

Christ Church Grosse Pointe Partnership with the Inner City

The roots of Christ Episcopal Church Grosse Pointe's partnership with a congregation in Detroit began in December 1988. Parishioner, Bob Feeser, who was on special assignment from First America Bank, proposed the partnership with Joy of Jesus to the rector, Ted Cobden. Joy of Jesus was a "grass roots" organization attempting to improve the lives of residents in the Ravenwood area near City Airport.

After a year of planning and a year of joint series and potlucks, the relationship was not working. But, the seed had been planted; and Ted Cobden began looking for a better alternative. Ted believed that "outreach worked best when it was nearby and focused." His relationship with Ron Spann, the rector of Church of the Messiah, proved an obvious opportunity. Ted and Ron each invited specific parishioners to participate, and the partnership was born in 1991.

The rectors met monthly, regardless of the committee schedule. Both believed that the primary focus had to be the faith relationship.

This was not our first involvement with Church of the Messiah. In 1988 Diane Jahnke organized a Christmas Gift Project. [This project continued to provide gifts for about 125 people who are served by the Church of the Messiah Community, until 2011, when The Rev. Barry Randolph decided it was time for Messiah to become the helpers, instead of the ones needing help. So attention has turned to trying to find a third party for the two churches to help jointly.]

The leadership at both churches believed that we needed to learn about each other, if the partnership was to be successful. Early meetings included bible study and discussion. This helped us learn about each other through our common spiritual bond. We also read "With Justice for All" by John Perkins and "The Content of our Character by Shelby Steele." Discussion centered on these readings focused on the problems of the inner city – racial, sociological, and economic – and the problems generated by stereotypical thinking from both the urban and suburban members of the partnership. From these discussions, we learned what their needs were and how our resources might be mobilized to meet their needs. Ron Spann suggested that we join the Christian Community Development Association (John Perkins' response to the problem of the inner-city).

Balance is the key to a successful partnership and one way we did that was to alternate meetings between the two churches. The first year we met on a weekday afternoon, but that soon proved difficult for people to schedule. A Christ Church member suggested meeting in the evening. The response was unanimous. Ron Spann told us later that "it had never occurred to them that we would be comfortable coming down there after dark; and it had never occurred to us to not be comfortable. This was an important step toward building mutual trust.

The first joint project was joining Church of the Messiah and the Islandview Development Corporation in their annual paint-a-house project. This initial event was well organized and had high turnout on both sides. Painters, flower planters, organizers of children's activities, and lunch providers were on hand. The project was repeated about two years later.

"The participation of Christ Church Grosse Pointe helped strengthen this organization during its early years," said Ron Spann.

In addition, we joined in a Messiah Housing Corporation day of planting trees, shrubs and flowers around El Tovar (under the guidance of Greening of Detroit). It was very successful.

Early in the Partnership, we began collecting grocery items for the Messiah Senior Pantry, run by Pat Mentzer; and clothing items taken down there have either been given away or sold at a nominal price at their rummage sale. Helen Santiz began tutoring kids after school, and ended up mentoring some of them.

In the second year we planned a picnic together. The decision was to do it on Belle Isle, partly because we wanted to communicate our willingness and comfort about being in the city. Organized by two co-directors (one from each church), the tasks were divided between the two churches. An informal worship service was a part of the day, and Greg Sammons led singing.

The next year we proposed having the picnic at the Grosse Pointe Farms Pier Park, partly to communicate that they were welcome in our community. [The picnics were a big success and were held every year, until 2003. The event was especially well attended by families with children.]

In 1995, the partnership received a blow when Ron Spann and Ted Cobden each announced their retirements. Since that time, it has been mostly under lay leadership, by Helen Santiz (who was the lay chair at that time).

