



Church Life!

The Magazine of the Episcopal Diocese of Ohio

WINTER 2009



What's Inside?

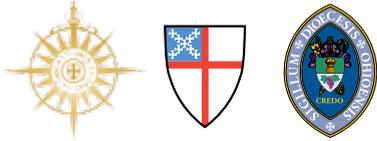
- Mission Work Heads Diocesan Convention
- Winter Convocation
- Feeding the 5,000
- Something in the Water
- Hard Times at Home

ChurchLife!

The Magazine of the Episcopal Diocese of Ohio

Vol. 113, No. 4, Winter 2009

The Episcopal Church



In the Anglican Communion

A global community of over 80 million members in 44 regional and national member churches.

The Most Rev. Rowan Williams,
Archbishop of Canterbury

In the United States

A community of more than 2 million members in 110 dioceses in the Americas and abroad.

Established 1789.
The Most Rev. Katharine Jefferts Schori,
Presiding Bishop

In the Diocese of Ohio

A community of 18,727 baptized members in 95 parishes in the northern 48 counties of the State of Ohio.
Established 1817.

Bishop of Ohio

The Rt. Rev. Mark Hollingsworth, Jr.

ChurchLife!

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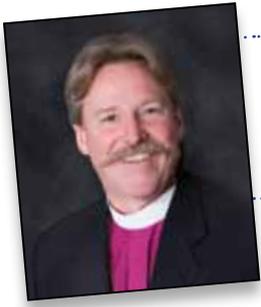
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Front Cover: Pictures from the mission work day at the 193rd Annual Convention of the Diocese of Ohio.

Photos by Chris Holley-Starling and Joseph Ferline



FIRST COMES PRAYER

ON THE FIRST DAY OF Convention, one hundred fifty of us, representing fifty congregations, gathered here at Trinity Commons to give ourselves to God in the service of others at a number of sites around this city. Thanks to the Canon for Mission Mark Robinson's planning and guidance, together we were the hands of Christ ministering to God's beloved.

That is the kind of giving that builds the church. Sacrificial giving, the spiritual surrender of self to God that we proclaim in our diocesan mission statement, is a comprehensive act. It is carried out in our service of others, in our financial giving to parish and diocese, in our participation in the life of the church, in our leadership as Christians in the world, and in our prayer. It is this last, giving ourselves to prayer, that I want to focus on.

In Matthew 9:38, Jesus tells the disciples how to give themselves in response to the great needs of the world. "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest." In this story, the first act of giving ourselves to God is prayer. "Ask the Lord." My image of this scene is that Jesus expected the disciples to do just that. Not to wait for him to pray on their behalf, nor to go home and kneel alone in prayer, but to launch right in together, in that very moment.

Jesus knew, doubtless from his own prayer discipline, that asking God to send out laborers would itself transform the disciples' own labor. There is some evidence that this didn't come easily to the disciples. Prayer doesn't appear to have been the default response to the considerable challenges of their lives and ministries. Remember how they reacted to the hunger of the multitudes and the storm at sea. It was not with prayer.

There is similar evidence that this sort of prayer doesn't come that easily to all Episcopalians. We pray in church, or go along with what is being prayed on our behalf, and we "say our prayers" privately, with varying degrees of discipline. But many of us struggle to pray with one another for the everyday concerns and needs of our and each other's lives, and for the things we either fear or yearn for.

Twenty years ago a colleague and I started a monthly Saturday morning men's group in the parish where I served as rector. We had a dozen or more faithful participants, guys whom I had watched white knuckling it through church on the average Sunday, who rarely said aloud the word "God" unless it was followed by "damn it." Some

months into our meetings, one of them became ill and was hospitalized. When he recovered, he reported to the group at our monthly meeting how calm he had been in the hospital, and how he had felt our prayers for him. A few minutes later, another member of the group offered thanks for our companion's recovery, and quite awkwardly confessed that he, in fact, had not been praying for him. I noticed that somewhat self-consciously heads were nodding all around the circle. It was in fact a general confession.

The man who had been ill was not hurt by this; the comfort and confidence he felt in the hospital had been genuine. But together they began to face in a new way both their limited experience with prayer and their common reticence to give themselves to it.

Their confession reminded me of Annie Dillard's description in *Teaching a Stone to Talk* of Christians' general lack of consciousness about and confidence in the power that Jesus said can bind and loose on earth and in heaven. She writes:

"On the whole, I do not find Christians, outside of the catacombs, sufficiently sensible of conditions. Does anyone have the foggiest idea what sort of power we so blithely invoke?"

"Or, as I suspect, does no one believe a word of it? The churches are children playing on the floor with their chemistry sets, mixing up a batch of TNT to kill a Sunday morning. It is madness to wear ladies' straw hats and velvet hats to church; we should all be wearing crash helmets. Ushers should issue life preservers and signal flares; they should lash us to our pews. For the sleeping god may wake someday and take offense, or the waking god may draw us out to where we can never return."

Crash helmets, life preservers, and signal flares. Being drawn out by the "waking god" to where we can never return. That is the church I want to serve. A church that gives itself to the power of God's love in ways that change everyone it touches—the members, the community, the beloved of God it serves, the world. And I am persuaded continually that it begins with our giving ourselves to God in prayer. "Ask," instructs Jesus. "Get together and ask together."

Gratefully,

The Rt. Rev. Mark Hollingsworth, Jr.
Bishop of Ohio

MISSION WORK HEADS DIOCESAN CONVENTION

PHOTOS BY CHRIS HOLLEY-STARLING

THE 193RD CONVENTION OF THE DIOCESE OF Ohio began with a blessing, a prayer, and a sending forth of the disciples. Instead of the usual day and a half business meeting that has characterized convention for years, the Rev. Mark Robinson, canon for mission, and Bishop Hollingsworth decided the first day of Convention should focus on serving others rather than ourselves. With that in mind, the idea for “Be the Hands of Christ” was born. All delegates to Convention and anyone else who wanted to join in were invited to sign up for an afternoon of service in the Cleveland community. Fourteen work sites were selected and their representatives agreed to transport and oversee the work of volunteers. Bishop Hollingsworth sent the group off at 12:30 P.M. with a prayer and a blessing, and over 150 people from 50 parishes fanned out across Cleveland to rake leaves, make blankets, paint, repair and tear down, put together food baskets, talk, listen, and do whatever else needed doing. The groups returned to the cathedral at 5:00 P.M. for a simple soup, bread, and salad dinner and table discussions about their workday. Participants were also asked to fill out a questionnaire about their experiences. Most expressed enthusiasm and pleasure about the design of Convention.

“This is exactly what we need to do more of in the community,” said one worker.

Commissioning workers to “Be the Hands of Christ.”



Clergy new to the diocese, clergy in new positions, seminarians, and deacon postulants.

“I loved it! I had doubts that we could get all of the business [of Convention] done in one day, but I must say that the bishop moved the Convention along in a wonderfully orderly manner.”

But another participant said, “I think Convention is the wrong venue for these sorts of projects. This is not what parishes elect and fund delegates to do. As Ecclesiastes says, ‘To everything there is a season and a time to every purpose under Heaven.’ Convention is not the time or season for these projects.”

