Packing Up Some New Conceptions

by the Rev. Brad Hinton, St. David’s, Wilmington

This is one of several reflections on our denomination’s experience at General Convention. Visit www.DioceofDelaware.net to read more.

July 17 - We’ve adjourned for this triennium, and I have to find a way to put all my clothes and toiletries back into the suitcase and briefcase. That will prove to be a challenge. More challenging will still be how to put my notions of church governance back into the mental box I had set aside for them before coming to Anchorage. Reading the journal of the General Convention is one way of knowing what happened, being here to participate in the process is another reality altogether. The former has a sense of order and completion, whereas the latter can feel bulky, nervy, and unfinished.

Please don’t misunderstand me. The overall experience was good and positive. I met great people, saw friends of long ago, worshiped mightily, and pondered a vast array of ideas and proposals never before known to me in such short order. We addressed a wide range of topics and interests including, but not limited to: national policies, world events, the environment, liturgical resources, ecumenical and interfaith relationships, canons, mission priorities, human sexuality, ecological concerns, rules of debate, and, of course, the budget. All told we dealt with nearly 800+ deputies, 760+ deputies. I found that by the time some-thing reached the floor of the House, most people would support it if a committee made the recommendation. But that doesn’t mean that the votes are tallied “it’s all said and done.” This is church (not pol-itics) and that means we need to hold in special care those people whose ideas are not in the majority.

Whenever one side prevails in a vote, there is a minority for whom the experience can be disheartening. This disconnect is compounded when people mistakenly believe that our resolutions especially reveal God’s will. When that happens I call it a resolution (yes, a made up word). Here’s the definition: resolution n. the revelation of God’s will through a legislative process.

When people believe that a resolution is a resolution, they are set up to suppose mistakenly that if it is passed, God will do it. Moreover, if their proposal fails, the church has obviously ignored or abandoned God. No need to belabor that point. You can see where that will lead.

Our participatory and shared process of governance is far from perfect. Sometimes we advance the cause of God’s justice and mercy, and sometimes we wander in a darkness. It can be messy, and it can be beauti- ful—all in one afternoon. Our task is also our hope: to reflect something of the mind of Christ and the Spirit’s presence and power.

I believe this con- vention has done just that.

St. James’ Episcopal Church, Newport

New, Young Parishioners Transform Parish

by Jen Mason, editor. In the coming months, the Delaware Communion will feature Children and Youth Ministry articles. If your parish has a story to tell, contact Teri Valente, Diocesan Youth Ministry Coordinator, at TeriValente@gmail.com or Jen Mason at Editor@DioceseofDelaware.net

It was a quiet and scary time,” said Janice Fischbach, a 75-year member of St. James’, Newport. “When there was suddenly an empty seat next to you one Sunday, you sadly didn’t know why.” But now this parish, that was once growing smaller and older by the day, has been raised to a new life in Christ.

It all started with a decision. St. James, which is nestled in a city neighborhood in Newport, saw around 30 well-matured souls each Sunday; and those souls, like Janice Fischbach and her long-time friend Alberta Regan, recognized that if they continued to focus inward on themselves and those empty seats, Christ’s work could wither and die there. So the parishioners took a look outside their doors and, recalling how the church had embraced them as children, made a choice to put their energy into caring for the children of their neighborhood.

They began, quite naturally, with vacation bible school and a couple of summers back. What surprised the parishioners, though, was that it wasn’t the neighborhood parents who jumped on the bandwagon and brought their kids, it was the kids themselves who found a way to get there. And they were of all ages: not just the elemen-tary-aged children, but their big and little brothers and sisters as well. As Alberta Regan put it, “The older children tell us that

NEW TO OUR WEBSITE: www.DioceofDelaware.net

A New York Times article featuring St. Peter’s, Lewes.

Wall Cheatham and Cecily Sawyer-Harmon’s summaries of General Convention.

Flu season update of August 17: How to avoid the flu and what to do if you get symptoms.

Profiles of Twelve Inspiring People

Clergy Calendar for 2009-2010

Short biographies and photos of those elected to Diocesan Council in 2009.
**BISHOP’S LETTER**

Sundays Behind Us, Significant Opportunities Before Us

by Wayne Wright, Bishop of the Diocese of Delaware

W ith the com ing of Labor Day all things seem to spring back to life. Schools re-open. The pace of business and social events quickens. Church programs and ministries resume after a summer break that seems brief every year.

A highlight of this summer was attending the 2009 General Convention in California. I left the meeting feeling hopeful about the Episcopal Church and grateful for the opportunity to tell the story of our diocese and its many faithful missionaries. The Convention tackled challenging topics, but in a thoughtful, respectful way. I give much credit to Katharine Jefferts Schori, our presiding bishop, for our church’s spiritual focus on our common mission to serve the world and care for each other in Christ’s Name. This is the source of our unity and strength.

