

# Esprit

A Publication of the Episcopal Diocese of Dallas

Spring 2016



Just as the Son of Man did not come  
to be served, **but to serve ...**

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On the Cover:

This Esprit issue on mission and outreach is dedicated to Hudson Stuck, who in 1896 became the first dean of St. Matthew's Cathedral. He was dedicated to social justice and founded a night school for millworkers, a home for indigent women, a children's home, and helped gain passage of the first state law against child labor. In 1904, Stuck moved to Alaska, under the title Archdeacon of the Yukon and Artic, where he traveled between parishes and missions by dogsled, boat, and snowshoe, continuing his good works.

# Helping Neighbors in Need

**D**eacon Bonnie Morrill couldn't believe the devastation just blocks from her house in Rowlett after tornados spiraled through North Texas in December and destroyed hundreds of homes.

She began walking the streets in her collar and ministering to those who had lost every possession, when she happened on a couple and their teenage daughter. "The woman hugged me so tight, I could feel the pain seep out of her," Morrill said.

The family was in the house when the tornado imploded their home on top of them. They were uninjured but it took rescuers an hour to dig them out. Family members consider themselves lucky to be alive and are grateful to be able to live in a beauty shop they own, even if it's not ideal.

The daughter, Kayla is a senior in high school and lost her first car in the storm, which had been given to her by her grandmother who wasn't able to drive anymore. Morrill has been ministering to Kayla and gave her store cards and suggested she buy art supplies and a journal to use as a catalyst for healing. "I'm forming relationships with families," Morrill said. "You can minister to them more fully. These are my neighbors, and it's important to me that they see continuous caring."

Morrill, who is a deacon at St. David's in Garland and at The Gathering, a church for the homeless in Thanks-Giving Square, brought three or four homeless men to the damaged neighborhood so they could volunteer. They hauled bricks, insulation and other debris to help get homes cleaned up for demolition or rebuild. "It shows how they have taken the message of Jesus Christ, that everyone is a neighbor, and that they don't always have to be on the receiving end," Morrill said.

Morrill is also networking with diocesan clergy and with the Garland School District to aid in the cleanup and ministering.

"She's amazing," Deacon Rosemary Trei said. "She has really been out there seeing what the needs are and trying to help. She has a heart for reaching out to folks who need someone to walk with."



Bishop Suffragan Paul Lambert and the Rev. J.D. Brown view tornado damage in Rowlett

## "Kayla" by Bonnie Morrill

A solitary figure standing in a  
doorway that is no more  
bricks, rubble, pictures, and  
history are the landscape  
One lonely tear skitters down  
a lovely cheek as  
she watches a truck tow  
away her prize possession  
Her Grandma's car, given to her  
with the love and hopes  
grandmothers hold.  
A second tear joins the first for  
a home filled with her history  
Her baby bracelet, kindergarten  
drawings, pictures of  
senior friends blown to  
who knows where  
Mom and Dad join her, arms  
and hearts locked together.  
The foundation still stands  
God is here  
Write your story precious child  
Tell of terror, survival and grace  
God is here



By the Rt. Rev. Dr. George Sumner

## Just Getting Started

“Thirdly, I believe that we have a special calling as a more theologically traditional diocese, which is also committed to the life of the Episcopal Church. We have a witness to make to the ‘goodly heritage’ we have received, but in **a charitable way that includes all in our diocesan family.**”

**D**ear Brothers and Sisters,

Greetings in Christ. I am writing to you after roughly half a year at work here in the Diocese of Dallas. It has been a time of great encouragement and blessing. I have been warmly welcomed without exception. I have been cheered on by my fellow Episcopalians of various opinion and churchmanship. I have found a wide array of ministries of outreach and mission, and a deep devotion to our Lord. I have encountered a diocese about what He has in store for us. I have had a lot of fun: pig roast in Garland, Aztec dancers in South Dallas, an evening of theology and pizza with students in Denton, a remarkable opening on McKinney Avenue, the gift of love that was the consecration, Saturday mornings with deacons, lay missionaries, teachers, and on and on. I am of course still learning, and continue to travel about our parishes as widely as I can until Easter. As you may know, we are in the first stages of a strategic planning. Still, I want to share with you some preliminary thoughts.