About that time, Beyond Parish Ministry (now Outreach Funding) helped fund the building of a special storeroom for some Church of the Messiah parishioners who wanted to start a grassroots business. Also during this time period, the vestry determined that a portion of the Antiques Show profits would be funneled through Beyond Parish Ministry. Church of the Messiah was one of the "big 3," taking turns at being one of three organizations that received those funds. In 1997(?) we learned that there was no budget for a rector's salary at Church of the Messiah. That year the entire amount of the monies from the Antiques Show was given to Church of the Messiah, so that they would have something to offer for a salary, in their search for a new rector. [This did get them a rector for a year. After that, they embarked on Mutual Ministry.]

We have invited their parishioners to be our guests at all of our musical performances. A few have come, and their tickets are covered by Beyond Parish Ministry. And during this same time, our Bell Choir has performed at Church of the Messiah about four times, including providing a service of lessons and carols to help tide them over while they had no rector. The Choir of Men and Boys also sang at Church of the Messiah prior to one of the trips to England.

In 1995, when the tenth grade at University-Liggett was looking for something more meaningful to do to help less-fortunate people, their advisor, Christ Church Grosse Pointe parishioner John Fowler, inquired about providing the makings of Thanksgiving dinner for nine Church of the Messiah families (or the equivalent. Pat Mentzer, of the Church of the Messiah Senior Pantry, was able to provide them with names and coordinate things at that end. It was repeated each year until John was no longer in charge of the 10th grade.

For many years, the Caritas Players of Church of the Messiah have been invited to perform their musicals ("Esther," "Judith," and "Jesus' Women") at the Sunday Forum. Turnout has been good, and appreciation by our parishioners enormous. We videotaped the last one, and each participant has received a copy of it. During the summer of 1997, we tried to plan a joint performance of their other (longer and more adult) musical, "Ruth," but we were in over our heads in many ways, so the project was tabled.

In 1996 and 1997, men from Church of the Messiah were guests of our men at the Promise Keepers gathering, and the Christ Church Grosse Pointe men were guests of Church of the Messiah for a breakfast beforehand. Both lay and clergy were involved.

In Fall '96, the two churches shared a very successful day of planting trees and shrubs at the Field Street townhouses, again with the help of Greening of Detroit. (One of those trees is dedicated to Ellie Wiener, of Christ Church Grosse Pointe.)

In December 1996, a week before Christmas, we were notified that a Church of the Messiah family had been burned out of their apartment. An announcement was made from the pulpit that Sunday, and over the course of the next month, almost all the basic household necessities were replaced. In the spring, we learned

that the three boys in the family had lost their bikes in the fire; and the oldest was now walking three miles to his after-school job. The Christ Church Grosse Pointe congregation responded with 16 bikes. The husband of one of the Bell Choir members put the bikes in "good as new" condition. Three bikes were given to the family and the other given to other Church of the Messiah people. The "bike request" has evolved into a somewhat on-going exchange of items to be donated, and needs that people have. The bulletin boards at Church of the Messiah and the Christ Church Grosse Pointe Sunday bulletin have become the means for this exchange.

Over the years there have been only a few pulpit exchanges, including Steve Bartlett doing our 1997 Thanksgiving service. In addition, members of Christ Church Grosse Pointe attended both Ron Spann's last service and Steve Bartlett's installation; and Ron and Steve attended Ed Putnam's installation.

About this time, Fr. Benedict, the abbot at Three Rivers Abbey, and a good friend of Jackie and Ron Spann (he preached at their wedding), participated in an evening retreat/worship service at Church of the Messiah, preceded by a light supper. It involved shared feelings, prayer, and a Eucharist service, and was attended by a large number of members of each parish.

In January 1996, the Partnership Committee organized its first potluck, as a celebration of Ron's ministry. Ron had recently announced his retirement from Church of the Messiah. This event brought out people who weren't interested in picnics. Thus, we began looking at a new direction for the social interaction. We have since invited Church of the Messiah parishioners to join us as our guests at such events as the Pancake Supper, the Spaghetti Supper, and our Mardi Gras dinner. Because transportation is a problem for many of them, we offered to provide a vanpool, and that made a huge difference. Church of the Messiah has also held some of its retreats in our facilities. For many years now, we have jointly attended the Christmas Lessons and Carols, followed by a dinner.