The design of Convention this year was also a test of whether the diocese could complete its business in one day. In a year in which there were few resolutions and changes to the constitutions and canons, and none very controversial, it was relatively easy to accomplish a one-day business meeting, but it did come at a price.

Few committee and commission reports were given publicly, and there were no PowerPoint presentations, videos, or pictures. Everything was done the old-fashioned way—using the Convention Handbook—which meant that amendments to the resolutions and election results could not be posted on screens for everyone to see. In past years, reports from various commissions and committees, along with PowerPoint presentations, have taken up much of the Convention time. In a year when diocesan resources are scarcer and the church tries to model how we can do as much or more with less, the

choice this year to omit expensive screens and cameras was largely financial, with a savings of about \$10,000. Trinity Cathedral is particularly expensive for visual displays, because screens must be placed on three sides to account for the delegates sitting in the transepts.

Next year's Convention will be held in Canton.

Resolutions Passed With Little Discussion

Saturday morning began with taking the first ballot and was then followed by Convention Eucharist and the Episcopal Address. Delegates to this year's Convention passed resolutions on clergy compensation for 2010, which remains unchanged from that passed for 2009. Convention also passed a resolution acknowledging the closure of St. Andrew's, Canfield; Grace Church, Galion; and Trinity Church, Bryan, while expressing its deep appreciation to the laity and clergy for their years of faithful service to God and their communities.

Convention affirmed the charter for Lifelong Christian Formation, which was passed by General Convention last summer (see resolutions on the diocesan website at www.dohio.org).

Delegates follow along in the handbook at Convention.



org/convention). A resolution was also passed asking the Governor of Ohio and the legislature of Ohio to adopt legislation imposing a moratorium on the use of capital punishment.

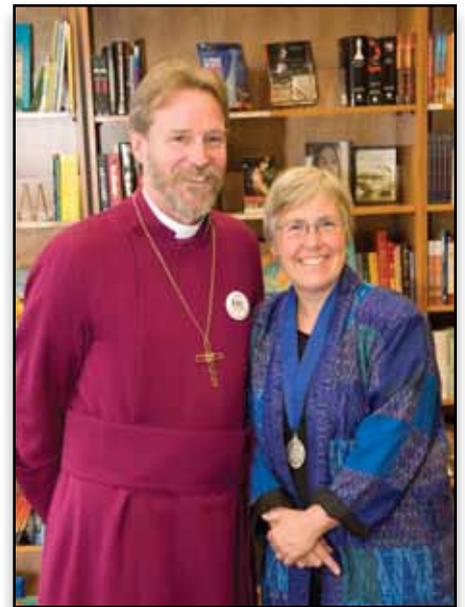
Convention also accepted the recommendation of the Commission on Global and Domestic Mission to explore diocesan partnerships with the Dioceses of Tanga and Belize.

Finally, delegates passed a resolution remembering with gratitude the life and work of the late Rt. Rev. John Burt, eighth bishop of Ohio, who died October 20 at his home in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. Bishop Burt was bishop of Ohio from 1967 through 1984.

Changes to the Constitutions and Canons

Convention passed a proposed amendment to the constitution, which requires representatives to the Ohio Council of Churches be the executive of a judicatory. For the Diocese of Ohio that means the bishop or someone the bishop appoints will represent the diocese. This constitutional change is the result of a change in the Ohio Council of Churches' bylaws requesting that the chief executive represent the various judicatories at OCC events.

Two significant changes were made to the canons. The first involved the method of assessing parishes, which has three major provisions: Previously assessments were based on a graduated rate system ranging from 10% to 16% of a Parish's Normal



Bishop Hollingsworth awarded the Bishop's Medal to Katherine Pinard.

Operating Income (NOI). Because of the mechanics of calculating the NOI, it is difficult for many parishes to easily calculate and accurately estimate their monthly assessment. The new canon states that assessments will be based on the Normal Operating Expenses (NOE) of a parish. The effect of using NOE as the basis of assessments means funds spent for the diocesan assessment or local outreach expenses, as well as any diocesan assistance used to support a parish's operating budget will be excluded. Secondly, the canon also relaxes the consequences for non-compliance. Any parish in arrears will retain seat and voice but will still forfeit their lay representation vote. For lay delegates to vote at Convention, a parish must have paid all of its diocesan assessments due for all of January through June of the current year and all previous years not later than 30 days before Convention. Thirdly, the change in the cost of assessments is, for most parishes, revenue neutral. You can find the cost of your assessment

online at www.dohio.org/convention under Convention Documents.

Establishment of Mission Areas

The other major canonical change is the establishment of mission areas, which will replace deaneries as the primary subdiocesan structure. Their creation was the culmination of a process arising from one of the Mission Strategy Task Force's recommendations to Diocesan Council to establish a Deanery Review Committee to research, develop, and propose a more effective model for collaborative mission and ministry among groups of local parishes.

Recognizing that the deanery structure has not been successful in promoting collaboration of parishes for mission and ministry work, with the notable exception of the Episcopal Church Women and Clericus, the committee proposed reducing the current ten regional deaneries of the diocese into eight mission areas. These mission areas have been

The Rev. Daniel Orr speaks about the Mission Area canonical change.



established along natural geographic divisions where possible, and each includes a critical mass of congregations and clergy.

The name shift also better reflects the new purpose. The structure is designed to facilitate mission, and the churches in a mission area will share a collective responsibility to represent the Episcopal Church and serve the entire area within their boundaries, not just their local communities.

The new structure also creates the possibility for two or more congregations to form a voluntary mission partnership, and those congregations will be eligible to apply for grant money that is specifically earmarked for support of such collaborative ministries.

It is hoped that the new structure will encourage and improve communication at all levels of our common life that are necessary for us to be good stewards of our resources and faithfully minister to those around us in more effective ways.

Mission Area Councils will be formed to encourage relationships to develop between congregations, to foster collaborative ministry and to serve as a communications channel between the congregations and different diocesan entities, such as the Diocesan Council, the Bishop's staff and Episcopal Community Services.

The new mission areas replacing the deaneries are: Central East, Cuyahoga, North Central, Northeast, South Central, Summit, West, and Youngstown. In the future pre-convention meetings will be held in the various mission areas, and each mission area will elect a dean and a representative to Diocesan Council.

Full descriptions of Convention actions are available on the website at www.dohio.org/convention. The business of the day was completed by 3:40 in the afternoon.

