



# Baptismal Mission Forum



Volume 1, Issue 3

Fall 2012

## BAPTISMAL MISSION FORUM The Newsletter for Episcopalians on Baptismal Mission

Editor: Rev. Dr. Peyton G. Craighill

Associate Editors:

- Rt. Rev. Herbert A. Donovan, Jr.
- Dr. Wayne W. Floyd
- Rt. Rev. Edward L. Lee, Jr.
- Rev. J. Fletcher Lowe
- Ms. Demi L. Prentiss
- Rev. A. Wayne Schwab

Contact Information:

25 Sycamore Lane, Lexington VA 24450

540-463-7092

Peyton.g@comcast.net

Photos with bios for each of the above contributors are included throughout the publication.

### FROM THE EDITOR

If you're wondering about the purpose of our organization, here's a purpose statement for you:

#### **Episcopalians on Baptismal Mission STATEMENT OF PURPOSE:**

- ◊ To be a prophetic voice and a resource for furthering baptismal mission in daily life within the Episcopal Church:
  - Initiate and support efforts to enhance the centrality of baptismal mission.
  - Explore common ground and natural alliances with other Episcopal groups including seminaries, Living Stones, Church of England, and domestic provinces.
  - Assist congregations, dioceses, and provinces in planning and implementing educational events focused on the mission of all the baptized in daily life.
  - Develop resources such as a Fresh Start module and an EFM component for mission in daily life.
- ◊ To provide a communications link among partners to share programs, ideas, concerns, needs, etc.

## IN THIS ISSUE

### 1-FROM THE EDITOR

#### MISSION IN DAILY LIFE

2-Baptismal Mission Movement: Moving the Baptized to Action in Daily Life—Peyton G. Craighill  
*What is the baptismal mission movement, and why is it important for God's mission today?*

5-How Baptism Transforms our "Money Life"—David L. Fisher  
*How can baptism transform our attitude toward our income?*

#### CONGREGATIONAL MISSION

6- The Rite of Baptism Deserves Major Recognition—The Rev. Canon J. Fletcher Lowe, Jr.  
*Why are baptisms given less prominence than ordinations?*

7-Trinity, Shelburne, Comes Alive through Member Mission—Wayne Schwab  
*How has a congregation made the shift to its members being in mission in daily life?*

8-Ministry in Daily Life Moves Congregation Beyond Church Walls—Dr. Wayne Whitson Floyd  
*How did a congregation in the heart of DC move out of their church into their neighborhood?*

#### NATIONAL CHURCH MISSION

10- The Five Marks of Mission Reshapes Our National Church Mission—Demi Prentiss  
*How has the Anglican Communion's Five Marks of Mission moved our National Church from management to mission?*

## MISSION IN DAILY LIFE

### BAPTISMAL MISSION MOVEMENT: MOVING THE BAPTISED TO ACTION IN DAILY LIFE By Peyton G. Craighill



*What is the baptismal mission in daily-life movement and how did it develop?*

First, let's be clear about what it's *not*. It's not about doing what we have done in the past – only better. It's a radical change, turning the common assumptions about how we do mission upside down.

Commonly, mission is thought of as the “extra-curricular activity” of the church. Churches are considered primarily as places where clergy serve members of their congregations by providing them with parish programs and pastoral care. Mission activities are secondary, listed in parish literature under the heading, “Outreach”. When church budgets are put together, the needs of “in-house” programs are taken care of first; whatever is left over is donated to outreach projects at home and overseas.

In the missional church movement, the meaning of “mission” is defined in a radically different way. “Mission” is defined, not as peripheral church activities, but as the *total work of God*. God is the archetypal missionary. Because in the Bible God is depicted as the ultimate power of divine love and love can only exist in outreach to beings that are loved, God can't be described impassively. God is always *active* - on *mission*! God's mission can be best described as sharing his love and justice with the world in the form of creating, liberating, and life-sustaining *action*.

According to this movement, the entire narrative of the Bible is the record of God's mission. Beginning with creation and the fall, God's mission moves on to God through Abraham creating his servant people, called to share with God in his

mission of love and justice as recorded in the Old Testament. In the fullness of time, God sent his Son to reveal himself and his mission in its perfect embodiment in Christ's life, death, and resurrection. Through Christ's Great Commission and the gift of the Spirit, his followers were empowered to form a new community to share with Christ in his mission in, “Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth”.

