

RECORD OF THE 2015 ANNUAL CONVENTION

Minutes of the 150th Annual Convention (Unapproved)

The Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh of the Episcopal Church in the United States A.D. November 14th, 2015

The 150th Annual Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh of The Episcopal Church in the United States (the “Diocese”) convened on Saturday, November 14th, 2015 at St Paul’s Episcopal Church, Mt. Lebanon, Pennsylvania.

Registration of Convention Deputies began at 8:00 a.m. in order for the necessary certifications to be completed. At 9:00 a.m. those present convened for a service of Morning Prayer.

The Convention commenced at 9:16 a.m. The Right Rev. Dorsey W. M. McConnell called the Convention to order, and following an opening prayer, the Bishop asked the Rev. Louis B. Hays to offer a general welcome.

The Bishop then announced his appointment of Dr. Joan Gundersen as Convention Manager and directed that any logistical issues or problems be directed quietly to her.

He then recognized the Rev. Lou Hays, who, on behalf of Diocesan Council, nominated the Rev. Canon James D. Shoucair as Secretary to Convention. There being no other nominations, Canon Shoucair was elected as Secretary by acclamation.

The Bishop then appointed Ms. Betsy Hetzler as parliamentarian for the Convention and Mr. Jon Delano as Judge of Elections.

The Bishop then recognized Ms. Kathy Baird, the Judge of Assessments who reported that all parishes were in compliance with the canonical assessments for the year.

The Bishop then recognized Mr. Joseph Baird, Judge of Audits. Mr. Baird reported that all parish audit reports had been submitted and that parish deputies were qualified for full participation and voting at Convention.

The Bishop then called upon the Secretary to report on quorum.

The Secretary reported that there were ninety-one (91) lay deputies present whose credentials had been received before the Convention. He also reported that there were thirty-seven (37) clergy present who duly affirmed that they were ordained and in good standing in the Episcopal Church. This brought the total deputies present to one hundred and twenty-eight (128), which constituted a quorum for the transaction of business.

The Bishop then recognized the Rev. Scott T. Quinn, who reported on certain initiatives being taken by the Cathedral to improve its financial health. In particular, he highlighted the room rental and web-streaming opportunities that were being made available to the diocese.

Next, the Bishop recognized Ms. Dana Phillips who spoke in support of the Cathedral, and asked that parishes consider donating one percent of their income.

The Bishop then acknowledged the following special guests: the Rev. Marc Jacobson, missionary in the Philippines and the Rev. Liddy Barlow, Executive Minister, Christian Associates of Southwest

Pennsylvania. He also gave a special welcome to the Rt. Rev. Sean Rowe of the Diocese of Northwest Pennsylvania, who had addressed the Diocese the previous evening in celebration of its 150th anniversary celebration.

The Bishop then recognized Bishop Rowe, who greeted the Convention and, on behalf of his diocese, offered thanksgiving and congratulations to the Diocese. Bishop McConnell then conveyed to the Convention a similar expression of congratulations he had received from the Rt. Rev. Audrey Scanlan of the Diocese of Central Pennsylvania.

The Bishop then, in turn, recognized the Rev. Marc Jacobson and the Rev. Liddy Barlow, who each spoke briefly about their ministries and extended their greetings and thanks to the Convention.

The Bishop then asked the Secretary to proceed with the roll call.

The Secretary requested that clergy and lay deputies stand when their parish was called. He also noted an added feature of this year's roll call was the acknowledgment of those parishes that were founding parishes of the Diocese, highlighted by a gold star on their nametags. The following parishes so indicated their presence at the Convention:

District 1: All Saints, Brighton Heights; Founding parish Christ Church, North Hills (then in Allegheny City); Emmanuel, North Side; St. Barnabas, Brackenridge; St. Brendan's, Franklin Park; Founding parish St. Paul's, Kittanning; Founding parish Trinity Cathedral, Pittsburgh.

District 2: Founding parish Calvary, East Liberty; Church of the Holy Cross, Homewood; Church of the Redeemer, Squirrel Hill; Church of the Good Shepherd, Hazelwood; Founding parish St. Andrew's, Highland Park (then in downtown Pittsburgh); Founding parish St. James, Penn Hills (then in the Strip District of Pittsburgh); St. Matthew's, Homestead; St. Stephen's, Wilkesburg; Founding parish St. Thomas Memorial, Oakmont.

District 3: All Souls, North Versailles; Church of the Atonement, Carnegie; Church of the Nativity, Crafton; St. David's, Peters Township; Founding parish St. Paul's, Mt. Lebanon (then St Paul's, Laceyville); St. Peter's, Brentwood; St. Thomas, Canonsburg; St. Stephen's, McKeesport.

