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From the Clergy Associate

Youth Mission Trip and Osprey Chicks

This past June nine of our youth and I traveled to Maine for our Youth Mission Trip. Don and Lynn M., long-time St. Elizabeth's parishioners, graciously invited us to stay on their property in Cushing, Maine. Don and Lynn were wonderful hosts, as well as steadfast co-workers on our work projects. Don also served as a dynamic—and always encouraging—project leader. We were also able to visit The Rev. Lu-Anne Conner at her “new” parish, St. Andrew's, in Newcastle. And for our final night, Don and Lynn and their great friends, Steve and Edie, generously hosted all of us, including Lu-Anne and her partner Kate, to a fabulous lobster bake – a true feast – in their “backyard” overlooking the water. It was a wonderful, spirited “St. Elizabeth's fellowship event”.

So we had great fun, but we also worked hard: scraping, painting, hauling, clearing, and cleaning at the Audubon Center on Hog Island; and cedar-shingling the back of a building at The Carpenter's Boat Shop. We are very grateful to Sharon Walker, Don and Lynn, Steve and Edie, and Lu-Anne and Kate for all of their love and support and work that went into helping to make this mission trip successful. And thank you for all of your prayers.

Above one of our worksites on Hog Island was an osprey nest which had a camera right over it so that we could see all that was going on in the nest. As we were scraping and painting the kitchen building, we could also look up at the nest from the ground and see some of the movement of the mother and her three chicks around the edge of the nest. It was fascinating.

These chicks were very, very awkward looking. They had **huge** feet – or talons. Eric, the director of the center, explained that they are born with their talons just about full adult-size – so the chicks looked like they had clown shoes on. And they moved about the nest quite awkwardly with these **huge** talons and their little fluffy bodies.

Watching them, I couldn't help but think how at different times in our lives we each feel like those chicks with oversized clown shoes. Feeling as if we have been given some pretty big role to fill or responsibility to take on; and we are trying to grow into that responsibility, perhaps maneuvering

more awkwardly at some points than others. Making mistakes and missteps along the way as we navigate, but having a strong, supportive, and steadfast presence in the background.

And my prayer, particularly for the youth of St. Elizabeth's, is that we each find a loving, vital, steadfast presence in this parish as we each continue to mature and develop into our beautiful, huge feet as Christians; as we each continue to grow into the full stature of followers of Christ.

The Rev. Joan F. Conley
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