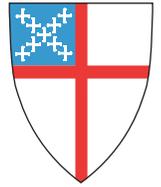


PEPtalk



February 2008 — Published by Progressive Episcopalians of Pittsburgh — Vol. 5 No. 1

Comment

Getting from “We and They” to “Us”

By the Rev. Diane Shepard

The Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh most likely will split during the coming months. Though a number of congregations and clergy will separate from the diocese, many will choose to stay in The Episcopal Church (TEC).

Even those of us who are choosing to remain in TEC have differing perspectives on fundamental issues as we go forward together. The effect of these differences has been intensified by perceptions of betrayal and a long history of competing goals.

Though barriers abound, we are all deeply aware that we are called to love God above all things and to love our neighbor as ourselves. But how do we do this?

If I could ask one thing of us all, clergy and lay leaders alike, I would ask that we each read Archbishop Desmond Tutu’s book *No Future Without Forgiveness*. Bishop Tutu outlines in this book the fundamental principles he used to work for reconciliation in South Africa following the national vote to end apartheid. At that point, a decision had been made about the way forward for South Africa, but the country had been deeply torn by atrocities and massive distrust. We can remember those years, waiting with dread and much prayer, imagining that South Africa could only explode into open civil war. That did not happen.

At the heart of Bishop Tutu’s strategy, steeped in his own deep appropriation of the Gospel, was the principle that a people who have hurt one another cannot forgive and heal until the underlying evil or hurt has been exposed. Nor

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Bishop Charged

Committee Says Duncan Abandoned Communion of The Episcopal Church

On January 15, 2008, Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori informed the Rt. Rev. Robert W. Duncan, diocesan bishop of the Diocese of Pittsburgh, that the Title IV Review Committee had certified that, in its opinion, he had abandoned the communion of The Episcopal Church (TEC). She also explained that the three senior bishops with jurisdiction had not consented to inhibiting Duncan, that is, forbidding him from exercising his episcopal ministry. Inhibition does not prevent a bishop from performing administrative acts.

The effect of the action is that Duncan retains his position as Bishop of Pittsburgh, but he can be deposed by the Presiding Bishop if the House of Bishops consents to her doing so. It is unclear at this time when the House of Bishops might consider the matter, but it will not be at its March 2008 meeting. If deposed, Duncan will be removed from all ecclesiastical and secular offices in the church and will be stripped of his ordained ministry.

A brief notice posted on the diocesan Web site after the Presiding Bishop’s announcement emphasized the failure of the senior bishops to consent to inhibition. Regarding the charge itself, Duncan was quoted as saying, “Few bishops have been more loyal to the doctrine, discipline and worship of The Episcopal Church. I have not abandoned the Communion of this Church. I will continue to serve and minister as the Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh.” “This is a rather improbable statement from a bishop who has accused TEC of propagating a different gospel

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Ads Promote Episcopal Church Parishes

A series of newspaper ads have been running in local papers promoting The Episcopal Church by highlighting the opinions of individual parishioners. The ads, each headlined “Welcome to my church...,” began appearing in October in the

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, in suburban editions of the *Tribune-Review*, and in the *Johnstown Tribune-Democrat*. Each ad features the picture of a parishioner of a Southwestern Pennsylvania Episcopal church, the Episcopal Church shield, and a personal state-



Welcome to my church...

I'm an Episcopalian. My church offers something for everyone from toddlers to senior citizens. I'm an acolyte and participate in youth activities because they combine fun with spiritual meaning and I get to meet other young Episcopalians -some I've known from church preschool.

One of our best youth activities is raising money for mission trips. No matter where I sit in church, I am welcomed with open arms. I worship at St. Paul's in Mt. Lebanon. You can find Episcopalians like me ready to welcome you in many places in Western Pennsylvania.

Questions? Contact us at churches@episcopalunity.org

Sample ad (from St. Paul’s, Mt. Lebanon)

ment from the parishioner. The church, though not the parishioner, is named in the ad. A new Web site displays past ads and will include new ones as they appear. It can be found at <http://welcometomychurch.org>.



