

Joseph Butler

This summer, my internship consisted of shadowing the Rev. Stacy Walker-Frontjes of St. Paul's Episcopal Church in DeKalb Illinois, and the Rev. Dave Hedges of St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Sycamore Illinois. Unlike my previous experience in the Church, both of these parishes are in rural communities. Consequently, both parishes had an average Sunday attendance of about 35 as opposed to the 60+ average Sunday attendance of my home parish.

I was given the opportunity to preach at both the parishes as well as lead a prayer service; though primarily I accompanied my supervisors to staff meetings, finance meetings, vestry meetings, deanery meetings, and pre-marital counseling sessions. I shadowed them on pastoral care visits to hospitals, nursing homes, etc. as well. We also took several "field trips" to charity operations such as the Shelter Care ministry in Rockford, and others in the area. On Sundays I served as lay Eucharistic administer except for the Sunday I lead the children's chapel service.

At St. Paul's I put together and lead a children's chapel service. The parish has a growing number of families with young children, but had no distinct program for children too old for nursery but still too young for formal Sunday school. The program was essentially a simplified Sunday service that was conducted during the first portion of the service, with the children rejoining their parents during the passing of the peace. The idea behind the children's' chapel is to teach young kids how to behave in church and explain the different parts of the service in a way they can understand; all in a child-friendly environment.

At St. Peter's I was given the opportunity to lead the Wednesday morning prayer service several times, prepare bulletins, and pick hymns for several Sunday services. Most days I received a private impromptu lecture about liturgy, church history, or church politics from Fr. Dave when I asked him about different aspects of our work. These lectures were interesting and quite enriching to my experience. During my time at St. Peter's we took a road trip to Indianapolis for the 77<sup>th</sup> General Convention. Though we could only stay for one day, we managed to attend two committees and observe delegation in the house of deputies and the house of bishops.

Though both these parishes were in the same rural area, nearly identical in size and demographics their styles of worship were remarkably different. St. Paul's worshiped in the fashion of the "low church", emphasizing the more protestant views on preaching and how to execute the Eucharist. St. Peter's preferred the "high church", and worshiped in a more Anglo-Catholic manner. Despite the differences in styles the congregations occasionally come together for charity work and events such as the Feast of St. Peter and Paul on June 28<sup>th</sup>. Both churches also emphasized the importance of good inter-denomination and inter-faith relations by participating in events and organizing several ministries (most notably Grace Place Campus ministries at NIU which is facilitated by St. Peter's, St. Paul's, and the local Lutheran and UCC churches).