

# Episcopal Youth Group To Learn About Island History While Serving Community

By Jessica Delaney

Bringing old and new together has been a constant focal point for St. Thomas Episcopal Church in Trenton. So when youth minister Brother Gary Snider was looking for a location for a pilgrimage and mission trip, Mackinac Island sounded like the perfect place.

"We had a lot of looks when we mentioned Mackinac Island," said Mr. Snider. "But

there's so much religious and state history. The kids can really learn."

Nine middle school children will be participating in the pilgrimage, the first of its kind at St. Thomas. According to Brother Snider, St. Thomas has been serving mostly older parishioners, but new emphasis has been put on the youth program.

"The program is small, but

our church is so supportive of the youth," he said. "It's great to see how they've rallied around the youth. It's neat to watch the program grow."

The group of nine children and five adults were to leave Trenton early Thursday, June 23, and spend the day and night at Interlochen. They planned to discuss creation and worship through music and indulge in activities like swimming and a concert.

Friday, they plan a tour of Colonial Michilimackinac and will focus on the Anglican history of the area, then hop a ferry in St. Ignace. Friday evening, the group will help serve the free weekly dinner for employees at Ste. Anne's Church.

Mr. Snider is especially excited about the dinner project because the youth in his church help in serving lines for Detroit soup kitchens and plan a service project at soup kitchens in New York City. This, he said, gives the younger kids an opportunity to learn about serving people and working together.

Saturday, the group will assist the Tourism Bureau to

hand out brochures, surveys, and buttons at Island boat docks. That evening at 7, they will head to the Island cemeteries for evening prayer, then spend the night at Trinity Episcopal Church. Sunday morning, they will help clean the church and prepare for service.

A primary focus of the pilgrimage, said Br. Snider, is to show the youth how to incorporate religion into a secular lifestyle.

"We're trying to show them the real life side of what it means to be a Christian," he said.

Participants were required to raise all of their own money for the trip at a pizza parlor and at car washes and bake sales.

The pilgrimage was designed around a national Episcopal program called Journey to Adulthood which teaches the children about themselves, about peer pressure, and about being a good Christian.

"The primary focus is to grow with Christ in their own way, to find one thing that has touched them and helped them grow," said Mr. Snider. "The goal is if they can find one

moment when they feel Christ working."

Mackinac Island was chosen, in part, because the children have learned about Michigan history in school and organizers believed the Island ties in well with that. Mackinac also is a place where the youth can interact with a large number of people who have come from many different places and backgrounds, and coming here, said Mr. Snider, demonstrates that there is a need for help and volunteering everywhere in the world, not merely in cities.

The youth who will be visiting the Island are also involved in other youth programs, such as marching in parades, making blankets for shelters in Detroit, and working with kids that have AIDS.

When they return to Trenton from their weekend of mission, they will bring home with them seashells. One seashell will be given to a mentor in the parish, the second will be placed on the altar in the church as a constant reminder of pilgrimage and service.

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## Island Horses Blessed

Morgan Brodeur-Bunker had her horse, Blue Moon, blessed by the Reverend Vincent Carroll of Little Stone Church Friday, June 17. Rev. Carroll wished all the horses on Mackinac a healthy, happy summer during the Lilac Festival's Feast of Epona and recognized the horses for their hard work, gentle natures, and beauty. Members of the Mackinac Horsemen's Association (MHA) and the 4-H Club were on hand to take donations, give barn tours, and teach those gathered a little about horses. Noted the MHA secretary Trish Martin: "Everyone here must pay attention to the horses, whether they like it or not."



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