ELECTION RESULTS

Diocesan Trustee

Roderick Adams, Jr.
(St. Andrew's, Cleveland)

Standing Committee

Sue Perkinson
(Church of Our Saviour, Akron)

The Rev. Evelyn Manzella
(St. James', Wooster)

Diocesan Council

Linda Martin
(Christ Church, Hudson)

Ernie Petrey
(St. Paul's, Cleveland Heights)

Rebecca Montague
(Grace Church, Sandusky)

The Rev. Howard Humphrey
(St. Martin's, Chagrin Falls)

The Rev. Ken Pepin
(St. Timothy's, Perrysburg)

Episcopal Community Services Development Council

Lorraine Angus
(Trinity Cathedral, Cleveland)

Cheryl Gray
(St. Martin's, Chagrin Falls)

Suzanne Palmer
(St. Timothy's, Macedonia)

The Rev. Kelly O'Connell
(St. Mark's, Toledo)

Cathedral Chapter

Pam O'Halloran
(St. Paul's, Cleveland Heights)

The Rev. Dan Schoonmaker
(St. Hubert's, Kirtland Hills)

EVANGELISM, WORKSHOPS HIGHLIGHTED AT WINTER CONVOCATION

HERE IS A TRUTH ABOUT THE DIOCESE OF OHIO and probably about most of the Episcopal Church, as well. We know that living our life with faith in Jesus Christ and living that faith out in the life of the Episcopal Church is great. We know, too, that we really want to share it with others, but something stops us from doing that. [This convocation] “is a fresh way to discover how to share your faith in a way that is genuinely exciting and fun. If you’ve ever wanted to share your faith with others, this will help you do that,” said Brad Purdom, Canon for Congregations, who is designing the Winter Convocation.

The second Winter Convocation will once again be held in Perrysburg, but with a somewhat reconfigured program. The theme is evangelism, but it offers Episcopalians some very practical advice about what evangelism is and isn’t and how even we Episcopalians can practice faith sharing in ways we never dreamed.

The event begins Friday, February 5, at 5 P.M. at the Holiday Inn in Perrysburg, with a reception around the pool, then music and worship with our assisting bishop, the Rt. Rev. David Bowman. It continues Saturday, February 6, through 4 P.M.

Saturday begins with a forum led by Martha Grace Reese in which she will discuss her book, *Unbinding the Gospel*, and her research. Reese, an ordained Disciples of Christ minister, initiated and provided leadership for five major Lilly Endowment Grants, all focused on congregational vitality, spiritual leadership, transformation, and evangelism in mainline congregations.

Talking and Praying Differently

Reese said she has found that when groups begin studying *Unbinding the Gospel* together, they start talking about their faith in a very different way from what usually is discussed in congregations, and they are able to form a much more powerful community in their

parishes. People also start praying more in different ways, and they have a greater sense of forming a relationship with a very imminent God. And finally, people involved in this process begin to think about what it might be like for those who are not Christians, who don’t have Christ in their lives.

“I expect that we will look around the room and see all these Episcopalians and decide, ‘We can do this! We don’t have to do something that is embarrassing or rude.

It is *not* better to have gall bladder surgery than to spread the Gospel. And we don’t have to look or act like Tammy Faye Bakker.”

Reese has much to tell us about the transformation of mainline churches and the results of her extensive research. She will continue the conversation in her workshop, “Implementing *Unbinding the Gospel*” for clergy and lay leaders about best practices in parish implementation.

Other afternoon workshops include: Effective Planning for Mission and Growth Using Percept; the 3 Colors of Your Spirituality: a new NCD Resource for Passionate Spirituality; the Role of the Vestry as Leaders in the Church; Caring for the Whole Person: Health Ministries in our Parishes; Life Giving Parish Stewardship; Beginning and Maximizing a Faithful Parish Endowment; What Is a Deacon and What Does a Deacon Do? Health Care in America; Q and A on the New Assessment Process and How Diocesan Audit Teams Can Help Your Parish; Communicating Effectively with Your Parish and Community; Resources for Faith Formation in the Parish; and All of God’s People: Diversity in the Church.

The cost for the conference is \$39 per person if registered and paid before January 21, 2010, and \$49 per person after January 21, with a maximum payment of \$100 per family. For children ages 3 through 12, the cost is \$10.

More information will be mailed out in December and will be available on the diocesan website www.dohio.org.



Martha Grace Reese, author of *Unbinding the Gospel*, will speak and hold a workshop at Winter Convocation.

FEEDING THE 5,000: CHURCH COLLABORATIONS IN THE DIOCESE OF OHIO

BY LINDA KINSEY

THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN NON-DENOMINATIONAL “megachurches” and the Episcopal Church are obvious to most observers. Yet in at least two instances in the Diocese of Ohio, megachurches and Episcopal parishes have joined forces in one common goal: to serve Christ in all people. The results have been nothing short of dramatic.

Some might even say miraculous.

Sharing the spotlight in this story of hope is Grace Episcopal Church in inner-city Mansfield, where as many as 300,000 people will have been fed through its food pantry by year’s end. That’s with an average church attendance of just 85.

In Toledo, Trinity Episcopal Church, has helped breathe new life into a vacant downtown restaurant, whose profits will help feed and serve the homeless.

Both Grace’s food program and Trinity’s restaurant have benefited greatly from the hand-in-hand relationship that both parishes have formed with nearby megachurches.

Feeding the 5,000-plus

The Rev. Joe Ashby, rector of Grace Church, describes his parish’s collaboration with Crossroads Community Church, a non-denominational megachurch, as “incredible.”

Grace’s food pantry was in its eighth year of operation when Crossroads Church first approached Ashby.

Darlene Rudrick, missions coordinator for the 2,000-member Crossroads Church, said it was Grace’s well-run food program that first drew her interest.

“People were doing things right and doing things well,” she said. “Our strategy is to look for ways to partner with others on programs that are already in operation. We don’t need to reinvent the wheel.”

She said when she visited Grace Church’s food program for the first time, she “was taken with how they are truly being the hands of Christ.”

Crossroads then began gathering food, household cleaners, and school supplies to help with Grace’s August distribution, and volunteers began popping up at the weekly Thursday morning distribution.

“It’s a very Christ-centered mission,” Rudrick said, adding that, “Our liturgy and traditions are a little different, but that shouldn’t divide us. It should unite us.”

That blending of traditions has aided in Grace’s mission to provide a 24-hour supply of food for every family of four. But along with food, the volunteers offer some genuine hospitality.

“When people come,” Ashby said, “they find it’s a happy place to be.”

“When you come in the door, you get a bag with cookies. We go through 300 cups of coffee,” Ashby noted. If it’s someone’s birthday, it’s common for everyone to break out in a chorus of “Happy Birthday,” he said.

The success of the program can be attributed, in part, to plenty of hard work, which about 70 people provide. Volunteers are from various agencies in town, including Grace and Crossroads. And a significant portion of the volunteers are those who benefit from the program itself.

Volunteers are so diverse that a business executive may work along side a homeless person, Ashby said.

No matter who shows up, there’s plenty to do. Tuesdays are especially busy, when the large food trucks pull up to the church and unload 6 to 8 tons of food each month. About 90 percent of the food comes from the Cleveland Food Bank. Kroger’s and Meijer’s grocery stores and Panera’s restaurant also generously donate.

In giving we receive

While countless individuals have benefited from Grace’s food program, the parish itself has reaped some rewards, as well, according to Ashby.

“It’s what has kept Grace going. It’s the one thing that

“What the church may lack in numbers, it makes up for in spirit and service to the community.”

The Rev. Joe Ashby

keeps us all together,” he said.

In fact, Grace has experienced difficult times. “It has seen a significant decline in the last 10 years,” he said, but what the church may lack in numbers, it makes up for in spirit and service to the community.

