

Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh - Diocesan Life Committee Moving Forward Together Report of April 10, 2010 Workshop

BACKGROUND:

Moving Forward Together was designed by the Diocesan Life Committee as an initial program in response to the resolution passed at the Special Diocesan Convention of December 2009 to *“take appropriate action to assure that the continuation of intentional relationship building becomes a visible and on-going function within the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh.”* The purpose of this initial program was to encourage the process of rebuilding and repairing broken relationships between individuals, groups, and parishes within our Diocese.

OVERVIEW:

The day opened with contemplative prayer. Setting the scene for three discussion opportunities were presenters The Rt. Rev. Kenneth Price, and, from the Diocese of Southern Ohio, The Rev. Charles Brumbaugh and The Rev. Bruce Freeman. Facilitators and scribes from the Diocese of Pittsburgh gave support to four discussion groups.

Attendance from the diocese included 14 clergy and 39 laity from 18 parishes/communities as listed in the table found in Appendix A.

Evaluations completed by 32 of the participants form the basis for this report. The average qualitative evaluation results, based on a ranking of 1-5 with 5 being the highest, were as follows:

<i>My expectations for the day were met.....</i>	<i>4.41</i>
<i>The program was well designed and carried out.....</i>	<i>4.31</i>
<i>The workshop leaders were effective and added to the experience... </i>	<i>4.34</i>
<i>The location, time, and facilities were appropriate.....</i>	<i>4.59</i>
<i>All were allowed to participate and be heard without being judged.....</i>	<i>4.84</i>
<i>I feel that I am an important part of the Diocesan family.....</i>	<i>4.31</i>

MAJOR THEMES REFLECTED IN VARIOUS PARTS OF THE EVALUATIONS:

1. A real thirst for open communication and a celebration of being together as evidenced by comments such as:
 - A *“sense of mutual trust and respect.”*
 - *“We seem to be more open and able to converse with one another.”*
 - *“We can speak together openly, honestly and without fear.”*This was supported by an overall rank on a 1-5 scale of 4.84 for *“All were allowed to participate and be heard without being judged.”*
2. People are at various stages in personal healing from the events of the recent past. Some needed to talk about the past; others were ready to move ahead. However, there was sensitivity that in this first event it was important to move forward together by addressing both of these concerns. This was reflected in these comments:
 - *“I wanted a clearer sense of ‘what’s ahead’ although we probably did as much as possible.”*

- *“Was not expecting to talk so much about the split, but we had to.”*
3. A great willingness to be in relationship with other parishes and with the diocese as evidenced by comments such as:
- *“Find places for intentional conversation.”*
 - *“Keep in mind that there’s more that unites us than divides us.”*
 - *“Face issues, don’t just paper over them.”*
 - *“Foster trust and respect.”*
 - *“There is much we can do and work on together.”*
- The offerings of help were more numerous than requests for help (see below).
4. Great interest in doing more of this as evidenced by comments such as:
- *“Don’t let this momentum fade!”*
 - *“A great start; thank you.”*
 - *“Need to do this again.”*
 - *“A sense of unity in the diocese.”*
- Seventeen new persons signed up as volunteers for future events.

SUGGESTIONS FOR ADDITIONAL PROGRAMS AND EVENTS:

1. Church building/rebuilding/growth strategies
2. Fun activities
3. Pulpit swap between parishes
4. Parish pairs – based on similarities or differences -- to do mission work and have conversation together
5. Vestry training
6. Workshops on various topics: spirituality, fundraising, banners, youth, community outreach, Christian Education
7. Workshop for various groups: youth, women, business
8. Diocesan worship events

HELP WANTED:

- All Souls, North Versailles – Needs information/help in how to grow.
- All Saints, Brighton Heights – Needs regular clergy
- St. Andrew’s, Highland Park – Needs help in negotiating community change.
- Emmanuel, Northside—Build a website; help with building repairs, volunteer tutors for after-school literacy program.
- St. Francis, Somerset – Needs help in how to overcome the geographical problems and isolation due to location.
- St. Stephen’s, Wilkinsburg – Needs help in learning to live beyond the church walls.
- St. Thomas, Canonsburg – We’re growing – need help in reacting to the growth.