Excerpts from Annual Reports

1997: Messiah had serious plaster damage in their nave; and we learned of their tile fund-raising program. Shannon MacVean-Brown (who had taught at Pewabic Tile) designed some tiles and trained interested Church of the Messiah members in the art of tile making. Several designs were fabricated. By making the tiles available between CCGP services and at the Gifts and Greens Sale, we raised \$1500 toward the repair of the nave. These tiles have been sold during the Antiques Show and are still currently available in our Cloister Bookshop.

Barb Perez volunteered her time in the Church of the Messiah office two mornings a week, to supplement the part-time coverage that the church could afford. And one Christ Church Grosse Pointe family donated their about-to-be-replaced van to the Church of the Messiah Senior Pantry, to replace the one that was on its last legs.

When we put out our book of Lenten Meditations, Peter Klein was invited to contribute, and this year Steve Bartlett wrote one of the items. Copies were provided for Church of the Messiah. For next year, the Worship Committee would like this to be a full-fledged team effort – including a contribution by at least one of their mentally challenged members (presumably dictated to someone).

Not all the projects are group focused. Susan Swoish worked with a mentally challenged Church of the Messiah parishioner, to help him learn to print his first name so that he would be able to write more than just an X for his signature. And Erica Hill invited the Church of the Messiah youth to go rock climbing with Christ Church Grosse Pointe youth group. It didn't work out, but sounds promising if we can plan further ahead. And just a few weeks ago, a Christ Church Grosse Pointe couple donated the leftover azalea plants from their daughter's wedding to Church of the Messiah.

1998: Knowing about our partnership, a friend of Helen Santiz arranged for Ford Motor Co. to donate 10-12 IBM 486 computers to Church of the Messiah. The Ferraras prepared all the donated computers with Windows '95 and CD_ROMS.

Over the years, there have been many situations where individual Christ Church Grosse Pointe parishioners have been called upon by Ted Cobden to help individual Church of the Messiah parishioners with special problems – legal, medical, etc.

There have also been ways in which Church of the Messiah parishioners have helped Christ Church Grosse Pointe. For a number of years now, young people from Church of the Messiah have helped antiques dealers unload their trucks and trailers for the Antiques Show; and Marion Canty (Candy) has worked with Helen Santiz on a Habitat house. We have hopes of getting our two youth groups (and maybe the adults too) together to work on the current project of the Grosse Pointe Habitat group.

A few years ago, Ron's Uncle Emerson baked a wonderful pineapple upside-down cake for the Partnership Committee, to say thank you for the gifts he received through the Christmas Gift Project; and just last month, Barry Randolph baked and decorated an exceptional cake for Erica Hill's birthday. And we are remembered on their prayer lists, as we remember them in ours.

During this year the Partnership Committee began stressing the importance of involving both parishes in each other's activities. Christ Church Grosse Pointe began including prayers for Church of the Messiah in every service insert.

1999: Ed Putnam agreed to have Christ Church Grosse Pointe participate in Church of the Messiah's Epiphany service. It was an idea that was truncated by bad weather and poor communication.

We were in the middle of the construction program for the new Education Wing. Ed Putnam proposed including Church of the Messiah tiles somehow in the new Christ Church Grosse Pointe addition.

Three Church of the Messiah members contributed to the Lenten booklet.

In an effort to meet the on-going need of repair to the Church of the Messiah, Ed Putnam suggested there should be sources in the diocese for Church of the Messiah to repair their roof.

Concerned about the lack of attendance at the joint picnic, Ed Putnam suggested we advertise the picnic as just the Christ Church Grosse Pointe annual picnic, inviting Church of the Messiah to join us. It was thought this might increase Christ Church Grosse Pointe turnout.

Some Church of the Messiah members who came to help with the Antiques Show were treated badly by one particular dealer, so a letter was drafted to go out to all future dealers regarding the treatment we expect.

A Christ Church Grosse Pointe parishioner, Laura Huebner, helped with the after-school reading program at Church of the Messiah.

