



The Forward

January 2009

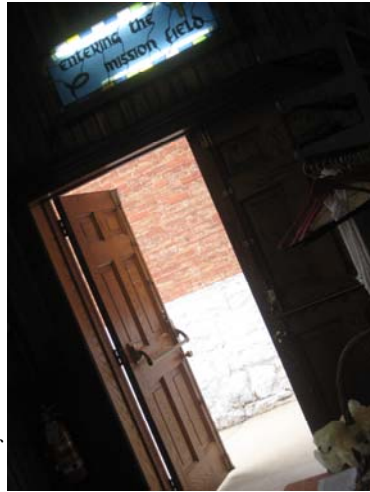
Letter from the Bishop

In 2010, our diocese will celebrate 100 years of serving this region. For one hundred years or so before that we were part of the Diocese of Pennsylvania and the Diocese of Pittsburgh. The long and short of it is that we have been around and bearing witness to Jesus Christ for a long time, and we are continuing to discern and explore new ways to serve God's mission here.

The concept that continues to come to mind is that of sustainability—sustainable mission. How can our diocese engage in mission through our missionary outposts (our congregations) in ways that are sustainable over the long term? The issues around sustainability are facing each of our congregations.

We all know that ministry in Northwestern Pennsylvania is challenging. The challenges that we face regionally are compounded by a struggling economy. Let's face it, though, we are one big mission field. There are thousands of people in our communities who do not have a relationship with God in Je-

sus Christ. Imagine what could happen if we decided to exercise spiritual discipline and pray and tithe (yes, 10%) our income to our congregations. Imagine the work that could be accomplished in the Kingdom! The economy or the challenges of our region really have nothing to do with this.



Over the course of the next year, our focus will be developing and equipping transformational leaders—both clergy and lay. Part of the 20/20 Vision for The Episcopal Church is to equip and develop persons to become innovative, entrepreneurial, and evangelical leaders. Part of our sustainability strategy in this particular diocese will be to provide congregations and congregational leadership the resources necessary to show outstanding Christian leadership for mission.

What resources do you need to be a more effective leader in your congregation? What resources does your congregation need to provide transformational leadership for sustainable mission? Make your discernment about these questions known.

Blessings for a transformational new year.

+ Sean

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Bishop Sean's & Canon Martha's Visitation Schedules - January 2009

- January 11th - Bishop Sean - St. Clement's, Greenville
- Canon Martha - Epiphany, Grove City
- January 18th - Bishop Sean - Trinity Memorial, Warren
- Canon Martha - St. Joseph's, Port Allegany
- January 25th - Bishop Sean - Cathedral of St. Paul, Erie
- Canon Martha - St. John's, Franklin



Cathedral of St. Paul, Erie

Letter from the Canon

“And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father’s only son, full of grace and truth . . . No one has ever seen God. It is God the only son, who is close to the Father’s heart, who has made him known.” John 1:14, 18

As Christians we know that the tradition of gift giving, played out in myriads of ways with cultural particularity across the globe, is rooted in our understanding of the gift of the Christ Child. Because God chose to live among us, we have this extraordinary opportunity to know, in a very clear and personal way, the One who made us. What a gift!

Perhaps you’ve seen the TV commercial of a guy receiving as a gift the latest and greatest cell phone. Each time he unwraps it, it is like a brand new gift with a brand new function. It is clever advertising—an abundance of gifts in one small package. (Only true of course if you take the time to open it and if you use it for more than making calls!)

Dare I suggest that the gift of the Incarnation is just like this phone . . . only way better? Think about it. This gift is wrapped in ways that will

surprise, delight, challenge and transform our very being. Every time we rip open the wrapping and explore what’s inside, there will be something more, something beyond our imagination, some piece of hope that uniquely addresses the time in which we live. So, okay, God is not a function. And for as many functions that there are on those electronic wizards it is a finite number. God is not finite.

But here is the challenge. Are we willing to keep on unwrapping what we have received? Are we willing to push past functionality and move towards relationship? The package under the Christmas tree is beautifully wrapped.

It is up to us to pick it up and start unwrapping.

Blessings,

Martha



St. Clement’s, Greenville, Calls New Priest-in-Charge



St. Clement’s, Greenville, recently called a new priest-in-charge. The Rev. Lynn Orville, who previously served in this diocese at the Cathedral of St. Paul, joined St. Clement’s in December.

She and her husband, Doug, moved here from Bemidji, MN, where she was serving in the Diocese of Minnesota.

If you get the chance to see Mother Lynn and her family, please welcome them to our diocese.

Healing Service Scheduled

A healing service will be held at St. Mark’s, Erie, on Sunday, January 25 at 7:00 PM. The bishop will be presiding. All are welcome and encouraged to attend.

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.