As always the Diocese of Delaware was well represented at the general convention. We have a long tradition of supporting the national ministry of the Episcopal Church. We will likely remember this general convention as a week that defined our church’s commitment to strengthen the Episcopal Church as an organization. This included the establishment of a national health insurance program for clergy and church employees. The Convention adopted a balanced budget for the Episcopal Church. This was no small accomplishment in these economic times. It required discipline and sacrifice on all sides.

After the convention ended Holly, Parker, and I spent a week together in Southern California. We had a good trip. There is much to do in a remarkable region full of interest and vibrancy.

We returned home in early August as Camp Arrowhead was finishing its 53rd summer season. Over 800 campers attended camp this year. The spirit was good and the weather – except for a few rainy days - cooperated. You all play an important role in making Camp Arrowhead a reality. Thank you for the great gift of your support and your prayers. This year your gifts to the annual Bishop’s Mission Fund and the Pension Fund Board Meeting, White Sulphur Springs, WV

6. Sunday, Morning Visitations, All Saints’ Church, Delmar

7. Monday, Bishop’s Office Closed

9. Wednesday, Cathedral Choir Board Meeting

9. Wednesday, Evening Visitations, St. Andrew’s School, Middletown

10. Thursday, Trustees Meeting, Cathedral Church of St. John, Wilmington

20 Sunday, the Bishop in Residence

22 Tuesday, Diocesan Clergy Day, Christ Church, Dover

22 Tuesday, Standing Committee, St. Andrew’s School, Middletown

27 Sunday, Morning Visitations, Cathedral Church of St. John, Wilmington

30 Wednesday, Bishop’s Group, Baltimore

**CLERGY INVITED TO PARTICIPATE**

**Delaware Clergy Statement Supporting Civil Rights**

Episcopal (and other) clergy members in Delaware are eligible to be signatories to the Revised Spiritual Leaders’ Statement supporting civil rights for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender Delawareans. The document, broadened from a 2001 iteration, is used to lobby Delaware lawmakers for fairness legislation and to educate the general public.

“Loud and ubiquitous have been demands from many pastors that gay and transgender citizens should not have full civil rights,” observes Douglas Marshall-Steele, a member of St. Paul’s, Gerogetown, and the conservator of the Statement. “My belief is that clergy on the other side of that discussion should also be allowed to speak.”

The bishop and a number of Episcopal priests have signed this interfaith declaration. “But the Presbyterians are way ahead of us in number of signatories. Not that anyone’s counting,” quipped Marshall-Steele.

The Statement conforms to the General Convention’s advocacy of full civil rights for gay people. Interested priests and deacons may electronically sign the document on the “Of The Spirit” page of www.TowardEquality.org, where the Statement with signatories is permanently displayed.

**Make Your Meals Healthy**

Learn to use high-impact flavors like fresh herbs, spices, seasonal fruits and vegetables to minimize the need for carbs of butter, cream and salt. There will be two separate workshops at Parish Life Day: Let’s Do Brunch and Let’s Talk Turkey. Executive Chef Jeff Baily and professional model Jimmie Sylvester of Lee Bailey Reed Catering Company will demonstrate how to make meals healthy.

Join us Saturday, November 21, for these and many other workshops for your body and soul at St. Anne’s Episcopal School in Middletown.

To learn more and to register, visit the diocesan website or call your church office.

**THE BISHOP’S CALENDAR: SEPTEMBER**

2 Wednesday, Bishop’s Day in Georgetown

6 Sunday, Morning Visitations, All Saints’ Church, Delmar

7 Monday, Bishop’s Office Closed

9 Wednesday, Cathedral Choir Board Meeting

9 Wednesday, Evening Visitations, St. Andrew’s School, Middletown

10 Thursday, Trustees Meeting, Cathedral Church of St. John, Wilmington

12 Saturday – 17 Thursday, Church Pension Fund Board Meeting, White Sulphur Springs, WV

20 Sunday, Morning Visitations, St. Martha’s Church, Bethany Beach

22 Tuesday, Diocesan Clergy Day, Christ Church, Dover

22 Tuesday, Standing Committee, St. Andrew’s School, Middletown

27 Sunday, Morning Visitations, Cathedral Church of St. John, Wilmington

30 Wednesday, Bishop’s Group, Baltimore


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FOLLOWING THE RESOUNDING SUCCESS OF THE ENGLISH CHOIR MUSIC WEEKEND IN JULY, CHRIST CHURCH IN GREENVILLE WELCOMES THE RETURN OF THE CHOIR OF KING’S COLLEGE, LONDON, WHO WILL PRESENT A CONCERT ON SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, AT 5:30 P.M. IN THE CHURCH AS PART OF THEIR 2009 EAST COAST TOUR.