OFFERS OF RESOURCES TO SHARE

- All Souls, North Versailles – Living without a budget; willing to share our experience on living on what we get,
- Calvary, East Liberty – Welcomes participants in Exploration for Ministry (EfM) from other parishes.
- Emmanuel, Northside – Would be happy to share their experience as a small parish in focused community ministry.

- Redeemer, Squirrel Hill – Have resources and experience in leadership training and willing to share.
- Redeemer, Squirrel Hill – Other protestant churches (particularly in Wilkinsburg) have great success in innovative prophetic social justice programs. Contact The Rev. Jared Jackson at Redeemer.
- Redeemer, Squirrel Hill – Willing to share from their success in interfaith initiatives.
- St. Andrew's, Highland Park – Parish Archivist is a leading scholar on the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh. Knowing your history can help plan your future.
- St. Brendan's, Franklin Park – Very successful in fundraising and would be glad to share knowledge, insights, and resources.
- St. Paul's, Mt. Lebanon – Willing to share clergy
- Church of the Redeemer, Cincinnati, Ohio – Willing to share experience in using Talent Bank software in parish and diocese.

CONCERNS FOR THE DIOCESE:

1. The age distribution of leadership and diocesan participation. It was estimated that only three of the 55+ participants were younger than 40. There may have been some misunderstanding about the event being “open”, but this topic needs to be on the diocesan agenda. To attract persons in the 25-45 age bracket, we might consider child care needs and “family-friendly” events.
2. Through all of the planning process, no consideration was given to inclusion of youth/young adult participation, either as designated “youth presence” or just “youth are welcome.” Youth have been especially impacted by the loss of friends. The work of the Pittsburgh Youth Initiative is important and addresses this; however, all segments of the diocese need to give consideration to bringing youth into “ownership” of the Diocese.

DIOCESAN LIFE COMMITTEE OBSERVATIONS:

The event was generally very well received by the participants. The Committee is moving ahead based on the evaluation forms. Special items of note for future events include:

- We need to provide more time for group discussion.
- We need to schedule more time between sessions.
- We need to have better prep time for discussion group staff.
- Success in building relationships depends on the openness and sharing in the small groups.

FOLLOW-ON ACTIVITIES:

In response to the feedback that sufficient time was not available to have in depth discussions at the Moving Forward Together Day and that additional such events should be held, in conjunction with the Diocesan Convention Planning Committee the Diocesan Life Committee will sponsor a follow-on workshop at the Diocesan Convention in October 2010 to provide an open forum to continue to identify, explore, and understand our common values and our differing perspectives without being judged and how we may continue to move forward together so that all in our Diocese will be accepted and all will have a sense of belonging.

Respectively submitted:

Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh Diocesan Life Committee

Diane Duntley (Chair)	Christ Church, Indiana
Walter Bowman	Calvary, East Liberty
The Rev. Cynthia Bronson Sweigert	Redeemer, Squirrel Hill
Carol Gonzalez	Emmanuel, Northside
John Roberts	St. Francis, Somerset
The Rev. Charles Weiss	St. Thomas, Canonsburg

Ex-officio members:

The Rev. William Geiger	President, Diocesan Council
The Rt. Rev. Kenneth Price	Bishop, Diocese of Pittsburgh
The Rev. Scott Quinn	Canon to the Bishop

Appendix A

**Parishes/Communities
Represented:**

<u>Parish/Community</u>	<u>Clergy</u>	<u>Laity</u>	<u>Total</u>
Advent, Jeannette	1	2	3
All Saints, Brighton Heights	0	1	1
All Souls, North Versailles	1	2	3
Calvary, East Liberty	1	5	6
Christ Church, Indiana	1	4	5
Community of Celebration, Ambridge	0	2	2
Diocese	1	1	2
Emmanuel, Northside	0	1	1
Holy Cross, Homewood	1	0	1
Nativity, Crafton	1	0	1
Redeemer, Squirrel Hill	1	5	6
St. Andrew's, Highland Park	2	4	6
St. Brendan's, Franklin Park	0	3	3
St. Francis-in-the-Fields, Somerset	1	1	2
St. Mark's, Johnstown	0	2	2
St. Paul's, Mt. Lebanon	1	2	3
St. Stephen's, Wilkinsburg	1	1	2
St. Thomas, Canonsburg	1	2	3
St. Thomas, Oakmont	0	1	1
Totals:	14	39	53