



A PUBLICATION OF DESERT STREAM MINISTRIES



Home FOR the **Holidays** **Life** in the **Body**



BY ANDREW COMISKEY

Those who claim the church as 'home' forsake the false notion that personal devotion to Jesus is enough. We know Him through them, 'the saints who are in the land, the glorious ones in whom is all our delight.'

PSALMS 16: 3



I have a confession to make: I love the church of Jesus Christ! Through all my wanderings, in a variety of gatherings, I have discovered the antidote to alienation, provocation to my passivity, the quieting of a restless heart.

I have found Jesus in His Body. There is nowhere else I would rather be than among the faithful, focused on the Lover of our souls.

Let's start at the church's beginning: Christmas. Here we are, yet again. Inevitably, the holidays stir up questions of home and family. As one ages, both change: families-of-origin scatter then one's own members leave and cleave. Today, Annette and I face the fun challenge my parents did decades ago: who is where and when? Often the stretch between Thanksgiving and New Year's is a series of little gatherings designed to accommodate the changing face and place of family.

Families change; the nature of 'home' evolves as we do. Christmas provokes a range of emotion, from the ache of a deceased loved one to anger and regret at estranged ones to delight in new members; holidays unfurl a backdrop of memories against which we assess this year's leanness and riches.

Head & Body

How blessed we are as believers to belong to a family that may well include but that always transcends our 'house church': we belong to a holy communion of saints who draw their life from Jesus Himself! Through birth and death, the taking up and letting go of family members, we are united in an actual

yet deeply mystical Body of which Christ Jesus is our head.

How blessed are we who know our home away from home! Those who claim the church as 'home' forsake the false notion that personal devotion to Jesus is enough. How can the Head, which is Christ, exist without His Body? We know Him through them, 'the saints who are in the land, the glorious ones in whom is all [our] delight.' (PS 16: 3)

The Body & Wholeness

I discovered my need for the Body early on. My life was disintegrated. I had come out of a community founded on the deception that same-gender members could create whole

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**'When I talk
about her,
I cannot stop!'**

St. Augustine

*'How lovely is Your
dwelling place, O Lord
Almighty!*

*My soul yearns, even faints
for the courts of the Lord;
My heart and flesh cry out
for the living God.*

*Even the sparrow has
found a home, and the
swallow a nest for herself,
where she may have her
young—a place near Your
altar,*

*O Lord God Almighty, my
King and my God.*

*Blessed are those who
dwell in Your house;
they are ever praising You.'*

Psalms 84: 1-4

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units. The truth: if two members share the same set of 'gifts', then trying to exchange those gifts is going to frustrate the gift-giving. Nature and good theology concur. A community of one gender cannot create new life; that requires 'otherness'.

The foundation for my wholeness lay not in dating women but rather in the dethroning of self that occurred in the 'otherness' of Christ's Body. By His grace, I submitted to a God I could not see with a group of people which a proud man like me would not have chosen to gather with. Yippee!

Pope Benedict describes far better than I the healing power of subordination to Christ through His Body. 'The Church of Jesus Christ is never my Church but always His Church. Indeed the essence of conversion lies precisely in the fact that I cease to pursue a party of my own that safeguards my interests and conforms to my tastes but that I put myself in His hands,

a member of His Body, the Church.' (Called to Communion)

Merciful Body

The Vineyard Christian Fellowship was the ground on which Annette and I fell in love. Within that holy family, we as a couple started our own. What a great foundation. The Vineyard possessed the special grace of Mercy: the mercy Jesus gave us for our sins that resulted in worship—simple love songs—that we sang to Jesus in gratitude for His kindness to us.

Jesus' mercy also expressed itself in healing. We as His Body believed that our Head wanted to heal people if we would pray. He was merciful. We trusted Him and prayed for people. Mercy healed us. Such healing was always accompanied by musical worship. Both flowed from Mercy, the foundation of the Vineyard and our own spirituality.

