



# *The Verger's Voice*

*in the Vergers' Guild of the Episcopal Church*

*"Service in Worship + Worship through Service"*

## New Bishop in the Diocese of Kansas



Cathedral Verger Kent Wingerson assists during the consecration of the Rev. Dean E. Wolfe as the ninth Bishop of Kansas.

Before a congregation of 800, the Rev. Dean E. Wolfe was consecrated the ninth Bishop of Kansas at Grace Cathedral, Topeka, on November 8, 2003. Six vergers took part in the two hour liturgy, which involved seven consecrating bishops. Five other bishops were also present for this important event.

Cathedral Verger, Kent Wingerson, serving as Master of Ceremonies, conducted the rehearsal and organized the liturgy along with necessary altar guild, usher, and sound arrangements. Dianne Betts, VGEC Secretary and verger of St.

Michael and All Angels, Dallas, along with Tony Briggles, Master of Acolytes, and 19 acolytes traveled to Topeka to join the cathedral acolytes, 3 cathedral vergers, and 2 vergers from the local diocese.

Vergers were responsible for ordering the processions, coordinating the acolytes, guiding various participants into position, assisting with the vesting of the new bishop, managing sound system items and furniture, delivering vessels to six nave stations and refilling bread and wine throughout communion.

**Lent Issue**  
**March, 2004**

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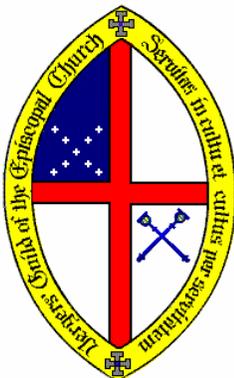
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## Upcoming Events

### Oklahoma Acolyte Festival

The Third Annual Acolyte Festival of the Diocese of Oklahoma will be held on Saturday, April 24, 2004, at St. Paul's Cathedral, Oklahoma City, OK. The event will include a session about the ministry of vergers. If you would like more information, please contact J. Mike Merrill, Verger-in-Training, Emmanuel Episcopal Church, Shawnee, Oklahoma, 405.273.0828 or by email at MerrillJM@aol.com.

### Walter Mace Chapter Second Annual Vergers Conference

The Walter Mace Chapter of the VGEC (Diocese of Texas) is sponsoring its second annual Vergers Seminar on March 20, 2004, at St. Christopher's Episcopal Church in Houston, Texas. Featured speakers will be the Reverend Dr. Bob Wells and the Reverend Dr. Robert Moore. Dr. Wells will be speaking on spirituality and listening as it relates to vergers while Dr. Moore will focus on the Concordat and the Lutheran and Episcopal prayerbooks. There will also be workshops on the various aspects of the ministry of the verger. The cost of the seminar is \$45. A continental breakfast and lunch will be included. Participants will also receive a manual containing approximately 60 pages of great information. For more information on this important event, contact Ann Goza, 713.465.7553, or Peggy Metcalf, 713.741.4312, or visit the Walter Mace website at [www.texasvergers.org](http://www.texasvergers.org).

### Sixteenth Annual VGEC Conference

Mark your calendars! Join the Vergers at Saint Michael & All Angels as they celebrate the Feast of their Patronal Saint. The Sixteenth Annual Conference of the Vergers' Guild of the Episcopal Church will be held in Dallas, Texas September 23 – 26, 2004. Conference hotel will be the Park Cities Hilton in Dallas. Plans are being made to share Texas barbecue and hospitality as we gather for learning, sharing, worship, and fun. Brochures will be mailed in late spring with more details. We look forward to seeing a large crowd of vergers and friends!

### Chapter Representative

The editor notes the following addition to the list of VGEC chapter representatives as reflected in the last issue of *The Verger's Voice*:

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## *News and Notes from the Church of England Guild of Vergers*

By John G. Campbell, Overseas Liason Officer, CEGV

### **Royal Maundy**

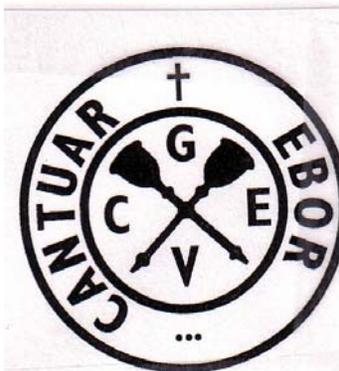
“I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another.” This commandment ( Mandatum) was given by Our Lord to His disciples the night before he died when He washed their feet. It is from this simple act of humility and mandatum that the present Royal Maundy ceremony has its origins.

