

CANON MISSIONER

I began actively serving as the Canon Missioner after Labor Day in 2013. During the past year, my work has had two primary aspects. My main focus has been coming alongside three or four parishes to assist the clergy and lay members in the pursuit of their mission and ministry. These parishes are St. Barnabas, Brackenridge; St. Andrew's, New Kensington; St. James, Penn Hills; and St. Thomas, Canonsburg. Each parish has had differing needs and my role has been adjusted accordingly.

At St. Barnabas, I've been mentoring Deacon Frank Yesko in his formation towards priestly ordination and have worked with him and the Vestry on many nuts-and-bolts details of Episcopal parish life as this parish grows in numbers and spiritual vibrancy. St. Andrew's in New Kensington returned to active participation in the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh in late July 2013. Fr. Norman "Chips" Koehler valiantly assumed the worship and pastoral duties there. I worked with him, the congregation, and other clergy and parishes of the Allegheny Valley to explore options. By late October, it became clear that sufficient resources were not available for St. Andrews to continue as a worshipping parish at this time. Their last service was held on All Saints' Sunday in November 2013. In Penn Hills, the Rev. Eric McIntosh, a newly ordained Episcopal priest with many years experience as a Baptist minister, began a restart of St. James with a unique vision to minister to the community through the parish facilities. I've been blessed to serve as a mentor and sounding board to Eric as this dynamic and culturally-sensitive ministry continues to unfold. St. Thomas in Canonsburg has experienced steady growth in recent years, so that the congregation and its ministries have felt constrained by the limits of their small and challenging physical plant. My role here has been to support the Rector, Chuck Weiss, and the Vestry in analyzing their mission priorities and options for sustained ministry over the long haul.

The second aspect of my ministry as Canon Missioner this past year has been to fill in some of the administrative/functional gaps within the diocesan structure. These have included: assisting and advising other staff members with parish/clergy needs and resources; representing the Bishop at events when he has had scheduling conflicts; and participating in an ex officio capacity in several diocesan committees. With the appointment of our new Director of Administration and Archdeacon, the Venerable Jean Chess, I expect my involvement in such work will lessen in the year ahead.

Finally, as I look with eager anticipation to the future, allow me to share concerning a couple of projects under development. I participate in as many parish visits of the Listening Committee that my schedule permits. I'm starting to process the conversations, data, dreams, and passions to seek ways of better under-girding the mission and ministry of our parishes and the diocese as a whole through sharing resources and best practices. The other project is a diocesan-wide baby shower for Jeremiah's Place, a new crisis-care nursery in East Liberty. This event, scheduled for January 2015, will serve as a model for bringing people of the diocese together in mission and fellowship.

With gratitude for the opportunities to serve Christ with you in mission,
Canon Cathy Brall+