Praying the Truth

We moved east to Kansas City to join with IHOP (International House of Prayer). We came to give our gift of healing to the sexually broken there but what

we received was much greater. IHOP is founded on intercessory prayer and biblical prophecy: God's word spoken in season to rouse His people to do His will. IHOP prepared us for the battle ahead; it granted us the discipline of corporate intercession and the Word that awakens sleepy Christians, a combination through which we combat the deadly blend of perversion and unbelief in today's culture.

IHOP and the Vineyard: two powerful expressions of Christ's Body that 'married' in us Mercy and Truth. In our transition out of IHOP, we served at a local church, New Day, which afforded us a loving pastor and a solid context for Living Waters.

Body Aches

Yet an ache for home remained in us. Our hearts were fixed on Christ our Head, we worked hard in His Body, yet we grew weary of the ever changing dimensions of local church life. Perhaps that is the gift of Protestant churches (we can change!), as well as its liability (the ever fracturing Body). Regardless, our hearts longed for a home in the Body where we could lay our heads on His.

On the **strength of a mere dream,**

some prophecies, and a star,

Joseph mobilized all he had to guide

mother into granting Christ

secure entry into this world.

Then quietly, carpenter Joseph mentored

Jesus in the work of his hands.

Annette and I diverged here; she made her home in a turned-on Anglican Church where our son Nick became a pastor. It is a privilege to accompany my family to worship there and to witness the knitting in of both Nick and Annette.

I proceeded to explore the Roman Catholic Church and eventually became a confirmed Catholic. That has been hard for Annette and me, and at times we struggle against the divide. He who holds all things together holds us together too. (Col. 1: 17)

My new parish home has deepened my understanding of the Body as 'home.' I could write for days on the marvel of her mysteries, particularly the Eucharist. Through daily Mass, I partake heartily of the Word and of the wounded God whose brokenness is always my healing.

Yet such mystical union could become self-serving, an essentially vertical act. My hunger for God is only satisfied if we the Body are broken for one another, known in our weaknesses, submitting to each other out of reverence for Him (Eph. 5: 21) and thus being healed. (James 5:16)

Home is where we heal; I need honest exchange of weakness for holy strength where I worship. How grateful I am for truthful priests who facilitate confession. Yet we need more than that. To overcome life-dominating sins and wounds, we need each other. It is not optimal (though understandable) to separate one's spiritual home from the healing we can access from one another in this one Body.

The healing authority of the laity is a truth that is alien to

most Catholics. And my becoming Catholic has alienated me from many of my evangelical comrades. So I take heart that this year Pope Benedict initiated a Year of Faith. Its purpose is to raise up afresh the foundations of our faith for all to see; I trust this shall include a renewed mobilization of lay persons like me to manifest Jesus, one to another, in the one Body.

My prayer of faith: 'Jesus, make each church a healing home for the sexually broken!' Toward that end, I draw strength and courage from the Christmas mysteries.

Mary: A Type OF Church

Who better exemplifies faithful surrender than Mary, Jesus' mother? All she could offer to God was herself. She had no other pedigree: only faith. We are called to be like her. After all, the church itself is an essentially feminine vessel composed of men and women yielded to God for the purpose of bearing fruit through Him.

When I was Protestant, I always loved Mary and instinctively knew that we neglected

her honor. She is an exemplary disciple for two reasons: her radical obedience in saying yes to bearing Christ, and her unparalleled communion with Jesus from conception to His tomb. There lies her greatness: intimate communion combined with humble deference towards her Son.

Just like the church itself. The beauty of the Body is in vain if we do not lift up Jesus so He can draw all to Himself. Mary leads the way here, and thus becomes a type of the church, 'its exemplary realization' (CCC 967) and 'the mirror in which the whole church is reflected.' (deLubac)

To be clear, Christ is her Head too. How silly ones are who confuse her greatness with deity. The Catholic Church shoots straight here: 'Mary's function in no way obscures or diminishes the authority of Christ but rather shows its power.' (CCC 970) Under His headship, Mary bears witness to the whole church as to what we can be as yielded vessels to the Father: bearers of Christ, who

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like her commit to manifesting Him always.