In the early church, Christ's mission was carried out by all members of his community. But after Constantine co-opted the church to serve his imperial purposes, mission came more and more to be in the purview of the clergy. After Europe became Christianized, the concept of *Christendom* arose to set the Christian nations apart from heathen lands in outer darkness. Christian mission came to be understood as the work of specialists called missionaries who were sent out from Christendom to bring the light of the Gospel to people in nations abroad who had not been saved. Later this approach to Christian mission was greatly expedited by the spread of Western imperialism.

After World War II, things changed. Christian leaders in both the sending and receiving countries recognized that, because a new world order had come into being, the church's mission would have to be recast. As Western empires crumbled, the relationship between sending churches in the West and mission fields in Africa, Asia, and South America could no longer remain the same. The Christendom model had ended. A new spirit of interdependence among all churches came into being. Network models of mission replaced obsolete hub-and-spoke models.

New thinking about Christian mission on the global level began influencing thought and practice in congregations on the local level. As Western nations shifted from domination by a single, Church-centered tradition to multi-faith and secularist world views, the conventional image of the

the local congregation started to change. Church leaders began to acknowledge that the concept of Christendom has disintegrated. God's world could no longer be divided into established Christian nations in the West and mission fields in the South and East. Some "mission field" nations overseas were more actively Christian than the traditionally Christian nations of the West. The mission field had moved from Asia and Africa to the doorsteps of congregations in Western countries. The mission field has come home.

But where are the missionaries to serve with Christ in his mission in the newly-perceived mission fields? Perceptive observers point out the obvious: they're already in place! Once more, Christ proclaims his Great Com-mission: "Go into *all* the world" - not just, "to the ends of the world", but also to, "Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria"! In contemporary terms, that means that Christ is calling us to share with him in his mission in our homes, workplaces, communities, districts, in places we would like to avoid - as well as in distant lands. Christ's missionaries already live and work in all these areas! The missionaries are *us*! We just need to discern Christ's call to mission in our daily-life activities and be prepared for and supported in these missions by our congregations.

To help us church members understand and respond to this new/old awareness of the meaning of Christ's mission, leaders of the missional church movement advocate that action be taken to remove the firewall that exists between the Sunday morning event and what goes on in the daily lives of us members, Monday through Saturday. In the case of most of us, our work-life occupies most of our time and energy during our waking hours. Yet the old saying still goes, "Don't talk about church at work, and don't talk about work at church".

Most parish programs are designed to attract people *into* the church rather than *send them out* in mission. Where are the congregational programs that are designed specifically to inspire, prepare, and support people in their daily-life missions shared with Christ in their homes, workplaces, communities, wider-world involvement, and their

leisure activities - as well as in their church-directed commitments? Leaders of the missional church movement maintain that working out the answers to this question is the most important enterprise for our church today.

In responding to this need, leaders don't recommend adding new activities to already overloaded parish programs. Neither do they advocate burdening members with new responsibilities in their busy daily-life activities. Rather, they advise taking the church programs and daily-life occupations that already exist and re-forming them from a missional perspective.

As an example, let's take baptism. Except in specialized circumstances, almost every congregation has programs related to Christian initiation. These programs are often primarily focused on welcoming people being baptized or confirmed into deeper fellowship in the church. This is, of course, a large part of the meaning of Christian initiation. But another important aspect of the rite is sending Christians out into new or renewed lives of mission shared with Christ in his world. In the case of the baptism of infants, this means that those who prepare the parents and godparents of children need to stress their responsibility, not just to educate their children about the Christian faith, but also to help their children grow up to be motivated and able to share their faith with others through both words and actions.

As we've seen, the redefinition of the word "mission" points to a major shift in paradigm in our understanding of Christian mission. This shift in definition has also influenced many other definitions involved in our understanding of the church and its work, as the following list of definitions indicates:

#### Mission, missional, missionary

Old paradigm – the specialized work of the church at the periphery of its life and ministry, performed by specially-trained and commissioned people called missionaries

New paradigm- The reason why the church exists is to share with God in his mission. Through baptism, all Christians are commissioned to

share with God in his mission through all their daily life activities

#### Baptism, baptizing, the baptized

Old paradigm – the rite of induction into the church

New paradigm- the rite of commissioning for mission of all baptized Christians

#### Outreach

Old paradigm – ministries of congregations performed outside their churches in the community

New paradigm- the missions of all baptized people, living out their baptismal covenant through their daily life activities, Monday through Sunday

#### Ministry, ministerial, minister

Old paradigm – ordained people in the church are called ministers and are in charge of the ministerial functions of the church

New paradigm- all baptized people are called ministers and, with a few exceptions reserved for the ordained, share in all the ministerial functions of the church.

