

The e-Vangel

June 2009

The Episcopal Church
Office of Public Affairs

Presiding Bishop's letter to the church on General Convention

"Above all else, this Convention claimed God's mission as the heartbeat of The Episcopal Church"

[July 22, 2009] Episcopal Church Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori has issued a letter to the church about General Convention 2009.

General Convention 2009 was held July 8 to July 17 at the Anaheim Convention Center in California (Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles).

The following is the Presiding Bishop's letter.

My brothers and sisters in Christ:

The 76th General Convention is now history, though it will likely take some time before we are all reasonably clear about what the results are.

We gathered in Anaheim, as guests of the Diocese of Los Angeles, for eleven full days of worship, learning, and policy-making. The worship was stunning visually, musically, and liturgically, with provocative preaching and lively singing.

Our learning included training in Public Narrative, as well as news about the emergent church, in the LA Night presentation.

We welcomed a number of visitors from other parts of the Anglican Communion, including 15 of the primates (archbishops or presiding bishops), other bishops, clergy, and laity.

You can see and hear all this and more at the Media Hub: <http://gchub.episcopalchurch.org/>

The budget adopted represents a significant curtailment of church-wide ministry efforts, in recognition of the economic realities of many dioceses and church endowments, which will

result in the loss of a number of Church Center staff who have given long and laudable service. Yet we will continue to serve God’s mission, throughout The Episcopal Church and beyond. This budget expects that more mission work will continue or begin to take place at diocesan or congregational levels. Religious pilgrims, from the Israelites in the desert to Episcopalians in Alaska or Haiti, have always learned that times of leanness are opportunities for strengthened faith and creativity.

As a Church, we have deepened our commitments to mission and ministry with "the least of these" (Matthew 25). We included a budgetary commitment of 0.7% to the Millennium Development Goals, through the NetsforLife® program partnership of Episcopal Relief & Development. That is in addition to approximately 15% of the budget already committed to international development work.

We have committed to a domestic poverty initiative, meant to explore coherent and constructive responses to some of the worst poverty statistics in the Americas: Native American reservations and indigenous communities.

Justice is the goal, as we revised our canons (church rules) having to do with clergy discipline, both as an act of solidarity with those who may suffer at the hands of clergy and an act of pastoral concern for clergy charged with misconduct.

The General Convention adopted a health plan to serve all clergy and lay employees, which is expected to be a cost-savings across the whole of the United States portion of the Church. Work continues to ensure adequate health coverage in the non-U.S. parts of this Church. The Convention also mandated pension coverage for lay employees.

Liturgical additions were also included in the Convention’s work, from more saints on the calendar to prayers around reproductive loss.

What captured the headlines across the secular media, however, had to do with two resolutions, the consequences of which were often misinterpreted or exaggerated. One, identified as D025, is titled “Anglican Communion: Commitment and Witness to Anglican Communion.” It

- reaffirms our commitment to and desire to pursue mission with the Anglican Communion;
- reiterates our commitment to Listening Process urged by Lambeth Conferences of 1978, 1988, and 1998;
- notes that our own participation in the listening process led General Convention in 2000 to “recognize that the baptized membership of The Episcopal Church includes same-sex couples living in lifelong committed relationships ‘characterized by fidelity, monogamy, mutual affection and respect, careful, honest communication, and the holy love which enables those in such relationships to see in each other the image of God’”;
- recognizes that ministry, both lay and ordained is being exercised by such persons in response to God’s call;

- notes that the call to ordained ministry is God’s call, is a mystery, and that the Church participates in that mystery through the process of discernment;
- acknowledges that the members of The Episcopal Church, and of the Anglican Communion, are not of one mind, and that faithful Christians disagree about some of these matters.

The other resolution that received a lot of press is C056, titled “Liturgies for Blessings.” The text adopted was a substitute for the original, yet the title remains unchanged. It

- acknowledges changing circumstances in the U.S. and elsewhere, in that civil jurisdictions in some places permit marriage, civil unions, and/or domestic partnerships involving same-sex couples, that call for a pastoral response from this Church;
- asks the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music, and the House of Bishops, to collect and develop theological and liturgical resources for such pastoral response, and report to the next General Convention;
- asks those bodies to invite comment and participation from other parts of this Church and the Anglican Communion;
- notes that bishops may provide generous pastoral responses to the needs of members of this Church;
- asks the Convention to honor the theological diversity of this Church in regard to matters of human sexuality.