First of all, let me state the obvious: The ministry of the dioceses is the parishes, it is you, the laity in your own ministries. We are designing a diocesan ministry that sub-serves parishes in as nimble a way as possible. We will experiment with consultants who come to offer help in targeted areas. We will move toward Stanton Center courses online, and lay catechists and evangelists, and education in the web/blog/app world, and many more ventures. Our hope is that every parish is, in its own unique way, celebrating our salvation in Christ, evangelizing its neighbors, reaching out to serve those in need, teaching its newcomers and young, and living out their share in the global fellowship of the Church catholic. Toward this end I am excited about clergy who have already, and will soon, be joining our diocesan family.





Secondly, my sense has been confirmed that we are living a remarkable time and place. “Now is the acceptable time.” The growth of our area invites the planting of new churches. The moment is right to put our Hispanic ministries on a firm foundation and expand them. We must continue to be in the forefront of raising-up young ordained leaders for a new generation. We need to be in league with fellow Christians addressing the urgent needs of the poor in our own area.

Thirdly, I believe that we have a special calling as a more theologically traditional diocese, which is also committed to the life of the Episcopal Church. We have a witness to make to the ‘goodly heritage’ we have received, but in a charitable way that includes all in our diocesan family. You may not realize it, but we live in a time in which fewer institutions are creating resources for teaching the faith - the stress of church life has curtailed this. My vision is of a diocese in which young scholar-priests play a leading role in articulating the faith anew, both in conferences and written resources. As the recent Primates’ meeting showed, we are also uniquely positioned to be a bridge between the wider worldwide Church and our own.

Fourth and finally, I look forward to the process by which we will be thinking about the future God is opening up for us in the coming years. What creative new ways can we find to ensure that Christian ministry and worship continue throughout our diocese? How can we invest in the places where we find potential for growth both spiritually and numerically? Paul exhorts us to ‘speak the truth in love,’ and this will be required at times as we discern together this future. But I am optimistic about what lies ahead, as we ‘press on toward the upward prize’ in Jesus Christ.

Peace, +GRS

“My vision is of a diocese in which young scholar-priests play a leading role in articulation the faith anew, both in conferences and written resources.”



## Grassroots Evangelism

“This group started to get sticky. By that I mean they **started sharing their lives** with each other.”

– The Rev. Leslie Stewart

**E**xplore God is a program that provides credible content for people with spiritual questions and curiosities. The group publishes on the website [exploreagod.com](http://exploreagod.com) which provides written information and videos. They also use social media, billboards and heavy signage to market the initiative. Several parishes throughout the diocese have offered Explore God programs during the last few years. Here are two vignettes from diocesan priests who participated last year.

### **By the Rev. Leslie Stewart, Annunciation in Lewisville**

The Episcopal Church of the Annunciation had a great time with Explore God. We ran four groups. Two were at the church on Sunday mornings, one for adults and one for teens. One group was held in a member's home on Tuesday evenings. These were all attended by church members, which was an important first step in expanding our culture from being a congregation great at “welcoming” to a congregation moved to “inviting.” The videos were really well-done and equipped our members to know how to have a conversation about their faith. It really is as simple as listening to and sharing our experiences.

The most exciting group was the one held in a café on Tuesday evenings. The length of the meetings, about an hour, and the Explore God series timeline of seven weeks was perfect. We started with four or five church members and the owners and staff at the café. The owners were great and let us use the large projection screen the size of a wall, and piped the video sound through the main speakers. They let us advertise on their business website, and allowed us to provide handouts, and hang a flyer on their window. We posted our group on the Explore God site and the Facebook group used by the local community. We were thrilled when someone showed up at that first meeting because they found us on the Explore God site. By week four we were up to fifteen people, five of whom had no affiliation with a church.

This group started to get sticky. By that I mean they started sharing their lives with each other. The members were connected by the Facebook group we set up for them and the group location. They were seeing each other in their own community and sharing what was happening during the week. The Facebook group was also a place where I posted links to the Explore God videos for the week. Members shared poems and prayers that were meaningful to them. By the seventh week, no one wanted the group to end. They were just norming as a solid group, so we decided to continue with the four-week follow-up discussion: Knowing God.

