch, work at a soup kitchen in Muncie and in an after-school program in Corvallis. “From my point of view, the entire People of Praise now has more of a sense of missionary vocation than was evident before. We seem to be on the cusp of a united willingness to be sent and to share,” he said.

In the final talk, Nick Holovaty spoke about the interplay he’s observed between having an overall strategy for missionary work and letting the Lord lead in particular encounters. He told a story about Elton, an African American man who often walked past the missionary men’s house in Evansville. One time the missionaries were singing praise songs on their front porch, and Elton asked if he could sing a song. “Elton sang with a deep, beautiful voice, ‘This ol’ hammer killed John Henry, but it won’t kill me! No, it won’t kill me!’ ‘My people need to remember that song,’ Elton said.”

Later, Elton got put in jail and Nick went to visit him. “Do you know why we moved onto the corner of Linwood and Madison?” Nick asked him.

“Jesus hung out with the tax collectors and prostitutes,” Elton answered. “He came for the people that knew they needed to be saved. And you all sure went to the worst of the worst down there on Linwood and Madison.”

Nick said, “I had wanted to tell Elton about our strategy, building local Christian community, etc., which would have been fine. But he hit me with something much more profound. ‘These people are the Lord’s people! He loves them! That’s why we’re there. He wants to be with them and to save them.’
Laura Salmon, the legalese in the letter was daunting, but the message seemed clear: her neighbor, Kathy West, was going to lose her house in South Bend unless she paid $10,000 in property taxes within two days, by September 10.

Kathy was a recently widowed woman who lived on Laura’s street, a few blocks from the People of Praise headquarters on Greenlawn Avenue. She came over often to use Laura’s cell phone. On this day, after Kathy had hung up the phone and started crying, she handed Laura the letter that said she was going to lose her house.

“I honestly didn’t have a lot of hope,” Laura recalls. “We prayed on my doorstep. I was brought to tears myself, I was so sad.”

That night Laura went to her women’s group meeting. “Kathy needs help, and I don’t know what we can do. David and I don’t have that much money!” she told her sisters.

One of them suggested she talk to Paul Kane, the community’s chief financial officer and a former commercial real estate broker.

Laura went to see him the next morning, then they walked over to Kathy’s house to look at the letter. Back at the office, Paul spoke to Clem Walters, who handles property matters for the community.

One of their coworkers called the City of South Bend and confirmed that the house had been sold at the city’s tax sale because of unpaid property taxes. The trouble was real: Kathy had to pay $10,000 or the sale would become final the next day. Clem called Russ Sanford, an attorney in the branch, who agreed to look into the matter. Russ tackled the situation from a different angle—looking into the proceeds from the sale.

He called the auditor’s office and found out that there would be substantial proceeds from the sale, even after the tax payment had been taken care of. Kathy had a legal right to the money that was left over. If she didn’t claim the money, it would go to the city’s coffers. “It didn’t make any sense to redeem the house, if that money was going to be available,” Russ said.

Paul and Russ met with Kathy, and Kathy decided to let the tax sale go forward.

Russ offered to help her claim the surplus from the sale. Within a few weeks, Kathy had received some of the money—enough to help her move. (The rest came a few months later.)

The next day, Kathy walked over to the Salmons’ house with a smile on her face bigger than Laura had ever seen. “C’mere, girl! You will not believe this!” Then she told her about the surplus that she was receiving.

Kathy and Laura had met just a few months earlier—on the day Kathy’s husband Willis died. Rus Lyons, a missionary who was living in South Bend for a few months, had noticed the police cars and the ambulance in front of Kathy’s house, and had walked into the chaotic situation. Rus prayed briefly with Kathy—deeply shaken and distraught—before walking over to the Salmons’ house. Rus, Laura and Catherine Bulger (who lives in household with the Salmons) went back to Kathy’s, where they talked with Kathy about Willis. As they laid hands on Kathy in prayer, she bowed her head and then embraced them.

“God is going to take care of you,” Rus said.

Laura pointed to her own house across the street, saying, “If you need anything, let me know.”

The next day, Laura brought dinner over, hoping she would get a chance to talk with Kathy again, but Kathy didn’t come to the door, so Laura left the food at her doorstep.

Several weeks later, the aluminum containers from the dinner appeared on Laura’s porch, along with a thank-you note. Then one day Laura met Kathy walking along their sidewalk and struck up a conversation.

Kathy had hit a low point: she was out of work, yet hadn’t paid all the expenses of the funeral and burial for Willis. A car accident had wrecked her car and left her with a bad back.

“I was going down,” she recalls. “My phone got turned off. My water got turned
off for a little while. I was having dreams of being a bag lady, walking with a crooked back. I was alone, grieving for my husband. So I opened up to Laura. We kept praying and praying about different things—the car, my back. She was helping me out, taking me places, giving me food when I couldn’t go shopping.”

The pace of their visits increased. Laura and her husband David did what they could to help, talking each need over together before deciding what to do. Then the crisis with the house came up.

After that crisis had passed, more community members—there are five community households on that street—got to know Kathy.

They took her grocery shopping, helped her get laundry done, went to church with her, sat with her at a community meeting, loaned her a lawn mower, and, a few months later, helped her move to her new place. Collin Anderson spearheaded the move, and a number of men from the branch spent half a day helping to transport her large appliances and other furniture.

Laura says, “I saw my brothers and sisters helping me care for Kathy. It was such a big situation with the house; it didn’t seem like it could be sorted out in one or two days. I think the Holy Spirit was encouraging me, helping me to talk to the right people about it.”

Kathy wrote to Laura, “I just wanted to tell you and your family how truly blessed I have been feeling because of all of you in your People of Praise. I’ve never, even as a child, felt more a family’s love as I have recently. God has blessed me, putting you all in my life through the turmoil that I was going through. I feel like I’ve known you all my life. God is good. Thank you all!”

“I’ve never, even as a child, felt more a family’s love as I have recently.”

Laura Salmon (South Bend) (left) shows Kathy West her latest pictures of her son Jack.
It all started with an iPhone.

On January 14, 2014, Tony Palmer, a charismatic bishop from a little-known Anglican communion, used his phone to shoot a video of a friend—Pope Francis, leader of the world’s 1.2 billion Catholics. In the video, Francis offered a brotherly “spiritual hug” to a group of Pentecostal leaders affiliated with Kenneth Copeland’s ministry. The next week, the Pentecostals watched the video together at their conference in Texas. None of this would have made headlines, except that a month later a video of the Texas meeting went viral.