Blessed is she among women, and blessed are we who concur. Through her witness, I take heart in my efforts to become a home for others in this One body.

'Salient' Joseph

Mary's greatness was realized by the faithful love of husband Joseph. You could also say that Jesus' birth depended upon Joseph's faithfulness. I define him as salient, which means equal parts authority and nurture, strength and benevolence. How else can you describe this man who employed his power to shield his bride and holy child from destruction?

Consider the forces against the young family. Joseph had not fathered Mary's child, leaving both him and Mary in the darkness of a social shame inconceivable in our day. Joseph did all within his power to protect her from such cruelties. He denied his own shame (not yet knowing the child's parentage) for her honor.

On the strength of a mere dream, some prophesies, and a star, he mobilized all he had to guide mother into granting Christ secure entry into this world. Then quietly, carpenter

Joseph mentored Jesus in the work of his hands.

We know of Joseph's salience mainly by inference: how his son wept over the lost and purged corrupt temples, lingered with children yet forged resolutely toward Jerusalem. We witness Joseph's salience most clearly in the beauty of his wife and the virtue of his son.

Tender and powerful, nearly hidden from view yet leaving a legacy that saved the world: not a bad role model for any Christian seeking to build up the Body. I look to Joseph with renewed intention this Christmas. How well do I use my power to empower the weak and grant them place in this one Body?

Manifesting Christ in this One Body


God entrusted Mary and Joseph to manifest Christ. Through His mercy, we have now become His Body. My challenge and yours is how our presence in that Body best manifests His headship. Are we making the Body a better place—purer, truer, more merciful through our membership? Are we helping make Christ's house a home for others?

We each must answer that question with concrete, Spirit-led decisions. I offered my gift—the way I manifest Jesus—to my parish. At first,

the pastor resisted a group for the sexually broken. Then I suggested a teaching/prayer group focused on the sexual abuse crisis in the Catholic Church. He agreed. Over the course of our weeks together, God knit together a small band committed to a healing Body.

We continue to meet and now include prayer for other sexual issues. Outside the group, I delight in meeting members of that 'band' as we await the Eucharist. We the broken are being built together to become something beautiful for God.

Similarly, Annette and I are running a pilot group in order to revise Living Waters. We have been working through the new material with a group composed of Protestant and Catholic members. Jesus unites us with our common desire to be good gifts to one another as men and women. Several members are church leaders who want to see Living Waters flow into their churches. God is healing us so that we might bring more healing to His house.

Home. Christmas reminds us that family should include Christ's Body. May we gather to adore Him and bless the new life growing among us. We are His very Body: living, growing, healing to become a refuge for the broken and a resting place for His glory. 

Home...

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Establishing a Healing Home



BY SAMUEL W. NEWBY

While flying back home from vacation last summer, strong storms caused my flight to be late. I missed my connecting flight and found myself stuck in Atlanta.

When you are waiting you can't but help notice people 'details': the strident gait of the confident, the meandering of the disinterested traveler, and the evidently lost.

As I watched, a picture of the church began to unfold before me in the faces of these busy and tired people. I saw here the same look I have seen in many churches across the country, including my own. It is the face a people looking desperately for the door to walk through that will take them home. In much the same way that these travelers looked for their gate, so do many in the church today find them-

selves looking for a church body to call home.

Being the pastor of a 4-year-old church plant, I am familiar with this syndrome of church hopping and shopping. I have come to recognize the look of quiet desperation on the faces of those peeking their head into the airplane to see if they know anyone on the flight or if there is decent enough legroom. (Is there ever?)

But the question for many has nothing to do with the 'plane', but rather what they bring to it: their inevitable baggage: the accumulation of unmet needs, tarnished pasts and wounded hearts. And the unspoken questions: is this a safe place for me? Will I be able to get what I need here?

And while these questions can lead to an unhealthy, "what's in it for me?" perspective, they are appropriate in making such an important decision.

Anyone who has visited a church for the first time lately knows how awkward the process can be. There is the parking, finding the right door, making sure you're on time then the process of meeting people.