Mutual Ministry began its training stage at Church of the Messiah.

2000: Helen Santiz began posting Christ Church Grosse Pointe activities monthly at Church of the Messiah, as a running invitation to participate.

Five Church of the Messiah parishioners contributed to the Lenten booklet, including a mentally challenged adult.

Shannon MacVean-Brown submitted a mock-up of a tile hanging for the new addition, and research began on how to hang it.

We agreed to participate jointly in the program around the new African-American Jubilee Edition of the Bible. With Ed Putnam's departure, we ended up without any clergy to lead us, which was difficult. Church of the Messiah was well prepared for the event, but Christ Church Grosse Pointe had trouble recruiting participants, and some tension resulted.

The picnic was on the lawn of Christ Church Grosse Pointe for the first time.

2001: Ed Brown of Christ Church Grosse Pointe helped Church of the Messiah get the diocesan grant to have their roof repaired, and his company did an A-1 job for a bargain basement price.

A Christ Church Grosse Pointe parishioner donated a chair lift to Church of the Messiah so that those who are physically challenged could get from the nave to the restroom. After much effort, it was finally learned that it was not legally possible to retrofit the device.

Thirty copies of "Lift Every Voice and Sing II" were donated to Church of the Messiah so they wouldn't have to photocopy so much of their service music.

Some Church of the Messiah youth joined Christ Church Grosse Pointe youth on a mission trip, with scholarships from Christ Church Grosse Pointe.

Three of the women of Church of the Messiah expressed an interest in joining Daughters of the King. They became members of the CCGP St. Monnica chapter, and this has expanded our interaction into a whole new realm.

The picnic took a dramatic leap, thanks to Barry Randolph from Church of the Messiah and Mary Margaret Block from Christ Church Grosse Pointe doing the planning. They arranged games, a magician, a clown, a tug-of-war, and face-painting.

This year Christ Church Grosse Pointe initiated the Alpha Program. Many members of Church of the Messiah participated in the class. Many new friendships were formed. This boosted the partnership greatly, and prepared Church of the Messiah to run their own Alpha class the following year.

Church of the Messiah celebrated their 100th anniversary at their location. Six people from Christ Church Grosse Pointe (with their "groupies") participated in the program by singing two songs.

Christ Church Grosse Pointe initiated a series of meetings of Christian and Muslim women. Pat Mentzer of Church of the Messiah also participated.

The Mutual Ministry team at Messiah was commissioned in December.

2002: The Canon 9 priests at Church of the Messiah were ordained. [Canon 9 priests are only allowed to do the sacraments in their own church; and they can receive no pay for their priestly duties, so they must have an outside job. NOTE: The national church has since declared all priests are on the same level.]

Messiah ran their own Alpha class. Christ Church Grosse Pointe donated a full set of the videos to help with this. Barry later ran what he called "ghetto Alpha" for the teenagers and it was a big hit.

A larger table was provided this year at the Holiday Boutique for selling the tiles and other items to support the work at Church of the Messiah.

2003: About 20 members from Christ Church Grosse Pointe participated in the Church of the Messiah Epiphany service and potluck.

Garrett Myers arranged for some very nice office furniture for Church of the Messiah. This took care of the church office and the "sunshine room".

Many from Church of the Messiah attended Christ Church Grosse Pointe's Mardi Gras Party. Shannon MacVean-Brown was persuaded by the Bishop to study for full--i.e. non-canon 9-priesthood, and left in the fall for a year at seminary.

Garrett Myers and Peter Ferrara from Christ Church Grosse Pointe proposed trying to close the "digital divide" for Church of the Messiah.

Ron Spann was named director of the new Center for Spirituality at Christ Church Grosse Pointe.

David Dieter began guiding the partnership. [For the first time in 8 years, we had clergy involved on both sides. Looking back, it is clear that this was the start of an exponential growth in the partnership.]

Plans were made to jointly serve meals on September 6 to the 300 volunteers at the September Habitat Blitz Build.

We had another great picnic with the best turnout to date. [Brad Whitaker decided to end the picnics after that.]