Next PEP
Membership Meeting

January 28, 2008, 7:30 PM

Location: St. Paul's, Mt. Lebanon
(lower level)

Topic: Recent Events

PEPtalk

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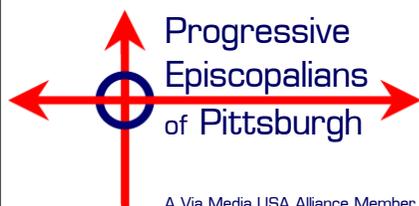
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A Via Media USA Alliance Member

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Charged

from the one he believes in and who is trying to remove his diocese from the parent body," remarked Progressive Episcopalians of Pittsburgh board member Lionel Deimel.

The charges were announced shortly after similar charges were brought against Bishop John-David Schofield, the former Bishop of San Joaquin. Schofield led his diocesan convention to vote to remove the diocese from TEC and to associate it with the province of the Southern Cone, a small South American church of the Anglican Communion (see story on page 3). Duncan has made clear his intention to remove the Diocese of Pittsburgh from the church in a similar manner. Schofield was inhibited with the permission of the senior bishops and will likely be deposed by the House of Bishops at its upcoming meeting.

The Rt. Rev. Don A. Wimberly one of the three senior bishops of the church, explained that consent for Duncan's inhibition was not given because Duncan has not yet taken the step of "realigning" his diocese with another province. Bishop of Texas Wimberly, is the informal leader of the so-called Windsor bishops, who have urged the church to be more compliant in dealing with demands from the Anglican primates. Similar remarks were made by Virginia bishop Peter Lee, who likewise withheld consent for inhibition. Bishop Leo Frade, of Southeast Florida, consented to inhibiting both Schofield and Duncan, explaining that "after reviewing all the supporting documents that give evidence of their actions, I was astonished that we neglected to take action any sooner on their obvious violation and breach of their oath to engage to conform to the doctrine, discipline and worship of The Episcopal Church."

The charges against bishops Duncan and Schofield were based on Canon IV.9 (see following story), which is usually thought of as a mechanism to remove a bishop who has joined another church (who has become a Roman Catholic, for example) but has not renounced his or her orders in TEC.

Once inhibited, a bishop has two months to renounce the actions that triggered the abandonment charge. Although Duncan has not been inhibited, the Presiding Bishop informed him in a letter, "I would, however, welcome a statement by you within the next two months providing evidence that you once more consider yourself fully subject to the doctrine, discipline and worship of this Church." If deemed credible, such a declaration could stave off disciplinary action. That declaration is not expected.

Abandonment Canon Narrow

The canon under which Bishop Duncan has been charged can lead to swift removal of a bishop, but the offenses covered by Canon IV.9 (Abandonment of the Communion of This Church by a Bishop) are narrow. Other offenses require a trial for adjudication; Canon IV.9 offenses require only certification by the Review Committee and a majority vote of the bishops to impose deposition.

Section 1 of Canon IV.9 lists three offenses that can trigger certification of abandonment. The Re-

view Committee, chaired by Bishop of Upper South Carolina Dorsey Henderson, concluded that submissions to the committee "demonstrated that Bishop Duncan has abandoned the communion of this Church by an open renunciation of the Doctrine, Discipline or Worship of this Church." This is the first of the three possible causes of action.

The committee had received a complaint against Bishop Duncan from clergy and laypersons in the Diocese of Pittsburgh on November 19, 2007. Eleven days later, it received a request from the Presiding Bishop for a determination based on material submitted through her chancellor and an associate. The

(Continued on page 3)

Life After Division: Good News for Episcopalians in San Joaquin

The vote at the last diocesan convention has made it clear that, sometime soon, the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh and a number of its parishes will need to rebuild after the withdrawal of those unwilling to remain within The Episcopal Church (TEC). While each situation is unique, we can learn much from the response of TEC to the final vote of the Diocese of San Joaquin to alter its constitution and canons and to “realign” with the Anglican province of the Southern Cone.