District 4: Founding parish Christ Church, Indiana; Founding parish Christ Church TEC Greensburg; Church of the Advent, Jeannette; St. Bartholomew's, Scottdale; St. Francis-in-the-Fields, Somerset; St. John's, Donora; St. Mark's, Johnstown; Founding parish St. Michael's, Wayne Township; St. Michael's of the Valley, Ligonier; Founding parish St. Paul's, Monongahela; Founding parish St. Peter's, Blairsville; St. Thomas, Northern Cambria.

The Secretary then acknowledged those parishes that were founders and still active in the Diocese of Northwest Pennsylvania: Christ Church, Meadville; St. Paul's, Erie; St. Andrew's, Clearfield; Trinity, Newcastle; St. John's, Franklin; Trinity Memorial, Warren; and St. James Memorial, Titusville.

The Bishop then moved the approval of the minutes of the 149th Annual Convention of the Diocese found in the Preconvention Journal, which was then duly approved and adopted by unanimous vote.

The Rev. Lou Hays, President of Diocesan Council, moved that the Convention adopt the printed agenda for the Convention. There being no discussion, the motion was passed unanimously.

The Rev. Lou Hays, on behalf of Diocesan Council moved the adoption of the Rules of Order, but with the suspension of Section 3, Nominations, section a, thereof, so as to strike the following words:

“however, that in accordance with Canon IV, Section 2, there shall be at least two nominees for each office of Trustee-at-Large, and provided further...” He indicated that the Diocesan Canons do not require two candidates for each Trustee position, and indicated that the suspension would apply only for the day, and that the Committee on Constitution and Canons will need to address the issue for next year. The motion passed unanimously.

The Bishop then asked Mr. Jon Delano and the Rev. Vicente Santiago, co-chairs of the Nomination Committee, to make the report of the Committee.

Before making the report, Mr. Delano moved suspension of the General Rule of Order, Section 3, Nominations, section c, so as to strike the following words therefrom: “any ten” and “providing that such nominations shall be made in writing and signed by members making such nominations.” The effect, he said, would be to allow any voting member to nominate from the floor and to permit the nomination of those whose names had been placed on the ballot within thirty days prior to the Convention. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Delano reported on each of the offices to be filled and the nominees for such offices. After the report for each office, the Bishop asked if there were any additional nominees from the floor. There were no additional nominations.

Father Santiago then moved that nominations be closed and that the Secretary be directed to cast a unanimous ballot for all those offices in which there was not a contested election: namely the Board of Trustees, Cathedral Chapter, Commission on Ministry, Constitution and Canons, Disciplinary Board, and Growth Fund. The motion was duly seconded and passed unanimously.

The Bishop recognized Mr. Jon Delano as Judge of Elections, who then instructed the Convention on the process for voting. Ballots were then cast by Convention deputies only for those offices with a contested election.

The Bishop then called on Ms. Kathy Baird, Chair of the Diocesan Budget and Assessment Working Group, and Ms. Kathi Workman, Diocesan Treasurer, to present the proposed budget for 2016. Following the report and a motion for approval and discussion, the budget was approved unanimously by Convention.

The Bishop then declared the Convention in recess for the Eucharist, lunch and District Meetings and asked the Secretary to provide instructions and information to the Deputies.

Following the lunch break, the Bishop recognized Dr. Joan Gundersen, who reported that the traveling 150th Anniversary historical exhibit was still available for display at parishes, and asked anyone interested to contact her to reserve up to three consecutive Sundays after Easter.

Following Dr. Gundersen’s announcement, the Bishop asked the Judge of Elections to report on the results of the balloting. Mr. Delano reported as follows (*denotes elected):

For the Standing Committee (one clergy, one lay):

Clergy:

*The Rev. T.J. Freeman

Laity:

Sandy Ludman

*Darrell Powell

Mr. Delano then announced the results of elections held during district caucuses as follows:

District 1

Chair: Bruce Quayle, Christ Church, North Hills

Vice Chair: Rick Mathews, Christ Church, North Hills

Council: The Rev. Charlie Hamill, Christ Church, North Hills

District 2

Chair: The Rev. Michael Foley, Redeemer, Squirrel Hill

Vice Chair: Roslyn Pratt, St Matthew's, Homestead

Council: The Rev. Carol Henley, Calvary, East Liberty

Trustees: Mary Roehrich, St. Andrew's, Highland Park

District 3

Chair: Jon Delano, St. Paul's, Mt. Lebanon

Vice Chair: The Rev. Linda Wilson, All Souls, North Versailles

Council: The Rev. Lou Hays, St. Paul's, Mt. Lebanon

District 4

Chair: The Rev. Teresa Hunt, St. Paul's, Monongahela

Vice Chair: The Rev. Nancy Threadgill, St. Mark's, Johnstown

Council: Joseph Baird, St. Peter's, Blairsville

The Secretary cast a unanimous ballot for the following uncontested elections:

