

Briefly noted

News in the [January 13, 2009](#) issue

Episcopalians in New Mexico have voted to leave a conservative umbrella group and reaffirm their commitment to the Episcopal Church rather than join a new rival Anglican province on U.S. soil. The Albuquerque-based Diocese of the Rio Grande said December 11 it could not support plans to launch a new Anglican Church in North America and ended its membership in the Pittsburgh-based Anglican Communion Network. The ACN is one of 11 conservative groups that joined together to launch the new province on December 3. Four Episcopal dioceses in the ACN have left the national church and plan to join the new province. But Mark Goodman, the dean of Albuquerque's Cathedral of St. John, told Episcopal News Service that the diocese wants to remain a part of the national church. "I think the picture people have in their mind about the Diocese of the Rio Grande being a very conservative and evangelical diocese is, in many ways, not an accurate picture of where we are today," he said.

The Alaska evangelical church that Republican vice presidential nominee Governor Sarah Palin calls home was severely damaged December 12 by a fire that has been ruled suspicious by authorities. "Our building was damaged by a fire, and will need repairs before we can resume worship there again," Wasilla Bible Church announced on its Web site. The *Anchorage Daily News* reported that Palin's office issued a statement the day after the fire. "Gov. Palin stopped by the church this morning, and she told an assistant pastor that she apologizes if the incident is in any way connected to the undeserved negative attention the church has received since she became a vice-presidential candidate on August 29," it said.