“The people we serve are gifts to us, without which we couldn’t be who we are supposed to be,” Ashby said.

My brother’s keeper

Meanwhile, in downtown Toledo, “My Brother’s Place,” a restaurant next door to Trinity Episcopal Church, is working full tilt serving freshly prepared lunches to local business people and anyone who just wants to drop by.

But the plan is to take the profits and expand the non-profit services to aid Toledo’s inner-city poor.

“In the evenings,” said the Rev. Elizabeth Hoster, Trinity’s rector, “it will serve meals to people who cannot normally eat together. For example, if a family is homeless, and the father is in one shelter while the mother and kids are in another, they can enjoy a meal together in a safe place.

“We will also have rooms for meetings, parties, Bible studies, etc. For example, let’s say a young woman is in transitional housing, and her friends want to have a birthday party or baby shower, we can help. It’s another way of providing the radical hospitality that we promise in our mission statement.”

The restaurant, which opened this fall, has closed twice in the last 33 years and had remained closed since 2001.

But thanks to the Trinity Foundation, a group affiliated with the church, and Westgate Chapel, a megachurch, the eatery was given a new beginning—this time with the aid of a professional caterer who has

a clear vision for what the restaurant can become.

Getting started

Hoster said the plan is to use the restaurant space for non-profit purposes. As a starting point, the kitchen was renovated in the spring of 2008.

Just six months later, “Food for Thought,” a local non-profit agency, said it was interested in the space. “At the same time, they met Elizabeth Sorge (of Westgate Chapel), and they introduced her to us. We quickly found out that we all had the same mission, but it was Elizabeth and her friends who made it work. Elizabeth is the real visionary here,” said Hoster.

Sorge believes the partnership between Westgate Chapel and Trinity Episcopal Church is “an awesome thing from God, especially how we’ve worked together, and the commitment we all have.”

So far, the restaurant has done well, Sorge says. The community has embraced the idea, and as profits from the restaurant increase, new ventures will be taken on, including Monday night dinners for families and individuals who have no place to go.

Having Sorge enter the picture was fortuitous. As it turns out, she is a caterer and has the skills and expertise to run the restaurant. But there was the matter of where all the money would come from to get the restaurant up and operational.

Financial needs are met

Hoster calls the financing of My Brother’s Place “a true stone-soup



The Rev. Elizabeth Hoster leads servers at My Brother’s Place in prayer.

creation. Sorge and her husband did some personal financing. Trinity paid for some supplies and electrical upgrades that will stay permanently.”

What’s more, “Elizabeth, some workers and lots of friends from Westgate—particularly Greg Tillman, who is a master carpenter—put in hundreds of hours painting, sanding, staining, floor laying, you name it,” Hoster said.

In the end, there was very little financing that was needed, said Hoster, thanks to “the countless hours of sweat equity, as well as donations of money and equipment that members of Westgate put into this project.”

Meanwhile, Sorge has been able to employ one full-time person and two part-time people who live in shelters.

Hoster says the partnership between Trinity and Westgate and its outcome has been “a gift from God. The opportunities, the connections, volunteers, timing was an incredible recharging of our faith.

“In a project where the goal is to serve Christ in others and respect the dignity of every human being, we found that our common ground is endless.”

HOW DO YOU SOLVE THE PROBLEMS OF SHARED MINISTRY?

BY THE REV. JEFFREY J. BAKER, PRIEST-IN-CHARGE, ST. STEPHENS' SHARED MINISTRY

WELL, I'M SURE I DON'T KNOW HOW TO SOLVE the problems of shared ministry, but I have figured out a few things over the last couple years that I'd like to share with you. St. Stephens' Shared Ministry is located in East Liverpool and Steubenville—the only two St. Stephens' in the diocese. Picking the name was the easy part. The rest of the successes can be chalked up to vision, determination, and Providence.

Soon after Bishop Hollingsworth was consecrated, he made a visit to this relatively poor and isolated corner of the diocese. St. Stephen's, East Liverpool, Senior Warden Don Lowe had a frank conversation with the bishop, explaining the challenging environment on the fringe of the Ohio River. The demographics of the region had shifted from a solid industrial hard-working people to an abandoned workforce just trying to survive. The people here are indomitable and handle adversity with a quiet grace. They know the good old days are past, but they have roots here that run deep and have chosen to perse-

vere. All of their lives they have worked hard and loved God and each other and they are determined to continue to do so.

St. Stephen's, Steubenville, Senior Warden, Rick

Custer was also exploring new ways to do church. That conversation helped plant a seed in the Bishop's mind that would eventually bear fruit.

Bishop Hollingsworth and I had a conversation while I was in the ordination process about how sad he was to ordain several gifted people only to have to release them. Very few curacies are available to offer them the experience necessary to manage the demands of a parish after seminary. Nevertheless, I told the bishop I wanted to stay here. By reworking how Episcopal Community Services was structured and the amount of money seminarians receive, the bishop found some funds to supplement 'quasi-curacies' (my term, not his).

The package to pay an inexperienced clergy (not new to the workforce—I haven't been close to new for a long time) between the diocese and the two St. Stephens' became a reality.

The people here are indomitable and handle adversity with a quiet grace. They know the good old days are past, but they have roots here that run deep and have chosen to persevere.

Close to 200 people were served at the Good Shepherd Lunch on November 21.



Where to Start

Now I had a job but no idea where to start, so I started asking questions. My friend and mentor, the Rev. Evelyn Manzella, rector of St. James', Wooster, helped me immensely and in the process shored up my confidence. Bishop Bowman offered great advice as did the Rev. Pat Hanen, rector of New Life, Uniontown, and the Rev. Kelly Marshall, rector of St. James', Boardman—all of whom made a point of taking the new guy out to lunch. The Rev. Albert Jennings, rector of St. Timothy's, Macedonia, helped our Joint Vestry by mediating our visioning sessions in the middle of the



Steubenville parishioners serving dessert at the Good Shepherd Lunch in East Liverpool.

winter. And, the Rev. Alan James, canon to the ordinary, gave me a lot of confidence in my preaching when he offered this sage advice, “There’s always next week!”

Fresh Start (a program for new clergy) was particularly helpful in giving me the resources necessary to find the right people to ask for help. I realized I didn’t need to reinvent the wheel, and there are a lot of great people in this diocese to ask for help. I have done very little by myself—I’m sure Dorothy Miller (one of my parishioners who likes to keep me in line) would agree. (Or she might argue that I don’t do anything!) Together we had countless conversations about how to mesh our gifts with our neighbors’ needs. By the way, we’re not done—we are engaged in the Natural Church Development (NCD) process to help us become better at what we do.

Still, even before we knew much about NCD, one of the first things that we discovered in this inventory process was that we have a lot to offer God’s kingdom here and now. By taking the focus of our attention off of ourselves and putting it on those who could really use our help, we

re-established our purpose. We began by starting a soup kitchen in East Liverpool—the more economically depressed of the two cities. (Once again, this was their idea.) East Liverpool had the kitchen and expertise, and Steubenville had some very generous people willing to travel a half-hour to feed people in another city.

