

# Episcopal Network for Economic Justice Newsletter

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## Episcopal Network for Economic Justice

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## Three Episcopal Networks to Establish Joint Office in Washington, D.C.

**By Mike Maloney**

Three independent networks of the Episcopal Church announced on February 21 that they had formed a new Episcopal Networks Collaborative. In a workshop on collaboration at the Episcopal Urban Caucus Assembly in Newark, New Jersey, the group announced they had agreed to set up a joint office in Washington, D.C. The office will be housed at the Bishop John T. Walker National Learning Center at the Church of the Holy Comforter. The shared office will operate as a management services organization (MSO) for the Union of Black Episcopalians, the Episcopal Network for Economic Justice and the Episcopal Ecological Network.

Through the shared office, the Episcopal Networks Collaborative will achieve greater efficiency in business operations and also facilitate collaboration on advocacy issues which unit ecological, justice and ethnic concerns. As an example, the three organizations released a joint statement on the need for a living wage. "We will work closely with the Office of Government Relations (Washington Office) of the Episcopal Church and serve as a link to the grassroots local organizations which make up our networks," said Annette Buchanan, President of the Union of Black Episcopalians.

As a newly designated Jubilee Center, the Episcopal Networks Collaborative will focus its joint program work primarily on social justice education and training.

Note: The joint office is not fully operational though UBE has moved most of its operations there. We are still working on establishing the resources needed to set up a management services structure that will support the three networks.



Bishop John T. Walker Learning Center at the Church of the Holy Comforter, Washington, D.C.

## ENEJ Resources You Can Use

The following resources are available at [www.enej.org](http://www.enej.org):

***Economic Justice How-to Action Manual: A Guide to Economic Justice Ministries for Episcopal Congregations***, 2006.

***Economic Justice Issues: A Guide to Church Teaching and Action Steps*** for congregations and individual activities on 26 issues facing the United States, 2011. Issue Papers include:

- Predatory Lending
- Taxes and Economic Justice
- Racism and Economic Justice
- Prisons and Incarceration
- Immigration
- Affordable Housing
- Fair Trade
- Human Trafficking

***Twenty Years Later: Response to A Crisis: Strengthening Economic Justice Ministry in the Church in a time of Fiscal Crisis.***

This report addresses current national and international issues including the international economic crisis and the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, 2009.

***Community Investing: An Alternative for Religious Congregations Seeking Social as well as a Financial Return***, 1999.

**Share the Wealth.** ENEJ's Community Investing Brochure, 2011.

**Economic Justice Education Modules**, six popular education units on such issues as inequality, worker justice and the impacts of recession. (Developed in conjunction with United for a Fair Economy)

### **Related Resources**

**"From Mammon to Manna: Sabbath Economics and Community Investing"** is a 6 part, 2 disc DVD, produced by Bartimaeus Cooperative Ministries, featuring biblical scholar/activist Ched Myers and Andy Loving, social investment advisor. It was produced for study groups interested in exploring biblical faith and practical economic justice. It is available at ([www.bem-net.org](http://www.bem-net.org)) for \$25 (plus \$2.50 shipping and handling). A facilitation guide is available without cost from the same website.

***Money and Faith: the Search for Enough***, edited and compiled by Michael Schut, with a substantial study guide for small groups. There are readings on many aspects of money by such authors as Walter Brueggemann, Henry Nouwen, Bill McKibben, Ched Myers, William Greider, Maria Harris, Andy Loving, and Michael Schut. The book is available from Morehouse Education Resources ([www.morehouseeducation.com](http://www.morehouseeducation.com)) with a retail price of \$20.

**Immigration:** The Franciscan Action Network has a new film on the need for immigration reform. This five-minute documentary can be accessed at [www.franciscanaction.org](http://www.franciscanaction.org). 202-527-7565. It can be used as a conversation starter.

### **Must Reading**

**Take Back the Economy: An Ethical Guide for Transforming Our Communities** (J.K. Gibson-Graham, Jenny Cameron, Stephen Healy, University of Minnesota Press, 2013) is required reading for those involved in sustainable community economic development. Order it through your local bookstore or at [amazon.com](http://amazon.com).