This is the story of that video. It’s a long one with many characters and threads that run across several continents and decades in time, cutting through the spiritual divides that separate mainline Protestants, Catholics and Pentecostals. I believe that these events cast fresh light onto some pivotal moments in the history of our community, the People of Praise. But in tracing all of these threads, the main protagonist is the Holy Spirit, which means that anything could happen.

The Wind Blows

In the iPhone video that Bishop Palmer recorded, Francis lamented the divisions between Catholics and the Pentecostal leaders in Copeland’s audience. Like Joseph who forgave and reunited with the brothers who had once sold him into slavery, Christian brothers and sisters must unite and forgive one another, Francis told them. “We must cry together like Joseph did. These tears will unite us, the tears of love,” he said.

“I am speaking to you as a brother,” he went on. “Let us allow our yearning to grow, because this will propel us to find each other, to embrace one another, and together to worship Jesus Christ as the only Lord of history.”

He added: “The miracle of unity has begun.” Then he asked the Pentecostals for their blessing.

Played on a giant screen in Texas, the greeting brought the Pentecostal leaders to their feet. They prayed for Francis enthusiastically, with their hands raised, in tongues and in the Spirit. “My dear sir,” Kenneth Copeland said, as the Pentecostal conference recorded a video in reply, “Thank you so, from the bottom of our hearts…. We do bless you, and we receive your blessing. It’s very, very important to us.”

The Pope’s greeting was never intended to become public, but someone posted video footage from the conference on YouTube. “It went wild,” recalls Tony Palmer’s wife, Emiliana. After Tony was bombarded with emails from evangelicals and Pentecostals who wanted to be part of the unity miracle, Emiliana called Francis, wondering what to do. He told her to “Let it go”—the wind blows where it wills.

In June, 2014, six months after the Texas conference, the momentum from the video produced tangible fruit: a meeting in Rome that included Tony Palmer, Pope Francis, Kenneth Copeland and another Texas-based TV preacher, James Robison, as well as several others. All told, the leaders at the meeting represented more than 1.8 billion Christians, including the Pentecostal movement. This movement, though splintered across many denominations and churches, is, in aggregate, the second largest group within Christianity after Catholicism, and the fastest-growing segment of the church.

The meeting in Rome was not like the formal dialogues that have been taking place for decades among Catholics, mainline Protestants and Pentecostals. It included a two-hour lunch, shared in a spirit of friendship, with prayer, hugs, laughter and even a high-five from James Robison to the Pope. The high-five came after Francis, as Robison put it, spoke fervently “on the need for everyone—Protestant, Catholic, whatever—to have a personal encounter with Christ.” Lit up by the message, Robison said, “Sir, as an evangelist, that deserves a high-five.”

A Voice Cries Out

Where was it all headed, and just what might come next?

Tony Palmer was at the heart of it, a friend who was bringing his evangelical and Pentecostal friends into a new relationship with his Catholic friend, Francis. At the Copeland conference in January, 2014, it was Palmer who had introduced Francis’s video greeting. He was uniquely positioned to do so. He had given his life to Jesus in a Pentecostal church in South Africa. He was married to an Italian Catholic. He had become an Anglican priest and bishop, and he had adopted a Catholic cardinal from Buenos Aires named Jorge Mario Bergoglio (later Pope Francis) as one of his spiritual fathers. Like St. Paul, he was capable of being “all things to all men,” a missionary, but in a counterintuitive fashion, one working inside the church for the cause of unity.
As he set the stage for Francis’s greeting, Palmer played the role of the prophet, of John the Baptist signaling that something greater was yet to come. “We are living in an incredibly important generation,” he said. He read from the 1999 Lutheran-Catholic “Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification,” in which the two confessions declared that they share a common understanding of the basis for salvation—and therefore that the central theological disagreement of the Reformation had been fundamentally resolved. As Tony Palmer put it: “The protest is over.”

Methodists had joined Lutherans and Catholics in signing the declaration in 2006, but Palmer lamented the fact that no evangelicals had added their names. Millions of Christians had also never heard of the declaration, and so they were living their daily lives as if the protest was still in force. Tony ended his fiery speech by praying Jesus’ prayer for unity from John 17, that his disciples “may all be one.” He called it “a dying man’s prayer.”

Because video from the Copeland meeting, including Tony Palmer’s introduction, had been put onto YouTube, Palmer’s message shot round the world right alongside Francis’s. Palmer’s light shone out perhaps more brightly than it ever had, but then just as quickly, went out. Less than a month after the June meeting in Rome, on July 20, 2014, a car struck the motorcycle that Tony Palmer was riding near his home in Trowbridge, England. He was in surgery for 10 hours before he died, a 48-year-old man who left behind his wife, Emiliana, and their two young adult children, Gabriella and Daniele, not to mention many shocked Christians.

Kindred Spirits

I was one of them. After Tony Palmer’s death, I felt a burden to learn more about him. As I watched him speak on old videos and read about his life, I sensed a kindred spirit. Here was someone who knew that unity was possible in the body of Christ because he had experienced friendship on a grass-roots level, just as we have in the People of Praise. Like many of the Protestant-Catholic married couples in our community, the Palmers knew about the pain of Christian separation, the pain of Sunday morning, when the union

A few frames from the video of the Kenneth Copeland conference in January, 2014, that went viral. Top: Kenneth Copeland (left) and Tony Palmer. Third from top: Pope Francis.
they experienced during the week could not be fully manifested at the table of the Lord.

After all, this story, of Catholics, Pentecostals and Protestants coming together, is a story we know about. Flash back for a moment to 1977, when some 50,000 Christians came to Arrowhead Stadium in Kansas City for a conference which our Charismatic Renewal Services organized. (Kevin Ranaghan chaired the planning committee.) They came from the three streams of the charismatic renewal: Protestants, Catholics and Pentecostals, gathered for praise and worship under a sign that flashed, “Jesus is Lord!”

“We are here tonight truly one in the Spirit,” Kevin said on the opening night in Kansas City. “And what we have experienced is not coming upon us to set us apart as ‘the charismatics’ but is coming upon the whole Church, the whole body of Christ... like a mighty river.”

