

Meeting of the Northern Convocation

On Wednesday evening, November 9, accompanied by Dick Young, Katherine and Anna Young attended the Fall Convocation at Trinity Church, Cranford.

The meeting began, after the usual “housekeeping” items, with a talk by Bishop Councill in which he showed the kind of intelligence, warmth and enthusiasm with which he spoke recently at St. Luke’s. Bishop Councill talked about 5 areas of funding that he was very pleased to have accomplished this year based on the Fair Share or Tithe from the Parishes. The Bishop explained that the Tithe is the minimum standard of giving. Among the “hand-outs” with which we returned from the meeting is a Stewardship Statement signed by the members of the Diocesan Council, among whom are Phil Carr-Jones and Ed Zelley. Of the 160 congregations in our Diocese, 10 made no pledge or payment in 2004 or 2005, 33 gave only the Tithe in 2004 and 26 in 2005, and 65 congregations gave less than the Tithe in 2005, 62 in 2004. We can be very proud of St. Luke’s for working toward our Tithe and making this an important goal.

The 5 areas of funding the Bishop highlighted were:

1. Fulfilling the Diocesan Pledge to National. There was a time NJ could not do that and now we can. The Bishop serves on the joint standing committee on finances. NJ is asked to give roughly 21% of its income to National.
2. 2. Millenium Development Goals. Cut in half by 2015 extreme poverty (<\$1.00 income per day). NJ budgeted 0.7% of our income to organizations that support the Millenium Dev. Goals (\$10,000 to ERD for primary healthcare in the Congo and \$10,000 to Huntington College of Nursing in Liberia to fund 5 female students).
3. Double the support of Trinity Cathedral.
4. Communications-hire a director of communications, Cynthia McFarland. One of the visible results of this is the new New Jersey Episcopalian.
5. Visioning Process-budgeted \$15,000 for visioning, and a steering committee has been appointed.

Next came talks by members of the Diocesan Council and the Cathedral Staff. Jay Ham, of Red Bank, a lay member of the Diocesan Council, expressed his joy in working with the Council and in visiting parishes or convocations from time to time as a part of his work with the Council. He encouraged participation in the Diocese, noting that the Diocese is not in Trenton, it is throughout our territory and includes all of us.

Canon Servio Moscoso of Iglesia San Jose in Elizabeth spoke eloquently on the subject of stewardship. He expressed his own church’s commitment to support the Diocese and stressed the fact that every church and every member is a part of the diocesan family.

Kep Short (oddly named, because he is a very tall, lanky individual), Canon for Youth Ministry, described some of the uncomfortable places in which he often finds himself (on a cot in a tent, for example) and assured us it was well worth it in order to work with the

young people of the Diocese. He has been doing this work for many years, and still looks like one of the kids himself.

We also heard from Elizabeth Geitz, who was assigned to St. Luke's some time ago, when she was discerning her call to the priesthood, and who is superbly well placed as Canon for Ministry Development.

There was a discussion of Episcopal Relief and Development and the many needs which it addresses. A "hand-out" itemized a great many of these needs and listed the nine provinces and the dioceses of which they are formed. Province 2 contributed \$1,305,985.04 between January 1 and June 30, 2005, of which \$518,243.73 was contributed by 1,442 donors in the Diocese of New Jersey.

There was a general discussion of ways to bring people together to worship not on Sunday, in order not to compete with soccer games. Katherine Young mentioned, in the same vein, that St. Luke's, Metuchen, offers Bible study not only on Sunday mornings, but also on Wednesdays, after the healing service, and on Sunday evenings, which has proved to be a popular time: three different approaches to Bible study, three different times in the week. St. Luke's is a leader again.

Respectfully submitted,
Anna and Katherine Young