

COME TO BALTIMORE TO MAKE FRIENDS AND DISCIPLES

"Transforming Congregations Through Spiritual Practice: Creating a Discipleship Community" is the theme for this summer's Annual Gathering featuring speakers Jessicah Duckworth and Paul Hoffman. Both published authors and popular conference speakers, they will help participants explore how to transform their congregations into communities of disciples. The event also features practical workshops, inspiring worship, and an opportunity to network with ministry practitioners of various denominations from across North America.

The gathering will take place Thursday, July 30 to Saturday, Aug. 1 on the beautiful campus of

the Bon Secours Spiritual Center, located less than a half hour from the heart of Baltimore. And close to the many famous sites in Washington DC. Participants are encouraged to come early or stay late to do some sightseeing in the area; you may fly into one of three airports: Baltimore International, Dulles, or Reagan (National).

There will be two workshop tracks for participants — one for beginners and one for experienced Catechumenate practitioners. Among the workshop leaders are Amy Dyer, John Hill, Beth Lewis, Wayne Schwab, and many others.

This year NAAC is offering a special discounted rate for

couples. Every room features a double bed and bath. Registration includes room, all meals, materials, and conference. Note that June 15 is the deadline to apply for scholarships and June 30 is the deadline to receive the early bird discount of \$50 per registration. Multiple registrations can be made online, so consider bringing friends and colleagues to the gathering this year. Scholarships are also available on a first come basis to seminarians and first call pastors. Contact registrar, Devra Betts, for more information at devrabetts@gmail.com. To download a brochure and/or to register, online go to our website at www.catechumenate.org.

PASHKA AND PUNCH FOR EASTER NEXT

Sherman Hesselgrave shares the following recipe that his parish uses for their Easter Vigil reception. Save and use for Easter 2016.

Recipe for Pashka:

Four 8-oz packages of cream cheese
1 cup butter
2 cups confectioner's sugar, sifted
2 teaspoons vanilla
3/4 cup toasted slivered almonds
1 cup golden raisins
Toast the almonds in a 325° oven until golden, but not burnt. Let cool. Combine softened butter and cream cheese and beat with a wooden spoon until smooth.

Add the vanilla, then the confectioner's sugar. Stir in the almonds, then the raisins. Cover and chill. Remove from refrigerator 1/2 hour before serving. Spread on Easter Bread, or pretty much anything.

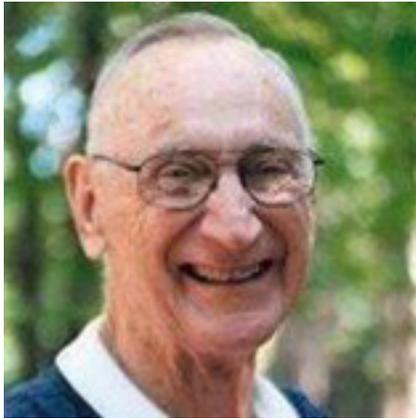
Recipe for Easter Vigil Punch:

1 can frozen orange juice
1 can frozen lemonade
1 can pineapple juice (I haven't found it frozen)
2 litre bottle of chilled ginger ale (I use diet) Don't dilute the frozen juices. I put them in unthawed,



and skip adding ice, since the punch disappears very quickly. In the other punch bowl, I substitute two 750 ml bottles of chilled champagne or cava (or one 1500 ml bottle) in place of ginger ale.

APPRENTICESHIP FOR CHRISTIAN LIVING



A. Wayne Schwab,
Coordinator for the Member Mis-
sion Network

We are moving toward a new way of Christian mission. *The Book of Common Prayer* states that the church's mission is "to restore all people to unity with God and each other in Christ. (p. 855). The "attraction" model of church is one way many congregations strive to respond to this mission. In the attraction model we hope that the non-churched will see us as a loving community growing in faith together and will, of course, be drawn to join us in this mission. Unfortunately this model does not seem to be working. A "missional" model is becoming the norm.

The missional model of church envisions that we move out of the church into the world around us, that we are on mission wherever we are 24/7/365. We are to make each part of life more loving and more just with God's help. The church becomes increasingly important as our place for guidance and sustenance. We find the guidance in scripture and teaching of how God wants us to live lovingly and justly. We receive the

sustenance to live that way at the Lord's table.

We joined this mission of love and justice in baptism. We joined the mission to respect the dignity of every human being, to seek and to serve Christ in our neighbors, and to bring the Good News in deed and word to every part of daily life. Thus preparation for baptism is critical for understanding what baptismal living is all about. The catechumenal formation process in its many forms is the way to progress in this preparation.

From its start in the early church, the heart of catechumenal formation has been reflection by the candidates with some of the already baptized on how to live out Sunday's Bible readings in the coming week. The candidates are apprenticed for Christian living, for seeking to be loving and just wherever they are all the time.