By the end of that time we were starting to perform mission tasks. We adopted an Angel Tree angel from the church. Several of us showed up in support when one of our members received his one-year sobriety chip. We formed a community in just a few weeks. Explore God had a powerful impact on us inside and beyond our church walls.

**By the Rev. David Miller, St. Matthew's Cathedral in Dallas**

For seven weeks beginning September, St. Matthew's Cathedral participated in Explore God. The series included seven weeks of preaching on big questions like, "Is there a God?" "Why is there pain and suffering?" and "Is the Bible Reliable?" These are questions non-Christians often ask when first beginning to explore Christianity. The sermon series included six different preachers (four clergy and three lay). Connected to the sermon series was a discussion group held each week at The Ginger Man pub in Lakewood. The

discussion group, open to non-Christians and Christians alike, served as a way of introducing people to the Explore God series through short video presentations of the topic/question for the evening. The discussion group was an excellent way of easily inviting our guests to come explore what Christianity has to say about life's most perplexing questions. At the end of the evening, the guests were invited to come to St. Matthew's the following Sunday to hear a sermon being preached on the same topic/question.

We also added a component to the Explore God series by inviting Carrie Boren Headington to speak to our adult Sunday School class on related questions we believe are compatible with the series. Questions like, "How do I tell my friend about Jesus?" and "Why does God, who Christians say is Love Itself, allow pain and suffering to exist?"

The Ginger Man discussion group and Sunday School presentations were well attended and received a good response. And even though no one from our Ginger Man discussion group came to hear the sermon series, we received good feedback from the congregation about the messages preached.

Explore God is a great tool for evangelism – one that St. Matthew's is interested in using again.

*For more information on bringing this program to your parish, contact EDOD Evangelist Carrie Boren Headington at [cheadington@edod.org](mailto:cheadington@edod.org).*



# Repurposed Ministry

“A portion of the profits from the shop are distributed to St. Luke’s and **support us in beautiful ways**, such as outreach, evangelism and music ministries.”

– **Deacon Rosemary Trei**

**L**ooking for a place to make a meaningful donation of gently worn clothing or household goods? Take them to the Plaid Door at St. Luke’s in Dallas where items are sold and the money goes to church ministry and local charities.

The store, which opened in 1953 and is operated by volunteers, does not actually have a plaid door. And sometimes people come in to shop and others to pray.

“We have some regulars who come by with a prayer request,” Deacon Rosemary Trei said. “They come in to connect and get support.”

The shop takes donations Tuesday through Saturday from 9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., and takes consignments from 9:30 - 11:30 a.m. on the second Wednesday and Saturday of the month, and also the last Saturday of the month. The items are on consignment for 60 days. After that, the items not sold may be picked up, otherwise they become store property and are marked down. All clothing must be clean, pressed, in season and in style.

In December, the stop hosted refugees from Gateway of Grace ministry offering them an entire outfit free of cost. “Most of the women were from the Middle East and it was amazing,” Trei said. “There were smiles everywhere. They were so excited to show each other what they got.”

A portion of the profits from the shop are distributed to St. Luke’s and “support us in beautiful ways, such as outreach, evangelism and music ministries,” Trei said. Money from the store also goes to North Dallas Shared Ministries, Brighter Tomorrows, Hope Cottage, Homeless Veterans Ministries, Friends of the Military and needy families. Clothing that does not get sold is donated to other charitable organizations.

*For more information call 214-368-2016.*



# Helping Refugees With a New Life

**R**efugees from all corners of the world arrive in Dallas in hope of a new start in a country that is culturally different from their own. They come from war-torn countries leaving behind their possessions, homes and careers. Most arrive needing a place to live, furniture, clothes, food, language lessons, transportation and a host of other things that would allow them to lead an independent life.

Gateway of Grace Ministries works to address these needs with more than 400 volunteers from more than 30 churches who try to provide for their practical, emotional and spiritual needs. It is the largest refugee ministry in North Texas serving about 1,500 refugees a year.

The Rev. Samira Izadi Page is the founder and Executive Director of Gateway of Grace Ministries. She was born and raised in Iran as a Muslim. She and her family fled Iran due to persecution and obtained political asylum status in the U.S., where she converted to Christianity, earned her Master of Divinity from Perkins School of Theology and is currently pursuing her Doctor of Ministry in Missional Church Studies. She has committed her life to bringing the hope and love of Christ to those whose hope, dignity, and humanity have been taken away by oppressive governments and circumstances. Page works cross-denominationally with pastors and mission leaders and moves local congregations into new ways of mission and outreach.