Shannon's tile hanging was finished and dedicated in September. A committee is working out a plan on how and where to mount the piece appropriately.

At David Dieter's suggestion, a facilitator was hired to help the Partnership reinvent itself in order to adapt to the changes in the leadership of both congregations. (Outreach Funding paid for the facilitator, Jan Palmer, who was from the National Council for Community Justice.)

2004: The meetings with the facilitator were wrapped up, and we began looking for a mutual project to work on. David and Barry decided that Church of the Messiah's relationship with Bellevue Elementary School and David's involvement in setting up an after-school program at All Saints (Bound Together) represented an ideal opportunity for the mutual project. A site visit was made to All Saints, Pontiac, and they offered to mentor us in setting up a program. The Detroit Public Schools announced that Bellevue was being closed; so a new project was needed.

2005: Feeling discouraged after the elementary after-school project fell through; we marked time a little bit.

The summer camp at Church of the Messiah received financial assistance from a grant that Sarah Wheeler of Christ Church Grosse Pointe had gotten for outreach; and many people from Christ Church Grosse Pointe volunteered for the four afternoons a week for four weeks, helping to work with the children.

In the fall, Church of the Messiah was chosen to run a middle-school after-school program three days a week. Some members of Christ Church are going there on Mondays and Thursdays (the tutoring days) and providing enrichment when tutoring is not needed. Two couples from Christ Church are taking turns going to spend time with two young siblings at Church of the Messiah.

Shannon's tile piece was hung in the Undercroft at Christ Church in November.

Three more members of Church of the Messiah were inducted into Christ Church's chapter of Daughters of the King.

A dozen members of Church of the Messiah were invited to Lessons and Carols at Christ Church; and there was a wonderful party afterward, ending in a gospel-fest. This has continued every year.

The Christ Church Children's Choir sang at a service at Church of the Messiah in December, directed by Richard Gibson, and it was a great hit.

Plans have begun to form a joint team for the cancer fund-raising walk "Relay for Life" at the Farms Pier Park in May '06.

In November, Shannon's tile triptych dedicated to the partnership was mounted in the Undercroft.

2006: Messiah experienced significant growth, almost tripling its membership, and also gaining new intact families. In fact, almost half the congregation on any given Sunday are men. In addition, one of the men took on the joyful responsibility for planting and maintaining many beautiful flower beds all around the church and out to the street.

The after-school program grew into an amazing mentoring experience, including visits to the University of Michigan-Dearborn, the Michigan Humane Society, the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, and a fencing club. The same group has returned for another year.

The beautiful tile hanging by Shannon MacVean-Brown was dedicated at our Mardi Gras party; and a beautiful color brochure was created to go with it.

Gerhard Heinen was a guest speaker at the Housing Corporation's annual meeting, and he talked about the importance of personal interaction – not just "remote-controlled," checkbook involvement.

We joined forces for a second year for the Relay for Life cancer fund-raiser; and plans are underway for even greater participation.

Three people took the training to teach reading to adults, and are just waiting for the need to be uncovered.

Many of us helped again at the Messiah summer day camp, which provides much-needed educational, spiritual, physical, and life-skills activities for neighborhood children.

In a creative and generous project called "Christ Church R US" (US standing for United in Service), Sheila Minetola and the Christ Church fifth grade presented Messiah members with the opportunity to buy quality gifts for their children at greatly reduced prices, and returned all the proceeds to Messiah for other projects.

The Gifts and Greens sale is donating half of its proceeds to Church of the Messiah; and Messiah had a table at the sale, offering items made by members of the congregation.

And we repeated the great experience of '05 by hosting friends from Messiah at Lessons and Carols, followed by a party.

2007: This year the partnership has grown in striking ways, most notably two programs for at-risk children: Kids' College in the summer, and Bound Together East during the school year. Both programs are staffed by people from both churches.

In addition, members of Christ Church attended the wedding of a couple at Messiah, and also the service where Bishop Gibbs visited.

The bishop says he is very interested and supportive of the partnership activities.

