

THE  
LION'S TALE

*The Seasonal Magazine of St. Mark's, Mystic*



BACK TO SCHOOL 2021



SAINT MARK'S  
EPISCOPAL CHURCH

15 Pearl Street  
Mystic, CT 06355  
(860) 572-9549

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

MINISTERS

All members of the congregation  
The Rev. Adam Thomas, Rector  
David Tubbs, Music Director  
Faihe Emerich, Communications  
Bev Olsen, Senior Warden  
Kurt Cramer, Junior Warden  
Eric Bookmiller, Clerk  
Dave Cruthers, Treasurer

VESTRY

Celina Ortiz  
Teresa Norris  
Lynn Batcho  
Brae Rafferty  
Katy Roberts  
Christian Cloutier  
Mon Dickinson  
Bill Merrill  
Louisa Broadbent  
Ann Ragsdale  
Gene Roure  
Ted Kietzman

# FLEXIBLE OPTIONS FOR BEING TOGETHER

By Pastor Adam

Another school year begins here at St. Mark's, and I must confess that this has been the hardest to plan since I arrived here in 2014. We had hoped that the pandemic would have abated to such an extent that we could hold all our normal educational and missional opportunities like we have in the past. But the pandemic persists, which has caused us to reevaluate yet again. Such instability in the planning environment has forced us all to embrace flexibility in new ways. And, yes those ways are tiring. And, yes, we all long for a more stable and predictable immediate future. And, yes, learning to be more flexible, adaptable, and resilient is good for all of us.

The song of my life right now comes from the new animated Netflix movie, *Vivo*, which features songs written and sung by the genius Lin-Manuel Miranda. In one song, *Vivo* sings:

*All I can do when the road bends*

*Is lean into the curve.*

*And all I can do when the tanks run dry*

*Is see what's in reserve.*

*And all I can do when the plans break down*

*Is stay on my feet.*

*And all I can do at the end of the day is play on*

*Play on and keep the beat.*

The current plan for our fall opportunities blends in-person and online modes of being together. All people in the building will be masked.

**Worship:** Unless the case numbers increase drastically, our worship services will continue the way we have been gathering all summer – 8am and 10am in-person, masked and socially distanced. The 10am service will be streamed live on YouTube.

**Adult Forum:** Our adult forum (Sundays at 9am) will meet in the undercroft and on zoom. Please see the e-Tale or the front page of [stmarksmystic.org](http://stmarksmystic.org) for the Zoom link to the forum.

**Nursery:** The nursery will unfortunately remain closed for the time being.

**Godly Play:** Our Godly Play children's program will meet outside in good weather at 10am each Sunday.

**Upper Grades:** Our middle schoolers will restart their online fellowship group for prayer and games. (Our high school offerings are still to be determined.)

**Fellowship:** We will continue having fellowship outside until the weather is too cold for it.

I look forward to seeing you all and sharing in worship, service, and fellowship with you this school year at St. Mark's. It's not shaping up to be the year we hoped for, but our God is faithful and we will play on, play on and keep the beat...together.

# MINISTRY OF THE PORTER

*By Bev Olsen*



Each Sunday, we enter through the great red doors of the church, and each of us is greeted and made welcome. The usher is our porter and our gatekeeper. The usher assists those who need help, gives instructions on special events, and keeps the doorway clear. Newcomers are welcomed and made to feel comfortable in our space.

In his Rule, St. Benedict calls for a monastery to have a porter. This is an important job. The porter should be at the ready at all hours; he should live next to the gate so as not to miss a visitor. And according to Sr. Joan, “The chapter on the porter of the monastery is the chapter on how to receive the Christ in the other always.” The visitor is greeted with a blessing and invited into the life of the monks. On Sundays, this porter is the usher. During the week, we now have office volunteers, who have the opportunity to serve as a porter for our church.

During the week our office – including the phone – is a doorway into the church, and those of use who work in the office are the porters. Often, working in St. Mark’s office, the only face a visitor or workman may encounter is volunteer sitting in wait; the only voice a caller may hear is this volunteer. We await the opportunity to be of service. We have answered calls for help; we have given out information about St. Mark’s and the pre-school; we have fielded calls about work to be done in the building; we have ushered workers through the building. Sometimes we are an ear for someone who just to be heard.

*“The way we answer doors is the way we deal with the world.”*

**- Sister Joan Chittister**

Our vision for this office ministry is a vision of hospitality. While the building is mostly empty these days, this will change as the pre-school opens up and the choir begins to rehearse again and meetings recommence. In the meantime, we are there, ready. We believe this is a ministry, a holy task – the task of ministers – for it is a call to be Christ for one another.