Treat the Way We Want to be Treated

We named it the Good Shepherd Lunch and offered it to everyone once a month. We have limited resources so we started relatively small. The focus was not necessarily on how many people we could feed (though the need is staggering), but how we made each person feel as one of our guests. We continue to try to treat people the way we would like to be treated. We serve what we enjoy eating. We sit with our guests and engage them in real conversation. We try to make this part of their lives better. The Good Shepherd Lunch has grown from feeding twelve people when we started, to nearly 200 last month. That’s pretty good growth,

but it’s not what we are all about. Over the last couple years, we have established relationships with those in need, with each other in the Shared Ministry, and primarily, we have developed a better relationship with God by seeking and serving Christ in the other. These relationships are transformative and help us all grow as Christians. Our lunch has branched out to other ministries and everyone really has a good time participating.

Our Shared Ministry is still in its infancy—we don’t know what will become of it. We do know that by keeping an open mind and by trying to determine God’s will through conversation and prayer that we will continue to work hard, love God and each other, and do our best to be present with those in our midst who are in need. We are grateful for our blessings—an understanding and compassionate Bishop, and knowledgeable generous advice from others who have worked

By taking the focus of our attention off of ourselves and putting it on those who could really use our help, we re-established our purpose.

through some of the problems faced by Shared Ministries. Additionally, we are thankful for a decreasingly naïve priest, for hard working passionate parishioners who are determined to make a difference, and especially, for a loving God who can and does

augment even our smallest offerings into something beyond our imaginations.

All of this is a long-winded way of thanking my wonderful Bishop for his vision and these two fabulous parishes for taking a chance on me.

SOMETHING IN THE WATER

BY REBECCA WILSON

Will you continue in the apostle's teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers?

Will you persevere in resisting evil, and, whenever you fall into sin, repent and return to the Lord?

Will you proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ?

Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself?

Will you strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being?

I will, with God's help.

THERE'S SOMETHING IN THE WATER AT TRINITY Cathedral. Since the Very Rev. Tracey Lind arrived in 2000, the Cathedral has sponsored five people under the age of 35 for ordination. The Rev. Kurt Wiesner served six years at Trinity before being called as the rector of All Saints' Episcopal in Littleton, New Hampshire, while the Rev. Judith Alexis served three years as Trinity's curate and now serves Église de l'Épiphanie in Stamford, Connecticut. The Rev. Joy Cairns is now associate at Church of Our Saviour in Akron, the Rev. Vincent Black is Canon for Christian Formation at the Diocese of Ohio, and Audra Abt is in her final year of seminary at Bexley Hall.

Earlier this year, the Fund for Theological Education noticed this ordination boom and awarded Trinity one of its Culture of Call grants. This award recognizes the Cathedral as a "calling congregation"—a place that helps people listen for God's call in their lives. With the award, Trinity will undertake a project designed to formalize Trinity's culture of call and help more people participate in it.

The Fund noticed Trinity's success at raising young people up for ordination, but according to Lind, its culture of call is centered not in its priests and ordinands, but rather in the ministry of all of its baptized members. There truly is something in the water at Trinity.

"Baptism is the first ordination," says Lind, "and our ultimate authority for ministry in the world comes not from ordination to the priesthood, consecration as a

bishop, employment with the church, or approval by a committee. We are all called to discern how God wants us to serve the world as the priesthood of all believers."

Adam Spencer, Trinity's intern, recently preached an Evensong homily in which he put it this way:

"...God's calling isn't just for the clergy. We need to banish that idea completely. It creates a hierarchy of vocation: Sure, we all have careers and passions and hobbies, but the clergy—they get CALLED. Calling isn't just for the pious or holy. Calling happens to all of us every moment of every day. God names us and invokes our future in every single moment of existence. In process theology, God offers us all of our possible futures and God also offers us what the process theologians call 'lures.' Think of a crooked finger inviting us forward. We can freely choose from the multitude of futures available to us, but God calls us to choose that future which would make

us whole. To move us towards the future that entails harmony and beauty and meaning."

How does a church help its people—lay and ordained—find the future that God is calling them to live? The Fund has identified that congregations with strong cultures of call, regardless of tradition and geography, share characteristics that benefit all of their members. These congregations are:

- **A good-enough home** to support the growth and development of people over time and life circumstance;

"Out of the economic crisis and the despair of our city, we have been blessed with an abundance of call."

The Very Rev. Tracey Lind

- **A place where something important is at stake** in the life of faith for individual people, for the communities of the world and for all creation;
- **A seat of resistance** to that which thwarts the fulfillment of God’s vision of justice, reconciliation and abundant life;
- **A site of interpretation** to make faithful sense of people’s lives in a world of nonsense.

“Trinity has always strived to embody these characteristics,” says Lind, “During this recession, however, both Cleveland and Trinity have become places where something even more important is at stake. Every week, I meet with congregation members and friends who have lost their jobs. Although many of them are frightened and upset, many are also yearning to reinvent themselves by discerning a new sense of vocation and ministry. Out of the economic crisis and the despair of our city, we have been blessed with an abundance of call.”

Together with Lind, Trinity vestry member John Church, retired superintendent at Polaris Career Center, and John Gordon, chaplain and associate professor of religion at Baldwin Wallace College, lead Trinity’s Culture of Call project. Its next phase will begin during Lent when a small group of congregation members will meet weekly to focus on ways for youth and adults to identify their gifts and talents, ask questions, reflect theologically, and find opportunities for individual and collective discernment.

“Our individual and collective lives of faith are bound up with the community where we live and worship,” says Church. “As we listen together for God’s call, some will

Bishop Hollingsworth with newly ordained deacons and newly received priest in June 2009.



be called to ordained ministry. Others will be called to new ways of serving in the world, while still others will find a renewed sense of ministry in the work they have already been given to do. Trinity is, in the words of the Fund, a good-enough home for all of these people.”

Trinity’s Call to Civic Ministry

The confluence of Trinity’s culture of call and Cleveland’s economic crisis has already resulted in a new call for Lind’s own civic ministry. In February 2009, Lind

“God’s calling isn’t just for the clergy. We need to banish that idea completely... Calling happens to all of us every moment of every day.”

Adam Spencer

wrote a column for the *Plain Dealer* advocating for an initiative called Sustainable Cleveland 2019, which has now been adopted by Cleveland Mayor Frank Jackson. The movement to reinvent Cleveland as a sustainable city aims to be complete by the time Cleveland marks the 50th anniversary of the fire

in the Cuyahoga River. It’s an audacious vision, Lind says, and one that will need the contribution of every Greater Cleveland resident.

“To realize the promise of Sustainable Cleveland 2019,” she asserts, “requires that we regard human talent and skill as our most important sustainable resources. We must strive to foster a culture of call not just at Trinity, but also across all of Greater Cleveland. We are beginning what we hope will be a resurgence of interest in vocational discernment across all faith traditions in our city.”

Even as Trinity Cathedral hopes to spark a metropolitan inter-faith movement to support Cleveland’s sustainability, it’s clear from another ordination boom of sorts that the congregation’s own culture of call is thriving. On All Saints Day, the Cathedral clergy baptized two adults and three children. There continues to be something in the water at Trinity.