For many, the conference was a high point—but with lower points to follow. At Kansas City Larry Christensen, a Lutheran pastor, had warned, “Where the charismatic renewal loses its ecumenical character, it tends to shrivel up, and yet there are some who want to... cultivate a nice, cozy, well-insulated Episcopalian or Catholic or Lutheran or Pentecostal renewal. For they see the vitality of the movement and think, well that would be nice, to bring it in and domesticate it and use it to bolster our denominational program.” By 1982, the group of Pentecostal, mainline Protestant, nondenominational Christian and Roman Catholic leaders which had dreamed up the Kansas City conference had splintered, never to reunite. But God had not given up on his desire for unity.

Eager to find out more about what God is doing today, I wrote to Emiliana Palmer, telling her about the People of Praise, and asking if she would agree to an interview with Elizabeth Grams and me. During our conversation, she told us that she turns down many requests, but she had felt that the Lord wanted her to talk to us. She concluded with this message: “Thank you for everything that you’re doing. Never give up. It’s a long walk, but it’s rewarding in the end because we’re just answering Jesus’ prayer. It’s so nice to see that there are other communities—that we have the same Spirit and the same heartbeat.”

An Ecumenical Family

Tony Palmer was born in England and moved to South Africa when he was 10. He met Emiliana there. She came from a wealthy Italian family who had traveled the world before settling in South Africa. Though neither was a practicing Christian, during their engagement they attended a conference at the Christian Family Church in Johannesburg. The pastor, Theo Wolmarans, gave an altar call, and Tony and Emiliana went up and dedicated.
their lives to Jesus. Later that afternoon they went to a party in a wealthy part of Johannesburg. Tony was offered drugs, which he had taken in the past, but something had changed. Emiliana recalls: “He looked at me and said, ‘Emi, I don’t belong here anymore.’” They left together.

After getting married, Tony and Emiliana quit their jobs so they could go full-time as door-to-door evangelists. They hit the streets for eight or nine hours a day, in wealthy neighborhoods with fences and dogs, watching VHS tapes of Kenneth Copeland’s preaching for inspiration before they went out. A video on Kenneth Copeland’s website reported that the Palmers led 167 families to Christ during that time.

During the 1990s the Palmers made several trips to Italy, where they came in contact with the charismatic renewal in the Catholic Church. As Tony put it later, “When my wife found out that she could be charismatic, evangelical, Pentecostal and Catholic, she wanted to reconnect to her Catholic roots.” Their children were raised Catholic and attended Catholic schools, but Tony remained an evangelical.

In 2003, Tony got an email from Matteo Calisi, a leader in the Catholic charismatic renewal in Italy, inviting the Palmers to move back to Italy to minister within the Italian Catholic charismatic renewal.

But the invitation was conditional on the Palmers raising their own financial support. Tony wrote letters, yet just one couple agreed to back them financially, Kenneth and Gloria Copeland. The Palmers sold their car and house and used the money to support their new work.

While in Italy, Tony joined the Communion of Evangelical Episcopal Churches (CEEC), a young Anglican group with its base in Florida that had grown from a circle of charismatic evangelicals who had felt a hunger for the sacraments. With the CEEC, Tony became an Anglican priest, and later a bishop. The CEEC is a communion that is independent of the Anglican Communion led by the Archbishop of Canterbury, but claims historic apostolic succession for their bishops.

Fr. Mario
The story of how Tony came to be friends with Cardinal Jose Mario Bergoglio begins in 2003. That year Matteo Calisi, Palmer’s co-worker, helped start an ecumenical group in Argentina called the Communion of Renewed Evangelicals and Catholics in the Holy Spirit (CRECES). This group brought evangelical and Catholic leaders together for fellowship and prayer and sponsored an annual charismatic prayer and praise rally, which Bergoglio began attending in 2004. When Bergoglio first began to attend the rallies, he went as a spectator, but something changed in 2006. What happened is told in Austen Ivereigh’s biography The Great Reformer: Francis and the Making of a Radical Pope. The cardinal spent the morning, as usual, seated in the rows along with everyone else, but in the afternoon he came up to the front to give a speech to the 5,000 Christians gathered there. He “asked the preachers first to pray for him, and knelt, with his head bowed, as they held their hands over him,” Ivereigh writes. The pastor leading the prayer, Norberto Saracco, “ended with a crescendo of invocation: ‘Fill him with your Holy Spirit and power, Lord! In the name of Jesus!’”

Ivereigh describes how Cardinal Bergoglio then preached with “new fervor,” with “passion, urgency, clarity and strength” about the importance of Christian unity. After the conference, the cardinal started praying regularly with a group of evangelical pastors. Later he arranged for some of them to preach at two retreats for the Catholic priests of the Buenos Aires archdiocese, aimed at helping the priests have a personal relationship with Jesus.

Also in 2006, Tony Palmer, Matteo Calisi and a few others went to visit Bergoglio in connection with their ecumenical work. He asked to hear their personal

At the June, 2014, lunch at the Vatican, James Robison gave a high five to Pope Francis after he spoke about the importance of all Christians having a personal relationship with Jesus.
stories, and Palmer told him about his ecumenical marriage. He explained how the Palmers attended Catholic mass together but Tony could not receive communion, a fact that had perplexed the Palmers’ children. When he finished, “Father Mario just wept,” Emiliana told me. (The Palmers usually spoke affectionately of Cardinal Bergoglio, calling him simply, “Father Mario.”)

Bergoglio asked Tony if they could keep in touch. With phone calls, emails and occasional face-to-face meetings, their friendship grew. “They would spend hours talking and praying,” Emiliana recalled.

During one of those conversations, Tony Palmer spoke to Bergoglio about whether he should become Catholic. He described the cardinal’s response to Ivereigh: “[Bergoglio] told me that we need to have bridge-builders. He counseled me not to take the step because it looked like I was choosing a side and I would cease to be a bridge-builder.”

Cardinal Bergoglio’s reactions to these two situations—the Palmers’ ecumenical marriage and Tony’s question about becoming Catholic—reveal his deep awareness of ecumenical issues. In an interview, Ivereigh told me how surprising these reactions were, particularly since Argentina is reported to be more than 90 percent Catholic: “In Argentina, division among Christians—not being able to share communion—is really not a big deal. In Argentina, you’re mostly either a Catholic or a non-practicing Catholic. So Bergoglio’s sensitivity on this is really very remarkable, an exception among Latin American cardinals.”

Bergoglio’s reactions reminded me of some stories from 1967. That year Ray Bullard, a janitor at a Mishawaka high school and a deacon at Calvary Temple, a Pentecostal assembly in South Bend, hosted prayer meetings in a basement room at his home. On March 13, 1967, eight days after Catholics from Notre Dame had first been prayed with to be baptized in the Holy Spirit, some of them went to Bullard’s home to learn more about the spiritual gifts. A Pentecostal minister gave a talk on speaking in tongues, and the Catholics began to do just that.