There are the bigger questions of how the church worships, how they approach Scripture, and facilitate community life. What does it mean to be the 'called out people of God' in the midst of a post-Christian, post-modern society?

All of these things lead up to the intangible tangible: whether or not the church incarnates the person and ministry of Jesus Christ.

A great indicator of this is the presence of healing ministry in the church.

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...a Healing Home

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When we look at the ministry of Jesus in the Gospels, we cannot separate His teaching from His healing ministry. They were one in the same. In addition to direction for the future, Jesus knew people needed healing from the past. As a result, everyone that came into contact with Jesus came away radically transformed.

That same Jesus lives in the church today; He not only instructs but heals; He makes a way for all willing hearts to not only belong but to be transformed. **The church is not called to meet the needs of the human heart, nor can it, but rather to facilitate the life of the One that can: Jesus Christ.** "If I am lifted up....I will draw all men unto me." The role of the church is

to "lift up" Jesus in His actual presence and power.

There is an interesting story coming out of Spain about a woman named Cecilia Gimenez who set out to repair a damaged fresco of the Ecce Homo, a painting of Jesus with the crown of thorns. Though armed with the best of intentions and working in broad daylight under clerical supervision, the end product has caused an international uproar.

The initial image and essence of Jesus, though damaged, was still recognizable. This woman so altered Jesus that he is now unrecognizable, looking more like a type of monkey than human.

This tale is a parable of the 21st century church and its 'reformers' who end up presenting a Jesus who is not only devoid of His true image but His power as well. We must not only present the fullness

of Jesus essence and teaching from the Gospels, but engage with Him in this work nearest His heart: the healing of the human being.

With His presence and power realized in the church, Christ is glorified as Head and we have the joy of what Paul referred to as being 'those with unveiled faces reflecting the Lord's glory, being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory.'" (2Cor. 3:16)

I have been blessed to see this healing 'headship' of Christ in Desert Stream Ministries. I have been moved by the intense healing power employed relationally, theologically, and spiritually. And I have seen the evidence of lives transformed by the sweetness of Christ's healing power in their midst.

As a still young and forming church, I look forward to the day we will be able to facilitate Living Waters. We are excited to partner with Christie (see corresponding story) and others in order to unleash Jesus' love to the quietly desperate among us. We expect many like Christie to become confident, fruitful Christians as they find a home in the church. 

Sam and his wife Anna, are the pastors of Bridgeport Church (www.bridgeportchurch.org) in Kansas City, Missouri.



"The church is not called to meet the needs of the human heart, nor can it, but rather to facilitate the life of the One that can: Jesus Christ"



We are excited to partner with others in order to unleash Jesus' love to the quietly desperate among us... may we find a home in the church.

Finding Home



BY CHRISTIE MAY JESSEE

At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea where she entered Zechariah's home and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's

greeting, the baby leaped in her womb and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. In a loud voice she exclaimed:

"Blessed are you among women and blessed is the child you will bear! But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfill his promises to her!"
Luke 1:39-45

This is one of my favorite exchanges in the Bible. Mary, charged with the greatest responsibility of any human, knows that she cannot do this alone, so she hurries to her cousin. In Elizabeth, God has given Mary an incredible gift. The confirmation, the joy, and the honor all wrapped up in one uninhibited and unscripted greeting frees Mary to then proclaim what has been considered one of the greatest 'songs'

in the Bible. Elizabeth, the elder cousin who herself is experiencing a miracle of pregnancy, sees the truth, calls it out, and blesses it.

The Bible tells us that Mary spent three months with Elizabeth and then returned home. (Luke 1:56). I would have loved to hear the conversations that these two women had over those three months. I can imagine Elizabeth, with her wisdom and maturity, pouring into Mary encouragement, advice, blessing affirmation and love. In a sense, it is the perfect picture of godly community—two women, experiencing a profound move of God, and supporting one another along the way. Each believed the impossible for each other, and responded to the Holy Spirit's leading in claiming the truth for one another.

