

BISHOP'S REPORT

Dear Friends in Christ,

You may recall at our 149th Diocesan Convention I commended this diocese to a year of Jubilee, of resting in the Lord, through deeper fellowship, study and prayer. I know this recommendation has been followed with varying degrees of success throughout our congregations. Some parishes have said they were grateful for the permission to take a “day off” for the first time in what seemed like decades. Vestries have taken a step back, been more intentional about their life in Christ, paid more attention to the state of their collective soul. Others have been busier than ever.

My own record on this score has been mixed over the past 12 months. On the one hand, any year highlighted by a General Convention is going to be busier than most, and this was my first General Convention as a sitting bishop. It felt that the run-up to Salt Lake, the two weeks there, and the weeks immediately following, were white-hot with activity. Adding to this the round of ordinations, meetings of governing bodies, pastoral demands, visitations, a foreign mission trip, the move of our offices back to the Cathedral, and significant staff changes, it feels in the end that the year has been anything but restful. On the other hand, there were some very clear moments of peace: for the first time in years, I made a retreat during Holy Week, joining with the Benedictine brothers of Mount Saviour in upstate New York. There were other times of rest, away with my family, and even an occasional weekend! There is daily Morning Prayer with Betsy. And, as odd as it sounds, there are often times of rest on Sundays; as I drive to a visitation early in the morning, sometimes through the western Pennsylvania countryside, I am reminded of how blessed I am to be alive, and to be here!

Our three strategic priorities remain the same: Public Gospel, Missional Communities, and Leadership Formation. I think we are making progress in all three.

The Strategic Task Force 2.0 essentially morphed into an apostolic forum – the Listening Committee. This band of questioners visited all of our parishes, and I have received a detailed report on each interview. There are well over 200 efforts reaching out through our parishes to convey the love of Jesus Christ beyond their walls. These show we certainly have the capacity to extend the hands of the Lord into the world. Specific efforts to do this together as a diocese are becoming more common, such as the huge outpouring of support demonstrated by the women of the diocese for Jeremiah's Place in January, and the multiplication of “Ashes to Go” among a number of parishes at the beginning of Lent. I am very grateful to the Reverend Canon Cathy Brall for her oversight in both of these efforts, and for the Reverend Lou Hays, Sue DeWalt, and Bob Johnston in keeping the ball moving for the Listening Committee.

The Listening Committee showed us that most of our congregations are excited about their life together. As I go about the diocese, I see that people are simply more relaxed, confident and happy, that they are talking to each other and praying for one another, that they are less focused on the past and more hopeful about the future. Parishes are talking to one another about their mission, exchanging ideas, and exploring ways to cooperate. The number of parishes taking advantage of grants available through the Growth Fund and Advancement Society has been steadily increasing, and many congregations applied for and received mission grants through the 2014 budget, totaling over \$30,000.

I am finding as well a renewed interest in formation. Sometimes this can be as basic as discovering and sharing “best practices” for bringing people into our churches and helping them find their place. In September, St. Paul's in Mount Lebanon hosted a gathering to hear from Mary Parmer and to explore “Invite – Welcome – Connect.” Nearly 30 parishes participated, with attendance well over 100. I have

heard ongoing excitement about the results, and a widespread desire to follow up. I have also seen evidence of an increasing hunger for deeper formation in the Christian faith across all of our communities.

I am particularly concerned that we seize this present opportunity. Our churches will not succeed in becoming fully equipped for mission if our people are not deeply formed in Christ. This formation needs to take place on all levels of the church, from our children and youth to our seniors, all candidates for ordination, and most importantly, the leadership of parishes. To this end, Canon Jay Geisler and I have been laying the groundwork for an extensive partnership with Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. In the fall of 2014, we offered a course entitled “The Anglican Way,” an introduction to Anglican history, theology and practice. About seven students enrolled. By contrast, this fall we are teaching a class called “Worship as Pastoral Care,” which has attracted double the number. Recent conversations with the new president, Dr. David Esterline, have shown me that PTS will be an invaluable resource as we build a program of formation to train both lay and ordained leaders for mission.

This will be helped by the recent appointment of the Rev. Canon Dr. Cathy Brall as Director of Field Education at PTS. I am sad to lose Canon Cathy, who has been so valuable a member of my staff for the last two years. Her gifts in mentoring those recently ordained, helping small parishes become stronger, her administrative gifts, her deep love of the Lord, and her capacity for analytical and strategic thinking have been wonderful contributions to the life of this diocese. However, in her new role she will be an important stakeholder on our behalf in the day-to-day life of PTS, which will help us greatly as the specific outlines of our partnership begin to emerge. And while this relationship with PTS grows, Canon Jay continues to work on our behalf with seminarians at Trinity School for Ministry.