The Maundy Ceremonies have become an important part of Easter preparations for Christian churches of many lands and traditions.

The Royal Maundy traces its origins in this country back to King John who, in 1210, it is recorded, took part in a foot washing ceremony in Knaresborough, Yorkshire. Tradition now has it that the monarch gives Maundy Gifts to men and women. The gifts consist of two sets of specially minted coins: the first containing 1p for each year of the monarch's age, and are made up of 1p, 2p, 3p and 4 pence pieces. The second set contains a sum of money in lieu of gifts formerly given. In 2000 that sum was £5.50 in two specially minted coins ( a £5 coin commemorating Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother's 100th birthday, and a 50p piece marking the 150th anniversary of public libraries).

Preparations for the great event started on October 6th 1999 involving many telephone calls to and visits from Christo

pher Williams, Secretary to the Royal Almonry. A visit to Buckingham Palace was in order, which was an experience I will cherish. Rehearsals took place with many differing parties: the Chapter and the Bishop, the music department, stewards, vergers, servers, civic parties and police all were put through their paces well before the main rehearsal the day before.



And so on 20th April 2000 Her Majesty the Queen, accompanied by the Duke of Edinburgh, together with the Lord High Almoner (the Bishop of Wakefield) and members of the Royal Almonry attended Lincoln Cathedral for the distribution of Maundy Gifts. A total of 2000 filled the cathedral, including: 219 in the procession, four bishops two choirs ten vergers and eight trumpeters from the RAF as well as a television crew.

Her Majesty gave 74 men and 74 women, one of each for each year of her age, Maundy Gifts. The recipients, from all parts of the County of Lincolnshire, chosen for their Christian service to their church and community were all of modest means and over the age of seventy.

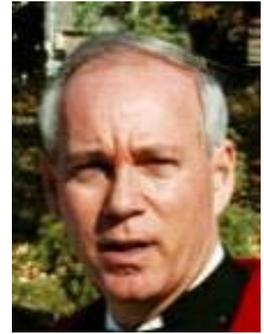
The Dean and Chapter, foundation, staff and congregation of the cathedral, ceremony mixed with a simple act of humility following Our Lord's example.

JOHN G CAMPBELL

### **Diocese of Atlanta Vergers Meet and Elect New Officers**

The Mark Emory Graham chapter of the Vergers Guild of the Episcopal Church met on January 10, 2004 at historic St. Stephen's church in Milledgeville for their annual meeting and elected officers to lead the 45 member group for the next two years. Following a Eucharist celebrated by the Rev. Carl Buice of St. James, Macon, the meeting was called to order by outgoing chair Ken Medernach. After the usual business, elections of the officers for the next term were held.

During the past two years the chapter has grown to 45 members, including 8 churches which have added the verger ministry to their parish liturgical activities and four member parishes outside of the Diocese of Atlanta. For further information on the Mark Emory Graham chapter of the Vergers Guild, visit our web pages at [www.southern-artist.com/VGEC-MEG.htm](http://www.southern-artist.com/VGEC-MEG.htm).



## *President's Message*

David Jette

It was my privilege at the end of January to serve as a visiting vergger at the investiture and seating of the Rt. Rev. Samuel Johnson Howard as the 8<sup>th</sup> Bishop of Florida. Bishop Howard had served previously as vicar of Trinity Church in New York and consequently had been my previous boss. He and I had worked closely at Trinity for over five years and we both were accustomed to our various ways of doing ministry. Verggers, I think, are not wired to deal with change easily. We appreciate patterns and ordered sets of details as a tool to carrying out our assigned tasks. Naturally, I arrived at St. John's Cathedral, Jacksonville extra early in order to familiarize myself with the building and to check in with Frank Bellamy and Roger Smallridge, two of the St. John's verggers. The warm welcome from each put me at ease immediately and prepared me for the tasks at hand. After Bishop Howard was invested by the retiring Bishop of Florida and seated by the Dean, it was my job to assist the new bishop in switching from rochet and chimere to Eucharistic vestments. All of this seemed a "normal" customary part of our time together in New York. I soon realized, however, that my friend's ministry had dramatically changed and so had our relationship. As gratifying at some level, as this realization was, there was pain too. In the end, I knew it was best to accept this change knowing that our friendship, though altered, would continue. God's call should not limit or narrow our focus but should broaden every relationship in our life.

