



# The Forward

May 2009

## Letter from the Bishop

Alleluia. Christ is Risen.

The Easter season is my absolute favorite season of the church year. I count celebrating the risen Lord and proclaiming the resurrection as one of the greatest joys of being a Christian. In the resurrection, God is doing something new in the world. Resurrection is not about Spring and new life, but about the reality that in Christ death is conquered, and we are free to live lives that witness to the Kingdom.

I wonder what would happen if we lived into this 50 day celebration of the resurrection in ways that are open and public? I really think



Christians should consider greeting each other during this time with the Easter acclamation, Alleluia. Christ is Risen. The Lord is risen indeed, Alleluia.

I do not suggest this form of greeting as some kind of gimmick. Instead, I view such a suggestion that we greet each other by proclaiming the resurrection as one which squares with the biblical witness about proclamation. That is, what we say matters, and what we say contributes to the reality around us. Think of all of the negative talk about the economy. What about all the hype about the swine flu where people are actually refusing the common cup in communion as though we can somehow become sick by receiving the blood of Christ? What we say—what we proclaim—matters.

As I spend time with you in our congregations, I hear a tremendous amount of grief about what has been lost. This usually takes the form of talking about what ‘we used to have,’ or ‘what we used to be.’ That grief is real. Our churches are smaller, and, in many cases, our children have moved away. The disciples were definitely looking back when Jesus died.

What will it take for us, as a diocese, to embrace the power of resurrection? What will it take for us to talk like an Easter people—a people of resurrection? We have to start somewhere, and I think it needs to start with what comes out of our mouths—what we choose to proclaim.

I’m certainly not suggesting that what we say is somehow magic or that all we have to do to overcome our circumstances is to speak positively. I am saying that we are called to proclaim the Kingdom of God in our midst. Especially in these 50 days, we have a vocation to witness to the resurrection. This means, we should show, by the words we speak and the fruit we bear, that we are an Easter people.

In the resurrection God is doing something new. We are an Easter people—a people of resurrection. Let’s talk about a future that includes resurrection. Let’s talk about a future that looks at the past and values it, but seeks a new future where God is always doing something new.

The Lord is risen indeed. Alleluia.

Blessings,  
*+ Sean*

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## Notes from the Diocesan Health Team

by the Rev. Holly Davis

Last month the **Organic Quality Management Diocesan Health Team (OQM)** invited the Body of Christ—all peoples of the Diocese—into dialogue regarding the eight quality characteristics of growing churches. **For review, Natural Church Development (NCD)**, (as well as the work of the OQM) is designed to foster church **health**—not church **growth**, per se, but the development of a rich, vibrant, Godly and healthy church. Growth follows ***naturally*** from health.

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### **QUALITY CHARACTERISTIC 2: GIFT-ORIENTED MINISTRY**

The second characteristic we will focus on is: **gift-oriented ministry**. The **basis** of our focus is the conviction that God has **already** determined **which** Christian should best assume **which ministries** in the church.

(No question)... this **SOUNDS** simple, but the implications of the **practical** application of these characteristics will play an **enormous** role in all areas of our *communal diocesan life*.

When we live according to our ***spiritual gifts***, we are working under the power of the ***Holy Spirit***—no longer only our **mortal** strength (because we are Christians). We will, as the Body of Christ of the Diocese, begin to focus on the ***spiritual gifts*** we possess as a means of accomplishing awesome and extraordinary work for the **Kingdom of God**.

The **practical** application of this characteristic is to ascertain each of our ***spiritual gifts*** in order that we **function *healthily*** in ministerial positions which benefit ourselves, the *missionary outposts* of the Diocese, the church and the Kingdom.

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This month we will also begin defining terms of the proposed Diocesan Mission Statement.

### **THE PROPOSED DIOCESAN MISSION STATEMENT:**

The Diocese of Northwestern Pennsylvania is **One Church** under the Lordship of Christ, equipping Transformational Leadership for Transformational Ministry through our missionary outposts – our Congregations.