For the Board of Trustees (three to be elected):

*Sue DeWalt

*Anne Kinsey

*Melanie Kurtz

For the Cathedral Chapter (one clergy one lay):

Clergy:

*The Rev. Garrett Yates

Laity

*Doug Starr

For the Commission on Ministry (one to be elected either clergy or lay):

*The Rev. Michelle Boomgaard

For The Committee on Constitution and Canons (one clergy, one lay):

Clergy:

*The Rev. Michelle Boomgaard

Laity:

*Ansley Westgard

For the Disciplinary Board (one clergy two lay):

Clergy:

*The Rev. Linda Wilson

Laity:

*Betty Duckstein

*James Kraus

For the Growth Fund (one to be elected):

*Nancy Bolden

The Bishop then took a moment to express his heartfelt thanks to the members of Diocesan staff, and others, for their hard work and dedication. In particular he recognized the Rev. Canon Dr. Cathy Brall; the Venerable Jean Chess; Mr. Rich Creehan; the Rev. Canon Jay Geisler; Dr. Joan Gundersen; Mr. Brent Hansen; Mr. Andy Muhl; the Rev. Canon Scott Quinn; Ms. Marlene Rihn; Ms. Judi Rogers; Mr. Andy Roman and Ms. Kathi Workman.

The Bishop then gave his annual address to Convention, a copy of which is attached as Exhibit A.

At the conclusion of his address, the Bishop called upon Mr. Michael Braxton for his report from the Committee on Constitution and Canons. Mr. Braxton then presented the proposed canonical change to Canon II, striking Section 4 thereof, as set forth in the Preconvention Journal. The motion prompted some discussion. The Rev. Canon Dr. Jay Geisler offered a motion to refer the matter back to the Committee of Constitution and Canons. Canon Geisler's motion was defeated unanimously, whereupon the original motion striking section 4 of Canon II was approved, with one no vote and one abstention.

The Bishop then recognized Mr. Andy Roman, the Chancellor of the Diocese, who made his report to the Convention. Mr. Roman detailed the canonical closing in the past year of All Saints, Bridgeville, following a decision by that congregation to merge with All Saints, Brighton Heights. He also reported on the canonical closing of four parishes whose buildings have been vacant or under-utilized: St. Martin's, Monroeville; Christ the King, Beaver Falls; Prince of Peace, Hopewell; and Good Samaritan, Liberty Borough.

At the conclusion of the Chancellor's address, the Bishop called upon the Rev. Lou Hays, who, on behalf of Diocesan Council, presented a report from the Diocesan Compensation Committee. He indicated that the committee had brought before Convention a greatly revised Compensation Guide and Health Care Benefits package. After he made his report, Father Hays moved the adoption of the revised Clergy Compensation Guide, as well as Appendices A, B, C, and E, all as found in the Preconvention Journal. The motion was approved with two abstentions.

The Bishop then called on Mr. Steve Stagnitta, chair of the General Convention Deputation. Mr. Stagnitta read the following resolution (D059) of General Convention:

Resolved, that with the House of Bishops concurring, that the 78th General Convention of the Episcopal Church join the Diocese of Pittsburgh in celebrating the 150th anniversary of the diocese's admission to union with the General Convention, and acknowledge the many ways that the Diocese has been an innovator in the service of God and the Church, including Pittsburgh's leadership in radio broadcasts of religious services, the formation of the United Thank Offering and the Anglican Fellowship of Prayer; and be it further

Resolved, that the 78th General Convention acknowledge the resilience of the Diocese in its recovery from schism and looks forward to its continuing heritage of innovation and leadership in the next 150 years.

The Bishop then called on Mr. Jeff Dunbar, Chair of the Resolutions Committee.

Mr. Dunbar asked the Rev. Scott Russell, on behalf of the Social Justice Committee, to present **Resolution 1 concerning Justice, Peace and Security in the Holy Land**. Father Russell indicated that the resolution follows the one adopted by General Convention in 2015. It emphasizes study and reconciliation and does not call for divestment. The resolution passed with two abstentions.