**The New Globalization: Reclaiming the Lost Ground of Our Christian Social Tradition**, by Richard W. Gillett, Cleveland, Ohio: The Pilgrim Press, 2005 (219 pages)

## Student Loan Debt and Inequality

By Mike Maloney

Guess what? As the burden of paying for a college education shifts from public subsidies to families, minorities and the poor are disproportionately affected. The results are that the poor are less likely to enroll in college and less likely to complete a college education. Increasing college debt is also a drag on the economy. Families burdened with high student loan debt are less likely to buy a car or own a home. If we want a thriving economy, we need to invest more in education. This is all related to the recent recession. The recession and current political trends reduced investment in education by government. Increased debt or the prospect of such debt discouraged college enrollment and completion. Increasing debt slowed economic recovery and led to increased inequality. **Google search:** student loan debt impact on families.

### **2014 Congress on Urban Ministry: Together Building a Just Economy**

Chicago, IL, June 23-26, 2014

**Seminary Consortium for Urban Pastoral Education** (SCUPE) holds its Congress on Urban Ministry which will model partnership, cooperation, and innovative approaches to contemporary urban challenges facing our cities here at home and abroad. It is our goal to empower leaders by giving them the theological grounding for action, training them in the tools of organizing, and inspiring them to think systemically about the economic justice issues in their communities and networks.

The overlapping IWJ and SCUPE conferences will

be held at:

DePaul University  
Student Center  
2250 N. Sheffield  
Chicago, IL 60614

For more info: <http://scupe.org/congress-on-urban-ministry/>

*The following is the Joint Statement presented at the Episcopal Urban Caucus Assembly on February 24, 2014.*

## Joint Statement on the Need for a Living Wage

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The social justice networks of the Episcopal Church were given life in the movement for civil rights, but they have always understood that civil rights without access to economic prosperity was at best a protest movement without a vision in reality. We understood that a free and democratic society included the opportunity to better one's human status through meaningful employment, which would then open the door to a better quality of life and hope for the future. The dream of home ownership, a steady and hopefully growing income, the ability to secure a quality and empowering education for self and one's children and the possibility of passing on to the next generation are all what is necessary for full participation in a democracy such as ours and part of the real dream that Dr. Martin Luther King spoke of more than fifty years ago.

The reality is, however, that in 2014, we are living in an America that is increasingly becoming a nation that is divided into the haves and the have-nots. The trickle-down theory and the "rising tide lifting all boats" has not become a reality for the increasing numbers of working poor in this country. Income inequality in the United States is among the highest in the world. President Barack Obama referred to the widening income gap as the "defining challenge of our times". Pope Francis called on world leaders to address the problems of the poor by "attacking the structural causes of inequality." Many statements of the Episcopal Church General Convention have called on our legislators to address issues of poverty, unemployment and the rights of workers.

Nothing points out the income gap in this country more dramatically than the issue of providing a living wage to those who work, but cannot begin to move out of poverty. Being locked in a cycle of poverty increases job stagnation, increasing class division and social disorder. Further, globalization has resulted in an economy where disadvantaged groups engage in a race to the bottom as they compete for declining wages and benefits. Working full-time but not earning enough to move out of poverty limits access to those things which can improve life overall, such as health care, housing in safe neighborhoods, the ability to buy fresh and nutritious foods, the opportunity to attend an educational system that will provide the tools and resources to enter higher education and employment training programs, both of which are absolutely necessary in this present society that is no longer driven by manufacturing. The Episcopal Networks Collaborative is particularly concerned about income inequality and the raising of a living wage, because most of those impacted, those stuck in poverty although working, are people of color at least in central city areas. Poverty is directly related to the high dropout rates of youth of color and other marginalized groups, the rise in the percentages of youth impacted by hypertension, obesity and diabetes and the increase in violence and incarceration rates because of a lack of hope and any sense that life might change for the better. Child abuse rises with income inequality according to a recent study published in the journal, "Pediatrics," March 2014. Increasingly we are witnessing class divisions within communities of color around education and income, which further isolates those who would rely on examples of success and possibilities to motivate and to give hope. The lack of good-paying jobs with benefits is not just a problem of the inner city. They impact the rural and urban poor everywhere including whole regions such as the Mississippi Delta, coastal Carolina and Appalachia. Immigrant workers are often among those who suffer the worst working conditions and lowest wages.

Those at the bottom economically are often the first to be impacted by disasters related to industrial pollution, destruction of the environment and the effects of climate change.