As soon as the December convention in San Joaquin ended, the rebuilding of the diocese began. Remain Episcopal, the Via Media USA group in the diocese, sponsored a meeting immediately after the convention to bring together a core group of Episcopalians and parishes that have begun reaching out to others who might be persuaded to stay in the church. As of January 20, 10 of the 46 parishes and missions in the diocese had made clear their intention to remain in TEC, and there are signs that that number will continue to grow. Remain Episcopal is also helping groups gather to form new congregations. Two are well established, and more church plants for the faithful are in the offing. Remain Episcopal has received offers of help from clergy, some of whom were living in the diocese but were not licensed by Bishop Schofield.

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Canon

committee communicated its findings to the Presiding Bishop on December 17.

Links to the canon, the material presented to the committee, and to the committee’s certification can be found at http://episcopalchurch.org/79901_93969_ENG_HTM.htm.

The Presiding Bishop quickly sent the Rev. Richard Moore, the former Canon to the Ordinary of the Diocese of El Camino Real, to San Joaquin as her official pastoral representative. Moore is married to Bishop Nedi Rivera, daughter of the first diocesan bishop of San Joaquin. Moore promptly began a “listening tour,” which involved his visiting all the parishes of the diocese. Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori promptly took appropriate steps to have Bishop Schofield certified as having abandoned the communion of TEC, writing to Bishop Schofield asking him to clarify his status, and submitting a request for a determination from the Title IV Review Committee as to whether the bishop had abandoned the church. As soon as she received that certification, she asked for and received the consent of the three senior diocesan bishops of the church, Bishops Frade, Wimberley, and Lee, to inhibit Schofield, that is, to declare that, for the present, he cannot exercise his episcopal ministry. The House of Bishops will complete the disciplinary process in March, when it will vote on deposition at its Camp Allen, Texas, meeting. Once the House of Bishops acts, Bishop Schofield’s status will be clear, at least as far as TEC is concerned, and the diocese can move forward in seeking appropriate episcopal oversight.

Bishop Schofield did not allow mission congregations to choose to remain in TEC. When he fired the priest of St. Nicholas Mission—ironically, on Christmas Day—TEC stepped in to pay his salary. The mission had declared its intent to remain in TEC. Since the congregation has been locked out of its building by the bishop, it is meeting in a community hall.

Those reorganizing also have the strong support of the President of the House of Deputies, Bonnie Anderson, who is to be keynote speaker at a diocesan-wide gathering of faithful Episcopalians on January 26. Anderson has visited the diocese several times to support Episcopalians there. Michael

Glass, an attorney who has worked with the House of Bishops committee on church property, has also been a strong supporter and advisor to those in San Joaquin who want to remain in the church. In the short time since the diocesan convention, funds and offers of assistance have begun to come into the diocese from Episcopalians and Anglicans around the world.

Meanwhile, the group now claiming to be in the Southern Cone seems poised to turn on itself. Some may be having second thoughts about the movement they had been supporting. Schofield dismissed the entire Standing Committee on January 19, 2008, supposedly for not making a clear commitment to the Southern Cone. There is no provision in the San Joaquin canons for a bishop to dismiss members of the Standing Committee, and it is unclear on what authority the former Episcopal bishop is now acting. Members of the Standing Committee had been strong supporters of the action taken at convention. Standing Committee members were not given the option of resigning.

THE SEVENTH ANNUAL EAST END PARISHES

Tuesday Night
Lenten Preaching
Series 2008



“Kindle our hearts and awaken hope”

6 P.M. Dinner • 7 P.M. Holy Eucharist with hymns and sermon

12 February

St. Andrew’s - 5801 Hampton Street, Highland Park
Preacher: The Rev. Jeffrey Murph, *Rector*, St. Thomas’, Oakmont

19 February

Calvary - 315 Shady Avenue at Walnut, Shadyside
Preacher: The Rev. Dr. James Simons, *Rector*, St. Michael’s, Ligonier

26 February

St. Stephen’s - 600 Pitt Street, Wilkinsburg
Preacher: The Rev. Louis Hays, *Rector*, St. Paul’s, Mt. Lebanon