Mr. Dunbar then presented the following resolution:

Resolution in Recognition of Volunteers

Whereas this Diocese has been enriched by the gifts of time and talent offered by many volunteers; and

Whereas the office has benefitted from the willingness of volunteers to review documents; collate, stamp and stuff mailings; and do other office tasks as requested; and

Whereas the Archives is especially thankful for the volunteer help received this past year in processing collections, packing and moving the collections; and

Whereas the work of the Diocese depends on the many hours donated by those who serve on diocesan committees, commissions, and task forces; and

Whereas this annual convention has depended on volunteers to register, guide visitors count ballots and lead our worship; be it therefore

Resolved that the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh gratefully acknowledges the many hours of unpaid service offered so willingly and with such good spirit and hereby request that all those here present who have provided volunteer service for the diocese since our last Convention stand and receive the thanks of the Convention.

The motion passed unanimously. After the applause, Mr. Dunbar moved the following resolution:

Resolution of Thanks to St Paul's, Mt. Lebanon

Whereas St Paul's, Mt Lebanon, and its staff and members stepped in on short notice to undertake the many tasks associated with hosting the 2015 Annual Convention of the Diocese; and

Whereas this Diocese has been the recipient of St Paul's hospitality on both the night of November 13th, for the celebration of the 150th anniversary of the Diocese and the day of November 14, 2015 for the Convention; and

Whereas we have been escorted and directed, and generally welcomed with smiles and helping hands; be it therefore

Resolved that the officers, deputies, bishop and visitors participating in this Convention tender St Paul's our sincere thanks for the many ways, large and small, that the people of the parish have worked to smooth the course of events and provide us with a welcoming site for our Convention.

The motion was passed unanimously.

The Bishop offered his thanks to the Rev. Aidan Smith from Trinity Episcopal School for Ministry for the generous donation from the seminary to cover the cost of lunch. He also asked the prayers of the Convention for his future work on the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music, as well as for his work with a group, including a team from the House of Bishops, meeting soon in the Diocese of Chicago, to develop a pastoral letter on the issue of racism.

The Bishop concluded by announcing that the 151st Diocesan Convention would be held on November 4 and 5, 2016, at Trinity Cathedral. He offered a closing prayer and at 3:02 p.m. moved that the Convention be adjourned. The motion, duly moved and seconded, passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
The Rev. Canon James D. Shoucair
Secretary to Convention

EXHIBIT A

Address of the Right Reverend Dorsey W. M. McConnell VIII Bishop of Pittsburgh 150th Annual Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh November 14th, 2015

If you have ever had the pleasure of hearing our new Presiding Bishop Michael Curry preach, then you know that he talks a lot about Jesus. A lot. In his installation sermon at the National Cathedral a couple of weeks ago, Michael called the Episcopal Church to take up our full, energetic, and spirit-filled place in the Jesus movement. He referenced the Acts of the Apostles, and particularly the moment in which the apostles Paul and Silas were accused by their detractors, on the one hand, of betraying the legacy of their Jewish forefathers, and on the other hand of worshiping a king who was not Caesar. Now, even though the two different sides of this opposition would never agree on anything else, they did manage to agree that these apostolic troublemakers, who preached Jesus Christ crucified and risen, were turning the world “upside down.”

Bishop Curry went on to point out the two great consequences of this movement: first, that the way of love in the Lordship of Jesus Christ spread like wildfire as people, moved by the Holy Spirit, got hold of God’s great vision for humanity – of a world in which there would be no more war, no more suffering, no more injustice, no more bigotry, no more violence, no more hatred – the rule of love, the way of God, the Kingdom. And the second consequence, that the barriers of hostility that divide peoples, nations, and families would be finally brought down, and that a new humanity would emerge in which there was neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, but only one body in Jesus Christ, with many members, drinking from the same mercy, receiving the same power, reconciled to one another and to God.

Finally, Bishop Curry announced his two priorities, which he sees as flowing directly from the wellsprings of the ancient church and from the universal witness of the Scriptures: the priorities of evangelism, sharing the Good News which has been announced to all nations in Jesus Christ; and reconciliation, beginning particularly with the work of racial reconciliation, which he sees as just the beginning “of the hard and holy work of real reconciliation that realizes justice across all the borders and boundaries that divide the human family of God.”

I am overjoyed that our Presiding Bishop speaks so passionately and clearly about the centrality of Jesus. He knows that no work we have to do is viable, or even possible, unless it is carried out under the will and the authority of the risen Lord and in the power of his Holy Spirit. Michael is not a restrained man, physically, in the pulpit; his enthusiasm is infectious. You may have heard little resonances this morning in my sermon, of a sermon he preached in 2012 called “Crazy Christians.” And as tempting as it is for me to imitate his preaching style fully, I won’t, because I don’t want to hurt myself and I don’t want to embarrass you.

