

The Episcopal Diocesan Convention

Nov 6-7, 2015

St Paul's Cathedral, Burlington

I. Call to convention by Bishop Ely

The Bishop talked about *Jazzed about God's Mission* (the theme of the convention) as a improvisational blending of voices in jazz music, which he likened to the conversation of diverse voices with different stories and backgrounds and which he described as "an unselfish opening to what the other is offering and a willingness to help others be brilliant as possible."

He reminded us again of the Vermont diocese's call to become more missional, saying that "one of the most important components of diocesan ministry is the support and encouragement of ministry at the local level – where the "rubber meets the road".

From the Rutland convocation in June, 2015 came a resolution "to name, share and support the local ministry approach of each congregation ... as it moves to discover in greater depth what God is up to in our neighborhoods and communities".

"I believe we need to increase our awareness of and attention to the root causes of economic injustice, income inequality, environmental justice, racism, bias on the basis of gender identity and expression, violence in its many forms including gun violence ... Our faith communities and buildings need to be known as places of sanctuary and welcome, places of hospitality and healing, places of compassion and justice." - Bishop Ely

The diocese will implement this mission as it reviews loan and grant programs and the mission of Rock Point. The resolution does not offer a general roadmap but encourages each congregation to determine it's best "local approach to mission and ministry".

Following this, we enjoyed a delightful production, *Out of the Lion's Mouth*, a reworking of the tale of Daniel in the lion's den in a musical mystery play with piano, clarinet and the brilliant St Michael's Choir School chorus.

II. Day Two -- Business Meeting.

We heard reports from a number of sources including:

The Brookhaven Treatment Center in Chelsea, VT which provides clinical, educational and family retreats for an average of 15 boys with severe emotion-

al and learning difficulties.

The Canons Committee, the Commission on Ministry, the Committee on Discernment and the Communications ministry which played a prominent role in the convention with excellent audiovisual presentations. The diocesan website, www.diovermont.org, offers an excellent clearinghouse for news, governance and resources of the diocese. A link for the convention provides further links to Bishop Ely's address, reports, budgets and resolutions passed.

Resolutions passed included:

A. ...to continue support of the Sustainable Development goals of the United Nations

B. ... requesting the Presiding Bishop to convene an interfaith coalition to provide moral leadership for the establishment of economic justice in our country. I encourage you to have a look at this discussion of economic justice and the churches role in addressing this issue.

C. ... The Local Mission Resolution which calls on ...

"... each congregation in the Episcopal Diocese of Vermont commit to an intentional and renewed exploration of its approach to Local Mission during the course of the next two years (2016 and 2017) in order to deepen our common understanding and practice of becoming more missional."

In the discussion of this resolution, speakers made a distinction between ministry and mission, saying that this resolution challenges us with the mission to step beyond traditional outreach into our neighborhoods -- what another called our "faith habitat" -- increasing our attention, involvement and openness to discover new partners. Another speaker said "ours is a small parish with few resources. Are you telling us that we no longer have an excuse" to not be involved.

So, what is becoming more missional. I'm not sure. There is no roadmap but it is certain that each congregation will be called and will be supported to be more deeply involved in the larger community, in new ways, with greater openness to new partners in our "Jesus revolution".

- delegates Jon Morey and Durrelle Whitmore