**“One Church”-** The term “One Church” is defined as the **one body** under the **Lordship** of **Jesus Christ**.

St. Paul defines the body of the church in his letter to the peoples of Ephesus, “And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the head over all things to **the church, which is His body.**” (Ephesians 1:21-22)

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### **Prayer for the Diocesan Organic Quality Management Diocesan Health Team:**

#### **For Guidance:**

Direct us, O Lord, in all our doings with your most gracious favor, and further us with your continual help; that in all our works begun, continued, and ended in you, we may glorify your holy Name, and finally, by your mercy, obtain everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

*The Book of Common Prayer: 1979*

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Please contact The Rev. Adam Trambley at [atrambley@trinitywarren.org](mailto:atrambley@trinitywarren.org) for more information.

Also see the Natural Church Development home page: <http://www.ncd-international.org/public/seminars.html>.

## 30 Hour Famine at St. John's, Franklin a Success by Paige Greene

This February, the youth of Saint John's, Franklin, learned what mission means. In the March edition of *The Forward*, Bishop Sean shared how the *Book of Common Prayer* defines mission: restoring all people to unity with God and each other in Christ. Fifteen teenagers did just that.

The 30 Hour Famine—a World Vision program—is aimed toward enlightening teenagers with a case of



“influenza.” Youth are educated about the harsh conditions children are facing in impoverished countries. We decided to spread awareness farther than just ourselves. We separated into groups and solicited some of Franklin's busier areas. We had signs, handouts, a jug to collect money, and free bottles of water. For three hours, we enlightened Franklin's citizens, and even got our picture on the front of the newspaper!

One of the long term projects through the weekend was creating a display symbolizing the deaths of toddlers each day from hunger. In thirty hours, our youth group cut, stapled, and tied 1300 brightly colored foam crosses to the hedges in front of our church. Beside these crosses, we made a sign explaining

that in two days, all of Venango County would be wiped out if we lived in the same conditions as these toddlers.

We had speakers during the weekend, including a surprise visit from the Bishop. Not only were these talks informational, they were inspirational, and helped distract us from our hunger. We also had three services of the Daily Office each day (instead of meals) to help keep our spirits full, even if our stomachs were empty.

At night, we went to the rectory where we were invited to sleep on the floor. While it was a rough night for some, we were humbled in preparation for the next day. In the morning we went back to the church to help distribute food at the Shepherd's Green Food Pantry (our monthly community distribution). This was an experience that affected everyone, and many of us decided we would like to help in the future.

The last three hours were the hardest, but we patiently waited for the Saturday night service to begin so we could prepare to break fast with the members of our church. We appreciated soup and sandwiches like we never had. Even while shaking off the effects of the hunger, we talked about how much we wanted to participate in the famine again.



- Paige is a member of St. John's, Franklin, a junior at Franklin High School and attended the EYE Conference in Texas this past summer.

## Diocesan Summer Camp Coming Soon!

Diocesan Summer Camp will be held this year from June 14-20.

Every summer for over 30 years young people in grades 2-12 gather at Camp Nazareth, an Orthodox camp near Mercer, Pennsylvania, for a week of Diocesan Summer Camp. The camp is staffed each year by a group of approximately 25 adults from around the diocese who are committed to providing the best camp experience possible. An average of 130 young people participate in activities that include worship, small group discussions, team building, swimming, softball, and a wide variety of additional activities. This summer camp program is one of the most positive experiences offered in our diocese. It is its own tradition here and has impacted the lives of many of our young people over the years. More and more we see those who were once campers returning to be counselors. Diocesan Summer Camp truly encompasses the best of who we are as a diocese, a community knit together by our faith and our shared experience that is Northwestern Pennsylvania.



Information on registration will be coming soon.

## St. Augustine Youth Involved in Service Learning by Sue Norton

The High School/Confirmation class at St. Augustine's has spent the past year studying the Bible, the Prayer Book, and the catechism. In addition to the "academic" learning, they have also been involved in service learning and answering the call for all Christians to help each other. Over the course of the year, the students have been involved in group and individual service that has assisted the congregation, local entities and national causes.