In Ray’s basement, Kevin recalls, Roy Wead, the pastor of Calvary Temple, said that the Catholics who had been baptized in the Spirit should remain Catholic, even though others would urge them to join Pentecostal assemblies. As Ray’s son Doug Wead recalls, “My father always encouraged the new charismatics to stay in the Catholic church.” Echoing a similar theme, Ray Bullard said, “I wouldn’t begin to want them to leave that church and come to my church. I think they ought to stay right in their church. They ought to be a witness in their church. And I believe that God—as he said in the Bible—he’s going to pour out his Spirit on all flesh.”

Two Pentecostals from Indiana and a cardinal from Buenos Aires had come to the same conclusion: as long as it’s God’s will, stay where you are.

When Cardinal Bergoglio was elected as Pope Francis, Tony Palmer expected that their friendship would be over, that Francis wouldn’t have the time to speak with him anymore. So he was very surprised when, after Christmas of 2013, Francis called him at home and asked when he could come to Rome for a visit. They set a date, January 14. During that meeting Palmer told Francis about the Kenneth Copeland leaders conference that he would be attending later in the month. He asked if Francis would like to send a message. “Why don’t we make a video?,” Francis said after a pause. Then he gave the greeting that went viral on YouTube.

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Signs of The Times
On June 30, 2014, one week after he met Pope Francis in Rome, Kenneth Copeland was back in Texas for the Southwest Believers’ Convention. He preached on the theme of Christian unity. About 20 minutes in, he turned to another book, bound in leather just like his Bible, but smaller. Rapping his finger against the smaller book, he said, “This was brought about by Spirit-filled Pope and Spirit-filled Lutherans that got together in the Holy Ghost.” He was talking about the “Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification,” signed by leaders from the Lutheran World Federation and by Pope John Paul II. He read from its key sentences before reaching his conclusion: “The protest is over.” Copeland, whom Tony Palmer called his first spiritual father, was answering the call of his spiritual son for an evangelical leader who was willing to back the “Joint Declaration.”

When Copeland, Robison and Palmer went to see Francis in June, 2014, they took
with them a draft document. Ivereigh spoke to Palmer just after the meeting, “Palmer told me the draft declaration has three elements: the Nicean-Constantinople Creed, which Catholics and evangelicals share; the core of the Catholic-Lutheran declaration of 1999 making clear there is no disagreement over justification by faith; as well as a final section asserting that Catholics and evangelicals are now ‘united in mission because we are declaring the same Gospel.’” Tony’s hope was that Protestant and Catholic leaders would sign the document publicly sometime in 2017, during the 500th anniversary of the Reformation and the 50th anniversary of the Catholic charismatic renewal. “Francis told them he would think about it,” Ivereigh writes.

Tony’s funeral was held at St. John the Evangelist Catholic Church in Bath, England. The funeral was a Catholic requiem mass at which Bruno Ierullo, a Pentecostal from Toronto and an ecumenical leader who knew Palmer, sat near the altar along with the priests and bishops. Emiliana Palmer tearfully read a message from Pope Francis: “We were great friends... Those of us who love him feel impelled by his zeal to follow in his footsteps, to walk without rest preparing the bride, one single bride for the bridegroom who will come.”

In October, Francis met with Emiliana and a contingent of bishops from the CEEC. He announced that Emiliana and Archbishop Robert Wise of the CEEC had agreed to “carry the torch, this dream which was Tony’s: this dream of being able to walk in communion.”

It is too early to tell what will come next in this work that the Holy Spirit brought about through Tony and Francis. The wound of Tony’s death is still raw, and from the moment Tony took out his iPhone no one was following a script. Since Tony’s death, there have been no public statements about the draft document Palmer took to Pope Francis or any plans to sign it in 2017. Still, Francis’s biographer, Austen Ivereigh, told me, “I’m convinced that this is a highly significant historical moment. We will look back and say, this was the moment where Catholics and evangelicals came together.”

The key, says Ivereigh, is not simply Francis’s openness to building friendships across denominations, but the fact that Francis is charismatic. “All Catholic charismatics should now be saying that this is a charismatic pope—he is. And that’s why Copeland and Robison and these others are responding to Francis. They’re saying, look, this guy is a man of the Spirit. He is a Spirit-filled pope responding to the promptings of the Holy Spirit and discerning that this is the moment, the kairos, and that he must do what he can to bring this about.”

Reading the Signs
Looking back for a moment at the massive spiritual explosion that took place in the Catholic Church from the late 1960s on, with the spread of baptism in the Spirit and the unprecedented coming together of Catholics, mainline Protestants and Pentecostals, you can see that there were signs and signals, foreshadowings and prophets raised up by God. Roy Wead and Ray Bullard, with their message in 1967 that Catholics should stay where they were, were certainly among the prophets. With that in mind, I can’t help but conclude that Tony Palmer’s life and his surprising friendship with Francis are also a sign for us that something greater is coming, not a repeat of the past, but something new. When I think of Tony, I feel that burning in my heart that signals the presence of God, and I remember our Lord’s words from Luke, “I’ve come to start a fire on this earth—how I wish it were blazing right now!”
MIDWESTERN GRACES

THE PHOTOGRAPHY OF
BOB CUNNINGHAM
ON TAKING NATURE PHOTOGRAPHS . . .
When I come across something special, like the shots I took down by the Minnesota River, where the hoarfrost is on everything, I start praying in tongues. There’s a spiritual thing that goes on with me, with the Lord, with my camera. Everything slows down and I start taking pictures. I’ve done that forever. I gave my life to the Lord in ’73, and from that time on I’ve been praying to be able to see how God wants me to see.

THE STORY OF HIS EYE . . .
When I was 16 years old, I got hit in my left eye by a tennis ball. I was in the hospital for 10 days. My eye hemorrhaged, and the blood from the hemorrhage made me blind in that eye. I got glaucoma on top of that. They said that they were going to have to operate, which meant I’d have a glass eye.

Before the surgery, I wanted to play in one more baseball game. In the second or third inning, I collided head-on with the center-fielder. We both got knocked out. I went back the next Monday to see the doctor about my eye, and he told me that the pressure had gone back to normal and there was no glaucoma. So they didn’t need to remove my eye.