We believe that a practical step to meeting the crisis of income inequality in this country is to enact legislation to require a living wage for full time workers. Lifting adults out of poverty also will move thousands of children out of poverty thus impacting future generations. The plight of part time workers also needs the attention of our legislators. Part time jobs were once the province of students and others who did not seek full time work. Now many companies hire heads of households for part time, low wage jobs with no benefits. This should be a big concern for policy makers and regulators. We know that the work of those who are now making a minimum wage is very much a part of the ongoingness of our society. It is work that needs to be done and enhances the quality of life of us all. In Sirach 38:34 it is stated, "the work they do holds this world together. When they do their work, it is the same as offering prayer." We in the Episcopal Networks Collaborative believe and pray that it is just and right that all be given the opportunities of a life that can only begin when people are able to move out of poverty. That is why we join with others across this nation who believe that empowering people through economic equality and seeking legislation that would guarantee a living wage is the next step in the struggle for justice and freedom.

Annette Buchanan

Union of Black Episcopalians

Dianne Aid, TSSF

Episcopal Network for Economic  
Justice

The Rev. Frank Edmands

Episcopal Ecological Network

## News Briefs

### Implications of the Seattle Mayor's Proposal for a \$15 Minimum Wage

In a policy brief, Puget Sound Sage explores implications of a \$15 minimum wage for the City of Seattle. Specifically, we examine the potential outcome of a \$15 minimum wage on our local economy, assess outcomes by industry sector, and demonstrate that a \$15 minimum wage would create large scale benefits to women and communities of color. We conclude that the net benefits to low-wage workers, the local economy and to race and gender equity make a compelling case to adopt a minimum wage in Seattle. Here is an excerpt of the key findings from the report:

#### **A \$15 minimum wage will have a wide and positive impact on our local economy.**

1. We estimate that 102,000 employees in Seattle make less than \$15 an hour.
2. Workers covered by a minimum wage could see an average increase of \$3.05 an hour. This represents a 26% actual increase above their average wage of \$11.95.
3. The additional earnings would result in a \$526 million stimulus to low-wage worker households in Seattle and the region.
4. The \$526 million dollar wage increase represents a marginal

change of only 2% in the total payroll of affected industries. Employers in certain industries, such as food and accommodations, would see a higher rate of increase (6%).

5. Low-income households are likely to spend more of their paychecks, increasing demand for goods and service. Households with incomes between \$30,000 and \$39,999 spend all of their pre-tax income. In contrast – households with incomes over \$70,000 spend only 63% of their pre-tax income.
6. **A minimum wage increase will greatly benefit women and people of color working in Seattle.**
7. Women and people of color living in Seattle earn between 44% and 71% of what white men earn in Seattle, respectively.
8. The over-representation of women and people of color in low-wage industries explains much of the gender and race pay gap. For example, in the food service industry nearly 63% of workers earn below \$15 an hour. People of color comprise 45% of those low-wage workers, despite making up 30% of Seattle's total workforce.

The entire report can be found at:

<http://www.pugetsoundsage.org/article.php?id=608>

### Microenterprise Development in Southern Ohio

#### **Community Blend: Community-Owned Coffee Shop**

Interfaith Business Builders (IBB) just opened a worker owned coffee shop in Cincinnati's Evanston neighborhood. Chirst Church Cathedral provided partial funding for the renovation of a 19<sup>th</sup> Century building. The Rev. Angelo Puopolo of St. Andrew's parish lent his carpentry skills to the project. For information, contact Ray West at [ibb@fuse.net](mailto:ibb@fuse.net).

#### **Lower Price Hill**

Lower Price Hill, a largely urban Appalachian neighborhood in Cincinnati has been targeted by several organizations for microenterprise development. An aquaponics firm is already in operation. CommunityMatters, a unit of the Lower Price Hill Community School will make a renovated storefront available for small business startups.

*Please let ENEJ know of microenterprise projects in your diocese. We can include them in our newsletter and/or on the website.*

## ENEJ (and Partner Organizations) at the Episcopal Urban Caucus Assembly

By Art Lloyd

As they have in recent years members of the ENEJ attended the Episcopal Urban Caucus (EUC) Assembly held in Newark February 19-22. We sponsored two workshops and honored organizations and individuals at our annual Gloria Brown luncheon (see related article on page 6).