However, I will say that the church to which Bishop Curry points, a church passionately engaged in sharing the good news of Jesus and actively committed to the work of reconciliation, is the same church described in the three strategic priorities I have been emphasizing for the last two years: the church for the public gospel, rooted in mission communities, and led by people deeply formed in Christ. Such a church *will* share the Good News in every way, in every place, and every time, and by any means she can imagine. And such a church will throw herself, with joyful and compassionate confidence, into the sorrows of the world, into the need of the human families around us, into the brokenness between and among the races, into the disappointment and shame and separation human beings experience from one another; a church washing their feet, pouring out the healing balm of Christ’s grace and mercy, binding up their wounds, and walking with them, toward the day when the Kingdom will finally be revealed and we all will be one, even as Jesus and the Father are one. Can I get an amen? *Amen!*

Now I know this church, as we imagine it in southwest Pennsylvania, is still a work in progress. I know that. Like Paul in the third chapter of the letter to the Philippians, we may honestly say we *have not yet obtained the resurrection from the dead* (Phil. 3:12). We are not already perfect, as Paul himself says, but as he says, we *press on to make it our own because Christ Jesus has made us his own, forgetting what lies behind and straining forward for what lies ahead we press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus*. Now if you are listening to St. Paul here, you know he is using an athletic metaphor. And athletic metaphors ought to have a particular attraction to us here in the holy land of the Steelers, the Pirates, and the Penguins. But the prize Paul holds forth is not the Super Bowl, not the World Series, nor even the Stanley Cup, but rather the strange and beautiful upward call of God, the call to the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. It is a call that demands we offer everything we are, everything we have, our whole heart, mind, soul, and strength, in the race for this vision.

Sisters and brothers, first off, as excited as I am about this, and I hope you can see I’m excited, I want to say this race is a marathon and not a sprint. I say this because we have been through a whole lot of trouble in this diocese, and in some ways we still bear the wounds. We still yearn for our separated sisters and brothers. We still mourn the loss of many of our congregations. Though in many ways we have moved on from that terrible contest, in others we are still catching our breath and dusting ourselves off. That is why, about this time last year, I called us all to year of Jubilee, a season of rest and refreshment, of fellowship, study, and prayer, so that we might be provisioned, for the great race ahead.

I know many of you have taken that call seriously because you have told me about it. I have heard from several of you individually and collectively, that this concerted and focused time of re-gathering for you personally, and sometimes for your parishes and vestries, has given you deep provision for the journey. I also know that many of you have been at the other end of the spectrum, just for a whole variety of reasons, busier than ever. And if as a result you now feel that you missed that year of Jubilee, or you weren't ready to take it up, but you're ready now, or maybe you just didn't get the memo, I want to say it's all right. Don't worry. If we do this right, if we run this race the way God desires us to run it, there will be rest on the road.

From my perspective as your bishop, even in the midst of a Jubilee year – goodness! – we got an awful lot done. We have, through the diligent efforts of the listening committee, compiled a catalog of existing outreach and mission initiatives among you, across all 35 of our parishes, along with a huge compendium of soft data, your expressions of your hopes and your fears and your dreams, most of which were enthusiastic and encouraging. For our part, in the bishop's office, we have tried to make good on our standing pledge that everything we do will be to help you thrive. We hear you are getting the help you need around the questions you have had about salaries and pensions and roofs and boilers and driveways and a hundred other smaller but important issues (if you are the one standing in the basement that's flooding at the moment). Our administration is solid. Our budget has been in balance for the last two years, and we are proposing, and thank you for voting it, another budget for 2016 that, unless it's changed again, is a whopping \$182 in the black. We have even managed to push \$55,000 from this year's budget surplus into mission grants that have been accessed by a dozen parishes and we still have \$23,000 in those funds available, so you all pray and send something in.

And qualitative indicators are also encouraging. I sense a growing enthusiasm for parishes reaching out to each other. I sense growing mutual trust and affection among our clergy. (The clergy conference this year felt to me like a watershed – people were having such a good time.) I feel bonds of fellowship appearing where only a few years ago there had been widespread isolation and anxiety. I have heard the excitement that came out of such things as the recent *Invite, Welcome, Connect* conference hosted in this parish in September, and attended by over 100 leaders representing more than three-quarters of our parishes. All of this collectively paints a portrait of a church that is poised at the brink of a great venture, readying ourselves to launch the Jesus movement in a new way into the world.

