



The Forward

October/November 2009

Letter from the Bishop

The 99th Convention of the Diocese of Northwestern Pennsylvania is nearly upon us. Every year, even though I sometimes complain about it, I actually look forward to convention. I guess I am one of those people who think convention provides, among other things, an opportunity for good debate, good food, and fellowship with people who are committed to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

This year I will be outlining a diocesan mission strategy in further detail. This mission strategy will build upon nearly one hundred years of God's mission in this diocese. We could not move forward in our time if it was not for the countless saints of God who have gone before us in this diocese. The lay leadership in our diocese is strong, committed, and consistent. I regularly give thanks to my predecessors who each worked with a vision of the Gospel at the center. The one I consider 'my bishop', Bishop Rowley, kept the Baptismal Covenant in front of us constantly and reminded us to, 'discover, experience, and share Jesus.' Before him, Bishop Davis and other clergy and lay leaders led the diocese through the Venture in Mission program which raised an endowment that makes ministry possible in the diocese to this day.



We will continue to build on a strong past into a future that will continue to unfold. Moving forward in mission is not without challenge. That's certainly been the case all along. There are no 'magic' solutions, no easy fixes, and no 'kits' to buy or programs to implement that will somehow fix our issues. We will have to work extra hard to embrace change and understand that we might be called to do things differently or rearrange our priorities. Our mission will continue to unfold and be revealed to us as we are faithful in prayer and persevere with a comprehensive mission strategy.

Building a missionary diocese for the 21st century is our challenge and our delight. God has a plan for us that will allow us to prosper. We can become a diocese of disciples who make disciples in a way that speaks to a new generation drawing on the traditions of the ones that have gone before.

We will be getting a start on this mission at our convention. I hope you can join us even if you are not serving as a delegate. If not, please pray for us during the convention. Please also add the mission of our diocese to your prayer lists. Prayer makes all the difference.

Blessings,

+ Sean

Inside this issue:

99th Annual Diocesan Convention to be Held	2
Notes from the Diocesan Health Team (October)	3
Church Takes Part in Greek Lessons	3
Notes from the Diocesan Health Team (November)	4
Christ Church, Meadville Calls Priest	5
Vicar Appointed to St. Mary's, Erie	5
Spiritual Gifts Workshops	5
Visitation Schedule	5
Houtzdale Celebrating 125 Years	6
Scenes From Around the Diocese	6

Fall Clergy Retreat



A clergy development retreat will be held November 15-17 at Olmsted Manor in Ludlow, PA. The retreat will begin promptly at 5:00 PM with Evening Prayer, followed by dinner. The retreat will continue until Tuesday, following lunch. To register for the clergy retreat, please go to the diocesan website's calendar page at www.dionwpa.org/calendar.htm. If you are unable to do that, please contact Vanessa at 814-456-4203 or at vbutter@dionwpa.org to register. Please register no later than November 4.

The 99th Annual Diocesan Convention to be Held November 6-7

It's that time of year! It is time once again for the diocese to gather at our annual convention. This year we will be hosted by Trinity Church, New Castle. The convention will take place at the Villa in New Castle, PA, on November 6-7. Registration will begin on Friday, November 6, at 8:30 AM and the convention will convene at 10:00 AM. The convention Eucharist will take place on Friday, November 6, at 5:00 PM at Trinity Church, followed by a banquet at 7:15 PM back at the Villa.

We are once again asking that clergy and delegates bring the materials with you to convention. We will not be providing packets. For those of you that do not have access to the internet or for churches that do not have ready access to copiers, please let us know. Vanessa will bring packets to convention for you in those instances.

The following materials will need to be brought to convention:

- Convention Schedule
- Resolution B – Proposed Annotated 2010 Budget
- Proposed 2010 Assessments
- Resolution A – 2010 Minimum Stipend
- Resolution C – Regarding Responsibilities of the Nominating Committee
- Resolution D – Providing a way for the Cathedral to Amend its Charter, Statues, and Bylaws
- Resolution E – Change the deadline for receiving resolutions
- Resolution F – Change the time frame to receive nominations
- Resolution G – Add “deliberately destroyed” as a reason to seek consent to the canon “Of Property”
- Resolution H – Make clear that a Priest-in-Charge is the President of the Corporation



Also on the website is the information sheet on the nominees and directions to the convention site as well as to Trinity Church.

For those of you who will be in the New Castle area already on Thursday, November 5, there will be a hospitality room at the Radisson in West Middlesex (there will be a sign with the room number in the lobby). We will be enjoying light refreshments and fellowship from 7:00 PM until 9:00 PM, so please join us. The hospitality room will also be open on Friday following the banquet. You don't have to be staying at the Radisson to take part, so please come on down.