Rebecca Wilson is a member of Church of Our Saviour, Akron, and Communications Consultant for Trinity Cathedral.



ECW NEWS NOTES

BY NANCY SHERWIN

GREETINGS AND BEST WISHES FOR A BLESSED Christmas! We all look with anticipation to the celebration of our Lord's birth, as we strive to keep Christ in this season, which has become so commercial. May a thoughtful and prayer-filled Advent help us make ready for the gift of Christ's birth.

The Episcopal Church Women are also making plans to be a vital part of the new Mission Areas, beginning in July 2010. Why that date? The ECW has enjoyed active deaneries for many years; so we will complete our deanery year 2009-2010, then "regroup" into new ECW Mission Areas. Meanwhile, there will be an ECW Representative on every Mission Area Council as they are formed throughout the diocese.

You'll notice that ECW has had a page in the last few issues of *ChurchLife!* The ECW thanks Martha Wright for incorporating our "News Notes" into *ChurchLife!* This is not only an economical move but will also enable more people in the Diocese to read about activities of the ECW.

We encourage women throughout the diocese to send their news to our "News Notes" editor, Hilary Nerby, either by e-mail (hnerby@roadrunner.com) or by snail mail to 10219 Andover Dr., Twinsburg, Ohio 44087.

Episcopal Church Women in Action

Women play a very active role in all parishes around the Diocese. In many cases they are known as the Episcopal Church Women (ECW); in others, they are the "Women of (your parish name here); in others they may not even have a special name, but in all cases, these women are very busy!

A few examples: Church of the Ascension, Lake-

SAVE THE DATE!

The Episcopal Church Women's Annual Meeting in 2010 will be held on Friday evening, April 30, at the McKinley Grand Hotel, Canton, and on Saturday, May 1, 2010, at St. Paul's, just a block away from the hotel. Young children and teens will be welcomed with their mothers. More details will come in the New Year.

wood; St. Timothy's, Macedonia; and Grace Church, Ravenna, are having "cookie walks" or cookie sales in December. It's a great way to purchase homemade cookies, with those purchases supporting ECW outreach projects in these parishes.

St. Paul's, Medina, held their St. Nicholas Tea, along with a craft show and sale, on Friday, December 4. And on Saturday, February 27, St. Thomas, Berea, will hold their Devonshire Tea.

For a number of years, a group of women at the Church of the Good Shepherd, Lyndhurst, hold monthly "Reflections"—studying and discussing a book with practical applications to their everyday lives.

Women are leading volunteers in their parishes' community meals, which are being held in more and more Episcopal churches.

See the accompanying article on the "Baby Bundles," which women from St. Paul's, Cleveland Heights; St. Hubert's, Kirtland Hills; and St. Timothy's, Massillon, have worked on together.

Many of the deanery ECWs select a specific outreach project each year. The Central East Deanery supports "Open M;" the Cleveland East Deanery makes 400 to 500 Easter flower tray favors each year for patients in the VA hospital, hospice and nursing homes; and the Youngstown Deanery women support the Second Harvest Food Bank.

The diocesan ECW also has a Hospice Care Committee. Recently, grants of \$75 each were given to three hospice associations: Valley Hospice in Rayland, Ohio; Hospice/Palliative Care of Greater Wayne County, and Wilson Memorial Hospital-Hospice in Sidney.

Christ Church, Shaker Heights, recently began a Community Meals program, but shortly thereafter a gas leak in the church's kitchen necessitated the replacement of most of their kitchen equipment. The diocesan ECW was able to make a \$1,250 gift from our Response to Crisis Fund to Christ Church toward the cost of their new kitchen equipment.

In addition, first year Seminarians receive grants from our Church Periodical Club (CPC) funds each year.

The ECW Book of Remembrance is a vehicle for individuals or ECW groups to memorialize or honor some-

one who has played a significant role in a parish. Names are inscribed in the Book of Remembrance, for which a minimum donation of \$5 is requested. These donations become a part of the Eliza Backus Endowment Fund, which pays travel expenses for ECW members. Additional information and forms may be obtained from Karen Stansbrey, 137 Parmelee Dr., Hudson, Ohio 44236.

Episcopal Church Women Help Honduran Mothers

Have you tried to buy diaper pins or baby shirts lately (not what are called “Onesies”)? And why would you? Mothers of newborns in Honduras do not use these one-piece body suits, nor do they use disposable diapers or even prefold cloth diapers. The women at St. Paul’s, Cleveland Heights, assisted by women from St. Hubert’s, Kirtland Hills, and St. Timothy’s, Massillon, have scoured local stores, the Internet, and manufacturers in order to gather the supplies for “Baby Bundles” for Central American Medical Outreach (CAMO). Sammy Dyer, from St. Paul’s, has a remarkable ministry with the inmates at the Marysville Prison for Women and has helped them develop a sewing project called the “Stitching Post.”

The women from Marysville are now helping the ECW Baby Bundle project by sewing the infant shirts and receiving blankets from material that Dyer delivers to them. Recently, a group of women gathered at St. Paul’s and assembled 103 Baby Bundles— two plain flat diapers, two shirts, baby soap, baby lotion, and a baby hairbrush, all folded up within the receiving blanket and secured with two diaper pins. The bundles were then delivered to CAMO’s USA Headquarters in Orrville.

Baby Bundles are assembled several times a year, as the necessary items are acquired.

A group of ECW members assembling Baby Bundles.



THREE STEPS TO TITHING

BY LAEL CARTER

EACH YEAR MORE AND MORE REQUESTS FOR GIFTS and contributions appear in our mail. Our parish and the Diocese are at the top of our list; many other organizations may also be worthwhile and merit our support. If, like me, you struggle with growing your giving, the following suggestions from the Stewardship Office of The Episcopal Church may help you.



1. Become a first fruits giver. Whenever you receive money, give thanks by giving something back to God. Don’t worry about how much. Just do this **FIRST**, before all your other spending.
2. Become a percentage giver. No matter how large or small, decide what percentage of your income you want to give to God and begin doing it.
3. Increase as you are able. Pray and listen. Talk it over with God so that God can help you decide when to take risks and when to play it safe.

A discipline that I find helpful is to tally annual expenditures for vacation, recreation, and dining out and compare those to your church giving and other support. Are you satisfied?

Lael Carter is the development officer on the diocesan staff. Lael can be reached at 216-774-0463 or lcarter@dohio.org.

HARD TIMES AT HOME

HOW OUR PARISHES CAN HELP THE UNEMPLOYED AND UNDEREMPLOYMENT IN THE DIOCESE OF OHIO

BY MAE PELSTER

“For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

—Romans 8:38

OHIOANS, AND THAT INCLUDES OUR PARISHIONERS throughout the Diocese of Ohio, are seeing a sharp surge of unemployment and underemployment reminiscent of the pre-World War II era as major Ohio businesses and industries close or downsize under the strain of economic pressures. Hardest hit, of course, are the auto workers centered in Toledo, Brookpark, Twinsburg, and Youngstown. Also affected are skilled workers, managers, and executives in companies where the lack of investment capital and decreased demand for high-tech electronics is resulting in massive layoffs at every corporate level. The trickle-down effect to surrounding communities, suppliers, and related businesses dependent on tax contributions of these businesses and their workers continues to grow. With credit markets frozen and banks in need of government intervention, even industries with healthy assets are wary of tapping into them until global markets stabilize, and they hesitate to hire new workers or rehire those they laid off. The promise of new jobs created by green technology is in its infancy, and for unskilled factory workers, retraining may be necessary, because their old jobs will never return.