4 March

Redeemer - 5700 Forbes Avenue, Squirrel Hill
Preacher: The Rev. Philip Wainwright, *Rector*, St. Peter’s, Brentwood

11 March

Holy Cross - 7507 Kelly Street, Homewood
Preacher: The Rev. Catherine Munz, *Rector*, St. Brendan’s, Franklin Park

Lord Jesus, stay with us, for evening is at hand and the day is past; be our companion in the way, kindle our hearts, and awaken hope, that we may know you as you are revealed in Scripture and the breaking of bread. Grant this for the sake of your love. *Amen.*

—A Collect for the Presence of Christ, *Book of Common Prayer*, page 124

The Saga of St. James the Less

A Cautionary Tale

By Kenneth Stiles, Esq.

The litigation involving the parish property of St. James the Less was not discussed by diocesan representatives at last summer's district meetings, nor was anything about it posted on the Parish Toolbox Web site. This is unfortunate because the Pennsylvania law stated in this case is of utmost importance to parishes in the Diocese of Pittsburgh thinking of leaving the Episcopal Church. (TEC).

The parish of St. James the Less was a small parish of eighty or so members, located in the Allegheny West area of North Philadelphia, in the Diocese of Pennsylvania. It was founded in 1846, and its church building is recognized as a National Historic Landmark. In the late 1970s, parishioners objected to changes taking place in TEC regarding divorce and remarriage, the ordination of women to the priesthood, and what were viewed as major doctrinal changes in the prayer book. Their response was to prevent their bishop from making his visits, inviting a bishop of their choosing instead. In 1997, the newly consecrated diocesan bishop refused to honor this practice, and the parish felt it had to separate from TEC.

In 1999, the vestry transferred all church property to a new corporation that was independent of the TEC. Then followed a year of discussion with the Diocese, during which the parish offered to engage in mediation over ownership of the property. The vestry believed that the parish owned the property because it held title to it and because the deeds and corporate records granted the diocese no rights in it. The parish could, therefore, leave TEC and take its property with it.

The parish declared, "The Bishop and Diocese claim that the parishioners did not have the right to withdraw from the Episcopal Church and take their property

with them. The parishioners say that they most certainly do have the right to decide what their religious beliefs will be and whether or not their beliefs and personal consciences allow them to be part of the Episcopal Church. The parishioners fully intend to stay in the property they own, continue to serve their neighbors as they always have, and hold the religious views that the members of the parish have held since the parish was first founded." After the litigation began, the parish said, in its press release, "The parishioners are going to court well-prepared to defend themselves. They believe that they are in the right—legally and morally. Many people depend on them—they will not back down. They are confident that they will prevail."

In July of 2001, the diocese sued the parish for possession of the property. The diocese won at the trial court (No. 958 NP of 2001), but the parish appealed. In this litigation, it was represented by two large, well-respected Philadelphia law firms. The lead counsel was a past president of the American Bar Association. However, Commonwealth Court agreed, 5 to 1 with the trial court (833 A.2d 319) and held against the parish once again. The parish appealed to the Pennsylvania Supreme Court (888 A.2d 795), where it lost for the third and final time. The litigation process took four and one-half years, and the legal costs exhausted the parish's financial reserves.

The Supreme Court based its decision on several points. First, it did not matter that the parish had, over the decades, purchased and built facilities with no help from the diocese, or that the deeds said nothing about a trust interest held by the diocese or TEC. Second, the court found that the Dennis Cannon had been properly adopted by TEC and was binding on the parish, even though the parish had never agreed to it. The Dennis Cannon (Canon I.7.4), was adopted by the General Convention in 1979 to codify the longstanding under-

standing that the church had a trust interest in parish property. It provided that "[a]ll real and personal property held by or for the benefit of any Parish, Mission or Congregation is held in trust for this Church and the Diocese thereof in which such Parish, Mission or Congregation is located."