For surely that has got to be our only purpose, dear friends, the sole reason for Vestry meetings and fish fries and pageants, and the Growth Fund, the only reason for our boilers and roofs and driveways, the reason for our governing bodies and their meetings – the Standing Committee, the Trustees and Council – that not only we, but the whole world may know the love of Christ, may know Him as Savior and Lord, and through Him be reconciled to God and one another. And the good news is that we know much of what we need to do next in order to see this happen. We have the Presiding Bishop's vision of evangelism and reconciliation carried into the world, especially racial reconciliation. We have the three strategic priorities to guide our local work: public gospel, missional communities, and leadership formation.

We know that our existing parishes must be transformed from mainly inward-looking religious societies into outward-focused vectors of apostolic mission and grace in Jesus Christ. We know that new communities must be planted in flexible ways that are not burdened by the permanent ownership of real estate and yet have stability and continuity as they either establish themselves as Eucharistic centers or affiliate with existing parishes for that purpose. And we know we will have resources to accomplish this, as we let go of properties we no longer need and cannot maintain, and translate the proceeds from their sales into an endowment to fund innovative mission. In short, we can already see the outlines of the transformed church we are becoming. So if this is all true, if indeed God is making us ready and fit for the race toward his upward call, what is the fuel we need? What will sustain us on the course? What will give us everything we need to interpret the gospel clearly to those around us, love them boldly, and pray into being the church that God dreams of?

The answer appears in the New Testament from one end to the other. Friends, the church, as you know, is first defined not by its great buildings but by its great people – the great and ordinary Saints of God, called into one body by Jesus Christ. At first, you will notice in the gospels, Jesus calls these folks and he sends them out two by two, and he sends them out later in somewhat greater numbers, but even as, in the Acts of the Apostles, the number of missionaries grows into the dozens and hundreds and then the thousands, the evidence is that their primary communities, the ones that imagine and create the great

apostolic work, are small and intimate. The numbers of individuals in these groups range, by my reading, anywhere from two to six or eight, and all have a similar basic mode of life. They pray together, in the Acts of the Apostles. They hear the word of God together. They move into the world together. Led by the Spirit, they go together to minister the grace of God in the places where the Spirit gives them the opportunity. Sometimes, this means bearing witness to Jesus before the great and powerful. Sometimes it means blessing the poor, healing the sick, binding up the broken in the darkest and most forgotten corners of the world. But the key is this: they do this work supporting one another in small and flexible teams, and they do this work in a way that recognizes no distinction between their preparation for the work and the work itself.

These groups are not like the sharing groups or personal support groups of our own age and culture, far be it. They are not prayer groups, though they pray constantly. They are not Bible study groups, though they are always under the Word of God, hearing, reading, marking, learning, and inwardly digesting that Word, until it informs everything they say and do. They are not outreach committees, though they are always reaching out. They are not healing ministries, though they are always healing, or mission teams though they are always on mission. They are just the Church – praying, learning, drinking in the Word, listening to the Spirit, building new relationships, sowing peace, making friends for Jesus in the world, by twos and fours and sixes and eights, bearing witness to His cross and his resurrection in their words and in their deeds. And if you had to pick a word to describe what happened to them as they did this, whether it was on the road to Jerusalem, or Antioch, or Rome, that word might be *formation*. It is the word that St. Paul himself uses, Christ being *formed* in us.

Now I, for one, believe this is a beautiful vision. It is also a timely vision, a vision we need now, a vision that simply wasn't possible earlier. For a church in conflict, formation is not a priority. The political and doctrinal struggles in the years leading up to the split, and the demands of the immediate tasks of reorganization and rebuilding since then, did not produce environments in which this vision of formation could be entertained or supported. But I believe the time for this vision has come for the simple reasons that we need what God offers us through it and we are ready to receive it. In fact, it seems to me, we must begin here, begin with a vision of our formation in Christ, if we are to fulfill our role in the Jesus movement. Because unless we as the church yield ourselves to the Spirit's work in our catechesis, in our formation in the deep and basic mysteries of the faith, then our strategic priorities will mean nothing. We will have no gospel to take public, and no mission around which to build missional communities. But if we can yield ourselves, if we are willing to let God form Christ in us in this way, if we commit to this deep, long-term strategy of formation as a diocese, then I believe God will use us, and build us up as he does so, as we together strive toward the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

Now, I want you just to take a deep breath. You will be relieved to know I am not proposing a program to accomplish this. And I have no coffee mugs to offer you with a slogan of any kind. It's not that programs are necessarily bad. I don't think they are. Across the history of the church there have been nearly as many models for formation through small groups of disciples as there have been disciples. I, for one, have been through Alpha, and Cursillo; I have tasted the fruits of EFM and Disciples of Christ in Community. I have been a part of dozens of Bible studies, I've led dozens of mission teams, I've taken part in many ministries of healing. They all worked a little, and they all failed a little. And if I have learned one thing, it is that while existing programs or curricula had some value, the greatest transformation and change for myself and for the people that I worked with and we all hoped to bless, came from our making up the work as we went along.

