



The Forward

Letter from the Bishop

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Most of you have heard the variety of jokes about Episcopalians. Usually there is some truth to them, and it's always good to have a sense of humor about ourselves. What do you think of this one:

Question: How do you clear a room full of Episcopalians in a hurry?

Answer: Go into the room and scream 'Evangelism' at the top of your lungs.

In many circles of The Episcopal Church evangelism is viewed with mistrust or as something with which other churches engage. We have narrow visions about what evangelism means, and they are usually negative for us. We often picture someone standing on a street corner handing out tracts and asking us if we've been saved. [We might find this approach troubling but I would submit that, while that method may be offensive to some and does not often reflect our particular expression of faith, it actually can be effective.] The problem is that our aversion to thinking deeply about the nature of evangelism is part of the reason the Church continues to decline. Evangelism by birth rate will no longer work for Episcopalians.

We need to reclaim the language of evangelism in a way that reflects our gifts as a Church and congregations and present the Gospel in a way that is winsome.

'Lifestyle' is not enough. What I mean is that we, as Episcopalians, will often talk about how we try to convey the Gospel by the 'way we live.' To a large extent that is helpful and true. Don't tell me how much you love Jesus—show me by the way you

live. Lifestyle is, though, not the whole story. We have a Gospel imperative to share the Good News and make disciples.

Worship is a means of evangelism that should be near and dear to the hearts of Christians especially in The Episcopal Church. Many people will talk about the liturgy and worship as one of the reasons they came into The Episcopal Church. One of the ways we can be more effective in our evangelism is to seek excellence in our worship. Good preaching and presiding are important for sure. Equally important, though, is enthusiastic participation in the liturgy which includes saying the responses and singing hymns with enthusiasm as though we are praising God. By working toward excellence in worship, we are sharing the Good News and the power of God with those in our congregation and those who are seeking a deeper relationship with God.

Inviting someone to church is a means of evangelism. If everyone you know attends church, then I would invite you to consider widening your circle. Disciples are made one on one. Our lives are being transformed by Christ in ways that are real and powerful. Let's invite others to experience transformation.

Think about ways you can use your particular gifts as an individual and as a congregation for evangelism. I know that if we reclaim the language of evangelism we will more than fill the 'room' with people transformed by the power of Christ.

Blessings,

+ Sean

One Church of miraculous expectation under the Lordship of Jesus Christ equipping transformational leaders for transformational ministry through our missionary outposts — our congregations.

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Update from the Diocesan Health Team by the Rev. Adam Trambley

This year, our Natural Church Development work in the Diocese focuses on the minimum factor *Convincing Lifestyles*. *Convincing Lifestyles* is a parallel on an organizational level to evangelism at the parish level. This factor looks at how well we live out our Christian values when outsiders come in contact with us; how well we live out our values in our interactions with each other; and how we see our work as work being done for the Lord with enthusiasm and excellence.



Convincing lifestyles is in many ways a more personal area to work on than functional structures. If we are going to make improvements in this area of our common life, we have to make commitments personally to do the work in our own lives and attitudes. We can't hope for progress by deciding that somebody needs to do something and then pass a resolution at convention. Each of us gets to make the decision personally to act a bit differently in ways that will improve the health and common life of our diocese.

Our health team has identified a number of areas where we believe that changes in our diocesan lifestyle could bear significant fruit in our mission and ministry. These areas include clarifying expectations for our common life, accountability in meetings, and personal accountability. The health team is still in the process of setting out a plan for these areas. In the next month or two we expect to have suggestions for how we can all make our lifestyles more convincingly Christian in the ways we deal with each other, with the community and with our diocesan ministry.

If you have questions or are interested in more details about our Diocesan Health Team or Natural Church Development, please contact Father Adam Trambley at 724-347-4501 or at atrambley@gmail.com.

Upcoming Ordinations

Please join us for two ordinations this summer.

The Rev. Rebecca Lash and the Rev. Joann Piatko will both be ordained to the priesthood on Sunday, June 6, at 4:00 PM at the Cathedral of St. Paul, Erie.

We ask for your prayers for those being ordained as they embark on their new ministries.

Fourth Annual Strawberry Festival at St. Stephen's, Fairview

St. Stephen's, Fairview, will be holding its fourth annual Strawberry Festival on Saturday, June 19, from 3:00 PM to 9:00 PM at the church.

There will be food, adult and kids' auctions, a classic car show, kids' games and a giant slide, and—of course—strawberries.

All proceeds from the event will benefit Second Harvest Food Bank. Also, if you bring a food item to donate to the Food Bank, you will receive 10 free food tickets for the Strawberry Festival.

For more information, please call 814-474-5490 or visit their website at www.ststephens-fairview.org.



Diocesan Church Center Closed

The Diocesan Church Center will be closed on May 19 because the staff will be on retreat.

It will also be closed on May 31 in observance of Memorial Day.

Pieces from Our Hundred Year History

Editor's note: The Diocese is celebrating its one hundredth anniversary this year. In honor of that, there will be pieces in each Forward that come from past newsletters. The first edition of a diocesan newsletter appeared in November 1915 under the title "The Diocese of Erie." Since 1915, the newsletter has been published off and on under different names.