Our diocese has been blessed this year with an increase in the number of new clergy eager to work among you. I ordained John Mark Feuerstein and Lorena Ringle as vocational deacons, and Dan Isadore and Garrett Yates as transitional deacons, God willing, to be ordained as priests in the coming year. I ordained Bert Daly, Howard Gillette, and Frank Yesko to the priesthood, as well as ordaining Wally LaLonde as deacon then priest. Sadly for us, Wally soon accepted a call to New Mexico, resulting in the departure of two LaLondes – Wally and Kathy. However, in this past year we also warmly welcomed T.J. Freeman to Calvary Church and Nancy Threadgill to St. Mark’s, Johnstown.

Beyond our immediate borders, I see the foreign mission efforts of this diocese continuing to expand. In April, Dr. Mark Guy, Canon Jay Geisler and I visited northeast Uganda and conducted several workshops on alcohol addiction and recovery. Several parishes in our diocese already have mission commitments to that country, and I am hopeful that these ongoing efforts, as well as the work that Jay, Mark and I did through the good offices of Pilgrim Africa, will help us build further bridges to the Church in East Africa. However, we can also find plenty of opportunities for ministering to addiction closer to home. In September, Jay organized an overnight retreat for clergy on the topic of addiction in conjunction with the Diocese of Northwestern Pennsylvania. Both Bishop Rowe and I attended. It was a great success, and I am hopeful this may become an annual event. On a similar front, I have agreed to join the board of the Foundation of HOPE as the representative of Christian Associates of Southwest Pennsylvania. This ministry provides chaplaincies to our local jails and pastoral care to those who have been released.

As I near the end of this report, I wish to say a word about General Convention. You have every reason to be proud of your deputies. The entire deputation worked diligently, for long hours, over two weeks with scarcely a break. In several instances, they made a difference for the good in emerging legislation. Our meetings together at the end of every day were a chance to review the business of the day, talk over our disagreements, be edified by each other’s specific knowledge and insight, and simply to enjoy one another’s fellowship. To my mind, our most significant action was to begin the process for the revision of the Book of Common Prayer. This can be a long, complex, and difficult journey. I personally hope we

will be very deliberate as we walk this road, and I'm grateful that the Presiding Bishop and the President of the House of Deputies have appointed me to the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music for the coming triennium.

In closing, I want to give thanks for all the people who work hard to support my ministry as your Bishop, especially my staff. I have already noted one change in the roster with Cathy Brall's departure, and there have been others. Our Archdeacon, the Venerable Jean Chess, stepped down in July after more than a year of dedicated service. Her hard work as Director of Administration spread across a bewildering number and variety of tasks. I am particularly grateful for her supervision of our move back to the Cathedral, a project that was accomplished on time and under budget; she worked closely with two particular angels who provided oversight of construction and design, Jean Adams of Calvary and El Vines of Saint Paul's, Mount Lebanon. For their hard work in getting us out of Monroeville and into Trinity, my entire staff deserves a huge round of applause. Jean has been replaced as Director of Administration by the Rev. Canon Ted Babcock, formerly Canon to the Ordinary in the Diocese of Central Pennsylvania. Ted is already proving to be hugely helpful to me and has also accepted the position of priest-in-charge at St. Stephen's, McKeesport. Brent Hansen, having served faithfully as the coordinator for the Pittsburgh Youth Initiative, will take up other work beginning in January. Brent has taken wonderful care of so many of our young people over the past few years, and I have been blessed in getting to know him. I look forward to working with him in other ways in the years to come. The finance office continues to run with stellar efficiency under the guidance of our treasurer, Kathi Workman, and our financial and property assistant, Marlene Rihn. Kathi and Marlene are a formidable team, and are constantly looking out for me. I'm grateful to Dr. Joan Gundersen for her careful stewardship of the archives, especially during and after the move. I am able to communicate beyond the walls of my office mainly through the grace and competence of Rich Creehan and Andy Muhl. Canon Jay Geisler is my valuable assistant and advisor in many matters of formation; and Canon Scott Quinn continues to bless us all as Canon Pastor, at the same time as he takes up full-time ministry as Interim Dean of the Cathedral. Finally, I'm grateful for my executive assistant, Judi Rogers, who keeps my life in some semblance of order, and does so with grace and patience.

As we approach the celebration of 150 years as a diocese, may we always ask God for the grace to serve Him with renewed passion and dedication, that our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in all that we say and do, and our witness invite many others to know Him and love Him.

Faithfully your bishop,
+Dorsey

Statistics for September 1, 2014 – August 31, 2015

Episcopal Visitations	36	Marriages	1
Confirmations	52	Burials	0
Receptions	17	Ordinations	9 (Order of Deacon 5; Order of Priest 4)
Baptisms	3	Renewal of Vows	1