Many of these problems aren't new, but the size and dimension of the problem crossing class and geographical demographics has not been seen for decades. For parishes

with a large number of retired workers, the situation is more stable, but even retirees may find their pension income reduced or at risk, leaving those who planned carefully for retirement in need of assistance with utility bills and other ongoing expenses.

Christ Church, Hudson, which hosts the community-wide program called Hudson Job Search—an ecumenical program especially for those who live or worship in Hudson—is experiencing a surge in demand. Lately, increasing numbers of people are showing up for the group's meetings on the first and third Monday evenings of the month as skilled, highly-educated middle managers and executives find themselves either out of a job or underemployed.

Problems for Older Workers

Many of these job seekers are older, and their salary, education, and experience can actually work against them as companies try to redesign corporate structure to create leaner budgets. Presenter Bill Homjak, a 42-year career veteran in Human Resources now serving his tenth year as a

Hudson Job Search Advisor, addressed this issue at a recent meeting. While companies perceive older workers as inflexible, lacking technological skills, bringing with them a corporate mentality, having difficulty working for a younger boss, and expecting higher salaries, Homjak pointed out that older workers bring extensive

Consider whether you are in a position to offer temporary housing ... to people who are losing their homes or check to see if lower-cost motels in the community are housing families and see what your parish can do to help them.

experience, sound judgment, and excellent decision-making skills. He urged job seekers to emphasize their personal and leadership skills, their strong work ethics, commitment to company goals, and credibility with key stakeholders. He also noted that older workers, despite often having pre-existing medical conditions, generally take fewer sick days than do younger employees.

Hudson Job Search (www.hudsonjs.org) is a non-denominational Christian organization started in 1982 by a group of concerned residents to provide confidential outplacement services to the Hudson community. They can help organize a focused job search, set goals, develop a resume and cover letter, research positions and companies, give networking advice, help with interviewing skills and preparation, negotiate compensation, and close the offer. The key point Homjak made was the importance of networking when it comes to finding a job, because 70% to 85% of job seekers find their new position by networking. This is where the church can help.

“The church can treat the economic downturn just like any other catastrophe. It can coordinate relief efforts and develop networking to help people find jobs,” said one participant whose parish has served the poor of its community long before the economic downturn began.

A number of parishes are pooling their human resources to help job seekers among their membership and their community to connect with work. One networking tool can be the diocesan or church website. The Diocese of Upper South Carolina has started a job search blog on their website where people can view current job openings the diocese has to offer, post their resumes, and link to various community job search engines. For a parish church whose people may not be able to provide Internet help, a simple poster board where seekers can connect may be a low-tech answer to prayer.

Immediate Need

The need is immediate. Our parishes that operate food pantries are seeing requests for aid increase drastically—now from those who have been used to giving to the food pantries rather than using them. Limited church funds make it difficult for small parishes to cope with the demand for bus tickets, food cards, and gas cards. Many need help finding money for security deposits to get families losing their homes into apartments, help in making mortgage payments, or paying utility bills. For those in a secure position, the willingness to use their credit card to help stricken families secure a rental truck and save their belongings can be a lifesaver. (It takes a credit card to rent a truck as a security deposit and for a

WEBSITES THAT OFFER JOB SEARCH HELP

Career Center at the Maple Heights Branch of the Cuyahoga County Library:

Call (216) 475-2225 for an appointment with a counselor.

www.cuyahogalibrary.org/careerexpert.aspx

Career Counseling, Employment, and Training Services

www.cuyahogalibrary.org/CareerBackPage.aspx?id=1755

Ohio One-stop Map: This county by county directory points people to centrally located job search government offices that help guide people through the process of finding work.

jfs.ohio.gov/workforce/jobseekers/onestopmap.stm

Ohio Means Job Search Engine: An excellent search engine that combines several other job search sites in one place.

ohiomeansjobs.com/omj/

Job Search Banks:

Monster.com

Careerbuilder.com

Indeed.com

www.job-search-engine.com

Ohio Government Jobs Search Engine:

agency.governmentjobs.com/ohio/default.cfm

Educator Jobs:

www.ode.state.oh.us/GD/Templates/Pages/ODE/ODEDetail.aspx?Page=3&TopicRelationID=522&Content=64824

Employer Locator:

www.acinet.org/acinet/employerlocator/employerlocator.asp

Social Net Working Site: LINKED IN is a place to connect with professionals, post resumes, study the job market, and learn whom to contact at companies of interest.

www.linkedin.com

family in bankruptcy that has lost its credit privileges, this help can be critical.) One parish in the Toledo area prayerfully committed themselves to managing an apartment building to offer housing to thirty-two otherwise homeless individuals.

Of course, no one parish can do everything; however, several ideas are worth noting:

Offer a potluck supper once a week where the church provides the main dish with games, videos, or homework help for the children and prayer and conversation for the adults.

Offer hours when members and others can come and use the Internet for job searching. Perhaps computer savvy parishioners might consider volunteering their time to help job-seekers fill out online applications.

Ask local agencies to offer debt reduction and housing loss strategy sessions at the church. Make it an ecumenical effort.

Consider whether you are in a position to offer temporary housing (in three-month increments) to people who are losing their homes or check to see if lower-cost motels in the community are housing families and see what your parish can do to help them.

Reprogram budgeted money into an emergency aid fund to help with utility and house payments for parishioners.

Sometimes, in-depth analysis of a family's problems can allow a parish to help in other ways, too. For example, one parish that runs a food pantry discovered that some of the people coming to them for aid were so used to popping through the drive-through of a fast-food restaurant that they didn't know how to use the basic supplies that a food pantry gives out. The parish passed out crock-pots, recipes, and made simple cooking lessons available. This parish is also helping to find state funds for pre-school scholarships to help unemployed parents pay for daycare while they look for work.

The solutions, however, are not simply economic. Clergy are finding that many people are reluctant to admit their need. Mutual embarrassment about the situation and an unspoken code of "don't ask, don't tell" keep people from getting help. In such a situation, clergy can ask intentionally, "How's the job going?" when they shake hands at the door after services. Here is where greeters and church leaders and clergy can help by opening up the topic as they shake hands and write

the Prayers of the People and sermons. For those who wish to keep their situation private, a number of clergy mentioned the possibility of being added to the priest's own prayer list.

One priest who was approached by a very occasional church-goer for money struck a bargain with his petitioner. In the priest's estimation, his major role in serving the church of Christ is to draw people into a closer relationship with God. So he told the man that the money wasn't a gift; he expected to be paid back. He asked him to attend church one Sunday for every dol-

lar he received. As a relationship grew between the man and God, the man's relationship with the people of the parish grew, too. Before long, he was being offered opportunities to work toward independence once more.