*If you would like to volunteer or help the ministry, check opportunities listed to the right.*



Refugees take classes at Gateway of Grace as they assimilate into American life

## **Adopt a Refugee Family**

- Furnish an apartment for a refugee family
- Provide food for its pantry and refrigerator
- Greet arriving family at the airport and/or apartment
- Cultivate friendships

## **Teaching**

- English as a second language
- Cultural literacy in American values, basic legal issues, etc.
- Computer literacy

## **Resource Center**

- Help with furniture pickup and delivery
- Organize storage facility

## **Relational Ministries**

- Become a conversation buddy, build a friendship with refugee
- Sponsor a lunch for **Gateway Day School**

## **Finance Team**

- Support Gateway of Grace financially

*To volunteer or to donate money to this ministry call 469.324-8825 or email [samira@gatewayofgrace.org](mailto:samira@gatewayofgrace.org).*



By Alan Justice

## Bridging the Food Gap

“One woman arrived bearing tracts from her own church just to let everyone know she wasn’t going to be converted.”

The Episcopal Church of the Transfiguration is located at the intersection of Spring Valley and Hillcrest Roads, in a prosperous section of North Dallas. Nearby homes sell in the million-dollar range, so at first glance it seems an odd place for a food pantry that gives free groceries to the poor.

But nestled in the fringes and hidden by high-rises and freeways resides what the U.S. Department of Agriculture calls a “food desert,” where affordable, nutritious food is hard to obtain, particularly for those without a car. Many of these low-income families live within walking distance of the church in rental homes and apartments, but not within walking distance of a grocery store.

The 'Fig's outreach committee learned these demographics during a meeting with the North Texas Food Bank, which had created a map illustrating the large geographic expanse of food insecurity. The committee realized that running a full-fledged food pantry was a larger project than the church was equipped to handle, but they wanted to help so they joined with Crossroads Community Services and became a distribution partner along with about 80 other organizations.

Crossroads acts as a mini-food bank for groups too small or not suited to be a North Texas Food Bank agency. This network enables small organizations to offer improved quality and quantity of food to people in their neighborhoods. The group gives a variety of nutritious foods, such as fresh produce, that provide the foundation for preparing 21 balanced meals per person.

Crossroads has requirements for its partners. There must be space, a freezer and refrigerator, a governing board, sponsorship by a non-profit organization and enough volunteers to staff a pantry. Requirements for volunteers include training about civil rights and safe food handling.

When the outreach committee approached the new rector, the Rev. Casey Shobe, with their idea, his immediate response was “yes, yes, yes!” And when an evening meeting was called to gauge parish interest, more than eighty people attended.



Initially, the church decided to provide food to families from a neighborhood school, Spring Valley Elementary, where the counselors and staff identified “backpack kids,” who were given food by the school to carry home in their backpacks every Friday. The school staff contacted these families, all of them Spanish speakers who would normally have no contact with the members of an Episcopal church. Transfiguration has nurtured the relationship with this school, providing volunteers to several programs.

The food distribution project started small, growth has been gradual, and it’s not easy gaining trust. To get the aid, a poor family has to overcome ethnic, linguistic, economic and religious gaps. One woman arrived bearing tracts from her own church just to let everyone know she wasn’t going to be converted.

Volunteers do what they can to make everyone comfortable, and there are no religious requirements for participation. One of the church’s parishioners is from Peru and is able to translate. Several others speak some Spanish, which also helps. The relationships are growing deeper. Those in need who initially came with great caution and uncertainty now arrive bearing treats and Christmas cards for the volunteers, expressing gratitude. And some come with hugs—those are the best.

As of this writing, the Transfiguration provides food once a month to 42 people in 14 families. They encompass singles, elderly adults, single moms and large families. Each family gets a week’s worth of groceries for each person.

The program requires that the church only use groceries from Crossroads and the North Texas Food Bank. The food is purchased for 12 cents per pound, whether it is canned goods, produce, staples, meat or poultry. It’s a great bargain and leverages a small investment into a lot of food.