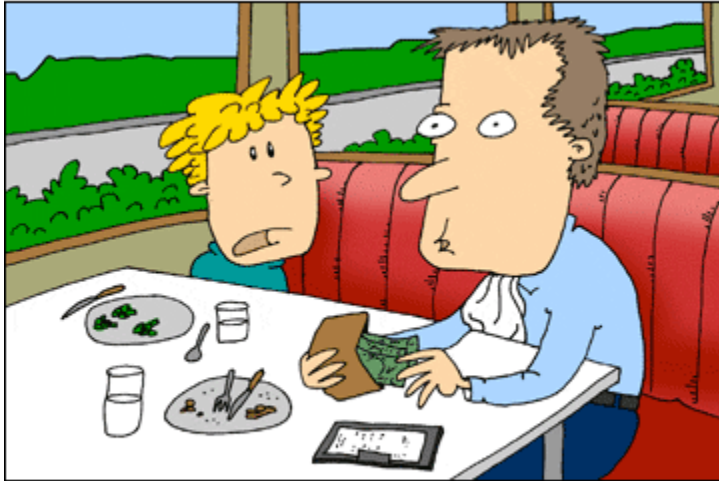
The full text of both resolutions is available here: <http://gc2009.org/ViewLegislation/>

I urge you to read them for yourself. Some have insisted that these resolutions repudiate our relationships with other members of the Anglican Communion. My sense is that we have been very clear that we value our relationships within and around the Communion, and seek to deepen them. My sense as well is that we cannot do that without being honest about who and where we are. We are obviously not of one mind, and likely will not be until Jesus returns in all his glory. We are called by God to continue to wrestle with the circumstances in which we live and move and have our being, and to do it as carefully and faithfully as we are able, in companionship with those who disagree vehemently and agree wholeheartedly. It is only in that wrestling that we, like Jacob, will begin to discern the leading of the Spirit and the blessing of relationship with God.

Above all else, this Convention claimed God’s mission as the heartbeat of The Episcopal Church. I encourage every member of this Church to enter into conversation in your own congregation or diocese about God’s mission, and where you and your faith community are being invited to enter more deeply into caring for your neighbors, the “least of these” whom Jesus befriends.

***The Most Rev. Katharine Jefferts Schori
Presiding Bishop and Primate
The Episcopal Church***

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Thanks to Shirley Ostrander

01-15-2004

HOW COME THE WAITRESS GETS 15% AND GOD ONLY GETS 10%?

<http://videos.komando.com/2009/06/18/african-thunderstorm/>

Outreach at St. Andrew's, Polson:

The following is a report on the efforts of Outreach Committee:

- *Loaves and Fishes* received 10 cases of canned food, along with a cash donation of \$100. We have also contacted the *Project Hope Foundation Haiti* and will send them a check next month.
- Plans are being made for Art in the Park, our major summer fund raiser. All profits from our efforts go to local charities – *Loaves and Fishes*, *CASA*, & *Helping Hands*, each receiving a third of the net for the past two years. This year we are adding a fourth - *The Rector's Fund*.

John, Bill, Liz, Chris and I have been actively planning an expanded menu to include Ice Cream, Chocolates (thanks to Kathy Farmer), Ice Tea, Lemonade, Pork, Beef, & Chicken Sandwiches.

You can see that we have ambitious plans, but we need your help! You may volunteer by talking with any member of the committee or by signing the sheet on the bulletin board. This is great fun and really demonstrates the motto of the committee, LOVE THY NEIGHBOR!

Thank you in advance for your help and encouragement.
Respectfully,

Jack Guns

Quartz Flat Rest Area

Preparations for the Quartz Flat Rest Area Coffee Shop are progressing very well. As of Sunday, there were 50 dozen cookies in the freezer, on our way to 150 dozen! If you bring cookies to church and I am not there, just get the key for the storage shed and put the cookies in the freezer.

There have been some changes from last year's operation. We will be operating on both sides of the Interstate for four days instead of just one side. The dates of operation are Sat. July 25th through Tue. July 28th.

Doreen and I will take our RV over and stay the entire four days and Keith Lanier will stay on the other side. We will need help during the day manning the stations. There should be two people on duty at all times from about 10:00 am to 5:00 pm. We will keep the stations open until about 7:00 pm, but Keith and I can handle the last two hours. There will be a sign-up sheet posted on the bulletin board for those who want to help.

The Quartz Flat Rest Area is located about 35 miles West of Missoula, just West of Tarkio. I thank all of you for your support and help on this project, specially the cookie makers!