The Supreme Court affirmed that Pennsylvania law required the use of "neutral principles of law" in cases about the ownership of religious properties. Applying these principles to this Episcopal parish, the Supreme Court found, by a 5 to 0 margin, that there was indeed a trust imposed on the property, so that the parish could not leave TEC and take the property with it. The Supreme Court also agreed with the trial court and Commonwealth Court that the vestry of St. James the Less had acted in bad faith and breached its fiduciary duties, making vestry members individually liable both for damages suffered by the reconstituted parish for the loss of assets and for expenses incurred by the diocese in pursuing the lawsuit.

In late November, I made a side trip in search of St. James the Less. What I found was an English Gothic church sited in the middle of a medium-sized cemetery. It had been built in the mid-nineteenth-century as an exact replica of a small parish church in England. The cemetery was enclosed by a high stone wall that gave a feeling of peace and serenity in an urban setting. All gates but one were chained shut. The open gate was unlocked only because someone from Massachusetts had wanted to visit a particular grave. The church itself was locked, and there was no sign of life save for the bells programmed to toll the hour in the detached bell tower. Across a small lane was another walled cemetery surrounding the rectory and parish hall. All of those gates here were chained shut. The site has stood vacant since early 2006, and the diocese has been unable to reopen it because the endowments necessary to operate the parish are gone. No one knows what will become of the church.

Avoiding Schism at the Creation

By Joan Gundersen

As the American Revolution drew to a close, those who had been members of the Church of England set about creating a church that would fit with the new nation. What many people may not know is that the founders of The Episcopal Church in the 1780s narrowly avoided a schism that would have created two Episcopal Churches in the U.S., rather than one united body. At the center of the division were the roles of laity and bishops in the church.

No Anglican bishop served in the Colonies before the Revolution. The Bishop of London exercised some oversight under the authority of special royal charters. Several eighteenth-century campaigns to have a bishop sent to the Colonies all failed because of opposition to the judicial and secular powers exercised by English bishops. Colonial efforts increasingly proposed appointment of bishops with powers limited to spiritual matters exercised only over members of the Church of England. This model of episcopacy was written into the constitution and canons of the American church at both national and state levels. When Parliament finally passed legislation clearing the way for consecration of bishops for Nova Scotia and the U.S., that legislation also adopted the notion of an episcopacy limited to spiritual matters.

Colonial parishes had almost no experience of working together as a church. Thus, they had to build both state and national church structures from scratch in the 1780s. Those supporting the new nation and its political ideals took the lead. Efforts began during the War for Independence. From the beginning, in the Middle Atlantic and Southern states, laity worked with the clergy in the conventions held to organize simultaneously at the national and state levels. These conventions wrote constitutions

and canons, beginning their work before any bishops had been consecrated for the new nation. A planning convention in 1784 proposed a constitution for a general church and called the first General Convention the next year. States were invited to send both clergy and lay deputies. The first General Convention, meeting in 1785, was unicameral, composed only of a House of Deputies. At the time, there were no bishops and no dioceses. (Not until 1838 would the church officially refer to state conventions as dioceses.)

When the General Convention first met, not only were many of the state conventions still in the process of writing constitutions and canons, but some of them were still struggling to free themselves from legislative oversight. Many of the canons drafted by state conventions gave bishops very limited powers and anticipated that the bishop, if and when one was consecrated for the state, would serve also as a parish priest. The 1785 General Convention drafted both a constitution and a proposed Book of Common Prayer. Church leaders used the draft prayer book and constitution in the negotiations with English bishops leading to the consecration of Bishops William White of Pennsylvania and Samuel Provoost of New York in 1787.

New England was an exception to this pattern. In Connecticut, clergy who had supported the British met secretly in 1783 to choose one of their number, Samuel Seabury, to go to England to seek consecration as a bishop. These clergy did not believe a diocese could organize until there was a bishop. More elitist and less enamored of representative government than their Southern counterparts, they excluded laity from all but the temporal affairs of the church. New Englanders were absent from the 1785 General Convention, and, when Seabury returned in late 1785 after his consecration by Scottish bishops, division increased. Seabury opposed the participation of laity in General Convention and was appalled to find that the pro-

posed constitution for the general church had no separate House of Bishops. Furthermore, he found the draft prayer book unacceptable. In turn, those participating in General Convention distrusted Seabury's Scottish consecration and the former loyalist's elitism. The General Convention focused on getting bishops consecrated in England and refused full recognition to Seabury as a bishop. It appeared that the new nation was about to have two Episcopal churches divided by theology and their conception of church polity at both the state and national levels.

