

Newsletter

March 03

NAECED



We're up and running
www.NAECED.org

NAECED's New President Elect

Carolyn Chilton

"I (also) bring my passion for relationships and community to my new position with NAECED. I believe we are at our best when we are in true community. That community must be based on truth, and truth must be based on love. I seek to know all of you through your own eyes—who you really are, what your passions and gifts really are, what you really want. I ask the same of you for me. Together in love for our Lord and for each other, I believe we can continue to build the NAECED network to strengthen and equip people for ministry.

I am honored by your selection of me as the NAECED President. I look forward to knowing and working with you. AND...we have to have some fun!"



Carolyn M. Chilton

I am a native of Virginia, having grown up at the Episcopal Conference Center for the Diocese of Virginia, Shrine Mont. My father was the director, and it was a wonderful place to be a child and teenager and to be formed as a Christian and an Episcopalian. My formation was greatly influenced by a wonderful family, but perhaps even more, by that place in Virginia—the small town, the mountains, Shrine Mont itself and all the wonderful people who were our guests.

John and I were married in 1974, and I graduated from Mary Baldwin College in Staunton, VA, in 1976. We've made wonderful friends and attended a diversity of churches as we moved from Virginia, to Rhode Island, to London, Ontario, to Columbia SC. In all those places we were members of church communities. Like most of you, I've taught Sunday School forever—and loved it! I've been a DCE in very small churches to large resource sized churches. In 1990, the Christian Education Program Group herein Upper SC opened our Diocesan Resource Center. I began working there 10 hours per week. It quickly grew and turned into a full-time position.

Our daughter, Ginny, was born in 1982. She is now a 3rd year student at the University of Virginia, majoring in music. We moved to Columbia, SC in 1984. We've been members at the Episcopal Church of St. Simon and St. Jude since then, where I've been active in children, youth and adult ministries of all varieties. In 1993 I received my Masters degree in Religion from Lutheran Theological Seminary here in Columbia. A year ago, John accepted a teaching position at the American University of Sharjah in the United Arab Emirates. He lives there during the academic semesters, returning home for the summer. Ginny and I have just returned from visiting him there. It was a great trip—such a beautiful country with gentle, hospitable people. But, it is difficult living so far apart. My spiritual journey has taken all sorts of new twists and turns now that I'm SOS—Sort of Single! I should add that I'm not completely alone here—I have two cats—Hildegard and Clare.

I joined the Diocesan staff in Upper South Carolina seven years ago as Canon for Christian Formation. In this position I am responsible for children and adult formation (we are blessed with a staff Youth Missioner.) clergy events and conferences, ethics and Title IV cases, lay professional standards, plus other areas that the Bishop puts on my plate! Christian formation has been a priority since the consecration of our Bishop, Dorsey F. Henderson, Jr. in 1995. We are blessed and guided by his vision, compassion and leadership.

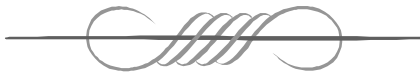
My priority in my work is the development of relationships and connections. I often describe myself as a connector. I work to connect churches to churches, people to people, and people to resources and tools for ministry. This involves a heavy travel schedule around the diocese meeting with teachers, Christian Education Directors, clergy, vestries and committees. I'm on the phone a lot and I communicate a lot by email! We design and offer conferences that focus on leadership development and equipping for ministry. We design and offer retreats that focus on wellness, spiritual formation, growth and community. One of the most exciting events for me is our Children's Day. We offer workshops for 3 year olds through 5th grade, as well as speakers and training for adults and parents. Then we close with the Holy Eucharist that is filled with children in the leadership positions and movement of children all over the place!

Another passion for me is the continued development of lay ministry, and particularly for Lay Professionals in the Church. This involves the full recognition by the institutional church of Lay Professionals as people with a call from God and a true vocation for what they are doing. I am an advocate for Lay Professionals to have competitive pay for their work, health benefits, pension, vacation, continuing education funds and sabbaticals...all at fair level.

I live by a Rule of Life based on the Rule of St. Benedict. This gives my life balance and reminds me that I must attend to all the parts of me—spiritual, physical, emotional and mental. My study of and life with the Rule of St. Benedict has also given me a passion for wellness for others and for the structures and systems of the institutional church. I am excited about working with NAECED to continue the work of advocacy, justice and wellness for lay ministry.

I also bring my passion for relationships and community to my new position with NAECED. I believe we are at our best when we are in true community. That community must be based on truth, and truth must be based on love. I seek to know all of you through your own eyes—who you really are, what your passions and gifts really are, what you really want. I ask the same of you for me. Together in love for our Lord and for each other, I believe we can continue to build the NAECED network to strengthen and equip people for ministry.