At the congregational level, the class has taken responsibility to see that the Sunday bulletins are folded and inserted into the service booklets for Sunday worship. Individual students have also participated in activities as diverse as lawn mowing, cooking goodies for coffee hour, acolyting, ushering and oblation bearing.

At the local level, the class decided to tie fleece blankets (security blankets) for children whose mothers find it necessary to seek safety in the Women's Shelter in Un-

ion City. Shown in the picture are three of the St. A's students displaying the blankets made by the class. As the blankets were completed, they were brought to the altar for a blessing by Fr. Dave Fulford. They have now been sent on their way to bring comfort to the children.



Pictured are Sarah Rupert, Jordan Rhen, and Chad Kulka. Not pictured are Shelby Davis and Alexandria Hurley.

The class is now involved in an international project – Africa 6000. This Northwest Deanery project is raising funds for drilling a deep well in Africa. The students are participating in collecting coins in plastic drinking bottles to be used to help fund the project. Congregational members have been asked to put loose change in the bottles and then bring them to the church. The students will be assisting in the sorting and rolling of the coins in addition to collecting coins themselves.

Congratulations to the students and their parents – they are surely demonstrating a knowledge of, and commitment to, Christ's call to love and serve one another.

## St. Stephen's, Fairview Looking for New Nursery School Director

St. Stephen's, Fairview, is looking for a new director for its Nursery School. The job description is as follows:

Energetic and creative early childhood professional needed to fill Director position at a local Pennsylvania State Department of Private Academic Schools-licensed private academic church nursery school with a long history of excellence. Bachelor's Degree with a minimum of 30 early childhood education credits. Three years of early childhood teaching experience required. Computer Software skills required. Experience with financial management a plus. Prefer completion or willingness to enroll in Pa Director Credential Program. Excellent communication and interpersonal skills. Comfortable working with parents and local community engagement groups.

Those interested can submit their resumes to:

Nursery School Search Committee  
c/o Episcopal Diocese of Northwestern Pennsylvania  
145 W. 6th Street  
Erie, PA 16501  
or by email to: [vbutler@dionwpa.org](mailto:vbutler@dionwpa.org)



## Bishop Sean's Visitation Schedule - May 2009

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|----------|------------------------------------------|
| May 3rd  | - Memorial Church of Our Father, Foxburg |
| May 10th | - St. Francis of Assisi, Youngsville     |
| May 23rd | - St. Agnes', St. Marys                  |
| May 24th | - Grace, Ridgway                         |
| May 31st | - St. John's, Sharon                     |



Memorial Church of Our Father, Foxburg

## Notes from the Canon

I want to take this opportunity to thank all of you for the countless prayers and many, many cards sent my way since my unplanned hiatus from the Diocesan Church Center. God has answered those prayers in magnificent ways, not all of which are yet known to me. Your words of encouragement have been a heartfelt blessing. I am making great progress and hope to return soon.

Blessings,  
*Martha*

## Houtzdale Ministerium Sponsors Community Lenten Services by Sharon Gregory

The Houtzdale Area Ministerium sponsored its annual community wide Lenten devotions and services throughout the local churches. Each Tuesday night, one church was host to all of the congregations, delivering worship each in their own style, accompanied by prayer and music. One of the ministers from the community would preach to the congregations each week, starting with our own Fr. Bill Ellis on Shrove Tuesday at the Houtzdale Lutheran Church, and then all sharing in the worship each week either by leading or preaching or being a part of the congregation.

This tradition has been ongoing in the area for many years, even as far back as some of us oldsters can recall from our youth. The Lenten services culminate with an afternoon long worship service on Good Friday at a different church each year with people coming and going as they have time but with worship continuing all afternoon. Many



of the local businesses also close their doors at this time to allow for their employees to attend and as a form of respect.