I had no sight in that eye for about 25 years, until 1989. For all those years. I was seeing two-dimensionally. As much as I hated that accident, it assisted me in being able to see. I could line things up in a way that a lot of people couldn’t see when they looked out of two eyes.

In 1989, Dianne and I were sitting in the living room talking, and my six-year-old son threw a tennis ball across the room and hit me in my bad eye. I wasn’t upset, just glad that he had hit me in my bad eye. I hadn’t seen the eye doctor for years, but when I did he said I had a detached retina and a very dense cataract on my left eye. They told me they could remove the cataract and then I’d be able to see out of that eye again. When I went for the surgery, I asked the doctor, “Has there been a cure for glaucoma?” He said there wasn’t any cure, but there was medication to treat it, and a blow to the head has been known to cure it. I started laughing . . . that’s me!

The surgery worked. Now I’m 20/20 in my right eye and 20/40 in my left.

ON FINDING EMPLOYMENT . . .
I had been working as a laborer for the city of Minneapolis. I wanted so badly to get into photography, and I had applied for jobs, but I didn’t hear anything back. I remember going downtown to the Basilica of St. Mary to have a heart-to-heart talk with the Lord about a job. When I got home I was climbing up the steps, and the phone was ringing. It was a film company in downtown Minneapolis, and they offered me a job. That was in 1974.

Later, a friend of mine who was in the community at the time, Bob Gaylord, started a commercial still photography business. He wanted me to come and work with him, so I did that. In September of 1980 I started my own business, but by February, I knew it wasn’t going to work out. I had three children at the time, and six community brothers and sisters living with us in household. One of the sisters said she’d seen a Fortune 500 company advertising for a permanent half-time senior photographer. They
told me there were 120 applicants, and then they weeded them down to 20, and then to 3, and I got the job. There were a lot of people praying! So I had work every week, and I was also able to do other things on the side. I worked for them for more than 20 years.

They ended up closing their photography studio, but they wanted to keep me on, so we worked out a deal where they sold me all their photography equipment. It was worth $20,000. I remember talking to my men’s group about it: “What should I offer them for it?” Sam Claassen said, “Tell them $5,000.” The owners were taken aback, but they said, “We’ll do it.”

ON THE TREE IN THE FIELD . . .
(See p. 18-19.) For most of my nature photos, if they were taken outside the city, Dianne was with me. For example, the tree out in the field, with the fog—that’s in Iowa. We were going down a road and I saw the fog, and as soon as I saw it I saw something beautiful in it. Then I pulled over and I started walking. Dianne was in the car, reading a book. Out of respect for her I knew I couldn’t be out there all day. It was just me and the Lord, and I was praying, Help me see these things quickly, Lord. This tree caught my eye.

ON THE LEAPING DEER . . .
(Front cover.) That morning I was in the Minnesota River Valley, and I was attracted to the steam coming off a reservoir. I was just praying like I do when I’m there. It was amazing to me, the back-lit colors in the fog. I was standing on a rock and I had my 200-millimeter lens on, and all of a sudden I heard a sound from my right, and by then I had my camera up, and I looked to the right, and I saw this deer, and he was leaping pretty high, right into my viewfinder. When he went up, I clicked the shutter. I thought, Glory to God! I had never, ever caught something like that.

ON COMPARISON . . .
Back in the ’80s, a brother in the community told me I should go out to visit a photographer he knew of in rural Minnesota, to get to know him a little bit. When I got out there, he started showing me his photos, which were really nice. He was a really successful senior portrait artist. I wanted to show him some of my stuff, but he didn’t have much time for me. Afterwards, I was walking along, wondering what he thought of my stuff, and my shadow in front of me aligned with the white building, and all of a sudden, the Lord said, Bob—it’s not what he thought, it’s what you think! I’ve never forgotten that—that ultimately what matters is what I think and what I think in the Lord about what he’s given me.

I don’t look at the work of a lot of other photographers. When I first got on Flickr several years ago, I started to get dismayed at how many beautiful photographs I was seeing. It sounds so prideful or selfish, but I did. Praise God, the realization I came to is: Don’t worry. There’s only one me! None of us is repeatable. What we see, and what we do, is us. It’s God in us—Christ in us. I’ve been able to say this to so many other photographers. What they capture is beautiful. It’s them! And it’s God working in them! I don’t have that issue anymore, with comparison.
If you’ve lived in the northern Virginia branch for any length of time over the past 20 years, you’ve probably had Therese McNichol’s stromboli. Several times. And loved it.

“I’ve made it a million times,” Therese says. For one thing, it freezes very well, so she can make a big batch ahead of time for large gatherings.
Therese makes her dough from scratch, but the recipe can be simplified by using store-bought pizza dough.

For a different take, Therese often makes a breakfast sandwich out of it, filling it instead with scrambled eggs and sausage.

**STROMBOLI**
(MAKES 2 LOAVES)

**Ingredients**
- 4 cups flour, plus more for rolling
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 2 ¼ teaspoons active dry yeast
- 1 ⅓ cups water (85-105F)
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- ½ lb. sliced salami
- ¼ lb. thinly sliced pepperoni
- ⅓ cup shredded cheddar cheese
- ⅔ cup shredded mozzarella cheese
- 1 egg
- 1 tablespoon water
- garlic powder
- Italian seasoning
- grated parmesan cheese

**Directions**
1. In a small bowl, mix yeast and water. Stir to dissolve and let sit five minutes.
2. In a large bowl, mix together flour and salt. Make a well in the middle of the dry ingredients and pour in the olive oil and the water/yeast mixture. Toss with a fork until the mixture comes together.
3. Turn the dough out onto a floured surface and knead until it’s no longer sticky, adding flour 1 tablespoon at a time. Place the dough in a large, greased bowl, covered with a damp towel, and let rest in a warm place until doubled in size (about two hours).
4. Divide the dough in half. On a floured surface, roll each piece of dough into a rectangle (approx. 12 x 15).
5. On the narrow side closer to you, lay a row of salami 2” from the edge of the dough. Sprinkle 3 tablespoons of mozzarella over the salami. Fold the edge of the dough nearest you over this row. Lay down a row of pepperoni and cheddar. Roll again and do a second row of salami and mozzarella. Sprinkle this row with a tiny dusting of flour (1 tsp). Fold in the sides and keep folding/rolling until you reach the end of the dough. Pinch the seams together at the sides and bottom. Lay seam-down on a greased cookie sheet. Repeat for the second piece of dough.
6. In a small bowl, beat together 1 egg and 1 tablespoon water. Brush each stromboli with this mixture and sprinkle with garlic powder, Italian seasoning and parmesan cheese to taste.
7. Bake at 400F until brown, 20-22 minutes.