*Are you willing to give a couple of days a month to this ministry?*

Contact Bev Olsen  
at [vestry@stmarksmystic.org](mailto:vestry@stmarksmystic.org)

# WARM MINISTRY

*By Arlene Johnson*

WARM stands for Westerly Area Rest Meals

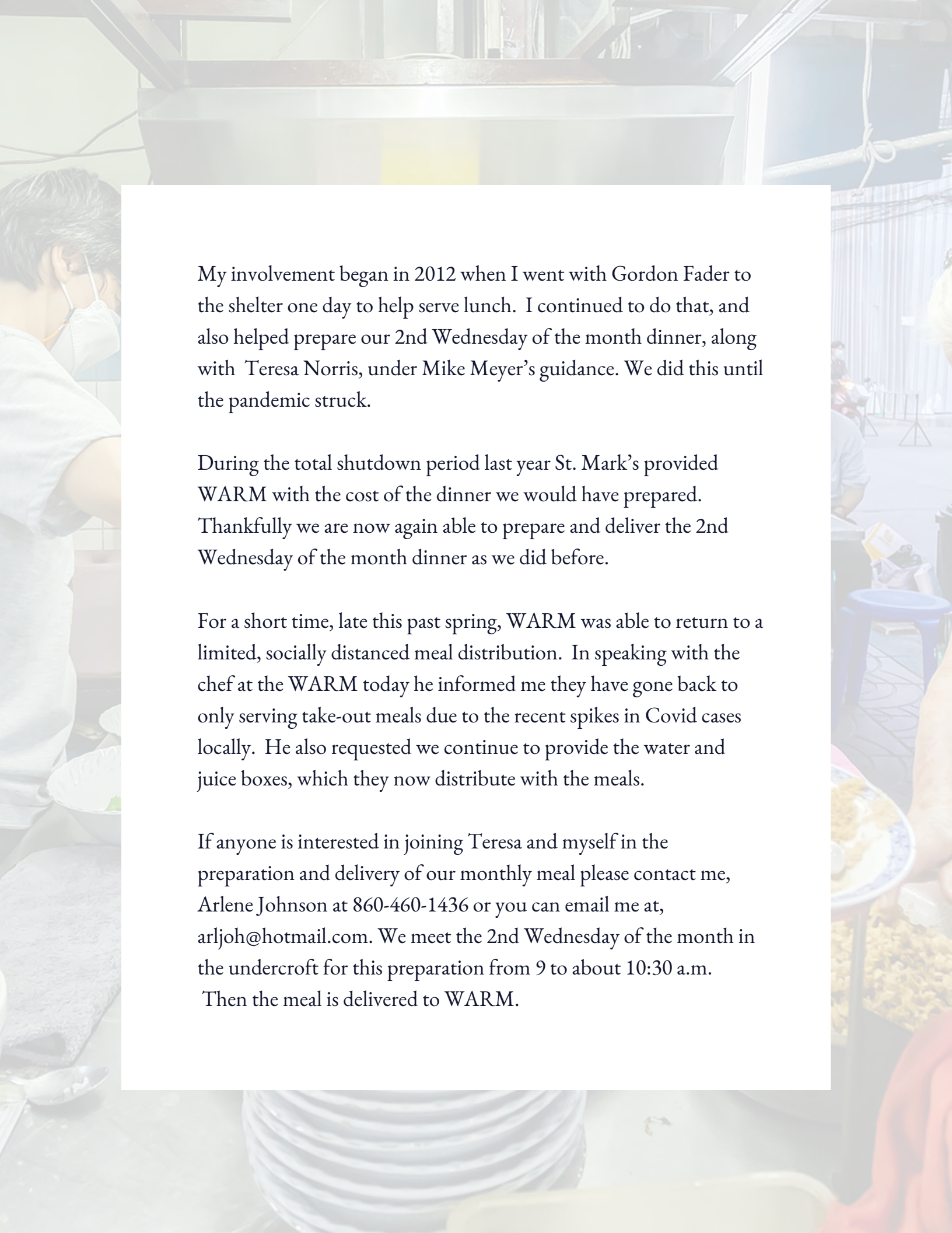


Many members of our congregation hear WARM mentioned during our church services, but perhaps not everyone knows a lot about what it does. It began in 1987 as a shelter and soup kitchen, which rotated nightly among seven local Westerly churches. In 1989 that number increased to eight churches, and gained the sponsorship of various local businesses, civic groups and the Westerly Hospital.