Vern

The Big Sky Chapel to Celebrate Tenth Anniversary

*All are welcome, all are welcome,
All are welcome in this place.*

--Marty Haugen

In the early 1990s, a small group of Big Sky residents explored the idea of building a year round, permanent place of worship in the Meadow Village. A place where all would be welcome. With the Kircher family's donation of a two-acre parcel for the site and the community's financial and moral support, ground was broken for The Big Sky Chapel on Mother's Day, 1998. Exactly one year later, on May 9, 1999, The Big Sky Chapel was dedicated in an ecumenical ceremony.

Ten years after the dedication--in an amazing ecumenical exercise--Catholic, Episcopal, Lutheran, and Christian Fellowship congregations attend services in The Chapel on Sunday mornings. And over the last ten years, The Chapel has become more than just a place to worship on Sunday. It has been the site of baptisms, First Communion, Confirmations, weddings, funerals, Sunday school classes, vacation bible school, youth fellowship, bible studies for adults. In addition, The Chapel serves as a meeting hall for the community and has

provided a warm, intimate venue for concerts, piano recitals, and other performances.

To celebrate and acknowledge the integral role that The Chapel plays in the Big Sky community, an anniversary party will be held on Sunday, August 30, from 12:30 PM to 2:30 PM at The Chapel. Lunch, refreshments, and entertainment for the whole family will be on tap. Please mark your calendars and plan to join all of Big Sky in celebrating The Chapel's tenth anniversary. As always, "all are welcome in this place!"

For additional information, contact:

Diane Lundsten, Chapel Manager, (406) 995-3336

Patricia Scott, 995-3006

Four different congregations (Catholic, Episcopalian, Lutheran, and Christian Fellowship) have worked together to share on building or worship services, meetings, religious education programs. It truly has been a wonderful ecumenical experience for all involved, and it could make for compelling reading. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact Diane Lundsten (Chapel Manager) at (406) 995-3336 or Pat Scott at (406) 995-3006.

Clay Balls

A man was exploring caves by the seashore. In one of the caves he found a canvas bag with a bunch of hardened clay balls. It was like someone had rolled clay balls and left them out in the sun to bake. They didn't look like much, but they intrigued the man, so he took the bag out of the cave with him. As he strolled along the beach, he would throw the clay balls one at a time out into the ocean as far as he could.

He thought little about it, until he dropped one of the clay balls and it cracked open on a rock. Inside was a beautiful, precious stone!

Excited, the man started breaking open the remaining clay balls. Each contained a similar treasure. He found thousands of dollars worth of jewels in the 20 or so clay balls he had left.

Then it struck him. He had been on the beach a long time. He had thrown maybe 50 or 60 of the clay balls with their hidden treasure into the ocean waves. Instead

*of thousands of dollars in treasure, he could have taken home tens of thousands,
but he had just thrown it away!*

*It's like that with people. We look at someone, maybe even ourselves, and we see
the external clay vessel. It doesn't look like much from the outside. It isn't always
beautiful or sparkling, so we discount it.*

*We see that person as less important than someone more beautiful or stylish or well
known or wealthy. But we have not taken the time to find the treasure hidden
inside that person.*

*There is a treasure in each and every one of us. If we take the time to get to know
that person, and if we ask God to show us that person the way He sees them, then
the clay begins to peel away and the brilliant gem begins to shine forth.*

*May we not come to the end of our lives and find out that we have thrown away a
fortune in friendships because the gems were hidden in bits of clay. May we see the
people in our world as God sees them.*

*I am so blessed by the gems of friendship I have with you. Thank you for looking
beyond *my clay vessel*.*

*APPRECIATE EVERY SINGLE THING YOU HAVE, ESPECIALLY YOUR
FRIENDS! LIFE IS TOO SHORT AND FRIENDS ARE TOO FEW!*

Taking Chance

A highly recommended film based on a true story starring Kevin Bacon as a Marine colonel escorting the remains of an enlisted fellow Marine from Dover Air Force Base in Maine to (ostensibly) the Marine's home town in Wyoming. Those of you with a sharp eye will quickly note that the aircraft carrying the casket doesn't land in what is supposed to be Billings – it actually lands in Bozeman and is escorted down highways 84 and 287 to Jeffers. The Rev. Karen Hall, the rector of Trinity in Jeffers explains:

Our only involvement was to let the cast and crew use the church which was quickly re-
visioned as a funeral home, so Trinity was not mentioned at all in the credits. The
interesting piece however, is that the crew that managed the lights inside the church

damaged our carpet, so we got a new carpet and a small honorarium for the use of the church. But the whole community was involved in one way or another.

Karen

Rent or buy the film and make sure you have your Kleenex at the ready!

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The Episcopal Diocese of Montana, 515 North Park Avenue, Helena MT 59601-2703.

Tel: 406.442.2230. Toll free: 800.347.1291. Fax: 406.442.2238.

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