



The Forward

June 2009

Letter from the Bishop

The 2009 General Convention of the Episcopal Church takes place this July 8-17 in Anaheim, CA. I would describe the experience of the General Convention as one of the times where the Church is at its best. When I say that, people usually look at me and repeat, "The Church at its best?" in a tone of voice and with a look that says, 'have you lost your mind?' Not on this matter, at least.

More than a thousand God-fearing disciples of Jesus Christ gather in one place to discern God's will for the Church. More importantly than being the second largest legislative body in the world, the convention serves as a community of intentional prayer and discernment. People come from a variety of perspectives, but share a common historic faith in the Creeds of the

You will no doubt read and see us on television this summer. The media rarely enjoys the nuance of theological position or of our polity so you will hear about extremes and disagreement. What you will not get to see are the relationships that are being forged around the Church.

What you will not get to see is Episcopalians from every point of view sharing the Eucharist. What you will not get to see are people of faith arguing passionately for their point of view because it actually matters in the Kingdom of God. These and much more will take place this summer.

You have elected outstanding people to your deputation with Fr. Denny Blauser serving as the chair. Half of the deputies in your deputation will be senior deputies and one of your deputies,

Anne Bardol, is serving on the Program, Budget, and Finance Committee which is one of the most important committees at the Convention since it prepares the funding structure for our mission.

None of us will 'get' everything we want. Undoubtedly, there will be decisions with which we disagree. Discernment of mission is not about getting what we want anyway. It's about the people of God doing their level best to discern what God wants. When we're discerning God's will and living like we believe it, we're at our best. The General Convention is one of the times when the Church is at its best.

Blessings,
+ Sean



Church from which our unity is derived.

There are disagreements to be sure and passionate disagreements at that. Without these dynamic tensions in the Church which have been with us since the beginning, we would not share the faith we profess today. So if the Church at its best means we come together and all agree on everything, then the convention does not meet the test. We find God inspired discernment as we worship and pray together and passionately consider the mission of God.

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Notes from the Diocesan Health Team

by the Rev. Holly Davis

We continue this month to discuss and define the Natural Church Development (NCD) in order to better foster church health. As a Diocese, we are continuing to develop a vibrant, healthy church led by the people of God. We look to an understanding that God cannot be contained and a healthy community served by healthy servants grows.

QUALITY CHARACTERISTIC 3: PASSIONATE SPIRITUALITY

The third quality characteristic we will focus on is: passionate spirituality. Passion—fervor—zeal—fire! St. Luke writes, “[Jesus said,] ‘I came to cast fire on the earth, and would that it were already kindled!’” God has chosen each of us through the Holy Spirit and set us apart for ministry in the Kingdom. God has been fashioning and equipping us for this moment in time.

As we enter this season of Pentecost, remember as the disciples were gathered to pray, the Spirit of God descended upon each of them as tongues of fire! They were set on fire by God’s Holy Spirit! I have come to believe that God is a “Fire Starter” and that we are each called to be fire starters—doing so will bring God’s eternal fire to those who sit in darkness—arsons for God’s sake!



The method by which congregations and individuals use to live out spiritual passion is of secondary concern. A church that lives out her faith with passionate fervor—no matter the method—will experience success.

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.

“equipping”-

The term “equip” is from the Anglo-French “eschiper”—to load, embark, outfit. We are making ready—provisioning—for service and action. We, as the body of Christ, engaged in providing the Kingdom of God here on earth, are working together in order that we live out the imperative to proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ to all who are in desperate need of the Word of God.

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@trinitywarren.org 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.

What is General Convention?

General Convention is the triennial meeting of the Episcopal Church. It has been in existence since 1785, when Convention met in Philadelphia. This year, General Convention will be held in Anaheim, CA from July 8-July 17.

The main purpose of General Convention is to be the legislative body of the Episcopal Church. It is a bicameral house made up of the House of Bishops and the House of Deputies. The House of Bishops is made up of active and retired bishops and the House of Deputies is made up of clergy and lay deputies that each diocese elects. They are considered deputies, not delegates, as they do not represent their diocese in the way in which they vote; they vote based on their own conscience and what they believe to be best for the Church. The houses vote on resolutions that have been proposed by various committees, agencies, dioceses, and other groups in the Church. In order to pass, both houses must approve the resolution in the same language. Any amendments made by either house must be passed by the other house. Much of the legislative work is done by committees that are made up of bishops and deputies.



General Convention isn't just about legislation, however. Besides the legislative houses and committees, other groups of the church meet during the course of the two weeks. One of those is the Episcopal Church Women's Triennial meeting. While there, they organize one of the biggest Ingatherings of the UTO. Another event is the Exhibit Hall which is open throughout Convention.