"We [can] do what the church does best. To take care of each other, not instill fear, but to respond in a healthful way," said one priest. Our churches must become for people in need the sanctuaries they are meant to be. People in crisis need to know that they are loved and cared for by

God and by their communities.

Most important of all is prayer, individually and in community, for those who have become victims of an economy gone bad. While we hope for better times, there are many ways in which members of the Diocese of Ohio may reach out to help those affected by the current economic crisis.

"We [can] do what the church does best—To take care of each other, not instill fear, but to respond in a healthful way."

CLERGY NOTES

The Rev. **Stephen Sedgwick** is serving as interim rector at **Church of the Good Shepherd, Lyndhurst.**

The Rev. **Michael Wiechers**, a Lutheran pastor, is serving at the new shared ministry of **St. Thomas' Church, Port Clinton, and Peace Lutheran, Port Clinton.**

PARISHES SEE THEMSELVES AS VITAL

BY LINDA KINSEY

REPORTS ON PARISH GROWTH IN THE DIOCESE OF Ohio aren't always something to cheer about, but a recent report on parish vitality issued by the Congregational Development Commission (CDC) is decidedly positive.

The Rev. Brad Purdom, Canon for Congregations, said the commission decided it was time to "check the temperature" of parishes in the diocese. What resulted was a set of questions that were designed to get to the heart of the issue.

"No attempt was made to make this a scientific survey," Purdom emphasized. And while the report proved revealing about the way parishes viewed themselves, the most important aspect of the project, he said, was "the conversations we had with parishes."

That was, indeed, the motivating force behind the survey, according to the Rev. Gayle Catinella, CDC member and coordinator of the project. About two years ago, she said, "a group of us met during the summer to discuss parish vitality."

But a lack of vitality was something that was assumed, she said, based on individual experiences and values.

How Do You See Yourself?

"It seemed to me we should ask [the parishes] what they think about themselves, and maybe some new ways of thinking about church and doing church might emerge. So the CDC decided to ask parishes themselves what they thought."

Catinella said she was glad that parishes had the chance to tell their story. "It wasn't uniform in terms of data gathering; we can't look at this as science, but as Spirit and the Spirit is moving in the Diocese of Ohio."

To get the project started, Bishop Hollingsworth lent his support by writing a letter to all the parishes.

In addition to the letter, some of the CDC members attended vestry meetings or made phone contact with parish leaders, Purdom said.

"Many of us who did the work found so much hope in talking to the parishes," Catinella said. "There were stories of how excited people were about their church, and about

the ways the church was reaching out to the community.

"I was personally afraid that when we put the data together, it would be depressing. But it really wasn't. There is a lot of wonderful ministry happening in our diocese."

In order to gather their information, five questions were posed to the parishes, Purdom said:

- Do you consider yourself to be a vital parish?
- How do you measure that?
- What are some things that have helped with that?
- What have you tried that didn't work?
- What are you willing to try?

A number of parishes mentioned new youth programs, outreach projects and Natural Church Development that have helped either grow

their parishes in numbers or vitality or both. Those that reported their parishes enjoyed robust vitality also mentioned a number of church-related events and programs that involved much of the congregation.

Purdom said the report revealed several key points, including the fact that "there has been an influx of good clergy in the last few years." And while he acknowledged that some of the parishes that believe they are vital are struggling with finances and growth, "we were surprised by how positive things were."

He added that the struggle some parishes have experienced might have sparked the need to come up with ideas that will revitalize their parishes and eventually grow them.

That thought was part of Bishop Hollingsworth's address to Diocesan Convention in November, as well.

"There is emerging evidence that the shrinking of some of our congregations has resulted in their communicants taking a focused look at who they are and making intentional efforts to explore their strengths and weaknesses as communities of faith," Hollingsworth said.

"That exploration has led them to live in ways that open them to others and to the possibilities of vitality that God wants for their congregation."

Catinella said she hopes the project "will result in a forum for sharing good ideas, and as a way to distribute diocesan support in the most effective way.

"I was personally afraid that when we put the data together, it would be depressing. But it really wasn't. There is a lot of wonderful ministry happening in our diocese."

The Rev. Gayle Catinella

ChurchLife!

Trinity Commons
2230 Euclid Avenue
Cleveland, Ohio 44115-2499

calendar highlights

December 24-January 1
Diocesan Offices Closed

December 26

47th Boar's Head & Yule Log Festival
Trinity Cathedral, Cleveland. For more information: 216-771-3530 ext. 392 or www.boarsheadcleveland.org.

January 3

48th Boar's Head & Yule Log Festival
St. John's, Youngstown. For more information: 330-743-3175 or www.stjohnohio.org.

January 7

Clergy Epiphany Brown Bag
12:00 P.M. Church of Our Saviour, Akron. An opportunity for clergy to gather with the Bishop. Please RSVP to the parish at 330-535-9174.

January 14

Clergy Epiphany Brown Bag
12:00 P.M. Location: St. John's Church, Youngstown. An opportunity for clergy to gather with the Bishop. Please RSVP to the parish at 330-743-3175.

January 21-23

Bishop's Winter Gathering
Atwood Lodge. Contact Rita Rozell, 216-774-0460 or rrozell@dohio.org.

February

Absalom Jones Day Celebration
Date TBD. St. Andrew's, Cleveland.

February 5-6

Diocesan Winter Convocation
Holiday Inn, Perrysburg.

February 5-7

Diocesan Youth Event
St. Timothy's, Perrysburg. For youth in 7th-12th grades.

February 12-14

Happening
Church of Our Saviour, Akron. For youth in 9th-12th grades.

February 13

Ministry Discernment Day
Location and details pending. Contact Rita Rozell, 216-774-0460 or rrozell@dohio.org.

February 20

Diocesan Lenten Retreat Day
Location and details pending. Contact Rita Rozell, 216-774-0460 or rrozell@dohio.org.

March 29

Clergy—Renewal of Vows
12:00 P.M. Trinity Church, Toledo. Contact Rita Rozell, 216-774-0460 or rrozell@dohio.org.

March 30

Clergy—Renewal of Vows
12:00 P.M. Trinity Cathedral, Cleveland. Contact Rita Rozell, 216-774-0460 or rrozell@dohio.org.

Bishops' Visitations

January

- 10 St. Luke's Church, Chardon** (Hollingsworth)
- 10 St. Peter's Church, Lakewood** (Williams)
- 17 St. Philip's Church, Akron** (Hollingsworth)
- 24 St. Mark's Church, Sidney** (Hollingsworth)
- 31 Trinity Cathedral, Cleveland** (Hollingsworth)

February

- 7 St. Mark's Church, Cleveland** (Hollingsworth)
- 14 St. Michael's-in-the-Hills, Toledo** (Hollingsworth)
- 21 Christ Church, Shaker Heights** (Williams)
- 28 St. Timothy's Church, Macedonia** (Hollingsworth)
- 28 St. Paul's Church, Maumee** (Bowman)

March

- 7 St. John the Evangelist's Church, Napoleon** (Hollingsworth)
- 14 St. Andrew Church, Mentor** (Williams)
- 14 St. Paul's Church, Steubenville** (Persell)

For the complete
calendar of events visit
www.dohio.org