2008: This has been a truly amazing year at Church of the Messiah; and the ways that the partnership could be of benefit to both churches have increased by leaps and bounds.

The beginning of the year was marked by serious financial problems at Messiah, after the Messiah Housing Corporation moved out of the building, with a consequential loss of rental income for the church. In spite of an increase in parishioners, it was getting harder to meet their bills. So Rev. Barry Randolph took a leap of faith--first moving into the church to save rent and utilities, and then quitting his outside job so that he could

be available full-time. (Messiah cannot afford to pay clergy. Barry gets a little support from vestry members, and friends from outside.)

Since then there has been an explosion of opportunities, all sparked by the theft of their faux copper “Green Jesus” off the outside wall. (The thief clearly thought it was copper, but it wasn’t.) The resulting press/TV coverage went around the world, and Messiah responded by forming a grass roots community organization called CUFS (Citizens United for Safety). CUFS has drawn the attention of leading government officials, law enforcement, business, the media, and the community. A two-mile parade attracted the neighborhood, with the “Green Jesus” as the grand marshal – bungeed to the roll bar of George Port’s convertible. (Jesus has been repaired by a former parishioner, and was “resurrected” on the outside wall around Easter.)

Bound Together, the after-school program for grades 1-5, continues. And now Ray of Hope, a new program donated by Computech, has installed computers linked to an online individualized learning program to help bring middle-school students up to grade level.

2009: This year Church of the Messiah has emerged as a serious leader in the city of Detroit. Through their '08 creation of CUFS (Citizens United For Safety), and their leadership, ideas, integrity, and thorough planning, they have attracted the attention and respect of leaders in city government, police, business, churches, and the community at large.

A new second service has helped bring church attendance up to 120.

The leaking roof of the parish house has been repaired.

Carol Gaskin sent more than 25 bunches of Easter flowers from Christ Church to Messiah to help in their Easter service. Each individual was offered flowers to put at the foot of the newly-repaired Green Jesus. [Candy Sweeny continues this practice.]

The Green Jesus was returned to His place, on the anniversary of His disappearance.

The second annual CUFS parade was held. Barry is working on using CUFS to bring the churches of Detroit together in a coordinated effort to serve the people of the city.

“Fallen Angels” was launched by Barry (with TV coverage) on Oct.28, as a lead into the three days of Angels’ Nights. It was a service commemorating those who were victims of crime.

Messiah hosted more town hall meetings with civic leaders.

Barry developed an outstanding vegetable and flower garden all around the church, and the produce was shared by members of the church. Jim and Ian Quinlan helped out in significant ways, especially digging cement-hard ground.

Bound Together Detroit (after-school tutoring for elementary children) expanded to three days; and Ray of Hope (after-school computer-based tutoring for teens) continues to be a challenge.

We are mentoring the formation of a new partnership between St. Matthew’s & St. Joseph’s (The Rev. Shannon MacVean-Brown, rector) and St. John’s Royal Oak (The Rev. Linda Northcraft, rector). It seems like an excellent match.

2010: This has been an amazing year for Messiah. Attendance has grown from about 40 to over 200. In the spring, nine people were confirmed; and the diocese is paying attention, pledging more support.

Community activities include another CUFS Parade, another Fallen Angels ceremony (remembering victims of crime), demonstrating in support of tearing down an empty house where a woman was attacked, developing a community garden, and a trip by the youth group to the local fire station to present a plaque and gift to the firemen thanking them for their service to the community.

Detroit Mayor Bing has asked them to lead next year's Hart Plaza "Juneteenth" celebration; and a Boston filmmaker who is working on a positive film about Detroit ("Lemonade - Detroit") wants to include material about Barry and Messiah.

Youth involvement now includes not just the after-school tutoring programs and basketball (assisted by some of our parishioners), but also a spectacular mime ministry that is totally the creation of a group of young people (see the cover of the Winter edition of "The Record").