As Louis Weil advises, the same pattern of how to live out the readings the coming week is the core of today's catechumenal formation. The catechumens are apprentices, and the members of the Church are their mentors and helpers. The question "How will we live out what we have just heard in the week ahead?" is critical for each and every part of your church's catechumenal formation process.

* * *

How can moving through the first three stages include the notes of apprenticeship for living the Gospel? How can mystagogia, the fourth stage of baptismal living, center on this apprenticeship?

Here are some ways recommended in the NAAC Training Institute literature:

The Introductory Materials:

- The opening lines of the materials cite a dual emphasis that the training to be on both baptismal faith and baptismal living.
- The catechumenate may be described as "a process of becoming one with both Christ's church and Christ's mission."
- One way to describe the mission of Christ that one joins in baptism is that we are making the world more loving and more just with God's help.
- The fourth stage of Baptismal Living is sensing what God is doing in each part of your life, listing ways you can join in what God is already doing, choosing the specific way you will join in God's mission now, doing it, and reflecting on what you have learned. The fifty days from Easter to Pentecost are, therefore, centered on practicing apprenticeship in Christian living. The newly baptized discern their specific missions, pursue them, and share the results. When possible, they secure teammates to walk with them on their missions.

The introductory session of the NAAC Training Institute seeks to broaden the participants' perspective:

- It is noted that the climax of the catechumenate process is more than the celebration of baptism. The real climax is seeking baptismal living from Monday to Monday wherever we are, all the time.

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- There are repeated references to developing daily living of the covenant in many of the suggestions for activities and presentations during this workshop.

Sample questions for biblical reflection focus on action as well as on one's inner life:

- The biblical reflection in the section on "Preparation for the Rite of the Cross" often centers on what it means to save or to lose one's life. This reflection can dwell primarily on personal issues. The leader can pose a question that helps to focus on specific responses in all areas of one's life. For example, "What are we asked to lose in both our private and our public life to follow Jesus? What life might we find in both the private and the public parts of our lives in following Jesus?"

- In using some form of three-step biblical reflection such as "The Aural Bible Study Method,"* word the third question with care. Ask: "From what I have heard and shared, what is God calling me to be or to do or to change this week?" Adding "to change" can move the reflection towards the possibilities of correcting some abuse in the world around us beyond the usual citing of only inner or personal change.

- When reflecting on the Samaritan woman at the well, I recommend that we go beyond a general question such as "How can your thirst be satisfied?" Ask for reflection on the spirituality of a specific group each participant chooses such as "How can the thirst of unemployed people in

our community be satisfied?" or "How can the thirst of people of color in our community be satisfied?"

- When using diagrams, make sure they acknowledge the many aspects of Christian living. For example, there is a page in the Institute training materials with quadrants labeled HOME, VOCATION, COMMUNITY, WORLD respectively. Participants are asked to write in a mission or ministry in each one. I suggest we change "VOCATION" to "PAID OR VOLUNTEER WORK" because the baptized are called to a specific mission or ministry in each area of daily life. As leaders we need to be sure that volunteer work is recognized. This is often where a person's "passion" is, where there is a response to God's call. I also suggest we add "LEISURE" as a fifth area in a pentagonal diagram. God has missions for us in our "play time" as surely as in the other areas of daily life.

"Discerning one's gifts" needs to be broad as well

- Paul Wagner of Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California developed a process for discernment and use of one's gifts. The potential gifts are those named by St. Paul in his letters (Romans 12:6-8; I Corinthians 12:8-10 and 28-32; and Ephesians 4:11).

- First, participants tend to look around to find where they will use their gifts. This can be a self-directed process rather than a process carried on in collaboration with God. If we direct them instead to ask "what is God already doing in this part of my

daily life?", the follow up question becomes "How will I join what God is doing there?" After this, ask what gifts might be required; identify the gifts you have already, and pray for other gifts that may be needed.

- Second, these lists from Paul's letters are in words of that era in the church's life. Other terms are needed for today's church life such as "official board member," "mentor," "spiritual director," or "group leader." Even more problematic are the lack of names for any gifts or roles outside the church such as "legislator," "corporation manager," "labor organizer," "working single-parent," "machinist," or "Internet techy." How do gifts in management, parenting, engineering, or internet knowledge fit into the mix in terms of determining one's vocation and mission?

- Groups practice discerning gifts in each other now. One by one, and on the basis of their brief time together, the rest share the gifts they see at work in each member. The members then conclude with sharing how they now see life in each of their daily mission fields. This process concludes with prayers of thanksgiving for the gifts discerned in each person.