The choir is one of the leading university choirs in England. Consisting of twenty-five choral scholars and two organ scholars, it is directed by the college organist, David Trendell, who is also a senior lecturer in the music department. Mr. Trendell has directed the choir and lectured in music at King’s since 1992, during which time he has established the choir as one of the finest mixed-voice university ensembles in the country.

The choir performs a large and varied repertoire, ranging from the fourteenth century to the present day, having made celebrated recordings of sixteenth-century English and Spanish music which reflect the research interests of the director. The choir also sings regularly commissioned music, including recent works by Antony Pitts and Susan Lawrie. The BBC reported that the choir is “as passionate as it is disciplined.” The concert is free and open to the public. Visit www.DioceseofDelaware.net for a link to the choir’s web page, and for concert details call 655-9879 or visit the worship and music page of www.ChristChurchDE.org.

The Way Home Program, Sussex County, Delaware

Transitional Home for Former Prisoners is Blessed

by Jessica Clark, St. Paul’s, Georgetown

Most of the men and women who come to us are homeless and penniless. Many have burned bridges with family, friends, and former employers, and are often seeking to re-locate to an area that does not have the same temptations and pitfalls that faced them before going to prison. Few of our participants have driver’s licenses, and most do not have adequate identification when we pick them up at the prison gates. We work with people to help them overcome challenges like these, so that they have a fighting chance to build a new, crime-free life. We offer encouragement and emotional and spiritual support, as well as very practical help, letting our participants know that they are not alone in this struggle. We reinforce the central truths that core decisions and choices are theirs to make, and that all decisions and actions have consequences for which they, like all of us, must be accountable. But this time can be different for them. This time they have a support team with them every step of the way.

—Barbara Del Mastro
The Way Home

These words from The Way Home’s executive director not only explain the mission of the organization, but they also give some sense for the importance of the blessing of the home in Millsboro, which is now a haven for men who are transitioning from Delaware prisons to a better life.

The Rev. Max Wolf of All Saints’, who serves as the chairman of the board for the organization, blessed each room of the transitional house on June 16. “We are blessed by this program to witness daily miracles as participants heal from past mistakes and turn their lives around with the support of our staff and volunteers,” said Fr. Wolf. “It is also a blessing for the wider community to be reminded of the needs of our brothers and sisters as they rebuild their lives.”

Financed by donations from the community and profits from sales of the Christian Storehouse in Millsboro, the small house that stands innocuously on a quiet Millsboro side street was used for 12 years to house area homeless families. “The (homeless) program, although much needed in Sussex County, was not entirely successful, as we did not have staffing for oversight and case management,” explained Steve Smith, Director of The Christian Storehouse. “About three years ago, Barbara Del Mastro approached us and proposed that the home be used to assist ex-offenders of the Delaware prison system who are transitioning to a new and better life. Our partnership with her organization provided the necessary case management and blemished into a successful ministry.”

Approximately 35 former prisoners have lived in the home while they learned new skills or worked at jobs to provide for their families and have a better future. The men are required to maintain the property inside and out, follow the established rules, complete probationary requirements, and meet their goals and responsibilities to accomplish their rehabilitation plans.

The Way Home’s mission is to free individuals from the cycle of crime and despair by providing them with holistic support after prison that generates hope, self-sufficiency, and connection to the community. Since 1998, The Way Home has helped hundreds of ex-offenders stay out of prison, providing case management to participants for less than one-sixth the cost of incarceration. The Way Home program aims for no more than five percent recidivism among participants, aiming to eliminate a return to prison among participants altogether.

For more information or to volunteer at The Way Home, contact Barbara Del Mastro, Executive Director, at 856-9870 or by email at barbara@thewayhomeprogram.org.

Above: The Rev. Max Wolf, rector of All Saints’, Rehoboth and St. George’s, Harbeson, and Barbara Del Mastro, executive director of The Way Home, bless the transitional home’s kitchen.

Worship at Old Christ Church, Sundays through October 4, 9:30 a.m.

Old Christ Church is one of only about a dozen churches on the Atlantic coast that predate the Revolution; having never been painted, plumbed, heated, or electrified.

One step into another dimension of time when one crosses the threshold of OCC.

The church is located at the corner of Chipman Pond Road and Christ Church Road in Laurel.