The 1787 General Convention delayed ratification of the general constitution because not all of the deputies had been given the authority to bind their state conventions. The constitution included no separation of powers or powers reserved to state conventions. Once the deputies acceded to the constitution, General Convention's actions would be binding, even if a state's deputies were absent or opposed a particular decision.

From 1787 to 1789, the convention negotiated with Bishop Seabury to head off schism. Even though Connecticut was absent from the July session of the General Convention in 1789, the convention provided for a House of Bishops (whose negative vote could be overridden by a two-thirds majority of deputies), recognized the validity of Bishop Seabury's orders, ratified the constitution, and then called a recess to allow final negotiations with the New Englanders.

When the General Convention reconvened in September, deputies altered the constitution to require a four-fifths majority to override a negative vote by the House of Bishops. Bishop Seabury not only attended, but presided at the House of Bishops meeting as senior bishop. Seabury's objections to the proposed liturgy also were addressed. The constitution avoided requiring a state deputation to include both lay and clergy deputies at General Convention. Connecticut sent only clergy to General

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Avoiding Schism

Convention, refusing for many years to exercise its right to elect lay deputies, and it continued to limit lay participation in diocesan governance. Connecticut realized that once it acceded to the constitution and canons, it lost its independence, and General Convention could and would make decisions about faith and order. Connecticut did what it could to increase the power of bishops in General Convention, but it then accepted what it considered a less than perfect arrangement. In typically Anglican fashion, each side maintained its position while finding room for the other, thus averting what would have been a disastrous schism for Episcopalians.

PEP Contributions Tax-exempt

PEP was formed in the spring of 2003 and was chartered as a Pennsylvania non-profit corporation in 2004. In a letter dated December 13, 2007, the IRS informed us of its determination that PEP is "exempt from Federal income tax under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code" and that contributions to PEP "are deductible under section 170 of the Code." PEP is now a "public charity" under Federal regulations. Moreover, the effective date of this status is February 2, 2004.

Board member Lionel Deimel, who managed the process that resulted in the IRS determination, said, "This represents an important milestone for PEP. Some people have been reluctant to make larger contributions because such gifts were understood not to be tax-deductible. As our diocese moves closer to crisis, the IRS ruling will make it easier for PEP to obtain the resources it needs to educate Pittsburgh Episcopalians and to coordinate activities among leaders and parishes."

PEP Board Sets Meeting Dates

As is required by its bylaws, the PEP Board of Directors set the schedule of 2008 general meetings when it met in January. Except as noted, meetings begin at 7:30 PM and, typically, offer a program and, at most, a short business session.

Meeting locations for some dates are still uncertain as this goes to press and will be available soon on the PEP Web site under "Calendar." With rare exceptions, meetings are held on Monday nights.

The meeting schedule for the first half of 2008 is the following:

- January 28: St. Paul's, Mt. Lebanon (lower undercroft)
- March 3: St. Brendan's, Franklin Park
- April 7: Calvary, East Liberty (potluck supper at 6:30 PM, 7:15 PM meeting)
- May 5: St. Stephen's, Wilkinsburg
- June 3: Location to be announced

Absalom Jones Day

The annual celebration of Absalom Jones Day will be held at Trinity Cathedral on Saturday, February 2, 2008. Absalom Jones (1746-1818), was the first African-American Episcopal priest.

Events begin with a Eucharist at 10:30 AM. The Rev. Melana Nelson-Amaker is guest speaker for the event, whose theme is "Building Up the Kingdom by Breaking Down Walls." The program includes lunch, song and drama, and a town meeting with a panel that will include Nelson-Amaker.

More information is available from Gladys Hunt-Mason, at (412) 672-8490. Tickets are \$8 per person, in advance (\$9 at the door), or \$15 per family (\$16 at the door).