#### Evangelism, evangelical, evangelist

Old paradigm – a special vocation in the church for specially-trained people

New paradigm- to share the Good News of Christ is part of the vocation of all baptized people

#### Pastoring, pastoral, pastor

Old paradigm - a function of the ordained, who choose selected individuals to share in their pastoral ministries

New paradigm- a function of all baptized people in all areas of their daily-life missions

These new definitions imply a radically changed understanding of the mission and ministry of all church members - laity and clergy alike.

For many of the laity, it means a whole different level of commitment. Under the old paradigm, many members that showed up regularly for Sunday morning worship and paid their pledges felt that their church commitment had been fulfilled.

Now they come to realize that everything they do every day of the week can be an expression of the commitment they made (or was made for them) when they were baptized. To use a sports metaphor, it's like coming down out of the grandstand to join the team on the field.

Priests are also recognizing that their role has changed. In the past, they thought that the ministries of their congregations grew out of their ordination. Now they recognize that those ministries grow out of the baptisms of all the members of their congregations, ordained and lay. Again, to use the same sports metaphor, the star quarterback has become the coach of the team.

And the congregation as a whole gains a new shared vision. In the past, most congregations measured their success in terms of how many people they could *attract in* to their Sunday morning programs of worship, fellowship, and education. Now the vision has changed. The members come to see that the chief mission of the congregation is not primarily a matter of how many people they can attract *in*. It's a matter of how many - and how well - members can be *sent out* to share with Christ in his mission in their daily lives, Monday through Sunday, in all areas of their activities – home, workplace, leisure, community, wider world, as well as their church commitments for renewing their relationship with God and contributing to the lives of their congregations.

Welcome to the missional paradigm shift!

\*\*\*\*\*

**Peyton Craighill** served as a missionary, primarily in theological education, in Taiwan for 21 years. After returning to the USA, he served in a number of different ministries in the Diocese of Pennsylvania. In retirement, he lives in Lexington, Virginia.

**MISSION IN DAILY LIFE**  
**HOW BAPTISM TRANSFORMS OUR “MONEY LIFE”**  
**By Davis L. Fisher**



*How does my money life influence how I live out my Baptismal Covenant?*

Since at Baptism our mission in Christ is launched, we can say that Christianity as a way-of-life begins with this rite. At the core of this mission is the day-to-day living out of our Baptismal Covenant. As over the years we grow in age and maturity, the formation and application of our mission in Christ evolves.

Although we often see our Christian mission through the lens of our life at church, the reality is that our baptismal mission is intended to permeate *all* aspects of our lives. We don't just have a religious/spiritual life; our lives have many dimensions, including home life, work life, community life, and leisure life, to name a few, and all are areas for our mission in Christ.

Can we add money life to this list? By money life, I don't mean just how much money we set aside to donate to the church and to charitable activities as *part* of our income. When I talk about money life, I mean *all* of our income. All the money that's available to us is a critical dimension of our baptismal mission.

Jesus sets a good precedent for us about the importance of our money life. In the Gospels, one-sixth of the statements of Jesus are about money, and also one third of his parables are about money. In his statements and parables, Jesus is not talking just about giving money to the church or charities (although that certainly is important!) Jesus is talking about the challenges we face *living* with money. It's not so much about *how much* we have as it is about what we *do* with what we have. It's about the role money plays in all aspects of our lives.

How we live with our money is profoundly important to the welfare of our lives in Christ. At our baptism, we promise that we will persevere in resisting evil. In the First Letter to Timothy, we read that the love of money is the root of all evil. That kind of love we must resist!

We may *think* that we don't love money, but what do our *actions* say about us? Ask yourself this perceptive question: “Am I in charge of my money – or is my money in charge of me?” What role does your money play in your relationships, behavior, and decisions? Consider this question in the context of your religious/spiritual life - and also in the context of your home life, work life, community life, and leisure life. Do you own your money – or does your money own you?

Every time in church when we renew our Baptismal Covenant we vow that, with God's help, we will:

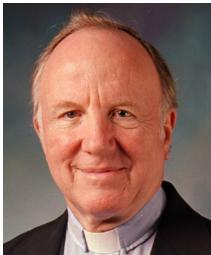
- ◊ Continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers;
- ◊ Proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ;
- ◊ Seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving our neighbors as ourselves;
- ◊ Strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being.