Also, there will be a couple of collections that the delegations can take part in. Following the tradition started by Holy Trinity in Houtzdale last year, Trinity, New Castle will be collecting non-perishable food items to be donated to the local food bank. Food can be donated on both Friday and Saturday. The other collection will be for a Military Transient Care ministry that the Rev. Mark Juchter, a canonically resident clergy person currently serving as an Air Force chaplain, takes part in. We are asking that, on Saturday when leaving the hotels, that everyone brings with them any unused personal sized toiletry items that were provided by the hotels. These items are used for military personnel who are in transit and don't have access to their personal belongings. We thank you for any items you are willing to donate to these collections.

If you have any questions, please contact Vanessa at the Diocesan Church Center.

We will see you in New Castle!

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.

Notes from the Diocesan Health Team (October edition)

by the Rev. Holly Davis

QUALITY CHARACTERISTIC 7: NEED-ORIENTED EVANGELISM

Can a church experience *healthy* growth without **evangelism**? **No**. Can a church experience *healthy* growth with **manipulative** methods of **evangelism**? **No**. Can a church experience *healthy* growth when she focuses on the *maintenance* needs of the church instead of the *mission* needs of the people with whom she shares the **Gospel**? **No**.

Let's *just face it*. **Most** Episcopalians shy away from publicly engaging in **evangelism**. Even those of us who *know* our faith well hesitate to discuss it with strangers, and those of us who *don't know* our faith as well usually find ourselves running for cover when we think we may be asked to engage in evangelism.

So, what is **evangelism**? Evangelism is the spreading of the *Good News* of Jesus Christ, as it has been entrusted to the Church He established. When we **evangelize**, we explain the *truths* (the Good News) and the *Truth* (the identity of Jesus Christ) of the faith and invite people to consider them. We offer them a *welcome into the house that God built for them*.

We live out Christ's **commandment** to His disciples to "**Go** therefore and *make disciples* of **all** nations, *baptizing them* in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and *teaching them to obey* everything that I have commanded you..." [Matt 28: 19, 20]

Our love for Jesus Christ and for our neighbor impels us to speak to others about our faith.

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.

"**outposts**" Merriam-Webster defines 'outposts' in two ways, both relevant to our proposed mission statement: 1) a military base established by an agreement in another country and 2) an outlying branch or position of a main organization or group.

We are the Christian Church "*militant*" here on earth—the **visible** church, as opposed to the church "*triumphant*" that refers to the **invisible** Christian Church in the **Kingdom of God**—Heaven. We are given the name "*militant*" because we do **daily** battle with the evil that exists in the secular world, evermore proving our identity as those *in* this world, not *of* this world. The **agreement** we make with God, through our *Baptismal Covenant*, is to proclaim, by word and example, the Good News of God in Christ.

Our main organization is **the Body of Christ**, of which parish, mission, congregation—vicar, administrator, rector, dean, bishop—name the *title* or *entity*—are **all** parts, and **imperative** parts of the *same* body—the same **one** body.

Diocesan Church Takes Part in Greek Lessons by Joann Allshouse



"It's all Greek to Me" no longer applies to some members of Holy Trinity Episcopal Church in Brookville. A group of members have started a 10 week adventure into the basics of New Testament Greek, under the tutelage of Robert Frakes who by profession is a teacher of ancient history at Clarion University.

Our looks of puzzlement over what in the world Φ or Ψ or ζ could possibly be have given way to smiles of familiarity as we become acquainted with these letters and a basic understanding of how they work to become familiar words and sentences.

Class members seem to be enjoying Robert's teaching as they keep coming back each Sunday, after church, for more. Kudos to our Professor Frakes for giving his time and efforts in this fun project and cheers to those attending and learning!

QUALITY CHARACTERISTIC 8: LOVING RELATIONSHIPS

How much *time* do the members of our church communities spend with each other **outside** of official church-sponsored events? How *often* do we invite one another over for meals or a cup of coffee? To what *extent* are the ordained **aware** of the personal problems the laity may be experiencing in their daily lives? How much **laughter** is present in the church?

Are these questions *relevant*? Do they have any *relationship* to the principles of church **growth**? Yes and yes! Church growth is, at its very core, about forming *community* through *relationship*—*relationship* with Jesus Christ and *relationship* with our brothers and sisters—one to another working for the increase of the ***Kingdom of God here on earth***.

Authentic practical love is a God-generated magnetic power that is more effective than any evangelical programs we can put in place. People who are starving for a relationship with God are not looking for folk who just *talk* about love. They want to experience how Christian love *actually* **transforms** their lives. They long, perhaps unable to articulate the same, to experience a community that lives out Jesus’ commandment to love our neighbors as ourselves—a community where people talk the talk and walk the walk.