Three Pittsburgh Parishes Call New Leaders

Several recent changes in staffing of clergy in the Diocese of Pittsburgh have given three of our parishes excellent leaders to guide and pastor them.

At St. Thomas', Canonsburg, the Rev. Martha Eilertsen and her family moved back to Spokane, Washington, where their families live. St. Thomas' called the Rev. Chuck Weiss, and his institution as new rector was celebrated on November 17, 2007. Chuck grew up at St. Paul's, Mt. Lebanon, and was Youth Director there for several years before attending Virginia Theological Seminary. Chuck remains chaplain at St. Edmunds Academy, a private school in Squirrel Hill.

The Rev. Nano Chalfant-Walker served as interim at St. Paul's, Mt. Lebanon, after the departure of the Rev. Robert Banse, and she provided strong leadership through its period of transition. Her interim tenure ended with the arrival of the Rev. Lou Hays, leaving Nano free to seek another call. In October 2007, Nano became priest-in-charge at St. Stephen's in Wilkinsburg. She will serve in that capacity for at least a year.

The Rev. Lou Hays was called to be the new rector of St. Paul's after a long search process. He was installed by Bishop Duncan on December 22, 2007. Lou had been rector of St. Andrews' Episcopal Church in Madison, Connecticut, for six years before coming to St. Paul's. Lou's academic credentials include a JD from UCLA School of Law and a Master's in Public Health from Johns Hopkins, as well as a Master of Divinity from Virginia Theological Seminary. Prior to entering seminary, Lou enjoyed a successful secular career in the Baltimore/Washington area in public health and government agencies. He is committed to the Episcopal Church and active in the Diocese of Pittsburgh.

Parish Life Continues after Somerset Split

On January 20, St. Francis-in-the-Fields in Somerset began a new chapter in its life as an Episcopal parish. Its former rector, the Rev. Mark Zimmerman, had set up an Anglican “fellowship” in a storefront less than a mile away, offering Sunday services at the same time as St. Francis. Remaining parishioners attracted 43 worshippers to the 9:00 AM service, despite bitter cold temperatures.

The congregation has announced that it intends to continue all the usual parish activities and events, including the annual Shrove Tuesday pancake supper that attracts many from the community. The parish is currently depending on supply clergy, but the congregation hopes to start a search soon. The Rev. James Simons, rector of St. Michael’s of the Valley, Ligonier, presented a forum for St. Francis on January 22 to encourage members to stay in the parish and in The Episcopal Church (TEC).

Bishop Duncan, meanwhile, has announced that the new “Anglican fellowship” is also part of the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh, even while admitting that its members have left TEC.

St. Francis-in-the-Fields parishioners are busy putting the word “Episcopal” back on bulletins, newspaper ads, and their redesigned Web site. If you are in the area, be sure to stop in and worship with our fellow Episcopalians at St. Francis.

Did you know?



You can now join PEP on-line.



You can even contribute to PEP or pay dues on-line.



Go to [http:// - progressiveepiscopalians.org/html/ - join_us_.html](http://progressiveepiscopalians.org/html/join_us_.html)

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PEP

It is probably unfortunate that Pittsburgh conservatives—I grant the inadequacy of such labels—never felt the need for an organization like they believed PEP to be; they had the diocese to speak for them. That is no longer true for some. There is a growing recognition that the conservatives staying with TEC must begin talking to everyone else who is staying. Fortunately, this is beginning to happen, and we can expect soon to see announcements of diocesan-wide meetings to which all Episcopalians are invited and to which Episcopalians of all stripes are expected to come. The time of small private (or secret) meetings is past. Working together is essential.

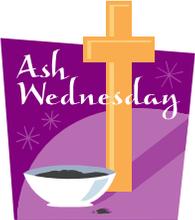
As Remain Episcopal is filling an important leadership role in the rebuilding of San Joaquin (see story, page 3), PEP will have a role in the future Diocese of Pittsburgh. The rebuilding must and should include many people not now members of PEP. PEP cannot become the new diocese nor usurp the role of parishes, but it can inform, encourage, and help co-ordinate efforts as part of a broad partnership. As Remain Episcopal is doing in San Joaquin, it may even collect and distribute funds and the many implements needed for worship.