Our own Byron Rushing delivered the keynote which will soon be posted on the EUC website (look for it in ENEJ's Fall newsletter).

One workshop focused on living wage campaigns for workers, under the leadership of the Rev. Timothy Yeager, attorney and priest from Chicago and Dianne Aid, President of ENEJ. The second workshop focussed on building collaboration between the ENEJ, the Union of Black Episcopalians and the Episcopal Ecological Network.

At its annual Gloria Brown luncheon, awards recognized the work of organizations and individuals connected to the ENEJ. The Gloria Brown award goes to a group doing outstanding economic justice work and with a connection to the Episcopal Church. This year's award went to the South Bronx Inter-Parish Council, a collaboration of 10 congregations in the Bronx, who work together for mutual support and to strengthen their communities, especially the poor, through more than 40 community outreach programs.

This year's Hugh White "Trumpet of Justice" award went to Chris Johnson for his support for justice

especially for low-income Church workers. The Michael Bryant award, given to someone for support of the ENEJ's work, was given to Laura Russell, an attorney who works, among other issues, on countering human trafficking, abuse of women and consumer

rights in New York City.

ENEJ, UBE, and EpEN used the EUC assembly to announce the launching of the Episcopal Networks Collaborative and to issue the collaborative's first joint statement.

### Dear Friend of ENEJ,

Let me share with you some of what ENEJ has been up to. **We have developed resources on Community Investing**, providing information on how dioceses, parishes and individuals can put some of their investible funds into community-based projects benefiting low-income people. One of these resources is a DVD and community investing. See Resources on page 2.

**We have produced a "How To" Manual, to help congregations start community development corporations and credit unions, support affordable housing and strengthen local community economies. Advocacy has been an important part of the work of ENEJ.** We continue to address **immigration issues**, for example the poor treatment of many families and children in the large for-profit immigration detention centers, and to advocate for **low-wage workers** and the **rights of workers to organize**. **Also we work to support justice for Church lay workers.** Are living wages being paid such workers, for example?

**Collaboration is essential to the work of the Church's networks.** So over the years we have collaborated with the Episcopal Urban Caucus and Jubilee Ministries. **ENEJ has begun work with the Episcopal Ecological Network and the Union of Black Episcopalians.** These three networks are working together to establish a joint management services organization in Washington, D.C. Through this collaboration will help link those concerned with racial equality, the environment and for economic justice. We continue to support the work of allies such as Interfaith Worker Justice and the Episcopal Urban Caucus.

**In recent years, ENEJ has focused its network building at the Provincial level.** We have begun to develop networks in several provinces. In 2013 we participated in two conferences in Province VIII.

**The environment, immigration, sex trafficking and the rights of workers** are issues relevant to people within our own parishes and communities – people who are being squeezed by the economic crisis and an economic system which, quite frankly, favors large corporations over small businesses, the wealthy and powerful over the poor and middle-class.

**We invite you to join us in this work, to become a member of ENEJ, and to support our work as generously as you are able.** We also invite you to join us in our work of advocacy, communications and education. Please visit us at [www.enej.org](http://www.enej.org) or send your donation to ENEJ at 5829 Wyatt Ave., Cincinnati, OH 45213.

Faithfully, Dianne Aid, TSSF, ENEJ President

## Awards Presented at Episcopal Urban Caucus in Newark

by Mike Maloney

### Gloria Brown Award

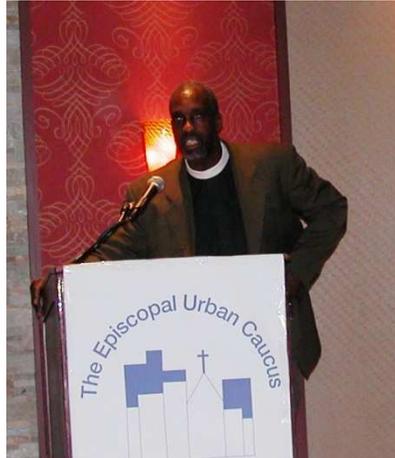
The 2014 Gloria Brown Award was given to South Bronx Churches. The organization was founded in 1987 by congregations of different traditions to provide a power base for the South Bronx to affect social change. Since its founding, SBC has developed into a large and diverse collective of capable community leaders who are able to identify underlying social problems and propose creative solutions. SBC is a place where community members turn frustrations into strategies for change.