Indeed, there is additional change in my life too. Our rector, is retiring this year, and we look forward to new leadership by summer. With the appointment of a new rector a new vicar should also be in place soon. All of this will bring further change. Like all change over which others hold control, there are some aspects which will be welcome and no doubt parts less immediately pleasurable. However, being of service to others is integral to our ministry as verggers. Sometimes this ministry is carried out with authority but more appropriately our leadership is exercised as an extension of the canonical authority of our dean or rector. I will be learning these lessons anew.

Change is never easy but is inevitable as anything in life. The call to Christian service is not a call to rigidity and absolute certainty in all things. If we are confident in what we do as verggers we can be open to the grace needed to manage change in our lives as opportunity for growth. The season of Lent always arrives at the right time it seems to me. As the worst of winter begins to fade the community of faith enters a time of solemn self-examination and repentance. This is not a time for excessive false piety but an opportunity for growth in closer communion with God and with those sharing our journey's path.

God bless you.

David Jette  
President,  
Verggers' Guild of the Episcopal Church

### **Trinity Church, Wheaton, IL, Installs Second Vergger,** by Russ Fox, Vergger

On December 1, 2002, Trinity Episcopal Church in Wheaton, Illinois, commissioned Joyce Thompson as its second vergger. The Reverend Canon Curtis R. Zimmerman, Interim Rector, presided at the service of installation and Deacon Jim Lanning presented the candidate. Vergger Russ Fox then presented the new vergger with a VGEC certificate of installation. Joyce has served as a lay Eucharistic minister, a lector, and a member of various committees in the parish. She brings to this new ministry as a vergger an intuitive sense of service and a special calling to the ordering and conduct of the liturgy.

*Pictured at right are Russ Fox, Joyce Thompson, the Rev. Curtis R. Zimmerman, and the Rev. Jim Lanning.*





## A Very Different Walk

### *A Lenten Reflection* by The Reverend Dr. Peter Gustin VGEC Chaplain

We've been together for a long time now, and readers used to my Lenten themes know that I'm all about verging the masses through the wilderness and all that. I'm still about those things, but God has traced my own path in such a way that I am now working indirectly for the U.S. Department of Homeland Security in the Domestic Preparedness Program. This work has given me an entirely new perspective of the Lenten journeys we all must verge, which are horrifyingly different from any Lenten path most of us have walked before. It is almost inevitable that one of us in the next year will have to retrace our beloved president's footsteps through the aftermath of a terrorist attack. The question is not "if," it's "when."

The post-September 11 era has brought not only new ways to live in the world, but it brings also new ways to live in the Church. Perhaps one of the most important parts of our Lenten observance will be to ascertain how we can verge our congregations, and by extension, our local and regional communities, into God's promise of recovery and redemption from such atrocities as we have never witnessed before September 11, but will surely witness again.

It can and does and most definitely will happen, so our Lenten question moves from How can I observe a holy Lent? to How can I observe a Lent that addresses, and God willing, provides for, the safety and well being of the people God has entrusted to my care? Here are some thoughts.

Does your town/city/region/county have an Emergency Operations Center (EOC)? It should, and the EOC staff should know that you exist. Find a way to contact them. (It could be tricky, because most localities protect the location of and access to their EOCs to protect them from secondary attack during or after a primary attack.) Tell them what facilities you have to offer in response to a terrorist attack. This would include how many buildings your church has and how many people it can (legally) sleep in case it is needed for a shelter.

Do you have a kitchen? Is it up to code? Keeping your parish kitchen in compliance with local health department regulations will make it a valuable resource in terrorism response. David will tell you that the makeshift kitchens in St. Paul's Chapel were under constant scrutiny by health officials to make sure that the food provided by countless volunteers wasn't a secondary attack on the rescue workers at Ground Zero.

Do you have a bus or van? Can you move groups of people from here to there? Your local EOC needs to know that, and a good Lenten discipline might include plans for sharing these resources with your community, should the need arise.

What are the languages spoken in your parish and community? Do you have access to translators? Non-English speaking people are particularly victimized and marginalized in terrorist events. It could be that only you and your congregation can help them. Make sure your EOC has access to all of your multilingual communicants.