Joint activities include coming in first again in the Relay for Life (\$10,000), including three Messiah members in the CCGP Stephen Ministry training, inviting people from Messiah to join us in Habitat work and the Crossroads soup kitchen, running a joint "Financial Peace" program, and helping St. Matthew's and St. Joseph's to develop a thriving partnership with St. John's Royal Oak.

2011: Another amazing year for Messiah: A gift enabled them to finally catch up on their bills, which the growing congregation can now maintain. [But they still can't afford a rector's pay.]

MakerSpace, which moved in a year ago, is booming. It's like a shop class for anyone who wants to come. (They accept bikes and small appliances and electronics, working or not.)

The Messiah Housing Corporation celebrated its 40th anniversary, and has purchased a nearby school, as a home for the Messiah's community empowerment ministries.

The Partnership Committee (jointly) collected for a "The Episcopal Church Welcomes You" sign for Messiah. It's hung on their parking lot fence.

There was the usual community garden at Messiah, plus one planted by a GP Eagle Scout recommended by Mary Kay Blaine of CC.

In November, Messiah marked its 110th anniversary with a big party celebrating its many ministries. There was a showing of "Lemonade: Detroit," a feature film about Detroit in which Barry is prominent. Because Barry wants the parish to turn its focus toward helping others, the Christmas Gift Project underwent significant change. We planned to jointly give gifts to a third organization; but their heavy schedule for the anniversary celebration meant they had to step back until next year. At Barry's request, Bound Together is being redesigned into a Saturday enrichment program for elementary age kids.

Some CC members helped Messiah serve Thanksgiving dinner to 240 homeless; and now they plan a "soup & socks" every Saturday.

Barry was honored as one of 300 outstanding black men of Detroit.

Other joint activities: raising \$7,700 for Relay for Life, staffing Crossroads Soup Kitchen, and providing dinner for homeless at GP Memorial Church. (We got many thanks from clients for spending time talking and eating with them, not just serving food.) [This continues.]

2012: Church of the Messiah has emerged this year as a leader in the diocese; and is the largest and fastest-growing Episcopal church in Detroit. It is providing a model for what can be done in the face of difficult times. But they are also unique in their style and success; so the bishop has created a new category to describe their

model, calling it "Baptismal Ministry", so the other "Total Ministry" congregations don't have to feel they need to keep up with what is clearly hard to replicate.

The congregation is also becoming even more varied, attracting people from the suburbs and Ann Arbor, as well as Indian Village and downtown Detroit—and a few Jewish people. And there is so much interest in Baptism that they are done monthly (including one young man who stopped drinking after being baptized).

The partnership is now very clearly a collaboration of equals, sharing experiences, ideas, and resources. The usual joint projects continued, such as Relay for Life.

We attended a performance of "The Exonerated" together, and many of us attended their anniversary celebration (110 years at this location), and also assisted in serving Thanksgiving Dinner to homeless in the area.

Jack Gray (of CC) visited them before leaving for his trip around the world, receiving a congregational laying on of hands wishing him well.

Our two churches combined forces to provide weekly "SOUP AND SOCKS" for area homeless people, as Ann Eatherly collected thousands of socks at CC, and Messiah members cooked thousands of servings of hearty soups.

The Messiah basketball team named themselves "The Eagles" (after the Relay for Life team, "Eagles' Wings") and took the season.

The Messiah Community Empowerment Center has expanded its reach, although the Messiah Housing Corporation has moved back into the church building, facilitating the coordination of the two, and again reinforcing that Housing has always been a church ministry.

The attempt to keep Bound Together viable by providing a Saturday enrichment program did not succeed. But the summer program (run by Messiah this year, with Sarah Whitaker participating) continues to be popular. Bound Together Pontiac is recreating itself and has shared some new ideas with us.

Bill Herbert made a children's cross for Church of the Messiah. It was dedicated in a special ceremony at Messiah, honoring Bill for his contribution to the life of the church.

Barry is very much in demand for interviews, presentations, documentaries, and roundtables; but he still has no stipend, as the offering is still needed to run the church.

For questions, or to join the committee, contact Helen Santiz.