Loving relationships, not surprisingly then, are literally and figuratively at the very *heart* of a healthy, growing church. Jesus said that we would be *known*, as disciples, by our *love*. Practical demonstrations of love build **authentic transformative** Christian communities that bring others into God’s kingdom.

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**.

As we approach Diocesan Convention it is fitting that we conclude our look at the proposed diocesan mission statement through the final word—**congregations**—and the final quality characteristic—**loving relationships**. We are provided a picture of the Kingdom of God through *scripture*, the *tradition* of our Anglican heritage, and our individual and collective *experience* in our Diocesan community.

We are called to build up the Kingdom of God, love as we are loved, and to share the Good News of the risen Christ. Our time together as a Christian family will be spent this weekend in consideration of how best to *move forward* to accomplish that which God has purposed. We will consider how God would have us **equip our transformational leaders for transformational ministry** as we come together as the body of Christ to provide the Kingdom to His people.

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

Please contact the Rev. Adam Trambley at atrambley@gmail.com for more information.

Also, you may find the Natural Church Development home page to be of assistance:
<http://www.ncd-international.org/public/seminars.html>.



Christ Church, Meadville calls Priest

Christ Church, Meadville, has called the Rev. Larry Donahue as their long term supply priest. Fr. Larry began his official duties earlier this year.

Fr. Larry previously served as rector of Church of the Ascension in Bradford.

Please pray for Fr. Larry and the congregation of Christ Church as they embark on their new ministry together.

Vicar Appointed to St. Mary's, Erie

A new vicar has been appointed to St. Mary's, Erie. The Rev. Shawn Clerkin was installed as vicar on Sunday, October 11.

Fr. Shawn was previously an assisting priest at the Cathedral of St. Paul, Erie.

Please keep Fr. Shawn and the congregation of St. Mary's in your prayers as they embark on their new ministry together.



Spiritual Gifts Workshops

Spiritual Gifts Workshops were recently held in all four deaneries in the diocese. The workshops were conducted by members of the Diocesan Health Team and were attended by over 70 people representing 18 congregations. Thanks to everyone who took part and made them such a success!



Bishop Sean's Visitation Schedule November 2009

November 1st - Bishop Sean - St. Stephen's, Fairview

November 15th - Bishop Sean - St. Joseph's, Port Allegany

November 22nd - Bishop Sean - Our Saviour, DuBois



Our Saviour, DuBois

Houtzdale Celebrating 125 Years by Sharon Gregory

The Church of the Holy Trinity in Houtzdale is this year celebrating 125 years of ministry! Founded in 1884, the church was erected in that year under the guidance of the Rev. F. C. Cowfer, Priest in Charge of Clearfield County south of the Susquehanna River, and the Rev. A S. R. Richards, Deacon. Though originally part of the Diocese of Pittsburgh, it was incorporated into the Diocese of Erie at its founding in 1910, and became part of the Valley Missions, which at that time included Osceola Mills, Hawk Run and Gearhartville. The church was founded by early English settlers, mostly coal miners, and unable financially to support a full time priest.

The church was originally designed in Gothic style with exposed beams and tricolored, arched windows. Excavation of the basement was done by shovel and wheelbarrow by the men of the church in 1949 and was ready for use before winter set in. In the 1960s, the church was remodeled and updated during the tenures of the Rev. John Shaffer and the



Rev. George Hough. This past year, members of the church once again stepped forward to redo the kitchen, bathroom, update the basement and provide a new entrance to the basement. Thanks to the volunteerism and generosity of the members of the church, we are able to continually update and improve our facility.



We are presently under the guidance of our home grown vicar, the Rev. William Ellis, who, with the help of his wife Donna, keeps our church vigorous and growing. Our oldest member is Marie Fish, mother-in-law to our vicar, and our list of young people being baptized is growing.

We are proud of our heritage in Houtzdale, where we have witnessed the hard work of our forefathers, and we are proud to continue to serve the Lord in our community by perseverance, compassion and caring for our community and for our family.

Scenes From Around the Diocese



The Rev. Dennis Blauser (l) and his daughter, the Rev. Johanna Baker, con-celebrate at a baptism service, which included the baptism of twins from their family. The service took place at Trinity, New Castle, where Fr. Dennis serves. Pastor Joie serves at Holy Trinity, Brookville, which was also her father's first post.



Representatives of CAPSEA (Citizens Against Physical, Sexual and Emotional Abuse) receive children's blankets for use in their shelter. The idea for the blankets, conceived by Deacon Bonnie Skellen, was to give the children something comforting and warm of their own at a time when it would be greatly needed. Members of Grace, Ridgway, particularly the youth group, participated by helping to cut the fabric and fringe for each blanket. Blankets are tagged, "Hugged by Grace" as a reminder that God has gifted us all with his grace.