Finally, we have outreach with a radical spin. When I was in New York, I learned that the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation had no local faith-based representation. They were tearing down and building up with no input from local congregations, whose churches rose and fell with their every decision. Sometimes vergers have to fight for the safety and well-being of everyone in the community. Is your congregation ready to represent everyone who might be affected by a terrorism incident?

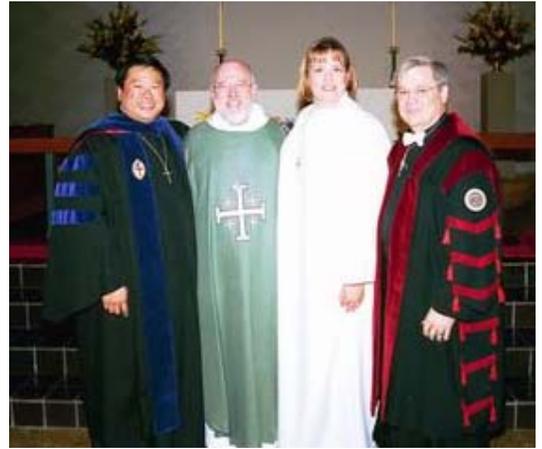
I would love nothing more than to do a nice, traditional Lenten meditation for this newsletter. We can no longer afford the traditional insulation of the Church, and God's command is that we love one another in such a way that we are able to serve them in the face of the most barbaric attacks we have ever faced. The aisle is widening beyond our comprehension, even as we contemplate "walking once more the pilgrim way of Lent."

May this Lent include our provisions for all of those entrusted to our care in this, their time of greatest danger.

-- pete

## St. Andrew's, Saratoga, CA, Installs First Verger

St. Andrew's Episcopal Church in Saratoga, California, in the Diocese of El Camino Real has a new verger. On Sunday, November 9, 2003, the Reverend Ernest Cockrell, Rector, and William H. Gleason, VGEC Privy Councillor, installed Timothy Thomas Gee as the first verger of the parish. On Saturday, November 8, the parish hosted a diocesan-wide event called a Grand Liturgical Hoo-Haw, where the many varied ministries related to the liturgy of the Episcopal Church gathered for training and fellowship with a concluding Eucharist celebrated by the Rt. Rev. Reverend Richard L. Shimpfky, Bishop of the diocese of El Camino Real. St. Andrews hosted Bill Gleason as he presented a morning-long workshop on vergers. Other workshops included the ministries of the altar guild, the acolytes, the readers and LEMs, and others. Serving as lay Eucharistic minister during the Sunday service was Mary Ann Gee, wife of the new verger.



New Verger Thomas Gee, The Rev. Ernest Cockrell, Lay Eucharistic Minister Mary Ann Gee, and William H. Gleason, VGEC Privy Councillor.

### *A Review of CD, "Our Heart's Desire" Pro Organo CD 7056.*

Available from the bookstore of Christ Church Cathedral, Lexington, Kentucky. [www.ccclex.2e.com](http://www.ccclex.2e.com)

Those who attended the recent conference of the VGEC in Lexington, Kentucky were treated to the choirs of Christ Church Cathedral singing at Evensong and Sunday Eucharist. This listener, fully encrusted with New York City prejudice, was blown away with the quality and impact of the choral singing. A CD, entitled, "Our Heart's Desire", Pro Organo CD 7056 captures the Choir of Men and Boys and the Girls Choir under the direction of cathedral organist and choirmaster, John E. Cummins, in all their considerable glory. This recording, issued for the bicentennial of the founding of Christ Church Parish in 1796, features a variety of choral music including works commissioned for this occasion. Notable among these works is a Rite I setting of the Mass by Bruce Neswick for brass, choir and organ. It is a setting of arresting beauty, sensitive to the texts, and appropriately liturgical. Though complex tonally it makes use of lush harmonies, within an overall frame of celebration. The choral writing assumes a choir of great skill and polish and the Lexington singers carry off their assignment with aplomb.

The English choral tradition that provides the Episcopal Church with much of its aural shape has never relied exclusively on works by Anglican composers. Significantly Mr. Cummins has chosen three motets from *Quatre Motets*, Op. 10 of the 20<sup>th</sup> century French master Maurice Duruflé to display the versatility of the cathedral choirs. The setting of *Tantum ergo*, is a stunning example of French choral writing that ideally marries text and music. The plainsong tune that grounds Duruflé's setting will be familiar to many of us as the hymn used to accompany the procession of the Blessed Sacrament on Maundy Thursday to the altar of repose.