Editor’s note: Paul DeCelles gave a set of two talks on God Our Father at the 2002 Leaders’ Conference for Men.

Freedom is a fact of life. It’s a reality. And you can see in the Gospels that it’s a reality that Jesus dealt with. (That is to say, it’s a reality that the Father is dealing with. If you see Jesus dealing with reality, you see the Father dealing with reality. That’s the way the Father deals with reality.) Perhaps the most poignant example is the story of the rich young man.

And as he was setting out on his journey, a man ran up and knelt before him, and asked him, “Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” And Jesus said to him, “Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. You know the commandments: Do not kill, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honor your father and mother.” And he said to him, “Teacher, all these I have observed from my youth.” And Jesus looking upon him loved him, and said to him, “You lack one thing; go, sell what you have, and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.” At that saying his countenance fell, and he went away sorrowful; for he had great possessions (Mk. 10:17-22).

“And Jesus looking upon him loved him.” Imagine the moment. The invitation hangs in the air. Jesus is helpless to determine the outcome. Jesus knew the man was free. He knew he would do what he wanted to do. There was nothing Jesus could do to cause the man to accept what he was offering—his life, the very life of God. Maybe Jesus could have tried to persuade the man with long arguments or maybe he could have tried to sway him by a moving declaration of his hopes and dreams for him, but he didn’t. Because Jesus loved the rich young man, he wasn’t going to try to control him—overpowering him with persuasive words or smothering affection. He wanted a disciple, not a hireling.

The full text of the talks on God Our Father can be found in the People of Praise file library. To access it, go to www.peopleofpraise.org. Click on the “Resources” drop-down menu in the upper right corner, and then click on “File Library.” Log in with your username and password, then click on “Scripture” in the left-hand menu. “Father talks” will be the second item. Click on the title to view the pdf.
TRIBUTES

ANNE PESZYNSKI
By Dorothy Berghoff
Anne participated in a work/study secretarial program in high school, and right after graduation she was hired by an insurance company. After taking a variety of courses to earn and maintain her professional insurance license, she created and sold health insurance programs to small companies.

Anne always saved up money so she could buy her next new car without taking out a loan. Her careful financial decisions allowed her to provide for herself and for an older sister even after she was laid off in 2000.

Anne was always a supportive sister to her family and to the community, and especially to her women’s group. After she moved to her apartment complex, she would set up the party room for community gatherings large and small.

During her last four years, she lived with kidney failure and dialysis three times a week. She had to let go of many things, and did so as part of the Lord’s plan. In her last week, she sent out cards and messages to community friends who were also living with severe health problems. She was talking, laughing, singing and praying until shortly before she died.

We knew Anne as a quiet, hardworking, independent, providential and generous daughter of God. She told the story of attending one of the Notre Dame Catholic charismatic conferences years ago. By the end, her sandaled feet were dirty and hurting.

On the bus ride home, her prayer group leader removed her sandals and bathed her feet.

In that encounter, Anne learned well the love and humility of Jesus.

facts
• Anne was born June 22, 1952, in North Minneapolis.
• She died April 27, 2014.
• She joined Servants of the Light around 1977 and made the covenant of the People of Praise April 14, 1985.

MARCY SCHOMMER
By Ruth Schmelzer
The Appleton branch lost sight of one of our more energetic seniors when Marcy died on October 10, 2014, at the age of 87. She and her husband John raised 10 children, building a family that now includes 29 grandchildren and 22 great-grandchildren. For years Marcy prayed to Jesus while the family lived on a shoestring, trusting him to meet their needs.

She often recalled John’s enthusiasm for attending a parish Life in the Spirit Seminar sponsored by the branch. Afterward he experienced a dramatic change and was eager to learn all about Jesus and the power of the Spirit.

Women’s group was an answer to Marcy’s prayers—finally she had the sisters she had longed for! She celebrated the covenant of the People of Praise October 10, 2009. (John had died in 1993.)

Marcy delighted in her huge family. Everybody celebrated Christmases together, and every summer the whole family camped out together. Marcy especially enjoyed fishing trips into the Canadian wilds. She and her sons would come home with photos (if not the actual fish!) showing huge walleye or northern, telling stories to back up the excitement of landing them.

Marcy reached out to the homebound and to those in the nearby hospital with her typical energy and enthusiasm for sharing Jesus. When she mentioned she was helping “take care of the old people” of the parish, people would comment on her own advanced age. She explained, “Well, these people are old!”

Marcy’s parting salutation was usually, “Love ya, Hon!” The love she expressed was always backed up by generous hugs and enthusiasm for life in Christ to the fullest.

facts
• Marcella Helein was born September 13, 1927, and grew up on a farm northeast of Appleton.
• She married John Schommer in 1947. To supplement family income while their 10 children were growing, she worked part-time as a university custodian for 29 years.
• Marcy and John were baptized in the Spirit in 1992 and immediately joined the community.
**SYLVIA WILLARD**

By Marty Willard

Sylvia loved playing the eccentric. An artist all her life, she created hundreds of works, and sometimes obliged that artsy stereotype by combining a furry hat, pink pants, multicolored sweater and bright red lipstick.

My mom’s first job (age 15) was as a secretary in downtown Minneapolis, and at 17 she was supporting herself. At 22 she met Ted Willard, a Navy vet and engineering student, and they married the next year.

Mom worked to help others. She invited people in need to move in: a daughter’s friend with a psychological disorder, a homeless Mexican man, a niece figuring out life, five teenage Laotian refugees, her mother-in-law with dementia, her elderly father. She worked against legalized abortion. She attended a Minnesota state Democratic convention as her district’s sole pro-life delegate.

After my parents retired, they lived and volunteered at The Lord’s Ranch near El Paso, where they were arrested for civil disobedience (praying in front of an abortion clinic). Mom spent several days in jail.

She always held a deep belief in the Lord and was a faithful Catholic. She signed up for a Life in the Spirit Seminar at church, but Dad refused to go. When the leader asked if anyone there could play guitar, Mom volunteered her absent husband, knowing he couldn’t resist his favorite pastime. So Mom led Dad to baptism in the Spirit, and together they joined Servants of the Lord and the People of Praise. She loved community life, cherishing friendships developed over 36 years.