As we strive to honor these vows, inevitably, money issues will arise. When this happens, ask yourself, *How does my money life influence how I live out my Baptismal Covenant?*

\*\*\*\*\*

Davis Fisher has served as a priest of the Episcopal Church for more than 40 years and currently is a Priest Associate at St. Luke's Church in Evanston, IL. His passion is to work to educate the church and congregations about Tentmaker, or bi-vocational, clergy and the opportunities and challenges that accompany that model. He also continues to work his other passion - the spirituality and theology of living with, using, and stewarding money.

**CONGREGATIONAL MISSION**  
**THE RITE OF BAPTISM DESERVES MAJOR RECOGNITION**  
**By The Rev. Canon J. Fletcher Lowe, Jr.**



Over the years as I have attended and participated in ordinations of bishops, priests and deacons, I continue to be moved by the depth of the spiritual grace they bring. I have been impressed with how all of the component parts – for the most part- are woven beautifully together into a celebrative liturgical tapestry. This is especially true when a bishop is ordained, given his/her wider Church ministry. We need to give thanks to God for all who answer the ordained calling.

With that said, let me offer another view via a Baptismal lens. Our Christian life begins with Baptism, which, together with the Eucharist, are the “two great sacraments given by Christ to his Church.” (Catechism, BCP 860) We need to remember that ordination is one of the “Other Sacramental Rites,” along with “confirmation, holy matrimony, reconciliation of a penitent and unction”. That we provide such celebrations for one of the “other”/minor rites, should we not be even more celebrative about the great/major sacraments? After all, major league baseball does get more fanfare than the minors!!

In the early Church, before Constantine, Baptisms were at the very heart of the Christian’s and the Church’s life. Catechumens were prepared, sometimes for as long as 3 years. At the Easter Vigil they made their final preparation as the journey of the Faith community in its Hebrew heritage

was reviewed, the Gospel proclaimed and the Church’s faith affirmed via the Baptismal creed. Then the candidates would remove their old clothes as symbolic of their old life, be fully immersed, given new white clothes (new life in Christ) and processed into the main body of Christians for their first communion. Those recently Baptized were sought after for their blessing, considered the purist one could receive. That was then when Baptism had preeminence. It was great/major!

In our post-Constantine hierarchical church we have all but replaced Baptism with Ordination, the major sacrament with the minor sacramental rite, the “great” with one of the “others.” After all, ironically it takes 3 years of seminary preparation, and then one is vested with new clothes! For ordinations we have grand celebrations complete with choirs and processions and bishops and testimonials (but not of one’s Baptism!). The newly ordained blessings are special. Clergy line their office walls with ordination certificates as symbols of their real Christian identity. And Baptisms, for centuries they were “private,” usually relegated to Saturdays as a prelude to a party. More recently we have restored them to our Sunday liturgies. But preparation continues to remain slim. That is now.

I envision that someday Baptism will be reclaimed to its early Church’s preeminence as THE great sacrament. As a bishop friend has said, “Baptismal awareness and attention ought to inform and enlarge all the Rites in their meaning and celebration.” So, pressed, I dream of the day when every Baptism is celebrated with large choirs, grand processions, banners and flags - you get the picture. And Ordinations - (remember they are

are “other rites”) - would be celebrated within a subdued liturgical environment as an expression of one’s Baptismal ministry. Then we will have truly restored the great to its proper place in our Christian life and witness. Until then, I’ll just keep on dreaming!!

After serving for 37 years in three dioceses and in Europe, **Fletcher Lowe** has served as Convener for Episcopalian on Baptismal Mission. Recently, he published an e-book: *Baptism: the Event and the Adventure, the Journey from the Font into the World*, and co-edited a National Church’s book, *Ministry in Daily Life: Living the Baptismal Covenant*.

## CONGREGATIONAL MISSION

### TRINITY, SHELURN COMES ALIVE TO ITS MEMBERS ON DAILY-LIFE MISSIONS

By Wayne Schwab



Trinity, Shelburne, VT, is moving deeply into Member Mission activities. When the rector, Craig Smith, heard about Member Mission, he explored the web site (membermission.org) and the workbook, *Living the Gospel*. He chose to begin with an orientation for the vestry along the lines of the on-site overnight workshop described in the workbook’s enclosures. The Friday-night to Saturday-afternoon session centered on the workbook’s three basic activities. As this early February workshop ended, three members said in a chorus, “Why haven’t we heard about this before!”