When God led my husband and I to our current church a few years ago, I was confused. It was not where I expected He would place me: it had an urban culture that was alien to me, I didn't dress as fashionably as many of the women there, and we were older than almost everyone in the church. In short, I had no idea how to make friends in this environment. I asked God why he had called me there. To my surprise, I felt him pressing this relationship of Elizabeth and Mary onto my heart—speaking to me—"I am calling you to be an Elizabeth in this church. I want you to call out what I am doing in these women. I want you to bless it, encourage it, and help these women to

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I am calling you to be an Elizabeth in this church.

I want you to call out what I am doing in these women.

I want you to bless it, encourage it, and help these women to embrace all that I have called them to."

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Finding Home

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embrace all that I have called them to.”

I cried all the way home. I still cry. The tears fall not only because the call is such a redemptive honor for me, who spent 17 years leaning on the body while walking out of same sex attraction, but also because God has led me to a community where such a call is welcomed and even encouraged.

When my husband and I first moved to this city, we searched for a church. Our community in California had been so foundational to my healing—men and women had prayed over me in truth as I wrestled with my own wounds and wounded responses. It took years for me to really break free from the bondage of lesbianism, but my brothers and sisters never lost hope for me, and never compromised truth.

No one ever said to me, “Maybe you were born this way”, or “Perhaps freedom is not really something God has for you.” Instead there was a faith in the power of God to heal, and there was an understanding that the only context for healthy godly intimacy was in heterosexual marriage. The simple consistent truth won out.

So when we went looking for a new church home, we were optimistic. We wanted to go to church near our home in the city—so we looked at urban churches and found one where we were told our convictions were welcome. But over time,

we discovered that ours were not the only convictions welcomed—there was, in fact, a relativistic, open-minded approach to truth. There was an agreement to disagree even amongst the leadership.


While this sounded peaceful, it actually created an environment that left the church fundamentally powerless to walk people into freedom. After being told that our testimonies would have to be handled carefully so as not to imply conviction, and after watching several marriages broken by husbands who chose to pursue a gay lifestyle while the church stood idly by, unwilling to do the hard work of calling these men to a higher place, we realized that the miracle of God’s redemption in our lives would never be fully celebrated here. And so we looked again.

The second search was more frustrating. We found conservative churches that ‘towed the line’, but did not seem to offer the avenues for healing that many who hope for holiness need. Having been saddened by our previous experience we wondered if we would be forced to look outside the city to find a church home.

Then we found this little church with a big crazy faith in the power of God to heal, restore, redeem and transform His children to reflect His glory. It is a body that is becoming more like Jesus both corporately, and individually. It is a place where people can be human, confess

sin, be loved and be called to the more that God has. We are a young church, both demographically and chronologically, but we are maturing in the light of truth. We are being transformed into His image, regardless of the cost.

Transformation requires a willingness to be known. In this church, I do not have to apologize for my ‘controversial and potentially offensive’ story; instead, my pastor asked me to share my testimony before the whole church—giving me the full 40 minutes (I took 50) both to model the transparency, faith and conviction that undergird our community. The goal is to offer hope for those who struggle with all kinds of besetting sins. It is exhilarating to see my story bring hope and understanding to others. And it is empowering to see others pressing in to the freedom God has for them.

It is an honor to emulate Elizabeth in this community and love my sisters with the glorious hopeful love of God. I am called to share life. Here that call is embraced, and I know we have found a home. 

Christie, her husband and their two daughters live in Kansas City and attend Bridgeport Church.

Reflection...

Home Away from Home



BY KATIE COMISKEY

Christmas has deep connections with home. We gather together with loved ones to celebrate within the intimacy of home. More importantly, as we celebrate our Savior's birth, we

see that God chose Mary to be the "home for Christ". Mary bore the Immanuel: submitting herself to the will of God and nurturing Christ within her very body

Indeed, the arrival of the incarnate God into his world gives us access to our true heavenly home; the virgin birth is the means God chose to redeem us so we could live forever with him.