But the parish is always on the lookout for other ways to help. A drive for non-food items brought in toilet paper, toothbrushes and toothpaste, soap, lotions and diapers — the kinds of items bought at the supermarket anyway. With the arrival of fall, parishioners gave school supplies for the children, from a list provided by Spring Valley Elementary.

And for Christmas gifts, a list was created of “want” and “need” for each child. The church members’ response was overwhelming and within two hours, they had signed up to buy two gifts for each child.

Recently, another outreach ministry at Transfiguration joined the food pantry. The Clothes Horse is the church’s re-sale shop of gently-used clothes. But pantry clients can now obtain several items of their choice every month at no charge. The Clothes Horse volunteers have also set up a room across the hall from the pantry, filled with racks of clothing.

When the parish was surveyed at the start of a recent rector search process, outreach was one of the main concerns voiced. With the enthusiastic support of both the clergy and the laity, parishioners are finding out anew what it means to care for their neighbors.



By Jen LeBlanc

# Every Child Deserves a Future

“It was in the weekly interactions between the volunteers and kids that **a greater need was identified** and, subsequently, a great opportunity to serve the community.”

**A**round the corner from million-dollar residences and upscale shopping and dining sits North Dallas High School, where one out of eight students is without a home. Not surprising when you consider that Dallas County has the highest rate of children living in poverty in the state. But if you're like most residents, you're shocked by these statistics and question how you couldn't have known before now. The answer is simple: It's a hidden problem.

For most, homelessness evokes images of adults begging on street corners. So it's no surprise that teens without a consistent home don't identify as such, but rather describe their situation as something closer to bouncing around hotels with friends. They work hard at blending in and disappearing into the communities they inhabit. Incarnation House does more than serve as the eyes of this community. It serves as its heart.

It was inconceivable that a fifteen-year-old girl could be homeless and alone on the streets of Dallas. But that was the startling realization made by one of the parish members of Church of the Incarnation when she was paired with the child through an outreach program. Was this an isolated event? As members of the church investigated, a shocking fact was revealed. There are more than 3,000 homeless students in DISD, nearly 200 of whom attend North Dallas High School, which is directly across the street from the church.

In 2012, Church of the Incarnation helped to create and operate a drop-in program at North Dallas High School for students who had no place to call home or were at risk of becoming homeless. The program was designed to provide immediate needs such as food, school supplies, uniforms and toiletries. On average, the drop-in program, which is still in operation today, supports 50 kids. It was in the weekly interactions between the volunteers and kids that a greater need was identified and, subsequently, a great opportunity to serve the community.

It was common to see students that visited the drop-in program wearing the same dirty uniform day after day. They would ask for an extra helping at breakfast to eat for dinner, or to give to a sibling. But they needed more than just material things, they needed access to a network of community leaders – those willing to provide the resources and time to help these kids discover their full potential and develop the essential life skills needed to break free from the cycle of abuse and poverty. Thus, Incarnation House was born as its own 501©3 organization – ready to provide a consistent and stable environment for homeless kids.

The youth come from backgrounds of poverty, neglect and abuse. Although their nights are filled with anxiety and uncertainty over where they will sleep or where they will get their next meal, every morning they rise with the goal to get to school – to get an education, yes, but also to get to a safe place, if for even seven hours. Incarnation House works to extend the walls of that safe place with after-school programming designed to provide physical, educational, and emotional support. Because these kids deserve what every child deserves – a future.

Incarnation House is located at the north end of the church campus on Elizabeth Street in a building anonymously donated by a parish family. That gift will also serve as the Outreach Center that houses the church's Mission & Outreach team, providing much needed office, storage and work space as they continue to identify needs in our surrounding community and beyond.

*To find out more or how to get involved visit: [incarnationhouse.org](http://incarnationhouse.org) or contact Laura at [lfredericks@incarnationhouse.org](mailto:lfredericks@incarnationhouse.org).*







By Annette Jenkins

# Prison Ministry in the Beto Unit

**F**or many years, St James on the Lake, Kemp, has followed Christ's call in Matthew 25:34-40 with its involvement of prison ministry at the George Beto Unit. The prison is a 3,500-bed, maximum security facility in Anderson County where parishioners volunteer in the faith-based wings of the institution. St. James also supports an intense four-day program of Christian teachings, called Kairos.