**RAY HAGENS**

By Tad Bornhoft

Ray wasn’t one for public speaking, but he promised God that if he and Ann, against medical odds, could conceive a child, he’d stand up in front of the entire Servant Branch and announce it. He did just that.

“The pregnancy was a miracle,” Ann says, the first of two for the grateful couple.

Ray grew up in North Dakota, the fourth of 10 children of very spiritual parents, Joe and Doris Hagens. When his brother Joe joined Servants of the Lord Community, Ray was suspicious at first, but a couple years later he moved down to the Twin Cities to live in a household and learn about community firsthand.

Ray did a huge amount of unheralded service. He led an area service team for years, and gave hundreds of rides to a sister in the community: to meetings, doctor appointments and grocery stores.

He took the pictures and led the hikes on numerous camping trips: with Ann, the children, other community couples. Dan Rosener remembers Ray, with red beard and hiking stick, trudging through the woods like a lumberjack.

Ann praises Ray’s steadiness. “He was steady as a husband; he was steady as a father.” Beneath his quiet demeanor was a deeply spiritual essence; he sought earnestly to learn more about faith. Colin LaVergne recalls that Ray “would call regularly for recommendations of good books to read, especially spiritual classics.”

Toward the end of his fight with cancer, Ray talked freely about being ready to meet Jesus. As throughout his life, he found strength in Jesus, in his wife and in the prayers of his friends and family.

**FACTS**

**RAY HAGENS**

- Ray was born in Bismark, ND, February 16, 1951, and died in Rochester, MN, July 15, 2014, from complications related to bone marrow cancer.
- He and his wife Ann raised two children: Jannell (born in 1985) and Sean (born in 1992).
- Ray worked as a registered nurse in hospice care and in rehabilitation.
- He made the covenant April 14, 1985. His brother Joe and sister Janet Tauer are members of Servant Branch.

**SYLVIA WILLARD**

- Sylvia Kuka was born April 23, 1926, and died June 4, 2014. She and Ted Willard were married September 3, 1949 and raised eight children.
- In 1977, she received an Associate of Arts degree in commercial art.
- She and Ted made the covenant April 14, 1985. Other community members in their family are Steven and Sarah Willard, Kristin Johnson, and Marty and Frances Willard and their children Isaac, Tess and Jonathan.
Correction: We made a mistake in the recipe for Hawaiian Beef Sticks in the last issue. The correct amount of optional sherry is 2 to 3 tablespoons, not ⅔ cup! We apologize for the error.

Covenant
Congratulations to these community members, who made the covenant of the People of Praise since our last reporting.

Rockford, September 27, 2014: Barb Connors, Carl Stolquist.


South Bend, October 12, 2014: Betsy Brophy (in Indianapolis), David Frank (in Indianapolis), Laura Gleason, Dennis Heinrich, Jeanie Hopper, George Kane, Kevin P. McShane, Frank Massa, Lori Massa.


Births:
Welcome to our youngest brothers and sisters in the community:

Joshua Joseph, born September 27 to Erik and Mary Clare Luckjohn (Servant Branch).
Colette Marie, born October 25 to Chris and Shauna Mianekci (South Bend).
Angelina Noelani, born December 1 to Pete and Maile Schunk (northern Virginia).
Elijah Thomas, born December 14 to Micah and Rachel Olson (Servant Branch).
Julian Vath, born December 16 to Tim and Jenny Dusenbury (northern Virginia).
Benjamin Augustine, born December 23 to Chris and Kayla Abramowicz (Rockford).
Elias Franklin, born December 23 to Jon and Amy Gapp (Servant Branch).
Margaret Lynn (Greta), born December 29 to David and Vivian Orthmann (Vancouver-Portland).
Julian Aloysius, born January 24 to Patrick and Cara Vermett (Rockford).
Rebekah Lorraine, born January 30 to Michael and Naomi Coney (Indianapolis CIM).
Kateri Regina, born February 10 to Mark and Kristen Brackins (northern Virginia).

Weddings and Anniversaries:
Best wishes to Ben Reinhardt and Kathleen Mehaffey (both Allendale CIM) who were married January 10, 2015, at the Cathedral of St. John Berchmans in Shreveport, LA.

Congratulations to these brothers and sisters for their achievement:
David and Sharon Sklorenko (South Bend), married for 55 years on January 9, 2015.
Tom and Jackie Brophy (Tampa), married for 50 years on November 14, 2014.
John and Marlene McLaurin (Tampa), married for 50 years on October 3, 2014.
Bill and Susan Rademacher (Servant Branch), married for 50 years on November 6, 2014.
Paul and Mitsy Sweeney (Servant Branch), married for 45 years on January 4, 2015.
Pat and Marlene Flynn (Servant Branch), married for 40 years on November 29, 2014.
Jim and Norma Cahill (Servant Branch), married for 35 years on November 3, 2014.
Jim and Beth Buiger (Servant Branch), married for 30 years on October 6, 2014.
Mike and Jeanne Hass (Servant Branch), married for 30 years on October 20, 2014.
Ron and Anne Linczer (South Bend), married for 25 years on November 11, 2014.
Jeff and Marie Winker (Servant Branch), married for 25 years on February 16, 2015.

Work and Achievements:
Congratulations to Noah Busk and Joe Massa, who achieved the rank of Eagle Scout at a court of honor on January 10, 2015. Noah (South Bend) is the son of Stephen and Jennifer Busk (South Bend) and Joe is the son of Frank and Lori Massa (South Bend). This brings to 81 the number of Eagle Scouts from Troop 325, founded by the branch in 1981.

Carl Stohlquist (Rockford) received his State of Illinois emergency medical technician license in November 2014.

Last November 2, Henry Peresie (Muncie) became the first person to receive a Certificate of Eastern Christian Studies via Byzantine Online, a website operated by the Byzantine Catholic Seminary in Pittsburgh. He has since begun writing a monthly column in New Star newspaper, published by the St. Nicholas Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of Chicago.

Nathan Barrett (Allendale CIM) has a new position as the business manager for Angel
Works Enterprises, a Christian nonprofit care and training center in Shreveport for people with disabilities.

Congratulations to Major Martin Couch (South Bend), who retired from the Indiana Army National Guard in June after 24 years, during which he participated in 18 schools and three deployments, and received 35 awards, ribbons and badges.

In December, five members of the New Orleans branch hosted a joint 60th year birthday party. John Butts, Mike Murray, Phil and Liz Slattery and Pam Wiltz each turned 60 between November, 2014, and March, 2015. Branch members, family and friends gathered to celebrate with an evening of honoring, food, fellowship and dancing.