But like many aspects of God's kingdom, this transcendent idea of home shows up as an earthly reality in which we can all participate. I defined home

primarily as my family-of-birth: a place of comfort, safety and joy in which I am known and loved by those closest to me.

However, after a year and a half away from my family, I expanded my definition of home. I have found that it is Christ's body, his church, in which I am also intimately known and love. Within this family, our hearts knitted

together in the bond of Christ's love, I taste and see my heavenly home.

I moved to Birmingham, Alabama in August of 2011 to attend Beeson Divinity School. Unfamiliar with Birmingham and 700 miles away from my family, I knew I needed to find a good church home in which I could worship the Lord in a loving, supportive community. And God blessed me to find an Anglican church, led by an amazing husband and wife who have poured into my life.

From the very first Sunday, this body welcomed me warmly and made me feel like a member of the family. I soon joined a community group, where I fellowship with my brothers and sisters and continue to learn to be open and vulnerable with those around me.

The transition to Birmingham was not entirely smooth. Various events marred my time here: a shoddy apartment complex, stolen wallet, totaled car. Previous to this move, I found relief and resolution from most trying incidents within my family. Now, far away from Mom and Dad, I found another means of support.

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"...it was this virgin birth, which gives us access to our true, heavenly home—it is the means by which God chose to initiate His plan of redemption in order that we could live forever with Him."



“Now, Far away From Mom and Dad,

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another means
of support.

And my church
family stepped
in and filled the
gap where my
earthly family
was unable.”

My church family stepped in and filled the gap where my earthly family was unable. My pastor and his wife led the larger community of the church to comfort and aid me in these minor trials. I have experienced the immeasurable comfort of the love of God as manifested through his body. I am learning that that we Christians do not walk this journey alone, but rather are grafted into the faithful body of Christ.

“We rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep” (Rom 12:25, ESV). Implicit here is the vulnerability and intimacy required of true fellowship within the body. That requires the willingness to be known in both our strengths and our weaknesses, and to invite those in the body to participate within these realities of our life.

My church has indeed become my family, my “home away from home.” It is the place I go to receive the mercy and grace of Christ, to weekly partake with others of his body and blood, and to meditate on his saving work. Seminary provides a theological framework for my ministry and belief; church is where I gather with my heavenly family to encounter the living God. It is where I, as a being created to worship and glorify God, find my place.

The alienation inherent in a fallen world falls away as I stand before the throne of God with my fellow saints; together, we worship the Father and His Son through the Spirit. In this worship I find home—not merely myself before God but with the entire body of Christ, the saints next to me and those of old.

As we prepare our hearts and await the birth of our Savior, I am overwhelmed at the kindness of our God who made a home for us in heaven through the birth of his Son. But he also gives us the privilege to share in this reality now through his body, the church.

May we be more like Mary, bearing Christ deep within. And may we share the gift, as Mary did with Elizabeth, in mutual affection and encouragement and exultations of joy. Here, within the body, we find the sustenance for faith. So we also share in the blessing of Mary “who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord” (Luke 1:45). We are well on the way to our true heavenly home 🙏

Katie attends Beeson Divinity School and is an intern at Christ the King Anglican Church serving under Dr. Lyle and Mary Dorsett



“I am overwhelmed

as the kindness of our God

who made a home for us in heaven...

he also gives us this through communion

with his body, the church.”

Annunciation

Hail, space for the uncontained God!

(From the Akathistos Hymn, Greece, VIC)

BY DENISE LEVERTOV

*We know the scene: the room, variously furnished,
almost always a lectern, a book; always the tall lily.
Arrived on solemn grandeur of great wings,
the angelic ambassador, standing or hovering,
whom she acknowledges, a guest.*

*But we are told of meek obedience.
No one mentions courage.
The engendering Spirit did not enter her without consent.
God waited.*

***She was free to accept or to refuse,
choice integral to humanness.***

*Aren't there annunciations of one sort
or another in most lives?
Some unwillingly undertake great destinies;
enact them in sullen pride, uncomprehending.
More often those moments when roads of light and
storm open from darkness in a man or woman,
are turned away from in dread,
in a wave of weakness,
in despair and with relief.*