Dare I suggest that conservatives might even consider becoming PEP members? This idea may seem odd (or even anathema), but it should not be. PEP really is, as its Web-site banner proclaims, “Committed to the Unity and Diversity of The Episcopal Church.” That diversity necessarily includes Evangelicals, Anglo-Catholics, and others identifying with positions other than liberal.

A button distributed by PEP at a diocesan convention a few years back proclaimed that “The Episcopal Church Welcomes All.” That may not be absolutely true—it would be counterproductive to welcome those who are unwilling to abide by the rules of the church in pursuit of some agenda—but it is

as true as anything likely to be printed on a button.

Everyone staying in TEC should consider coming to a PEP meeting and working with us for a vibrant Episcopal Church we can all be blessed to be part of. Let’s all start working together.



Plan to attend services at your local parish

February 6, 2008

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Getting to “Us”

will healing take place until the understanding is clear that we are one, bound together “in a bundle of life” (Tutu, page 31), “a delicate network of interdependence...” (Tutu, page 35). And Bishop Tutu acknowledged over and over that he could not have survived the enormous stress of the ongoing hearings without constancy in prayer and hope in God.

What, then, might help us move from “we and they” to “us”? Consider the following:

1. Be willing to listen to one another; acknowledge harm done, even when disagreement continues; expect truthfulness of one another; and honor the other’s integrity.
2. Recognize that we belong together and must make room for one another within a common house—give spiritual room to one another, theological room, room within the new leadership, and room created by mutual protection.
3. Pray constantly; pray together; pray that, with God’s grace and blessing, a way of healing and blessing will open for us together.

Comment

PEP and the Once and Future Diocese

By Lionel Deimel

Bishop Duncan has declared his intention to remove the Diocese of Pittsburgh from The Episcopal Church (TEC) and to “realign” it somehow within the Anglican Communion. The specter of a coming split in the diocese is made even more real by the likelihood that he will be relieved of all his positions of responsibility within the church before his plan can be put into effect. Pittsburgh Episcopalians should be planning for a quite different future diocese. As the Rev. Diane Shepard suggests in her front-page essay, everyone who expects to be part of that future diocese should be in on the planning.

Progressive Episcopalians of Pittsburgh will be five years old this spring, a fact that may surprise people who believe that PEP was formed to lobby for a newly

elected Gene Robinson. The anniversary encourages reflection and speculation about PEP’s future.

PEP was formed in response to the realization that our diocese had become, in its theological orientation, increasingly monochromatic and intolerant. Its founders sought both greater respect for diversity and greater actual diversity.

The first meeting I attended was the one at which PEP’s name was adopted. Discussion focused on whether the name should include “of” or “in,” but the tension between whether PEP was to be “progressive”—an advocate for the left—or centrist—an advocate for broad theological tolerance—was present from the beginning. It became increasingly clear that what was most needed was support for the great Anglican formula of ecclesiastical peace through common worship and tolerance of diverse theological understandings. Preserving the Elizabethan Compromise, the pragmatic act of statecraft that proved to be one of the

great theological concepts of all time, was the clear goal in 2004 when PEP helped form Via Media USA, an alliance of like-minded groups. The goal is reflected in PEP’s bylaws, which describe PEP as “dedicated to maintaining the health and unity of the Episcopal Church,” affirming “the broad inclusivity that has been the Anglican tradition,” and calling “all to strive for justice and peace and to respect the dignity of every human being.”

I was impressed when an Albany group chose the name “Albany Via Media,” and I once made a proposal to change PEP’s name to “Via Media Pittsburgh.” By that time, however, it was argued that “PEP” was well-known and the change would weaken “brand recognition.” That some, particularly in Pittsburgh, viewed PEP as radical and quarrelsome, might have made that a good thing, but the proposal was rejected.

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PEPtalk

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