



# The Forward

February 2008

## Letter from the Bishop

As we prepare to enter the Lenten Season, our diocese continues to look forward in mission. Lent will provide yet another way for us to practice discernment and discipline in our callings. Our relationship with God grows deeper and fuller as we continue to pray and engage the practices of our faith. As your bishop, I encourage you to take seriously this time of self-examination and repentance and use it to consider your ministry and our corporate ministry as One Church.

We will come together as a diocese in the Easter Season to consider our life and mis-

sion together. Our mission and vision will come forth from our mutual discernment. We will be learning to live into the exciting reality that our diocese really is One Church with a variety of mission outposts transforming our region. God has powerful and exciting work for us in our diocese. Please mark one of the focus group dates listed later in *The Forward* on your calendar and plan to attend one of these important events. Your discernment is important to the future of our community of faith.

Blessings for a holy Lenten journey.

*Bishop Sean*



### Inside this issue:

We Are the Diocese Part 2	2
Summer Camp Dates	2
Pre-Convention Deanery Meetings	2
Community of Spouses	3
Lenten Fish Dinners at St. Mark's, Erie	3
Visitation Schedules	4
Diocesan Council Schedule	4
Thank You from St. Matthew's, Eldred	4

## Sown in the Heart of Christ by Carly Rowe

The 2008 Episcopal Youth Event (EYE), *Sown in the Heart of Christ*, will take place from July 8-13 in San Antonio, Texas. As you may know, EYE is mandated by General Convention to be the triennial gathering of young people and their sponsors from every diocese of our Church. It is a celebration to inspire deeper faith in Jesus Christ and a renewed commitment to mission and ministry. It is the single largest youth event in the Episcopal Church. It is attended by some 1500 young people, adult sponsors, bishops, staff, and resource people. EYE is an opportunity to meet other young people from around the world and experience the church on a global level.



Each diocese is allotted 10 spots for this event. Application materials have been mailed to all eligible young people and are due back to the Diocesan Church Center no later than March 1. If you have not received materials and are interested in applying, please contact Vanessa in the Diocesan Church Center.

The adult sponsor's for this year's delegation are Fr. Denny Blauser, the Rector of Trinity Church in New Castle and Mrs. Sharon Gregory from Holy Trinity Church in Houtzdale. They will be traveling with the group and participating in the event. Bishop Sean and Carly will join the group for part of the week as well.

To learn more about EYE 2008 visit [www.ey2008.org](http://www.ey2008.org) or for specific questions about our diocese's participation contact Carly Rowe at [carlyhrowe@hotmail.com](mailto:carlyhrowe@hotmail.com).

## We are the Diocese! Part 2 by the Rev. John Wesley

In last month's *Forward* you read that a group of lay people and clergy is working to create a process by which all of us can talk about, and eventually define, the purpose and mission of the Diocese of Northwestern Pennsylvania together.

The process that has been most successful in recent history for garnering this kind of involvement was the use of Focus Groups to gather information leading up to the search for candidates for Bishop. Times and locations in each Deanery were announced well ahead of the meeting date, and the number of people who participated was phenomenal. Because of this success, we will hold Focus Groups to give all of us an

opportunity to express our opinion on what we believe the mission and purpose of our Diocese should be. Those focus groups will be held:

- April 16 from 6:30-8:30 PM at St. John's, Franklin
- April 20 from 3:00-5:00 PM at Grace, Ridgway
- April 21 from 6:30-8:30 PM at St. Mark's, Erie

In the meantime, we want to continue to strengthen channels of communication and discover the most effective methods for encouraging clear and relevant communication. In doing this, our desire is to:

- use multiple methods of communication, and
- find creative ways to allow two-way communication.

While reestablishing the monthly Diocesan newsletter, *The Forward*, and making it available through the Diocesan website is believed to be a key component toward accomplishing these objectives, we recognize that every communicant in our geographical area does not have access to the internet. Therefore, other methods of communication available to a larger number of people, but also financially realistic, are being discussed.

"We are the Diocese" is more than just a clever phrase. You are important and your opinions deserve to be heard. Our goal is to find the best methods of communication to allow that to happen.

## Summer Camp Dates

This year's annual Diocesan Summer Camp will be held June 8-14 at Camp Nazareth in Mercer, PA. More information will be coming as the summer approaches.