The faith-based wing houses 180 inmates and was one of the first such programs in Texas. The waiting list is long and inmates have to apply and interview for a slot. The purpose of this two-year program is to provide a safe environment for the men to change their hearts and their lifestyle before getting out of prison and returning to the general population. Without these changes, some statistics show they could return to the system within three years of release. Although the program is run and funded by Christian volunteers and is biblically based and Christ-centered, the program is open to all religions and to those with no faith. Volunteers also work with graduates in a new program called G-4, which is three-days a week, Christ-centered, biblically-based program for men who are restricted to their cells for breaking prison rules.

Kairos is an international program that brings the experience of Christ's love and forgiveness to the prison in a four-day program, much like the Cursillo movement. However, Kairos centers on continued involvement between volunteers and inmates as they learn further how to develop a relationship with Christ and how to live a life as He would have them live, whether it is in the remaining years of their imprisonment or when they return to the free world. The mission of the ministry is not "one day jailhouse conversion" but rather a changed heart and a changed life through a relationship with Christ.

**Annette Jenkins: I really had no interest in prison ministry and didn't understand the concept, but finally agreed to attend one Kairos event ten years ago just so I could say I had tried it. I never thought I would go back, but God had other plans. In the chapel at Beto prison that day, I witnessed more fully the presence of God and His power to transform the lives of broken and hurting men than I had ever seen.**

*For more testimonials got to [www.edod.org](http://www.edod.org)*

During Kairos, male volunteers (women are not allowed) go inside the unit each day to take the 42 participants through the program. The other volunteers prepare home-cooked meals for the participants and volunteers, and partake in ongoing prayer vigils in the sanctuary of the host church to pray for each individual inmate participant.

Each Saturday, volunteers continue in prayer and growth groups with the prison Kairos community. In July and December, volunteers bring lunch to the inmates they have been working with and share in worship in the chapel.

The rector of St. James on the Lake, the Rev. Jerry Morriss and his wife, Carol, are longtime Kairos volunteers and are the driving force for getting the congregation involved in this successful prison ministry. They have recruited volunteers to serve by ministering in the prison, baking cookies, drawing placemats and posters, providing financial support and participating in round-the-clock prayer teams during the weekend.

By Dabney Dwyer

# One Church One School

## Spotlight on Redeemer



In 2010, the Missional Church Commission began to make a deliberate effort to help churches engage and work with community partners to affect change in their neighborhood. Most of this effort initially was focused on developing church and school partnerships – now known as One Church One School.

There is no question that our schools in Texas need help. Twenty-five percent of children ages 0-17 live in poverty in Texas, and nearly 60 percent are enrolled in the free breakfast and lunch programs. Schools are not only nurturing and educating our children, but also clothing them and providing other basic needs. They have become the primary referral source for families to other social services.

Since the One Church One School effort began, church and school partnerships in the diocese have doubled from 15 to nearly 30. Parishes are finding many ways to support their local schools, including teacher appreciation, weekend food backpacks, reading, tutoring and mentoring.

Redeemer Irving demonstrates that smaller parishes can do great work in the community. Virginia Bertrand, a lay leader coordinating the One Church One School program, reports that even though they are in the search process, the parish happily forges ahead with their outreach ministries provided to W.T Hanes Elementary School in Irving. Many volunteers are “reading buddies” to third grade students falling behind and needing to be prepared for testing. Another ministry involves volunteers sending letters to students nearly every month, so students can practice their writing skills by sending letters back.

But that is not all. During the summer, Redeemer offers a summer reading camp at the parish with 15 to 20 students from the school in attendance. Teachers are supported throughout the year and volunteers sponsor a “Muffin Madness” appreciation party celebrating the end of the school year.

*If interested in becoming part of the One Church One School initiative or learning how to expand an existing school ministry, contact Dabney Dwyer, Missioner for Outreach, [dwyerdab@gmail.com](mailto:dwyerdab@gmail.com) or 214 500-7205.*

**“There is no question that our schools in Texas need help.**

**Twenty-five percent of children ages 0-17 live in poverty in Texas, and nearly 60 percent are enrolled in the free breakfast and lunch programs.”**





The Episcopal Diocese of DALLAS

[www.edod.org](http://www.edod.org)



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Bishop George Sumner at his consecration ceremony in November.