While South Bronx remains one of the poorest neighborhoods in the country, the last 15 years has seen its streets infused with new buildings and residents. SBC's work has been central to this revitalization.

Projects and Issues Include:

#### Public Housing

- Resolving the issue of apartment mold in New York City's public housing
- Mold removal is part of a broad program of improving public housing. This includes promoting improved conditions and promoting tenant rights.



The Rev. Bertram Bennett, Jr.

### Improving Schools

- Partnering with partner Metro IAF organizations on improving education policies. SBC has launched two schools and promoted the Mott Haven Campus, a campus of four new public schools.

#### A Model for Community Revitalization

Clearly South Bronx Churches is one of the most successful models for community revitalization in the country. SBC Director, Peter Saros accepted the award and the Rev. Bertram Bennett, Jr.

delivered a stirring acceptance speech.

### Hugh White Award

The Hugh White Award was given to the Rev. Chris Johnson who serves as Rector of St. Raphael's Episcopal Church in Security, Colorado.



During his tenure as Social and Economic Justice officer at the Church Center in New York City, Chris was responsible for domestic poverty initiatives and Jubilee Ministries. In this role he and Michael Schut of the Seattle office provided support to Episcopal Church networks including ENEJ and EpEN.

Chris's career of service includes organizing at the parish, diocesan and national levels. He has, for example, organized the Colorado Commission on Hispanic Ministry, a Jubilee Center in Denver, Colorado and has served on the board of Interfaith Worker Justice, one of the most important organizations in worker justice advocacy.

### Michael Bryant Award

Laura A. Russell received the Michael Bryant Award. She is a public interest attorney in New York City. She represents low income victims of domestic violence in their divorces and family law and consumer rights issues. Her main office is in the Bronx, but she



also supervises staff in Manhattan and Queens. She is involved in The Episcopal Church in many ways. She is on her parish's vestry, was a Deputy to General Convention, sits on the Standing Commission on Social Justice and Public Policy, and is a member of the Episcopal Network for Economic Justice's Advocacy committee. At General Convention, she worked to advance economic justice resolutions which she had worked to get adopted by Executive Council's Commission on Social Concerns.

## Secure Communities, Not so Secure

### Immigration Enforcement

Over the past several years the hope for humane, comprehensive immigration reform has risen, only to be dashed by fighting politicians playing “political football” with thousands of lives and the unnecessary tearing apart of lives.

What we have gotten instead of true reform are fragments of reform and intensified enforcement. One of these enforcement programs is called “Secure Communities”. County and Municipal jails across the country have chosen to honor ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) detainers. When an immigrant is booked into jail on even the most minor offense (e.g. a Bench Warrant for missing a traffic court appearance), their finger prints are shared with ICE. A hold is placed on the individual and the person is held for ICE to pick up, who now is “released” from jail time. The law requires that the hold not exceed 48 hours, but that is often ignored and the hold is much longer.

Secure Communities has created a great deal of fear in the immigrant community and crimes are going un-reported.

The following story highlights why:

#### Claudia's Story

Claudia, a resident of Auburn, Washington was referred to us at the Jubilee Center at St. Matthew/San Mateo Episcopal Church in Auburn to receive support services and advocacy resulting from incidents of domestic violence. Claudia is a young mother of three and an undocumented wife of a US Citizen. Advocates were working on filing necessary papers for a protection order for Claudia, this was in process when her husband

showed up at her apartment. She called me, and I told her to call 911 — she did. Her husband was attempting to strangle her and she bit him in the arm to get his hands off her throat. Her husband ran out of the apartment and intercepted the police as they arrived showing them the bite on his arm, and claiming he was the victim. He is fluent in English; Claudia is a Spanish only speaker. Claudia was arrested and taken to the SCORE jail in Des Moines; an ICE hold was placed on her.

It took about three weeks to raise the bond money to get her out of detention. The story does not end here. Since her 3 month old baby was present when she was arrested for “Assault, domestic violence” a protection order was put in place barring her from contact with her child. The baby was placed in the custody of the father who apparently deals drugs.

We had to go with Claudia to several court hearings for her to regain custody of her baby.

Today, a year later she has a U-Visa petition pending.

Claudia was arrested in error, eventually this all got straightened out, but she still is

working on complex immigration issues directly related to the “Secure Communities” program.