And I believe that is what God wants us to do now. In other words, I am suggesting that the key to your formation, church, lies with you, in your midst. And that key depends not only upon formation in general, but especially upon a well-catechized laity. By "well-catechized laity," I mean that the people of God have taken in Scripture and tradition in such a way that it has become their tap root, that our lay

leadership are able to reason biblically and theologically, not like seminarians, but like practitioners. That prayer, both private and corporate, becomes a daily practice and constant resource for them, and that this condition spreads through the Body of Christ until mission and witness to Him crucified and risen, in word and deed, become just a spontaneous fruit of our inner life and the motivating principle of every local church. Sisters and brothers, in the Order of the Baptized (and here I'm just going to ask clergy to just put your hands over your ears): you are the ones called to create your formation, and you need to figure it out. Now, you are responsible for designing what you will study and how you will pray and where you will serve, but you have all the help of the church, the power of the Spirit, your local clergy and your bishop to help you. But unless the lay people of this diocese engage in this deep formation, the culture of our parishes will never change in the way that we need it to in order for this work to take place. Because the crucial piece of leadership in the church is not among your ordained colleagues, but rather in the Order of the Baptized. Amen? *Amen!*

Now, the way this looks from parish to parish, and among our parishes as we work together, will be God's creative act through us, through you. And I expect that there is going to be a whole lot of collaboration going on that we haven't seen. Thank goodness for Bishop Rowe who came here last night and gave us a little talking to, didn't he, about our sense of autonomy, our separation from one another, our allegiance to the fact that we mainly think of church as our own parish, our own particular place, our own little corner of the Christian universe. And instead of a vision of autonomy, Sean set before us a vision of collaboration which is nothing less than the vision, again, of the church of the New Testament, the church catholic throughout the ages in which we are bound to each other in such intimate ways that when somebody sneezes in Donora, somebody gets a cold in the South Hills. And that's a good thing.

And as you develop this work, as we develop this work together, we will figure out ways for you to share your design for your formation as an inspiration to others. I do not care what we call these groups as we bring them into being. You could call them mission groups or you could call them discipleship groups, or ambassador groups. (Please don't call them self-help groups – that is the wrong track.) Even if they have different names, I do think that they will have common characteristics, as I say, going back to the model of Jesus, going back to the model of the apostles. Those characteristics are five. They will pray together, they will study the Word and the tradition, they will share the Good News of Jesus with those who do not know Him, they will be involved in healing and reconciliation in the world, and they will serve Christ's little ones, especially the poor. These seem to be the five characteristics that keep coming up in Jesus own ministry, in Acts, and in believers movements wherever they have been found in the Church, and they are as exciting a call to us now as they always have been to the saints who have gone before.

Now, I mentioned that the bishop can help. And I can. You will see in the 2016 budget that the position of Canon for Formation has been expanded to half-time, and in that role the Rev. Jay Geisler will help us imagine what the ongoing formation of our clergy, lay leaders, and candidates for ordination may look like. As you all know, the Rev. Canon Dr. Cathy Brall stepped down this summer as Canon Missioner to become the new director of field education at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. And in this new phase, I have created a half-time post of Canon for Mission. I have mentioned before that the conversion of our parishes into outward-focused missional communities depends upon changing our whole culture. I have already said this can only be done by lay leadership supported by the clergy – not the other way around. And if your lips are not moving when I give this speech next year, well then I'll just keep giving it. So, in this context, I was praying for a deeply formed layperson to take this canonry on. Someone with a heart for getting the Gospel into the world, a good listener, an experienced implementer with great analytical skills, a proven collaborative leader with experience in a complex organization, and I prayed, dear Jesus, please, if it is possible, send a woman. And I found all of this in the person of Kimberly Karashin, who brings years of experience as an analyst and project manager with PNC, an MBA from Duquesne, combined with many years of service and leadership in the church. Kim will take up her position on Monday. (Kim, will you stand please? *Applause*) Now, full disclosure, Kim has just begun the

discernment process for ordination to the priesthood, but I am confident that this will not be a handicap, and that over the next year and more she will look at this work very much from a lay perspective. To round out this team, our new director of administration, the Rev. Canon Ted Babcock, who also serves as priest-in-charge at St. Stephen's McKeesport, will be working with me and the other canons to help you discern what you need in order to create the next stage of your formation.