Congratulations to Rob Bolka (Muncie), who graduated in December from Trine University with a B.S. in mechanical engineering.

Deaths:
We've received word of the deaths of these members of the People of Praise. We pray for their families and friends in this time of loss. Tribute articles will follow in an upcoming issue.
Lee Sherpa, Colorado Springs branch, died October 25, 2014.
Tony Langenfeld, Servant Branch, died December 23, 2014.
Chuck Tychsen, South Bend branch, died December 23, 2014.
Phil Sheridan, Servant Branch, died February 8, 2015.

Executive Office
Colorado Springs:
Meghan Couch has been reassigned from the South Bend campus division in Indianapolis Triangle to Colorado Springs, effective August 15, 2014.
Laura Kane has been reassigned from the South Bend campus division in Indianapolis to Colorado Springs, effective September 15, 2014.

Corvallis:
John Carey has been appointed to a second three-year term of office as area coordinator, effective January 24, 2015.
Northern Virginia:
Keith Justen has been appointed to a three-year term of office as area coordinator, effective January 1, 2015.
Jacqueline Magill has been reassigned from the South Bend campus division in Indianapolis Triangle to the northern Virginia branch, effective September 15, 2014.

Servant Branch:
Paul Frenz has been appointed to a second three-year term of office as area coordinator, effective January 26, 2015.
Jim Grill has been appointed to a second three-year term of office as area coordinator, effective January 26, 2015.
Bernie Schwab has been appointed to a three-year term of office as area coordinator, effective January 26, 2015.
Chuck Shreffler has been appointed to a three-year term of office as area coordinator, effective January 26, 2015.

Matt Brickweg has been appointed to a one-year term of office as a nonvoting coordinator for the purposes of training, effective January 26, 2015.

South Bend:
Mark Havard has been appointed to a second three-year term of office as area coordinator, effective January 17, 2015.

Vancouver-Portland
Charlie Fraga has been appointed to a second six-year term of office as principal branch coordinator, effective February 1, 2015.
Dan Kabele has been appointed to a third three-year term of office as area coordinator, effective December 1, 2014. Also, Dan was granted tenure as a coordinator of the People of Praise on November 26, 2014.
Joel Kibler has been reassigned from Servant Branch to the branch in Vancouver-Portland, where he will work on the Brotherhood Study Program, effective December 31, 2014.
Sam Mertz has been reassigned from the South Bend campus division in South Bend to Vancouver-Portland, effective September 15, 2014.
Irene Robinson has been reassigned from the South Bend campus division in Indianapolis Triangle to Vancouver-Portland, effective September 15, 2014.
West Side Story
Servant Branch Members on the Move
by Elizabeth Pease

Last November, Chris and Geriann Raway, their daughter Mary and I moved into a rented house in the West Side neighborhood of St. Paul. Together with a few others, we form a team of Servant Branch members led by Pat Murphy. We’re committed to reaching out to this neighborhood as a work of our branch. Pat says, “The Lord is sending us as People of Praise Servant Branch into the West Side neighborhood to live. We want to spread God’s love to all we meet there.”

Our neighborhood is home to a wide range of middle- to low-income residents. We’ve encountered a woman who started a community garden on the busiest street in the neighborhood, a Hispanic teen dressed in low-riding jeans who removed his hat to pray, a young woman who had recently emigrated from Ethiopia, an older gentleman at a bus stop who wished he could stop drinking, and a couple out watering the lawn who love the neighborhood but think it’s gone downhill in the last 30 years.

The background of our move stretches back to 2007, when a committee of branch members pinpointed seven possible sites around the Twin Cities that might be good places for community members wanting to move closer together. The housing crash ultimately slowed that effort, but in the summer of 2012 things began picking up steam again. Inspired by the Action conference, Pat led teams of branch members on Saturday morning door-knocking expeditions. By the end of the summer, we had come to focus on the same neighborhood in the West Side of St. Paul.

A small group of branch members, including Chris and Geriann, Matt and Mary Brickweg, Jim and Beth Bulger, Mary Bredenberg and I, began meeting to discern the possibility of moving into the neighborhood. In August, 2013, our discussions culminated in a three-day retreat led by Joel Kibler. At the end of the retreat, we each wrote out what we had decided and handed it to Pat—we all said yes.

Geriann, who is experiencing a recurrence of brain tumors that she’d previously struggled with, remembers her decision this way: “I have this visual in my mind from something Joel said about taking things and just hanging them on the cross. I did that with my health, my job, my children, all the things that could be blocks. That has made a big difference for me now, as I encounter brain tumors again, to say, ‘It’s on the cross.’”

In November, Chris and Geriann sold their home in Prescott, WI, where they’d lived for over 20 years and raised their five children.

Geriann tells how an evening of door-to-door Christmas caroling highlighted for her why she moved to the West Side. As we finished one carol, a woman rushed out into her front yard without her coat. “She just erupted with delight and awe. She said that she had lived in the neighborhood for 28 years and had never dreamt that she would have carolers at her door, because carolers are for Hallmark and movies. She had lost her job, but someone had given her money in the mail and money in her door, and then there were carolers at her door! After we talked, we were able to pray over her.” Mary Brickweg adds, “Even if we never see that woman again, it was worth it for that moment.”

So far, we’ve heard yelling from the house next door and had a few snowballs thrown at our windows at night. But that’s tempered by the neighbor who stopped over to ask if the stray cat was ours and stayed for a while to make friends, and the older couple down the street whom we’d met door-knocking and are just delighted to hear that we’ve moved in.

Pat recalls an incident when three men in a car waved down a team of branch members walking through the neighborhood. The team hadn’t spoken to the men before, so they were surprised when the men seemed to recognize them. “They said they were glad we were doing this, that this neighborhood really needs God.”

“They said they were glad we were doing this, that this neighborhood really needs God.”
Hats of the People of Praise

Left top corner, New Orleans: Sheila Timler (South Bend) and Liz Slattery at Mardi Gras. Top middle, northern Virginia: John Elliott. Top right, Appleton: Pat Verbrick. Middle right, Indianapolis: Joe Werle. Lower right, South Bend: Stella. Lower left, South Bend: Orest Holovaty and Craig Lent. Middle left, Rockford: Chris and Mary Dausman. Center, northern Virginia: Susan Rinaldi (seated) and her sister Emily Dalgetty.
“Sing for joy, O heavens, and exult O earth, break forth, O mountains, into singing” (Is. 49:13).