***Ordinary lives continue.
God does not smite them.
But the gates close, the pathway vanishes.***

*She had been a child who played, ate, slept
like any other child—but unlike others,
wept only for pity, laughed in joy not triumph.
Compassion and intelligence fused in her, indivisible.*

*Called to a destiny more momentous
than any in all of Time,
she did not quail, only asked a simple,
'How can this be?' and gravely, courteously,
took to heart the angel's reply, perceiving instantly
the astounding ministry she was offered:
to bear in her womb
Infinite weight and lightness; to carry in hidden,
finite inwardness,
nine months of Eternity;
to contain in slender vase of being,
the sum of power—
in narrow flesh, the sum of light.
Then bring to birth,
push out into air, a Man-child needing,
like any other, milk and love—
but who was God.*

***This was the minute no one speaks of,
when she could still refuse.
A breath unbreathed,
Spirit, suspended, waiting.***

*She did not cry, "I cannot, I am not worthy,"
nor "I have not the strength."
She did not submit with gritted teeth, raging, coerced.
Bravest of all humans,
consent illumined her.
The room filled with its light,
the lily glowed in it,
and the iridescent wings.*

Consent, courage unparalleled, opened her utterly.

Corporate Corner



BY ANNETTE COMISKEY

My first memories of church go back a long time. I remember at 3 clinging on to my mom's dress as she went from one Sunday school room to another. Church

was the most important part of my parent's life. So every Sunday, year in and year out, I went to church with them.

As I grew up I stayed in church. My high school youth group was a big part of my social life, and in college I taught Sunday school. So, it wasn't much of a stretch when Andy and I started dating and attending the Vineyard almost simultaneously.

The church became as central in my adult life as it had been as a child. It was a constant for Andy and me through so many ups and downs of ministry life. That shifted when Andy joined the Catholic Church in April 2011. That September I started attending the Anglican Church where our son Nick is a pastor on staff.

Initially, it was a very emotional transition. Even though Andy attended services with me more often than not, it was the idea of his and her churches which grieved me. I would go to a meeting, not knowing a soul, and come home in tears. But slowly the kind people of the church began to draw me in. A friendly greeting at the Beth Moore Bible study, making a friend as we served at a church event: each week became a little easier.

Christmas Eve was a turning point for me. Andy, Katie, Sam, Meg (Nick's wife) and I went

to the service where Nick was serving as a deacon. We got there early, but not soon enough. The only seats left were folding chairs, one at the end of each row near the back of the church! As communion




Christmas provokes a range of emotion... holidays unfurl a backdrop of memories against which we assess this year's leanness and riches.



started I realized half the church would walk by where I was sitting. To my surprise, congregants filed by to say hello. Small beginnings gave way to much deeper involvement in just a year.

I'm now a part of the Altar Guild, serving alongside a committed group of women of all ages; I see their care not just to the church but to each other. These are women with church 'legs.' I'm leading a small group in the same Bible study where I walked in the door a year ago as a stranger.

My prayer is that Christ Church will also become another home for Desert Stream programs. Ann Armstrong (she attends the same church) and I just finished up leading a group in listening prayer. This spring a CrossCurrent pilot group will start.

Maybe the most important aspect of this past year has been the Lord showing Andy and I how to live as one, with a Catholic half and a Protestant half. The Lord's church is not a denomination but the gathering of ones committed to serving Him and equipping His Bride. We continue to do that together as we have for the past thirty two years. The setting differs but we serve the one Jesus in His one Body. 

2012

YEAR-END REPORT

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Newsletter (Spring and Fall)
Mid-Year Report (Summer)
Year-End Report (Winter)

Mission Statement

Based on the biblical foundations of compassion, integrity, and dependence on God, Desert Stream Ministries proclaims to the world the transforming power of Jesus Christ.

We equip the body of Christ to minister healing to the sexually and relationally broken, through healing groups and leadership training for the local church.

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