In 1990 a building was purchased which now still houses their Emergency Shelter and WARM-up facility. Later in 2013 a new building was build which houses Anita's Kitchen, Social Services, their "Attire for Hire" program, Supportive Homes, and staff offices. More details about each of these programs can be found on their web site, [warmcenter.org](http://warmcenter.org).

I haven't been able to find out exactly when St. Mark's involvement began with WARM, and it's believed that our connection was started by Mike Meyer.

According to WARM's Summer 2021 newsletter last year (2020) 32,733 meals (totals for lunch and dinner) were served through Anita's Kitchen, and over 4,000 bagged lunches were served to children in their children's summer lunch program. That newsletter is posted on our bulletin board in the undercroft if anyone wants to read it.

A person wearing a white short-sleeved shirt and a white face mask is seen from the side, working in a kitchen. The background shows a large stainless steel sink or counter area. The overall scene is brightly lit, suggesting an indoor kitchen environment.

My involvement began in 2012 when I went with Gordon Fader to the shelter one day to help serve lunch. I continued to do that, and also helped prepare our 2nd Wednesday of the month dinner, along with Teresa Norris, under Mike Meyer's guidance. We did this until the pandemic struck.

During the total shutdown period last year St. Mark's provided WARM with the cost of the dinner we would have prepared. Thankfully we are now again able to prepare and deliver the 2nd Wednesday of the month dinner as we did before.

For a short time, late this past spring, WARM was able to return to a limited, socially distanced meal distribution. In speaking with the chef at the WARM today he informed me they have gone back to only serving take-out meals due to the recent spikes in Covid cases locally. He also requested we continue to provide the water and juice boxes, which they now distribute with the meals.

If anyone is interested in joining Teresa and myself in the preparation and delivery of our monthly meal please contact me, Arlene Johnson at 860-460-1436 or you can email me at, arljoh@hotmail.com. We meet the 2nd Wednesday of the month in the undercroft for this preparation from 9 to about 10:30 a.m. Then the meal is delivered to WARM.



September 8, 2021

Dear Body of Christ in Mystic,

Next month, the first two refugee Afghan families of 700 to arrive in Connecticut will be settling in New London through the work of Start Fresh and its cadre of interfaith volunteers.

To do the work of loving our neighbors that Jesus calls us to do, we need your financial help.

Start Fresh is a local non-profit group that co-sponsors with IRIS (Integrated Refugee and Immigrant Services), a US Government Agency contracted to resettle refugees.

With these families arriving as soon as October 1st, we ask that you consider this a priority of your mission outreach. To donate, volunteer, or sign up for the email, you can go to the Start Fresh website, [www.startfreshct.org](http://www.startfreshct.org), or write a check to Start Fresh, Inc, c/o St James Episcopal Church, 76 Federal St, New London 06320.

Together, we will be embodying “The Way of Love.”

— The Most Rev. Michael B. Curry

Grace and Peace,

Hildy Zeigler, St. James, New London

Maggy Gilbert, St Marks, Mystic

# STORY QUEST

*Learning the Power of Story by Telling One Together*

*By Pastor Adam*

Last January, I was despairing that I had not seen much of the youth of the church since the beginning of the pandemic. They were sick of Zoom, so gathering for Sunday school via that platform wasn't going to fly. I was pretty sick of Zoom myself, but that's when I realized something. I realized the only Zoom meetings I looked forward to were my Dungeons and Dragons games. Bingo, I thought to myself. I invited the youth of the church to play D&D with me over Zoom, and the middle schoolers took to it right away.