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Just Ask

by Heidi Clark, NAECED member in the Episcopal Diocese of Missouri

I, too, attended the national conference in Chicago in February. While there, I heard a number of truths that can and hopefully will transform the way the church allows itself to be blessed and challenged by the voices of children and youth. I want to share with NAECED members one short piece from the seminar track I participated in which focused on leadership for Directors of Christian Education (that's us!). We were talking about what made us feel appreciated. Honored. Attended to. What was affirming about our work? We discovered that many of us have deep needs on this front, but are not clear with others what those needs are. It reminded me of many a counseling session where one spouse has said to the other "But I shouldn't HAVE to TELL you what I need!" Well, guess what? You still need to. So a seminar participant told us that she asked the rector to stand up on a Sunday morning and tell the congregation how well the Christian education programs were going, and how they had this particular DRE to thank for it. So the rector did! Another asked for a different space in the building. We realized that for some of us a regular checking in was affirming, and for others that was intrusive. So the take home message on that conversation was: Figure out specifically what you need, from whom, in order to feel supported and affirmed in your calling to Christian Education, then do something to make that happen. As we heard over and over at the conference, it's really quite simple, but it isn't easy.

2003 NAECED Conference

NAECED's Annual Conference was held in San Antonio, Texas. The Diocese of West Texas and Lou Taylor were gracious hosts as was St. Mark's Church where our meetings were held. St. Mark's is a downtown parish giving us ready access to the Riverwalk. Buzz Jellett is the Education Director for St. Mark's and anticipated our every need.

We began Thursday evening with dinner followed by Eucharist. Bishop James Folts, in his welcoming and gracious homily charged our group "You and I have a job. We are the chief rabbis. The teacher of teachers... without you, and your kind, the church will be left to wallow in nothing, because they won't know their story."

The facilitator for this year's conference was Debbie Asberry of Community Works, Inc. based in Indianapolis. On Friday morning Debbie spent time with the group exploring many topics, but the focus seemed to continuously come back to the role of the Christian educator in liturgy. The systems in which we function often put equal goods, such as, music, worship, and teaching, in competition with one another. How can we navigate this tension in a way that produces the best result for all? Are our patterns of worship more important than the spiritual lives of our children? As Christian educators, we are forever negotiating for time, space, people, and other resources in local, diocesan, and national systems.

Another topic was the stewardship of families. Do we view our families as commodities? As people to populate our programs? Or do we view them as holy families pursuing Christian relationships and building faith together? How can we support families, and not damage them by pulling them into unhealthy systems?

We spent Friday afternoon using our new learning's of systems and how it applied to NAECED. Who are we as an organization? Who do we serve? Plus all the logistical questions – How can we attract more members? How can we work a full time job and support the work of NAECED? Ideas were presented, and jobs were assigned. We came away from this conference invigorated, and with new confidence for working with people of all ages in our congregations and for a strong hope for the future of NAECED.

Saturday morning we discussed issues involving Professional Development and talked about the concept of certification for Christian educators in the Episcopal Church. After considerable discussion, we dismissed the idea of certification for the immediate future, but agreed to develop a recommended list of resources and reading material for the

benefit of those who are new to jobs of Christian education in the church. Missy Morain is compiling the list for us.

During our annual meeting we elected new officers to our board. The Rev. Carolyn Chilton of the Diocese of Upper South Carolina was elected president, and Gillian Barr of the Diocese of Minnesota was elected vice-president. We said good-bye to our past president, Heidi Clark, for her wonderful guidance these last four years. Thank you Heidi!

Of course no respectable NAECED meeting would be complete without a chance to renew acquaintances, make new friends and contacts, and to eat, drink and shop!

Book Review

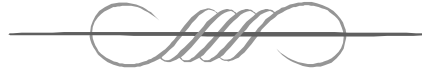
“Kitchen Table Wisdom”

By Rachael Naomi Remen, M.D.

Winner of the Wilbur Award, recognizing excellence in communicating religious issues, values, and themes

Winner of the 1997 Mind Body Spirit Book Award

“ ‘Despite the awesome powers of technology, many of us still do not live very well,’ says Dr. Rachel Remen. ‘We may need to listen to one another’s stories again.’ Dr. Remen, whose unique perspective on healing comes from her background as a physician, a professor of medicine, a therapist, and a long-term survivor of chronic illness, invites us to listen from the soul. This remarkable collection of true stories draws on the concept of “kitchen table wisdom” - the human tradition of shared experience that shows us life in all its power and mystery and reminds us that the things we cannot measure may be the things that ultimately sustain and enrich our lives. *Kitchen Table Wisdom* addresses all the spiritual issues: suffering, meaning, love, faith, and miracles in the language and absolute authority of our own life experience.”



NAECED on the Web!

Point your web browser to <http://naeced.org> to see NAECED’s new web site. Right now it’s still under construction, and simply features basic information about NAECED and some pictures from our San Antonio conference. However, over the coming months the website will expand to include:

- ? copies of NAECED newsletters
- ? information on subscribing to the NAECED email discussion list, which will be created soon
- ? information from our past conferences, and plans for future conferences
- ? job openings that members are aware of
- ? a bibliography of "must-have" books for parish educators
- ? links to other sites and information useful to Episcopal educators

Gillian Barr is our webmaster. Send suggestions for website features to her at grbarr1@earthlink.net.