We realize that there are many forms of worship in the community and that each of us can decide which way we worship best. The Houtzdale Ministerium brings those diverse worship styles together in a unique way. The Ministerium in the Houtzdale area is vital and energetic and provides a place for the ministers to share in prayer and for outreach to the community. It also allows the people living and worshipping in the area to become acquainted with other faiths and with the leaders in other congregations. In a small rural area, it is often the ministerium that provides ministry to individuals who are in need of assistance and prayer, and it also provides for information to be shared so that the work of God is active and alive in the area. We are blessed.

## Upcoming Ordinations

Please join us for some upcoming ordinations this spring.

The first will be held on Saturday, May 9, at 11:00 AM at the Church of the Ascension, Bradford. Joann Piatko will be ordained to the transitional diaconate.

The second will be held on Saturday, May 30, at 11:00 AM at Church of the Holy Trinity, Brookville. The Rev. Johanna Baker will be ordained to the priesthood and installed as vicar of Holy Trinity, Brookville.

We ask for your prayers for those being ordained as they embark on their new ministries.

**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).**

## Rector of Our Saviour, DuBois to Retire

by The Rev. Robert McKay

*Father Bob McKay retires from the Church of Our Saviour, DuBois on June 1<sup>st</sup>. His last service officiated as rector will be on the Feast of Pentecost the day before. Gail and Fr. Bob will continue to live in Treasure Lake, and continue to serve in the community and the larger church. Below are his reflections on his years of ministry and his look forward into retirement.*

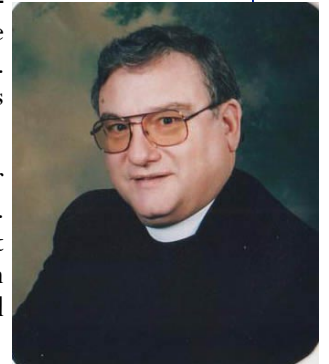
“You were called to the one hope of your vocation” Eph 4:4. I have known since the year of my Confirmation in the sixth grade that God was calling me to ordination and service in parish ministry. As a pre-theology student at the Episcopal college of Hobart and then seminarian at the Philadelphia Divinity School, I understood my vocation to be heavenly minded while doing some earthly good. Parish ministry was the calling that embraced the fullness of my vocation. My retirement from full time service to the Lord and his Church does not seem at this point to change my vocation one whit.

There are times when I recognize that some of my ministries have seemed to run their course. One such blessing has been to mentor and present 27 persons for ordination. Another is to form adaptive patterns for congregational ministry and oversight. Yet another has been a variety of teaching positions, which I may yet reconsider secularly in retirement. Then there has been the unexpected joy of publishing newsletters and tracts.

During the past 42 years I have carried on the tradition of my two grandfathers; one a parish priest and the other a railroad station master. I have no intention of abandoning either tradition. Rather, God has enabled me to become quite adaptable alongside my being bullheaded. I press on to the prize which is above, and I keep trying to complete what is below (i.e. in my basement – model trains!)

Yes, I have been around. Baptized in the diocese of Southern Ohio, confirmed in Northern Indiana, deputy in Rochester, seminary intern in Pennsylvania, ordained in New Jersey where I spent most of my career, then Central Pennsylvania, Eastern Michigan, and finally Northwestern Pennsylvania. Whew! I’m staying put.

Gail and I look forward to happy years with more flexibility, travel, and connection to our family. We value your friendship and your prayers. The best is yet to come.



## Diocesan Picnic at Waldameer

After an absence of several years, we are once again having a Diocesan Picnic at Waldameer Park. This great opportunity for worship, fellowship and fun will be held on Sunday, June 21, 2009. Registration will begin at 10:00 AM and the Eucharistic will be held at 11:00 AM. The bishop will preach and celebrate. It is hoped and expected that those coming to the picnic should also attend the worship service.

Tickets are \$15.00 per person, which includes food, rides, and the water park, and is a savings of \$11.50 off of the regular price. Tickets must be bought in advance and can be reserved through your church.

Proceeds after expenses will be placed in a fund for scholarship drawings for Camp Nazareth 2010.

If you have any questions, please contact Fr. Dennis Blausen at 724-654-8761 or at [frdenny@earthlink.net](mailto:frdenny@earthlink.net).

Hope to see you at Waldameer!!!