Claudia is not the only woman we know who ended up being arrested upon calling the police for help – we have another story, however, the victim was apparently kidnapped by her husband following her bonded release from the Northwest Detention Center.

### A Movement in the Right Direction

Over the past several months, jurisdictions across the US have opted out of The Secure Communities Program.

Claudia testified publically in King County, Washington, her testimony changed hearts and minds. Her story has been shared with The White House through The Inter-Faith Immigration Coalition. King County no longer honors ICE holds for minor offenses. Soon, two more municipal jurisdictions in King County followed by refusing to honor minor offense holds, including The SCORE multi-city contracted facility where Claudia was booked.

**Dianne Aid**

## CALL FOR ISSUE PAPERS FOR GENERAL CONVENTION, 2015

During the coming year, we will be reviewing and updating ENEJ issue papers and seeking contributions for additional papers that speak to current issues and economic/environmental and racial justice as we move into General Convention, 2015 in Salt Lake.

We will be looking for writers for new papers, and looking for volunteers with expertise in any of the fields addressed in previous papers to edit and update.

Please contact Dianne Aid, TSSF at [wolffgubbio1@gmail.com](mailto:wolffgubbio1@gmail.com) if you would consider contributing your time and talent.

For a look at the most recent set of Issue Papers distributed at the 2012 General Convention in Indianapolis, please look at the ENEJ website [enej.org](http://enej.org).

## President's Letter

### Invisible Church Boundaries, Borders and Walls

I recently went on line to register for a church conference on poverty. I thought nothing of registering on line since that is the most practical and painless way. I was a presenter, so my registration fee was waived. I could not register however, because I could not get beyond the payment page to complete the registration until I entered my "credit card" number. After several phone calls I was able to have a conference organizer send me a paper registration.

I began thinking about who I spend most of my days with, immigrants, underpaid workers, people without sufficient documentation to open a bank account. These are not only the people I encounter in the day to day work of our Jubilee Center, they also are people breaking bread with me on Sunday morning.

It is true, we can do a lot of community organizing and ministry in our own context, and in fact the majority of ministry should be carried out this way, but, all of us have a lot to gain by participating in an occasional training or workshop, it exposes us to the broader church, to our allies and brothers and sisters working to carry out our Baptismal ministry throughout the church. It is not intentional of course, but participating in broader church activities is somewhat limited to people of privilege. It is not all about money, it is also about lifestyle (leisure time) and political/social status.

I would like to invite us to think about some of the barriers to

accessibility to full church participation. Some of us may have some creative stories to share about how some of the barriers have been met and overcome.

Some of these barriers that come immediately to mind are:

In my own diocese we have a marvelous retreat center located within a hundred miles of an international boundary, the highway on which the retreat center is located is heavily patrolled by US Border Patrol. It is not a safe place for many immigrant members in the diocese.

Commission and committee meetings held during the work day of people working for hourly, minimum wage in the agricultural and service industries precludes participation.

General Convention will soon be upon us, and ENEJ will highlight labor issues in Salt Lake. We will encounter workers every day, cleaning our rooms, cleaning the convention facilities, carrying our bags at airports. Imagine the people working these jobs as being Episcopalians, how would it be possible to allow testimony at hearings from those punching the time clocks that keep the facility running.

I do not have the answers, but somewhere out in the church there are examples of how some of these barriers have been torn down.

I would love to receive stories via email, and watch for an announcement on the ENEJ list serve for a Facebook Page to be set up to share such stories.

We will share stories and concerns in our Fall Newsletter.

**Dianne Aid, TSSF**

## Vicky Partin Announces Retirement



On May 4, Vicky Partin announced her retirement as founding director of the Chattahoochee Valley Episcopal Ministry after over 33 years of service.

After two years of spiritual discernment, she will step down this December as the first commissioned Lay Missioner in the Diocese of Atlanta. Since 2003 Partin has served on the Bishop's staff.

CVEM is the first convocational outreach ministry, which includes six parishes in the Chattahoochee Valley Convocation and two parishes in nearby Diocese of Alabama.

The CVEM Board of Directors will develop and circulate the job description in collaboration with Bishop Rob Wright. An event will be held later this year to celebrate Vicky's ministry.

She has been active in the Jubilee Ministries network and many other church and civic activities. Vicky is currently Vice President of the Episcopal Network for Economic Justice.