

**Environmental Commission
Report to the 225th Annual Diocesan Convention**

The Environmental Commission completed two environmental audits during 2008, one for St. John's, Elizabeth, and one for Christ Church, Riverton. Both churches had formed committees to review the recommendations and carry them forward. St. John's reports that its oil budget has dramatically decreased about ten fold, partially due to the new 45 degree setbacks for its buildings and partially due to moving its Sunday services to new quarters fashioned from its large Parish Hall. Grants are being sought for new energy efficient refrigerators. Most bulbs have been changed over to fluorescents, with some electric savings, although the bulbs are more expensive and will take a bit of time to earn back their cost.

Christ Church has not yet reported on their progress, but their audit was done near the end of 2008 so will take some time to accomplish. The Environmental Commission will do a site visit during 2009 to see its progress and have a 'walk through' conducted by GreenFaith.

The Commission seeks to expand its audits during 2009 with a stronger budget than in 2008, as the savings anticipated for each congregation is quite sizeable and would greatly benefit both the diocese and the congregation.

Respectfully submitted,
Joe Parrish, Chair

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**NJ Diocesan Chaplaincy at the Elizabeth Federal Detention Center
Report to the 225th Annual Diocesan Convention**

We officiated at over 40 worship and Bible study sessions during 2008. Assisting the Rev. Joe Parrish were Deacon, the Rev. David Lawson-Beck, whose service occurred during his discernment period prior to ordination, and Lloyd Batson, who is doing his pre-ordination work at St. John's; Lloyd, who lives in our Diocese, will be a candidate for the Diaconate in the Diocese of Newark--the Detention Center is near his home and not far from the Diocese of Newark.

We visit with, pray with, and teach from two to thirty-two non-criminal detainees each week. The work is difficult as it is in the highest restricted area of any Federal prison in the US, yet it is not actually a prison but is called a detention center. Entrance is through a series of locked doors and gates, and body searches are conducted on the chaplains before they are admitted. Several of the detainees are under threat of death from parties in their originating countries so we cannot disclose their identities at any time. All visits are on weekday nights from 7 PM until 10 PM and are held in the Indoor Recreation Center.

Prior to our coming to the Center in the year 2000, several attempts at suicide were carried out, one leading to a fatality. Since our Diocesan involvement we have not been apprised of any such occurrences in our eight years there. Some detainees were quite depressed, but now we offer a time of consolation, study, singing, and prayer, encouraging the attendees to supply each part of the service they are willing to do. We have had times of great camaraderie, as we support small Bible and prayer groups inside the dormitories through our efforts and materials. The original ministry was funded by the Episcopal Development Fund, formerly called the Presiding Bishop's Fund that funded the effort at \$40,000 in 2000. The current budget from the Diocese of New Jersey is only \$4,000, but helps us buy materials, without any remuneration for the chaplains. We do need to increase this as we occasionally need supply persons who have been cleared by the FBI, a very lengthy process.

We are very grateful for the support the Diocese gives us to keep the detainees supplied with Bibles and meditative study materials in over three dozen languages, and trust the support will continue and increase to meet the growing needs we have.

The Rev. Joe Parrish
Rector, St. John's, Elizabeth