Choral Evensong, a mainstay of the English Cathedral tradition, is one of the unique offerings Anglicans have made to Christian worship. Though sometimes sadly neglected in the Episcopal Church, the choirs of Christ Church regularly sing full Evensong at the cathedral. Choosing from a wealth of settings for the evening canticles of *Magnificat* and *Nunc dimittis* the choirs sing settings by William H. Harris and Charles Villiers Stanford each sung with obvious care and devotion. The American Prayer Book begins Evening Prayer with the ancient hymn, *Phos hilaron* and this recording includes Charles Wood's brilliant setting of this text. The cathedral sopranos sing their taxing part thrillingly.

What this recording cannot convey is the spirited animation of Mr. Cummins conducting which elicits palpable joy from all the singers. His gifts with younger singers is especially remarkable and how well that shows on their faces. The recording closes with an Anglican Chant setting of Psalm 150, sung as the retiring procession at each cathedral evensong. Most Anglicans who are truly honest must admit to a special affection for this unique form of chant, and perhaps even within the confines of a recording one can see the joyful faces of each of the singers. I would be remiss if I did not mention the inclusion of two great hymns, "O All ye Works of God" to the lovely tune, *Irish*, and the beloved American hymn "Come, labor on", each sung with suitable gusto. This recording encompasses the best in our musical tradition and should find a place in any collection of choral recordings. You won't be disappointed.

David Jette

## Three New Vergers Installed at St. Mary's, Albuquerque, NM

St. Mary's Episcopal Church in Albuquerque, New Mexico gained its fourth verger on December 14, 2003, when the Rt. Rev. Dr. Terence Kelshaw, Bishop of the Diocese of the Rio Grande, installed Patricia Soukup as Co-Principal Verger. She joins Co-Principal Verger Jack Laskowski and Youth Vergers Matthew Thomas and William Drane. Matthew and William were installed in 2003 as Youth Vergers by the Rev. Robert Nagiel, Rector of St. Mary's.



Left to Right: Jack Laskowski, Patricia Soukup, The Rt. Rev. Dr. Terence Kelshaw, Matthew Thomas, and William Drane.

Patricia, the Chairperson of the Rio Grande Chapter of the VGEC, served as a verger at the Cathedral Church of St. John in Albuquerque for five years, and she also served as the Acolyte Director there for eight years. A cradle Episcopalian, she has served as an acolyte for 27 years, a chalice bearer for 23 years, and a subdeacon for

13 years. In addition to serving as a verger at St. Mary's, she will join Mr. Laskowski as Co-Acolyte Director.

St. Mary's is very fortunate to have such a talented corps of dedicated vergers. The liturgy is constantly evolving as more elements are added, and the congregation is thrilled to see a small parish such as St. Mary's use this historic office to the fullest extent possible.

Working under the direction of Fr. Nagiel, all of the vergers continue to grow in their ministry; in fact, all are currently licensed by Bishop Kelshaw to serve as vergers in the Diocese of the Rio Grande, and all are enrolled in the Verger Training

Course offered by the VGEC.



### "The Twofold Verger"

Scott Crowell, parish verger for St. Timothy's Episcopal Church, Henderson, NV, also serves as diocesan verger, which involves his participation in such services as confirmations, ordinations, and consecrations of church buildings.



## Editor's Note

### "Housekeeping Details"

In order to ensure that we leave no news untold, I invite re-submissions of any material that was previously submitted but not published in *The Verger's Voice*.

### A Personal Note—

When my daughter was first old enough to dress herself for school, she would come through the kitchen in the morning and ask how cold—or warm—it was outside. Being the weather data addict, I would announce the morning temperature. Nevertheless, she would still open the door and step outside for a moment to feel the air for herself. Fahrenheit didn't mean anything to her; she needed to *experience* the temperature.

No doubt, most of us consider our churches to be open and accepting communities of faith. Yet many of the non-Episcopalians we encounter each day have had little or no contact with the Anglican liturgy. Indeed, we tend to be impressed if they are even familiar with *The Book of Common Prayer*. Whether accurately or not, ours is a church often considered to be cold and standoffish. As Christians as well as "ministers of hospitality," it is incumbent upon us to ask a friend to join us occasionally. While no church will appeal to all visitors, we are called to extend the invitation anyway. And just maybe if they step inside and feel the warmth, they might find the community they didn't realize they were missing.



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