Please join us for the fourth annual

Taste the Fruit of the Vine

A benefit for the Sussex County Community Outreach Program

Friday, September 25, 7:00–10:00 p.m.
A reception and dinner in the gardens at the Herring Landing home of Hart and Rob Tunnell

Saturday, September 26, 3:00–6:00 p.m.
Wine tastings served with food pairing suggestions, an open bar, and a tour of the house and gardens at the Tunnell home

For information or tickets, visit www.TasteTheFruitOfTheVine.org or call 645-8479.
their mothers say, ‘If you’re gonna go, then you’re taking the rest of them, too.’ We try to help them with the tiny ones once they get here, so that the bigger ones can enjoy learning as well.”

The next step was to resurrect their church school. Without a single child in the pews on Sunday mornings and with a tiny budget, the parish’s move to hire Equetta Jones, a special needs teacher in the Red Clay district, to run their program was as pure a leap of faith as they come. “We do all this by a wing and a prayer — a lot of prayer,” said the Rev. Sarah Nelson, St. James’ rector. “We don’t use pre-made curricula or VBS programs — we simply can’t afford them. We made it through the spring thanks to our last Spring Faire, which raised $400, and now we’re working on the Fall Faire to get us the next $400, and so on.” (Read about St. James’ Spring Faire at www.DioceseOfDelaware.net.)

It also helps that Equetta brings more than her fair share of faith and creativity to the task. “One day the kids were restless and weren’t really listening to the story about teamwork,” she said. “So I put on some gospel music, and I taught them the Cupid Shuffle to it instead. All of a sudden they got it — they realized that they’d been acting as a team, and my objective was achieved!” And the shoestring budget provides opportunities for parishioners to share their creative gifts as well. Like Doris Gore who told the Jonah story at this year’s VBS, aided by her own hand-painted illustrations; or the many parishioners who volunteer in the parish’s after-school tutoring program; or Andi Bender, one of several new parishioners, who helped the children create a quilted banner from VBS to adorn the church.

Of course, with all of the teenaged brothers and sisters attending, a youth group was formed; and this is where the Spirit’s work has been most dramatically evidenced. The youth galvanized as a group as they worked together to get themselves to the Faith in 3D conference at www.DioceseOfDelaware.net.) It is their church.” And with twice as many souls now in the pew on Sundays, the parishioners, helping keep the parish garden and grounds, and so on” said Nelson. “These kids totally feel that this is their church.” And with twice as many souls now in the pews on Sunday mornings, parishioners like Alberto and Janice happily agree.

Read the story by St. James’ youth about their trip to the Faith in 3D conference at www.DioceseOfDelaware.net.

**Parish News:**

Jay Angerer has completed his time as a “church plant” minister at Good Shepherd, Glasgow, and has accepted a call to be the new rector of All Saint’s Episcopal Church in River Ridge, Louisiana. During the coming transition, the people of Good Shepherd are sharing worship space with St. Nicholas’ Church, Newark. Elizabeth Master son and the people of St. Nicholas’ generously extended this offer of hospitality, and they are prepared to welcome Good Shepherd for the coming season of discernment and transition. During the time that they are together, both congregations will maintain separate identities and worship times. This innovative relationship will provide a safe harbor for Good Shepherd as plans for the future are made. Bishop Wright said, “We are grateful to the people of St. Nicholas’ for this powerful example of Christian hospitality. As these two congregations begin working together, it is a moment of grace for our entire diocese.”

A Preview Party on Friday night, September 18, 6:00 – 8:30 p.m. will feature hors d’oeuvre and desserts, auction, craft vendors, bake shoppe, raffle (cash prizes), and treasure shoppe. Tickets are $5. Then, on Saturday, September 19, the festival is open 10:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. with free admission. In addition to craft vendors, treasure shoppe and raffles, lunch will be available.

All proceeds from these events will be used to support local outreach programs. For details, call 422-6029.

**ST. JAMES’, NEWPORT**

**New, Young Parishioners**

continued from front page (Page A)

**St. James’ Fall Faire and Flea Market**

September 26

2 South Augustine Street
Newport, Delaware 18904

Tables rent for $20.

Proceeds sustain vital ministries.

To learn more, call 984-2029.

**Third Annual Distant Neighbors Festival, St. Paul’s, Georgetown, November 20 and 21.**

Features unique, beautiful, and affordable gift items made by artisans who are paid a fair price for their labors, ethnic food and entertainment, door prizes, and fair trade information. For details, call 856-2894 or visit www.StPaulsGeorgetown.org.

**5th Annual Preview Party & Autumn Fest, Sept. 18 and 19, at Christ Church, Milford.**

A Preview Party on Friday night, September 18, 6:00 – 8:30 p.m. will feature hors d’oeuvre and desserts, auction, craft vendors, bake shoppe, raffle (cash prizes), and treasure shoppe. Tickets are $5. Then, on Saturday, September 19, the festival is open 10:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. with free admission. In addition to craft vendors, treasure shoppe and raffles, lunch will be available.

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