More information on General Convention can be found at www.episcopalchurch.org/gc2009.htm.

What Are Some of the Topics That Will Come Up at This General Convention?

The 2009 General Convention's theme is Ubuntu. South African Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu has said that he understands ubuntu to convey that "a person is a person through other persons." Someone who has ubuntu, he goes on, is "open and available to others, affirming of others, does not feel threatened that others are able and good, for he or she has a proper self-assurance that comes from knowing that he or she belongs in a greater whole and is diminished when others are humiliated or diminished, when others are tortured or oppressed." Planners of the Convention hope that those in Anaheim will be able to explore the Episcopal Church's call to mission through the themes of Ubuntu, as well as the subthemes of Identity and Mission.

One of the topics that will be up for discussion will include a complete revision of Title IV of the National Canons, which are the clergy discipline canons. These revisions have been proposed to be more streamlined and transparent, as well as being more cost effective. Concerns on global issues as well as the issues of the larger Anglican Communion will also be up for discussion. Those concerns include the crises in regions like the Sudan, the Middle East, and Sri Lanka, as well as justice and peace issues in places such as Zimbabwe, Cuba, Haiti, and Iraq. Human sexuality will again be a topic of interest at this Convention. It will also be a time of strategic planning, especially as the Church faces dire economic times, and those talks will include the possibilities of creating a planning arm of the church and the possibility of starting a capital campaign. Also as a part of strategic planning, the

Program, Budget, and Finance Committee will be presenting the national church's budget for the next three years at this Convention.

Full text of the resolutions can be found at www.episcopalchurch.org/documents/BlueBook2009.pdf. News before and during General Convention can be found at www.episcopalchurch.org/episcopal_life.htm. The media team of the Episcopal Church will also be posting on Twitter for instant updates, as well as placing a photo stream on Flickr.



Who's Headed to General Convention?



Those attending General Convention, top row, l-r: Carly Rowe, the Rt. Rev. Sean Rowe, the Rev. Dennis Blausler, the Very Rev. John Downey, the Rev. Brian Reid, the Rev. Adam Trambley, Anne Bardol, and Sharon Davenport. Bottom row, l-r: Kaycee Reib, Gary Yaeger, Enid Bishop, the Rev. Charl Kapp, and Lois Tamplin.

There will be quite a few representatives of the Diocese headed to Anaheim this summer for General Convention. They will include:

Bishop Sean & Carly Rowe

Bishop Sean's main purpose for attending General Convention will be, of course, to take part as a member of the House of Bishops. While in Anaheim, he will also be a member of the media briefing team for the National Church and will be serving on the Committee on Ministry. Carly will be attending and taking part as a member of the Bishops' Spouse group.

The Rev. Dennis Blausler

Fr. Dennis, rector of Trinity Church in New Castle, will be attending his eighth General Convention as a member of the House of Deputies. He, along with the other deputies from our diocese, was elected to his position by the Diocesan Convention in 2007. While in Anaheim, Fr. Dennis will be the chair of our diocese's deputation and will be serving on the Committee on Church in Small Communities.

The Very Rev. John Downey

The Very Rev. John Downey, dean of the Cathedral of St. Paul in Erie, will be attending his seventh General Convention as a member of the House of Deputies. He will be serving on the Committee on Ecumenical Relations.

The Rev. Brian Reid

Fr. Brian, a retired yet very active clergyman of the diocese, will be attending his second General Convention as a member of the House of Deputies. He will be serving on the Committee on the Constitution.

The Rev. Adam Trambley

Fr. Adam, rector of Trinity Memorial Church in Warren, will be attending his second General Convention as a member of the House of Deputies. While in Anaheim, he will be serving on the Committee for the Dispatch of Business.

Anne Bardol

Anne, a member of Holy Cross in North East, will be attending her fifth General Convention as a member of the House of Deputies. She will serve on the Joint Standing Committee on Program, Budget, and Finance, which she has been a member of since 2003.

Canon Sharon Davenport

Sharon, a former Diocesan staff person and member of the Cathedral of St. Paul in Erie, will be attending her fifth General Convention as a member of the House of Deputies. She will be serving on the Committee on Stewardship and Development.

Kaycee Reib

Kaycee, a member of St. John's in Franklin, will be attending her second General Convention as a member of the House of Deputies.

Gary Yaeger

Gary, a member of Christ Church in Meadville, will be attending his fourth General Convention as a member of the House of Deputies. He will be serving on the Committee on the Rules of Order.

