

# BISHOP'S REPORT

Dear Friends in Christ,

This summer marked the first anniversary of “The Move.” I mean, of course, the relocation of the diocesan offices from Monroeville to the Cathedral. I cannot sufficiently thank our diocesan staff for the way they handled every detail of the move and the way they have created an atmosphere of normal life in such a short time. The offices are bright, spacious and comfortable, and we are very glad to welcome all who walk in the door.

Trinity Cathedral's location is second to none: we are at the heart of the city. The Golden Triangle is literally coming up all around us: signs of new and vigorous life are everywhere, and we get to be in the middle of it all. Under the leadership of Interim Dean Scott Quinn, the cathedral's finances are stabilizing, and together with the cathedral vestry we have been assessing the best way to move forward to guarantee Trinity's ministry for the future. There are huge challenges, particularly from deferred maintenance. It will take time, an extended effort, and a lot of prayer and support from all of us, but over the last year I have become convinced that the mission of the cathedral can and will grow with the city, eventually becoming a focal point of diocesan mission and evangelism, a launching pad for our **public gospel**, a laboratory for our **missional communities**, and a classroom for **leadership formation**.

I will speak of this more in my address at convention. However, the extended nature of this report reflects something about this diocese generally – namely, that our vocation together in re-shaping mission and ministry for southwest Pennsylvania is long-term work. This means keeping our vision for the future alive while understanding that it is going to take us a while to get there. I am learning a lot about patience and persistence.

In this regard, our relationship with Pittsburgh Theological Seminary is developing slowly and surely. I have been appointed to the PTS Board of Directors. Canon Jay Geisler and I will again offer a winter-term course in “Worship as Pastoral Care,” and add a survey of Anglican theology in the spring. Dr. David Esterline has graciously provided me with an office on campus. Eventually, we will have a full Anglican track in which lay leaders and candidates for ordination can be trained together in evangelism and mission, but it will take careful continuing work, putting in place one piece at a time as we imagine together what our future leaders will most need.

Again, in last year's convention address, in which I identified *formation* as the key element in our three strategic priorities, I said I would form two ad hoc working groups – one on formation and one on new church plants. However, over the past year I have begun to doubt that the “task force” model is the best way to make progress in either of these areas. Formation is already happening organically in our local faith communities, and I think we are better off, for the moment, doing what we can to help parishes improve and sustain those efforts, rather than create another set of meetings on the diocesan calendar. Better repeatedly to give you the *experience* of being formed for mission, such as in having the Rev. Christopher Martin introduce clergy to the Restoration Project; or helping the ECW bring the founder of Thistle Farms, the Rev. Rebecca Stevens, to Pittsburgh; or finding ways to continue the work begun at the Invite – Welcome – Connect conference last fall; or designing the 2016 Diocesan Convention as a formation event for the whole diocese. As for new church plants, we still have work to do helping our current congregations reach into the world, supporting and expanding the missional work that came to light through the visits of the Listening Committee in 2014 and 2015, while training and nurturing enough clergy to lead the parishes we already have. New plants will arise, but I would rather see them begin to be called out from the existing Church, rather than attempt to design them by a task force and drop them into place.

As I see the contours of this long-term work emerging, I am trying to re-configure my own work to meet better the pastoral needs of our leadership. Since the clergy conference last year I have tried to expand the time I have to meet informally with my clergy colleagues over coffee or lunch just to see how they are doing, without any agenda up front. I still have a ways to go in this regard, since it has been harder for me to get out to the eastern parts of the diocese, something I would like to see change. In the coming year, I will expand my calendar to include meetings with the vestries of our parishes just to hear from them, study and pray with them, and address their specific concerns more than I might be able to on a Sunday visitation. I am also continuing to ask how I can meet with small groups of clergy in a way that actually adds value to their ministries.

My staff has been in the field as much as possible. Canon Ted Babcock and Canon Kim Karashin have been active with parish leadership in helping congregations improve their internal relations so they can begin to think more about reaching beyond their walls. I have appointed Canon Jay Geisler as Vicar of the Monongahela Valley Mission; he and Canon Kim have been helping the parishes in Donora, Monongahela, and McKeesport, with their leadership, to begin to think through a common approach in reaching their neighborhoods for Jesus Christ. Treasurer Kathi Workman and her assistant Marlene Rihn are devoted to helping parishes think clearly about their financial resources and how to position those resources for the maximum benefit of their people and for more Kingdom work in the world. Judi Rogers fields countless questions around process and administration, calling my attention to pastoral needs while constantly having my back, and Joan Gundersen, as historian and archivist, continuously helps parishes make the connection between where we have come from and where we are going. Andy Muhl is constantly working the website and other communications tools to give you all a comprehensive view of what is going on at any point in the month, and Rich Creehan labors behind the scenes to keep my office connected to the press, the media, and to other judicatories. I am grateful to them all, beyond anything I can say.

Finally, I have continued to take stock of the core opportunities for the Gospel, and the core obstacles to the Gospel, that face us here in southwest Pennsylvania, which have to be addressed even as we move forward. Here is a brief overview.

The environment around us is becoming more clearly secular, and the reputation of the Church has suffered accordingly. More than one survey shows that most people are not churched and think of Christians generally as narrow-minded and out of touch with the real world. Particularly, the divisions of the Church, the splintering of our denominations, the wars we have fought with one another, and our separation from one another according to race and class, reflect the worst ills of secular culture. If we are to gain a hearing for the Gospel, we must move to reconcile with one another across these barriers, joining with other churches and especially the African-American Church, to address together the needs of our neighborhoods with the hope and life given in Jesus Christ. Over the last year I have continued building bridges to key leaders across the churches in Pittsburgh, and I am hopeful that the visit of our Presiding Bishop, this coming February 3rd to 5th, will be a significant catalyst in raising up and training a core of lay leaders supported by their clergy as a vanguard for the work of evangelism and reconciliation in our diocese.

Finally, a word of thanksgiving. Our statistics show that we have grown over the last year, a net increase of 31 baptized members. This does not include the people of the Church of the Advent in Brookline, who have resumed active participation in the diocese and will be welcomed home at Convention. These are all good signs for our future. However, the best signs are the continuing faith, hope and love I am humbled to witness every Sunday as I make my way from parish to parish in this wonderful diocese. As I enter the fifth year of my consecration, I am filled with gratitude for the ongoing blessing of living and working

among you, for the friends you have become to Betsy and me, for the joy and encouragement I receive as I move among you. Thank you for the privilege of being your bishop.

Faithfully,  
+Dorsey

**Statistics for September 1, 2015 – August 31, 2016**

Episcopal Visitations	34	Marriages	1
Confirmations	67	Burials	0
Receptions	37	Ordinations	4 (Order of Deacon 2; Order of Priest 2)
Baptisms	2	Renewal of Vows	1