Finally, we have a great partner in Dr. David Esterline, the new president of Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. Dr. Esterline and I have already talked about expanding and formalizing the relationship between the diocese of Pittsburgh and PTS. We are both hoping to create an environment in which lay leaders, candidates for ordination, and clergy can continue their formation together, in each other's presence, collaboratively, so that the charisms of the various orders of ministry, lay and ordained, may operate with one another, as together we imagine what God wants our future to look like. And I hope that this collaboration will become a laboratory for mission and formation at PTS.

As we move down the road, in the near future over the next few months, I will convene, with our canons, two ad hoc working groups – one to help us design the resources to help you create your formation, and the other to begin to think and pray through what new church plants might look like, where they might be located, how they might be supported, and what connection they will have to our existing parishes. I point out that the process for the formation of these groups is permeable and open. If you have a call to serve in some capacity in this, if you have a notion, if God's given you a vision, if there's an answer to prayer somewhere rolling around in your head or heart that bears on this material, sit in front of a computer or tackle me on the bus (I do ride the bus now), and just let me know.

Now, this process of formation has many parts to it, and people will no doubt play many roles. I am not asking you to take on formation as homework. I know that, especially in small parishes, people are starved for time and energy. But I am asking something simple of you. Across the board, let God begin to feed you where you are in what you are already doing. Take the time you are already committing to the church, and simply reorient it in this way. For example, beginning a Vestry meeting with prayer and Bible study and just letting that go for a while can be the first steps in transforming our lay leaders from servants whose main concerns are shouldering the condition of the boiler and the roof into deeply nurtured and mature spiritual elders of the flock of God. And I guarantee you, sisters and brothers, you start out that way and the business at the end will go fast. But the overwhelming majority of the work I'm describing will take place not in our church buildings, but rather in the places where we work and live. That is where these groups will gather, as I see it, although they will of course come together for worship in the Eucharistic centers we call parishes, before moving out into the world again.

Finally, please understand, I am not asking everyone here immediately to go out and start or join a mission group. But I am asking you to take this idea home, take it into your parishes, pray about it, and then decide what you are called to do. Jesus, you will recall, started small. First there were two or three, then 12, then 70, then more and more. The early church was really not very worried about numbers. In the Acts of the Apostles, you will not find a single moment when the church wonders how they can get more people to come through the doors. Luke says only, "The Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved." So, if we begin small, I'm pretty sure we won't stay small. Perhaps imagine if, in a year, across the diocese, we had, I don't know, 72 people, that's a nice number, who had self-organized into groups of six or so, which would make 12 groups, a nice dominical number, who were cooking up new ways of letting God form Christ in them and taking that good news into the world. Perhaps one commits to a study of Bonhoeffer's *Life Together* and reaches out to form a partnership with an African-American congregation of a different denomination, beginning the slow and difficult work of racial reconciliation. Perhaps another convenes in a coffee shop, immerses themselves in the work of Saint Augustine and starts a ministry for those in prison. Perhaps a third adopts the letters of Saint Paul and then starts lunchtime studies in their several places of work. As I think of those three examples, I can

name four different Christian mission organizations connected to this diocese in various ways that could help them begin their work, offer support for them while they do it, and counsel them on the road. And there are dozens, hundreds of other possibilities, which I believe God wants to create through us to get his Good News into the world, to bind up the wounds that divide his children, and to announce the coming Kingdom of God. And again, if you have ideas, if you want a share in the ways in which this ministry could be structured, please share them with us.

Because I believe we can be about nothing more important. I mean, look at what has happened over the last twenty-four hours. A few terrorists sow destruction and mayhem in the “City of Light,” and the world is brought to a standstill. We are captivated, focused once again on the magnitude of evil, wringing our hands over the power of darkness, running to and fro wondering what we are to do. And Satan laughs. Have we forgotten that the only weapon such people have is death? And what do we have? What do we have, friends? Nothing, really. Just the Cross, the death that conquers death, the Cross and the empty tomb, the beginning of life that can never be taken away. The empty tomb and the Word made Flesh who gives hope to the hopeless, whose light shines in the darkness, and which the darkness can never overcome. We have only the power of the risen Christ that removes the stumbling blocks of race and tribe and clan. Only the Spirit of God that renews the face of the earth, only the communion of saints, only the armies of peace equipped with the weapons of love, only the everlasting love of the Father that can change despair forever into hope, stark hatred into pure affection, dead ends into open highways. Love that can dry every tear and empty every grave, until the family of God from every nation stands as one before the throne of grace. That’s all we have. So let’s get together, and pray together, and learn together, and serve together and get the news out there, because it is time once again to turn the world upside down! Amen! *Amen!*