Developing Baptismal Living

Apprenticeship in Christian living comes center stage after baptism. Facilitating this apprenticeship involves some foundational thinking and planning.** Additional guidance is needed for apprentices to become "journeymen" and "journeywomen." Fill the fifty

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days from Easter to Pentecost with intense practice of baptismal living. Use resources that help each of the newly baptized to discern God's work in each daily arena and to choose just how to join God's work there. Guide towards the goal that the neophytes will conclude the fifty days by having moved from apprenticeship to "journeyman/woman."

There are resources available to help us help the apprentices. *The Living Gospel: A Guide for Individuals and Small Groups* (Member Mission Press, 2010) is one such resource. It includes a theology for the daily missions of each member, a guide for using the workbook, a single session to introduce the sense of seven daily mission fields, forms to discern one's mission in each field, a way to find a teammate to walk with you, and a way to discern your gifts for mission. During the fifty days, try to use the introductory session; the discernment forms for home, work, community, and the wider world; and gifts discovery. If you extend the process, have additional meetings to focus on mission in leisure, spiritual health, church, and finding a teammate. This approach puts together both discerning God's work and specific ways to join in God's work. The teaching and worship of the congregation are the sources of guidance and power for the discerning and the doing of missions. The Holy Spirit's presence and help throughout the process makes it a uniquely rich spiritual experience.

Ongoing support for the "journeymen/women missionaries"

Each congregation will find its own way to weave living our daily missions into its life. Finding ways to guide and support the "journeymen/women" contributes to the raising of consciousness that we, as a faith community, have our corporate mission as well. How might we provide this guidance? Here are some suggested methods from *The Living Gospel*:

- Have prayers in Sunday liturgies rotate among the seven mission fields;
- Have members share their various daily missions during Sunday liturgies or in printed form on display in the entry way;
- Develop a Lenten series that uses and shares the introduction form and the forms for the mission fields of home, work, community, and wider world;
- Have a different member of the church council begin each meeting during the Period of Development of Baptismal Living with a report on one of his or her current missions;
- Build the youth confirmation process around using the daily mission forms so that the youth have a clearer idea of the kind of life they are committing themselves to. Better yet, involve parents in the process;
- Incorporate the daily mission forms into the adult confirmation formation process;
- Orient newcomers when they first join the congregation to the Christian missional nature of the congregation as joining Jesus' mission and share the seven daily mission fields;

- Build the entire formation process for catechumens and their sponsors around baptism being a matter of joining Jesus' mission and work;
- Review church publications with an eye that clearly state that, when one joins this congregation, one is joining God's mission to make the world more loving and more just;
- Build up the confidence of parish members to talk about issues in the context of faith by using the Sunday "Practicing God-talk" pieces in *The Living Gospel*. These address concerns in all seven areas of daily life with sources that come from both religious and secular settings and that are paired with biblical references;
- Have the neophytes meet on Sunday mornings before or after worship to study the Gospel passage of the day using some form of the Aural Bible Study;
- Help your various church organizations to describe and share what they do to support the daily missions of their members.

In summary, the catechumenal process offers a unique opportunity and capacity for participants to grow as apprentices and then journeymen/women in linking faith and daily living.

* One of the Aural Methods is available on the NAAC website under Resources/Bible Studies.

** See *Go Make Disciples: An Invitation to Baptismal Living* (Augsburg Fortress, 2012, pp. 126-137).

*All pastors, lay leaders, and seminarians are invited
to an event hosted by the North American Association for the Catechumenate*

**“GO, BAPTIZE, MAKE DISCIPLES”
a Catechumenate Training Institute for congregations
offered by NAAC**

**Thursday, Oct. 1 thru Saturday, Oct. 3, 2015
Held at St. John’s Lutheran Church, Sacramento, CA
Co-hosted by Trinity Cathedral and St. Martin’s Episcopal Church
Endorsed by Bishop Barry Beisner and Bishop Mark Holmerud**

Who should attend and why?

- For those new to the catechumenate and also for experienced practitioners.
- An immersion into the rites and rituals of this ancient Christian practice.
- Experience all four stages of the Catechumenate process including small groups.
- Learn tools and how to introduce this journey of discipleship to your parish.
- Bring a team, pastors, musicians, lay leaders, and interns, so you can learn together.
- Every participant will receive a training notebook and free copy of *Go Make Disciples: An Invitation to Baptismal Living*, an ecumenical guide for congregations published by Augsburg Fortress.

**Registration is only \$185 per person that includes all meals, materials, and program.
Lodging is available within walking distance
at the Sacramento Hyatt for a special conference rate.
Scholarships available for seminarians and first call pastors.
Application deadline is Aug. 31.**

**Download a brochure or register online at www.catechumenate.org
Contact Registrar Devra Betts: devrabetts@gmail.com
for scholarship information and more details.**

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