The board decided to use the coming Lenten season to introduce the Member Mission approach to other members through the adult education period of 60 minutes between the 8:00 and 10:30 a.m. liturgies. For five Sundays, 25 people worked through the introductory session and four of the worksheets for the mission fields of home, work, the community, and the wider world.

The vestry continues the process, with one member each month sharing how being on mission is working in the area of daily-life he or she chooses.

The confirmation class for high school youth uses the workbook’s activities as part the course

by using the worksheets to discern a present mission in each of the daily mission fields. Participants begin to fill out a worksheets at home in discussion with their parents. These home discussions are the pastor’s way to communicate with the parents that the focus of the course is on living out their baptismal promises that will be reaffirmed at Confirmation. Craig is impressed by the hunger of the young people to articulate their own faith in down-to-earth words.

Why baptism and confirmation: all people seeking baptism or confirmation are joining or reaffirming Jesus’ mission and, therefore, have a right to know how they might live out their promises in their daily mission fields. For infants and young children and their sponsors, see <http://membermission.org/New-Website-Files/basic-tools-20.html>

At the heart of Member Mission is practice in putting into words what a specific mission means to a person. The rector finds this aspect to be a spring-board for ministry groups. The pastoral care committee member’s job is not how to get others to take on the task but, first, to understand God’s call to himself or herself to join this mission. Sharing that motivation with the potential member becomes the way to ask another to join the ministry. “Here is what excites me about this ministry and gives me joy. I see these qualities in you and ask you to think about joining us to be part of this mission.”

This same approach is used to recruit members for

the vestry. “The board has a mission of love and justice. Here is how it works for us. [Examples of two of such activities are described.] We see it as part of God’s mission of love and justice.”

For further information, reach Craig at craigfsmith23@gmailcom.

**A. Wayne Schwab**, founder and coordinator of the Member Mission Network ([www.membermission.org](http://www.membermission.org)); consultant and trainer; Episcopal priest; and first Evangelism Officer for TEC.

## **CONGREGATIONAL MISSION**

### **MINISTRY IN DAILY-LIFE MOVES CONGREGATION BEYOND CHURCH WALLS**

**By Dr. Wayne Whitson Floyd**

I work in two parishes, and belong to one of them, where my wife, The Rev. Dr. Nancy Lee Jose is Rector, in the heart of Washington, DC. The parish where I am a member has pioneered “ministry in daily life” now for more than three quite distinct generations. Originally a large urban English Gothic church that could boast of F.D.R. as its Senior Warden before he was President, and that Eleanor Roosevelt delivered out first lay homily, the building that “was” St. Thomas’ Parish was a 1970 victim of arson that destroyed all but the previous social hall and parish offices, which remain our entire “church” still.

The remnant of the congregation who remained swapped a “building” for a “neighborhood” – becoming a visible and vocal presence at the interface with Dupont Circle war and political protesters, and then the LGBT community, and more recently the influx of young professionals – straight and gay – who have adopted our neighborhood precisely for its generous-hearted and socially-active posture in the larger Washington, DC, urban context. We are constantly being pushed to make more space for our community and its ministries, and as a result have raised almost a million dollars from our members towards a capital campaign finally to build a new worship space to house the work we do amidst our neighbors in Dupont Circle.

St. Thomas’ chose to remain committed to the neighborhood, whoever came to live and work here, in so doing found itself constantly changed by, as well as changing, the daily life of the area

where we have lived and worshiped now for more than a century.

One simply couldn’t keep church and life separate when life has so much to say about how you “do church” and when church understands itself to be intimately entwined in “daily life” – whether confronting police lines, holding funerals for AIDS victims when few others were willing, developing one of the first services in the Episcopal Church in 1998 for the Blessing of Same Sex Unions, or claiming to have spiritual relevancy for a generation that can find it as hard to come out as Christian as a previous generation found it to come out as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender.

“Daily life” for our parishioners is spent working for Congress members, holding senior positions in NGOs and nonprofits, doing research at NIH, going to graduate school, working for the State Department, or raising children while playing in the National Symphony Orchestra. The sacramental life of the parish continues to seek new ways to ground people’s everyday attempts to find God in the world where they work. They in turn bring that world back into the church with them in challenging and amazingly faithful ways.

Our leadership continues to emerge from the people who arrive on our doorstep, most of whom for a generation have been young, highly educated, professionally ambitious, and spiritually hungry. Our Junior and Senior Wardens are forty and under; several Vestry members are in their twenties; and hardly anyone grew up in the Episcopal

Church – many didn’t grow up in any church whatsoever. The parish took a risk to call a partnered gay man as their Rector in the 1990s and a straight married woman, who happens to be my spouse, as their first female rector eight years ago. The “daily life” of our parishioners now includes more and more children, whose parents reflect the broad array of sexual orientations, ethnic backgrounds, political persuasions, and vocational choices that “are” Dupont Circle in the twenty-first century. We “are” a slice of tomorrow’s America today.