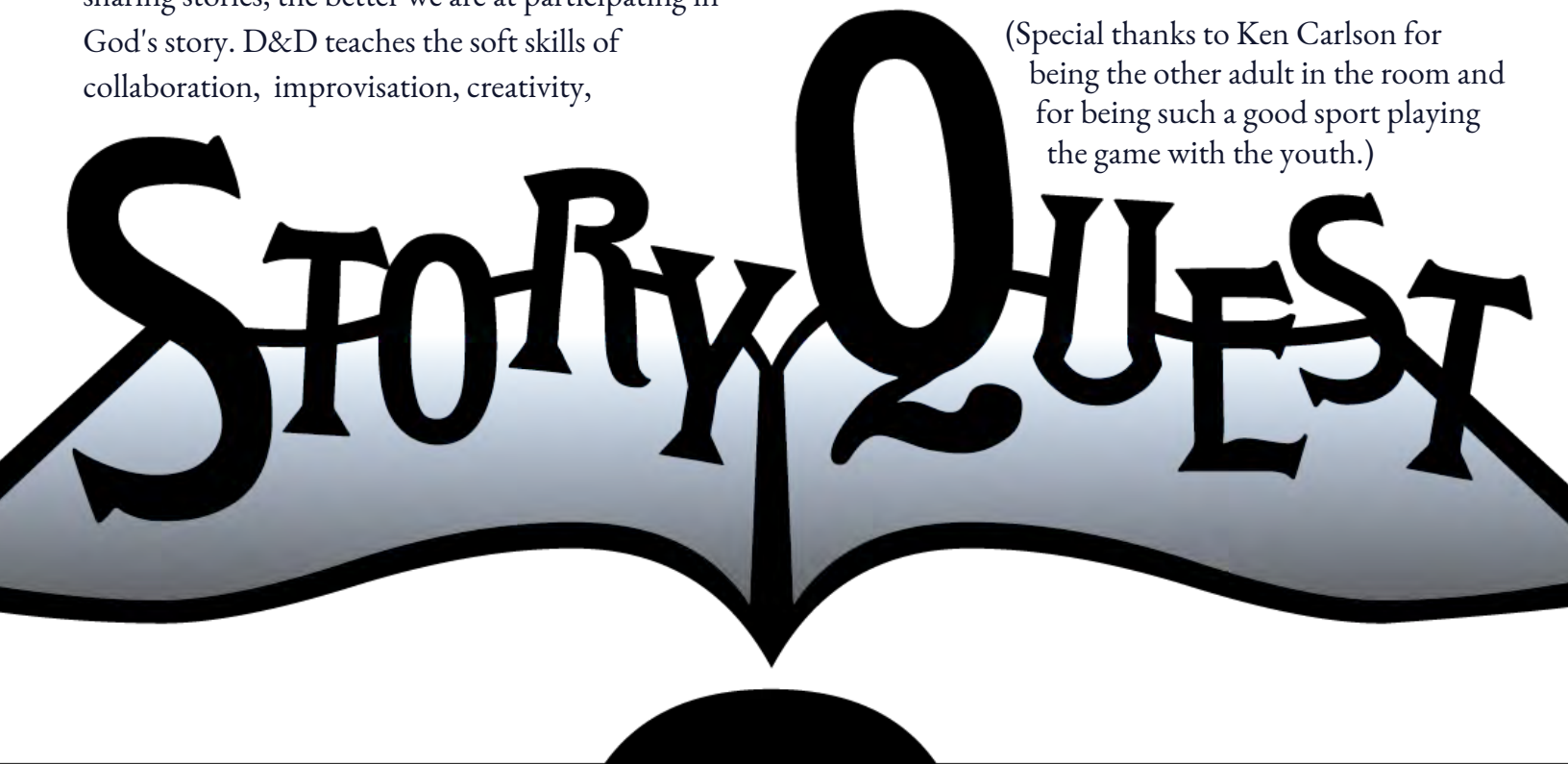
Why a roleplaying game (RPG)? I'm glad you asked. The secret of RPGs is that they are a vehicle of telling a story together. We are people of faith steeped in the story of God's movement that we find in the Bible and in our own lives. And the better we are at sharing stories, the better we are at participating in God's story. D&D teaches the soft skills of collaboration, improvisation, creativity,

flexibility, and teamwork (plus math). On top of that On top of that, it's really fun and a great way to make friends.

I designed the story for the middle schoolers to revolve around a petrifying sickness that hit their town. They went on a quest to find a cure. The whole story was designed to give them some agency in this fantasy world when in the real world the covid-19 pandemic was at its peak and we were essentially helpless against it. Thus, the game was something like group therapy, as well as sharing a story. We have moved on from that storyline, and I can't wait to see what stories we spin next.

We end each session praying the nighttime prayers of compline. Sharing prayer with these middle schoolers has been such a wonderful blessing.

(Special thanks to Ken Carlson for being the other adult in the room and for being such a good sport playing the game with the youth.)



# THE LION'S TALE

St. Mark's Episcopal Church  
15 Pearl Street  
Mystic, CT 06355

*Return Service Requested*

First Class Mail

## SWORDS TO PLOWSHARES

*Transforming Guns into Garden Tools*



On September 11th, Pastor Adam had the opportunity to help retired Bishop Jim Curry reforge guns into garden tools. Here's a snippet from the Swords to Plowshares website:

"Our program is focused on reducing gun violence in the communities in which our events take place. With 40,000 gun deaths per year in our country, something must be done now. The strategy we apply to this problem is to convert weapons of death into tools of life, and then use those tools to the betterment of the community. All with the goal of reducing senseless gun deaths."