From "Vocations" by The Rt. Rev. Harold Sawyer (from the January 1949 issue of "The Pastoral Staff")



Everyone has a purpose in life; God creates us for a reason, and we live until our work is done. The main object of each individual ought to be to discover his purpose. The happy, peaceful, contented human being is the one who has found his purpose and who is working with God for the accomplishment of that purpose; the unhappy, thwarted, miserable individual is the one who either has not placed himself well within God's purpose or who is working at cross-purposes with his Creator.

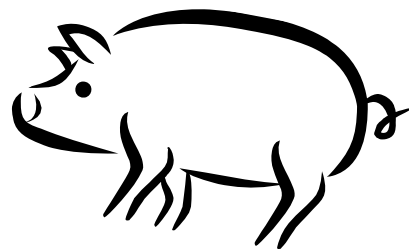
When we speak of "vocation" we mean the same thing as purpose, for "vocation" means simply the "calling" - being called of God for a certain job. Vocation, historically, has often been used in a purely religious sense such as "vocation to the ministry," but in a real sense vocation must be applied to any position in life to which one is called, called by God. God, in a very real sense, calls some to be doctors, others ministers, lawyers, veterinarians, business men, and even masons, cooks, and cab drivers. And these positions are vocations as long as they are constructive and filled with co-laborers in God's world, helping to build up the strength of humanity.

So we see how important the "following of a vocation" is and in what high dignity the vocation must be held. It is not a question of making money or of bringing credit to the individual or of bringing a thrill in life—much less is it a work to be drifted into carelessly or as a last resort after other things have been tried. God has a vocation for each one of us and it is our duty to try, each one, to find his own vocation. To use a telling metaphor—we are like the stones in a building where if one is misplaced or absent the whole building is imperfect. But we are living stones and the building is God's temple of creation.

Sometimes it takes a lifetime to find one's true vocation. No one is too old for the search. If there is a "divine discontent" with one's present work, it is evident he has not found his true place. We must know, however, that "divine discontent" is more than the habit of uneasiness or restlessness with which so many of us are troubled. Much of this is due to the uncertainty of the age in which we live. The "divine discontent" of which I speak, means a real spiritual conviction that one was destined by God to be in a different place or position. If one finds this is true and one can possibly follow the direction, after prayer and meditation, he ought to search for a way toward the change to his true vocation. If it is real, God always finds such a way. We must always include Him in our plans.

from the March 1934 issue of "The Erie Churchman"

*This little piggy went to market,
And this little piggy stayed at home;
And this little piggy went calling at St. James Rectory, Titusville,
And liked it there so well that when his master came to get him -
He cried all the way home.*



This is a modern version of the well-known rhyme, inspired by the fact that The Rev. Albert Broadhurst recently played host to a pig that ran away from the market and sought refuge in the basement of the Rectory.

The good Rector of St. James' is always genial to guests and glad to have them come to visit him, but it seems that this uninvited guest was trying upon the hospitality of Fr. Broadhurst, who was glad when the owner claimed the animal.

Did you know...

that the Rt. Rev. E. Pinkney Wroth, our third bishop, was a cousin of Katherine Hepburn?

- from the January 1934 issue of "The Erie Churchman"

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Ascension, Bradford Calls New Rector

Church of the Ascension, Bradford, has called a new rector. The Rev. Stacey Fussell joined Ascension in early April. Mother Stacey comes from the Diocese of Texas, where she served at St. Catherine of Sienna, Sienna Plantation.

There will be a Celebration of New Ministry service on Sunday, May 16, at 4:00 PM at Ascension, Bradford. Everyone is encouraged to attend the service.

Please keep Mother Stacey; her mother, Joan; her daughters, Christine and Catherine; and Ascension in your prayers as they embark on their new ministry together.



St. Stephen's, Fairview Calls Interim

St. Stephen's, Fairview, has called the Rev. Ron Dower as their interim priest. Fr. Dower began his official interim duties in April.

Fr. Dower is retired from the Diocese of New Jersey and currently resides in Zanesville, OH.

Please pray for Fr. Dower and the congregation of St. Stephen's as they embark on their new ministry together.



Students from the Diocese attending VTS (from left to right): Missy Greene, Evan Clendenin, and Melissa Bruckart. Photo courtesy of the Rev. Mary Norton.

Students Wrapping Up Year at VTS

Three members of the diocese are wrapping up the school year at Virginia Theological Seminary. Melissa Bruckart, a member of St. Mark's, Erie, and Evan Clendenin, a member of St. James', Titusville, are both studying for their Master in Divinity. They were both recently made Candidates for ordination and will be entering their final year at VTS in the fall. Missy Greene, a member of St. Mary's, Erie, is at VTS to earn her Masters in Theological Studies with a focus in Christian Education and Youth, and will also be entering her final year at VTS in the fall.

Bishop Sean's Visitation Schedule

- May 2nd - Trinity Memorial, Warren
- May 9th - St. Andrew's, Clearfield
- May 16th - St. John's, Kane



St. John's

Diocesan Council Reminder

Diocesan Council will meet on Tuesday, May 18th at 7:00 PM at St. John's, Franklin. Council members, please let Vanessa know whether or not you can attend.

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If you have news, story ideas, or pictures that you would like to share with the diocese, please contact Vanessa at the Diocesan Church Center at 814-456-4203 or at vbutler@dionwpa.org.