St. Mark's, Erie

## Pre-Convention Deanery Meetings

Mark your calendars! Pre-convention deanery meetings have been set:

Northeast Deanery: Saturday, September 27 at 10:00 AM at St. Luke's, Smethport

Northwest Deanery: Tuesday, September 30 at 7:00 PM at St. Mark's, Erie

Southeast Deanery: Tuesday, September 23 at 6:30 PM at Our Saviour, DuBois

Southwest Deanery: Wednesday, October 1 at 6:30 PM at St. John's, Sharon

### Community of Spouses by Carly Rowe

During last year's process for the election of the new bishop, I had the opportunity to see things from a very unique vantage point. After having worked in this diocese (as the program coordinator at the Cathedral) for nearly a decade, and establishing relationships with people from all around, clergy and laity alike, I suddenly found myself in unfamiliar territory. Sean was a candidate for and then elected bishop. Not at all what I expected to be doing just two years after being married to a parish priest! Nevertheless, my experiences out in the diocese, first during the walk-about and then, more recently on our Sunday visitations, caused me to really pay attention to what I heard and what I saw. While there are plenty of things about my new role that I haven't figured out, one thing became clear: We as a diocese are eager to be in community with one another.

One place that I can make an attempt to facilitate this process is with the spouses of our diocesan clergy. We have begun to build relationships with an outing on the Trolley the day before the consecration and a spouse gathering the night before diocesan convention, both of which were very well attended and helpful in getting to know each other. However, distance makes it hard to have those types of events often. So, how can we stay connected and be helpful to each other in between the times when we can't actually be together?

I would like to start an e-mail list for the spouses of diocesan clergy. This would be a great way to keep everyone informed on happenings in our lives, ask for advice, and share news from our congregations, all in a confidential and safe environment. I believe that this tool could really help us bridge the geographical distance and help us "spend some time together". Being a clergy spouse can be a unique, wonderful and difficult thing all at the same time and who better to understand that than other clergy spouses!

To get started, I am asking those who would like to participate to simply e-mail me at [carlyhrowe@hotmail.com](mailto:carlyhrowe@hotmail.com) and say "I would like to join the spouse e-mail list". Once I have some responses, I will get us set up and we can start talking! I look forward to hearing from you all soon!



### Lenten Fish Dinners at St. Mark's, Erie

St. Mark's, Erie, will be hosting their annual "Famous Lenten Fish Dinners" for four Fridays beginning on February 15, from 5:00-7:00 PM. You have your choice of baked, pan fried, or blackened cod or macaroni and cheese, and the dinners cost \$10.00 for adults and \$5.00 for children. You can make reservations by calling the church office at 814-868-9704. Take out is available if you are unable to stay.

**If you have news, story ideas, or pictures that you would like to share with the diocese, please contact Vanessa at the Diocesan Church Center at 814-456-4203 or at [vbutler@dionwpa.org](mailto:vbutler@dionwpa.org).**

**Bishop Sean's & Canon Martha's Visitation Schedules  
February 2008**

February 3rd - Canon Martha - St. Laurence, Osceola Mills

February 10th - Bishop Sean & Canon Martha - Church of the Ascension, Bradford  
(Welcoming of the Rev. Lynn Sinnott as interim priest)

February 17th - Bishop Sean - St. Clement's, Greenville  
- Canon Martha - Church of the Epiphany, Grove City

February 24th - Bishop Sean - St. Agnes' Church, St. Marys  
- Canon Martha - St. Andrew's Church, Clearfield

**Diocesan Council Schedule**

The following dates have been set as Diocesan Council meetings:

- Thursday, April 17 at 7:00 PM at St. John's, Franklin
- Saturday, May 10 at 10:00 AM at St. John's, Franklin (lunch provided)
- Saturday, September 13 at 10:00 AM at St. John's, Franklin (lunch provided)

**Thank You from St. Matthew's, Eldred**

The congregation of St. Matthew's would like to thank Bishop Sean, Canon Martha and Fr. Leo for conducting the Celebration of Ministry of St. Matthew's on Thursday, January 17, 2008.

We would also like to thank all the faithful who were in attendance - former priests who served at St. Matthew's; members from St. Luke's, Smethport, St. Joseph's, Port Allegany, and Church of the Ascension, Bradford; and other faithful friends. Thank you to Ade Angevine, organist, and the choir from Church of the Ascension.

While it was a bitter sweet evening for us, we thank God that we

ended with such an uplifting sermon and with voices raised in song and worship. Thank you that our last service was full of praise and song and not a quiet, mournful service with only our few faithful in attendance.

In his sermon Bishop Sean explained to those in attendance that all ministry has a season and that the season is finished at St. Matthew's. However, the seeds from that ministry will live on in ways that we may never know. He reminded us that Good Friday has to come before Easter Sunday and, while we are experiencing Friday, Sunday will come!