We continue to pioneer ways of engaging the real world in which our members live and work and play – inviting a Montessori School to share our facilities, hosting a Korean Presbyterian congregation, and developing a Taize service that reaches many who otherwise have no ‘religious’ connections whatsoever. Most recently we have partnered with Episcopal Bishop Gene Robinson to begin work to start a Center for Nonviolent Communication at St. Thomas’

Parish that he will lead as he makes our parish his “church home” when he is in Washington in retirement and also working with the Center for American Progress. We want to help facilitate a more civil and responsible public discourse that can invite “daily life” into “parish life” – and vice versa -- in new and creative ways. In the process I think we will once again help to redefine both “ministry” and “daily life” in fresh and responsive and courageous ways. We aren’t striving to be a “big church” but rather a “growing community” of involvement, responsibility, and faithfulness. No one could have predicted the path we’ve taken to get this far. But with God’s help we will find our path into the future, sure to be surprised and awed by who and what we find there and what faithfulness requires of us in ministry, as in daily life.

- ◆ **Parish Administrator and Clergy Spouse,  
St. Thomas’ Parish at Dupont Circle**
- ◆ **Parish Administrator, St. Margaret’s  
Episcopal Church**

## **NATIONAL CHURCH MISSION**

### **THE FIVE MARKS OF MISSION RESHAPES OUR NATIONAL CHURCH MISSION**

**By Demi Prentiss**



#### **The Mission of the Church is the mission of Christ:**

- ◆ To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom
- ◆ To teach, baptise and nurture new believers
- ◆ To respond to human need by loving service
- ◆ To seek to transform unjust structures of society
- ◆ To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth

*Developed by the Anglican Consultative Council, 1984-90 (Bonds of Affection-1984 ACC-6 p49, Mission in a Broken World-1990 ACC-8 p101); endorsed by General Convention 2009.*

The actions of General Convention this past summer affirmed the Five Marks of Mission through the adoption of a budget for the 2013-15 triennium structured around those marks. Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori challenged the General Convention to produce a budget that, “takes mission as its organizing principle and uses the Five Marks of Mission . . . as the strategic priorities for the budget as a moral document”. Responding to the leadership of the Presiding Bishop, General Convention chose to shape the budget to fund initiatives that prioritize mission over the maintenance of the church as an institution.

For each of the Five Marks of Mission, the General Convention 2013-15 budget provides a significant block grant for new work, emphasizing collaborative partnerships with dioceses and congregations. Seed money and/or matching grants, along with staff support and expertise, will launch these initiatives, which will include the formation of Mission Enterprise Zones; a collaborative program for new church plants; a focus on Jubilee Ministries as a key tool in the eradication of poverty; and campus, youth, and formation ministries.

Re-claiming mission as the first priority of the church is a re-affirmation of the significance of the baptismal calling of every Christian: to be “on mission” every day, in every aspect of daily life. Re-focusing on the work of dioceses and congregations re-imagines the mission frontier as the local community rather than a far-away continent. The center of ministry moves from the church grounds to the wider community.

Understanding ourselves as a missional church means re-framing the role of the church itself, re-claiming our identity as a Christian community dispersed in service to the Gospel. The emphasis shifts from the church gathered to the church scattered, as the church re-directs its energy away from paid staff and toward formation of every member as a minister and a missionary. And the worshipping community renews its commitment to equip every member to “be Christ” in their own immediate environment, bringing good news to every aspect of their daily life and work.

The five promises of the baptismal covenant articulate individual strategies for incarnating the Five Marks of Mission: continuing in the apostles’ teaching; practicing repentance and renewal; proclaiming the Gospel; seeking and serving Christ in all persons; striving for justice and peace; and respecting the dignity of every human being. The challenge for each baptized individual is to be transformed in living out those baptismal promises. The challenge for our congregations is to work together to inspire, support, and equip each member of their communities as they incarnate God’s dream of wholeness.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Demi Prentiss** serves as ministry developer/administrative officer for the Diocese of Fort Worth. For more than 25 years she has worked to support and equip laity and clergy in fully realizing their baptismal callings.

Comments and questions about articles in this publication are indeed welcome. Contact information is on the first page.