Enid Bishop, the Rev. Charl Kapp, and Lois Tamplin

Enid, Deacon Charl, and Lois will be attending the ECW Triennial in Anaheim. Lois and Deacon Charl will also be attending the Church Periodical Club's meeting while at General Convention.

Diocesan Staff

Mary Bowers, the Rev. Canon Martha Ishman, and Vanessa Butler will also be attending General Convention as workers for the Secretariat of the House of Deputies.

Prayers for General Convention

by Diane Pyle, Diocesan AFP Representative

The Anglican Fellowship of Prayer have requested prayers on each Wednesday until General Convention begins. They have suggested the following prayers. For more information, you can visit www.afp.org.

Almighty God, You called your church to be one, Holy, catholic, and Apostolic. By your Spirit, guide the preparations for General Convention that our church may be

ONE because we find true oneness in doing your will.

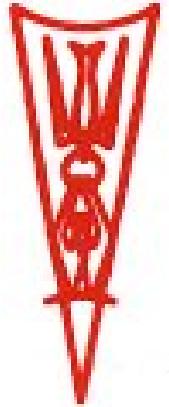
HOLY because we seek inspiration through your Holy Spirit.

CATHOLIC because we maintain the universal truth that is in Jesus.

APOSTOLIC because we remember that our mission is to share by life and witness the good news of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Amen.

Almighty and ever living God, source of all wisdom and understanding: be present with those in preparation to serve at the House of Bishops and House of Deputies this summer for renewal and strengthening in our common faith, and fro the mission of your Church. Teach them in all things to seek first your honor and glory. Guide them to perceive what is right, and grant them both the courage to pursue it and the grace to accomplish it; we also pray for the women attending Triennial of the Episcopal Church Women that you will bless them with enlightenment and vision through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

O God, you have bound us together in a common life. Help us in the midst of our struggles for justice and truth, to confront one another without hate and bitterness, and to work together with mutual forbearance and respect; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



St. Stephen's Third Annual Strawberry Festival

St. Stephen's Episcopal Church
1070 Dutch Road
Fairview, PA 16415

Saturday, June 20, 2009
3:00 PM to 8:00 PM

Come join us for a fun and festive day with auctions, classic car show, kids' games, giant slide, DJ, food and of course – strawberries!

Bring your family, friends and neighbors!



Bishop Sean's Visitation Schedule - June 2009

June 7th - St. John's, Franklin

The bishop will resume visitations in the fall.

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.

ECW Looks Forward to Chautauqua

by Diane Pyle

At the annual meeting of the diocesan board of the Episcopal Church Women, held May 1 and 2 in Oil City, new business was the upcoming retreat in September. Dates have been reserved at the Episcopal Cottage on September 25 and 26.



Enid Bishop convened the annual meeting and reports were received from United Thank Offering (Enid Bishop), Memorial Labyrinth (Monica Irwin), Church Periodical Club (Lois Tamplin), Diocesan Altar Guild (Mary Blaine Prince), Anglican Fellowship of Prayer (Diane Pyle), and the Treasurer's Report (Dona Wheeler). The Rev. Charl Kapp, chaplain, hosted the event as well as provided the Prayer and Worship duties. The Rev. Doug Dayton was celebrant. Prayers were requested for the General Convention until the event in July. (See the article on page 5 in this month's Forward for the prayers from the Anglican Fellowship of Prayer)

The program was presented by Dr. Jody Burgert, entitled *Madeline L'Engle: Searching for Truth in Story*. A former instructor at Pitt-Bradford, Jody has such a varied and interesting life. With family, students, her church, and travel, she found time to apply for a grant to explore all the writings and life of Madeline L'Engle. The event on Saturday was the culmination of Jody's findings and conclusions with special emphasis on the book *A Rock That is Higher*.

Women's Tea at Bishop's Residence

Carly Rowe, along with the Board of the ECW, hosted a tea in May to honor women who exemplify ministry in their congregations. These dedicated ladies came from all over the diocese and enjoyed a day of great fellowship in Bishop Sean and Carly's home. Some even wore hats! For most, it was an opportunity to see long-time friends, share stories and enjoy the chance to be together. "These ladies give generously of their time and talent to their local congregations and to the diocese. They are dedicated and have modeled vital and important roles in their congregations and we wanted to honor those ministries," Carly Rowe said. "It was a joy to be with them that afternoon."



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. Reservations from the churches must be to Fr. Denny at Trinity, New Castle, by June 8th.

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 Blauser at 724-654-8761 or at frdenny@earthlink.net.

Hope to see you at Waldameer!!!