

Weekly e-Epistle

Saint James' Episcopal Church, Mill Creek Hundred
Wilmington, Delaware

August 4, 2016



"For it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." (Luke 12:32)

This Sunday, August 7th, we hear Jesus encouraging his followers to not be afraid and to keep alert to the promise of God's kingdom and the unfailing treasure that awaits us in heaven. While not rejecting the goodness that we enjoy in this life and the beauty of Creation, they are not

ours to possess forever. For each of us there will come the day or night when our earthly life will end. And what then? Our faith, grounded in the person of Jesus, God's eternal Son, is rooted in the promise that nothing, not even death, will separate us from the love of God. So, where there is love there can be no fear.

Capital Campaign Projects & Storm Damage The replacement of the old drafty windows in the Parish House is finished, the concrete porch and stairwell off the Great Hall is nearing completion, and a new sidewalk has been installed around the street side of the Parish House. While there is clean-up work and lawn restoration work to be done, I am grateful for the progress that has been made to secure the current and future soundness of our building.

The storm that blew through here on the afternoon of July 18th damaged any electrical system that was hardwired to the internet or a phone line. This included our phone system, internet modem and wireless router, copier/printer, and the alarm system panels in the Church and the Parish House. With the exception of the alarm system panels which have to be totally replaced, everything is back up and running. Repair work has also been completed to the roof of the Church which suffered damage from the high winds that accompanied the storm.

Issues in Israel and Palestine The 2016 Diocesan Convention passed a Resolution that called upon "...Episcopal churches and schools in the Diocese of Delaware to undertake a period of education and conversation in 2016 to assist Delaware Episcopalians in understanding the Palestinian/Israeli Conflict..." and to utilize materials that offered a variety of perspectives. It is with this in mind that I pass along that on Tuesday, August 9th, there will be screening of the film The Occupation of the American Mind. The event begins at 7:00pm and will be hosted by Westminster Presbyterian Church, 1502 W. 13th Street, Wilmington.

Bishop Search Process The most recent communication from the Standing Committee, dated July 28th, is included below.

Blessings and Peace, The Rev. Jim Bimbi

Standing Committee of the Diocese of Delaware

Thursday, July 28, 2016

Update on Bishop Search

It is the desire of the Standing Committee to offer regular updates to the diocese on the Search process. We hope to do this every three weeks. The Search Committee and the Transition Committee will also be offering their own updates. They have a dedicated webpage that you can access @ www.bishopsearchdiodel.org. They are also creating a Facebook page, twitter feed and mail chimp email group. Please be on the lookout for those updates. We also ask that you make this and all communications available to your members and friends in hard copy. Please look to those locations to hear from them as to their reflections on the retreat and the work before us.

Now to the Standing Committee's update:

The Standing Committee, the Search Committee and the Transition Committee gathered at Christ Church Dover for a kickoff retreat on Saturday July 23rd. Our consultant the Reverend Thad Bennett led the all day event. The intention of the retreat was to clarify roles and responsibilities of each of the committees, agree on how we will be doing the work of each committee, commission the two committees and set next steps for the completion of the work.

The Reverend Mark Harris provided our spiritual grounding for the day. He led us in Morning Prayer, Noon Time prayer and a closing Eucharist. Mark has composed prayers for each of the committees to use when they meet and has composed a prayer that the members of the Diocese can pray during this process:

"In your Name, Lord Jesus, the community that is the Diocese of Delaware has been raised up and has flourished. We pray that in our day we as a Diocese may continue to be a sign of your presence in this State, a people devoted to You, and willing agents of your peace. In this time of transition as we seek a new bishop, help us to discern your will for us, to receive with joy and grace those who offer themselves to the election process, and to celebrate the episcopal ministry we have been given and that which is yet to come. Give us open and gracious hearts, patience with one another, and joy in anticipation. Lord Jesus Christ be with us in these days, as you are with us always, for You, with the Creator and the Holy Spirit, are one, Our God, now and forever. AMEN"

It was during our Noon Day prayers that the Standing Committee gave its charges to the Search and Transition Committee. This link will lead you to those charges. As you can see, we are asking each of the committees to ground their work in prayer, authenticity, transparency and openness as we seek our next Bishop. The Standing Committee is committed to offering them whatever support we can to ensure that they have what they need to do the work we have called them to do.

Anne Foster, Chancellor of the Diocese, was with us to offer background and insight into the various parts of the Constitution and Canons that govern our work. The Standing Committee, in consultation with the Transition Committee, will be presenting a "rules of order" resolution to the Diocesan Convention in January, which will govern the special electing convention. The date and place of the electing convention has not been set, yet. However, we anticipate it will take place in mid summer of 2017. The Transition Committee is researching venues and will work with the Search Committee to suggest dates. As soon as this is determined we will let you know.

During the day retreat, we would break out into our individual committees, do some work, then come back together and check in with each other. As we shared where we had gotten to in our work it became clear that the time line for our collective work would adjust itself. In anticipation of the need to gather together as a diocese, the Standing Committee asked that three dates in August (27th, 28th and 30th) and two in September (24th and 25th) be set aside for these gatherings. This was an ambitious timeline. The Search Committee asked that we not use those dates. Instead, they are working on a timeline for those gatherings that will be more in the October/November time frame. When those dates are firm, we will be sending them you. As these times and others will be the means by which we as a diocese will share our hopes and dreams for our future and our next Bishop, we ask that you please make this process and those gathering dates a priority in your schedule.

The Standing Committee also worked on a budget for the entire election process from now until the consecration December 9th, 2017 of the 11th Bishop of Delaware. We are blessed that Bishop Wright, Diocesan Council and the Trustees had the foresight to put money aside for this process for the last 15 years. To start our work, we consulted the Bishop's search budgets of three dioceses of similar size. This gave us a scope and template from which to work. As we began to populate the spreadsheet, we acknowledged that many of our numbers are soft as the committees are just getting started and some of the items costs will only become firmer as they complete their work in the weeks to come. For example, we have a number in the line item of "venue for the consecration service" (a space that will need to seat 1,500 people). Our number is based on recent rentals of space for conferences in our local area. As the committees get more information, we will most likely adjust the numbers we have in the budget. Based on our best guesses and anticipated costs, we passed a draft preliminary budget. We will make that budget available to you. Before we do so, we need to run it by the Trustees prior to releasing it to you. You can look for this to be released around mid September. Again, please remember that these numbers, like any budgets numbers, may change as we get more information.

Throughout the retreat many questions were asked. Those that we could answer readily, we did. Those that we could not, we promised to research and return with an answer. You too may have questions about this process. We want you to feel free to ask them and we will endeavor to answer them. It is our hope that we will have a means to do just that via our webpage, www.bishopsearchdiodel.org. There will be a FAQ page on our webpage that we hope will answer many of your questions. This should be up in the next week or two. Please feel free to contact any of us with your questions.

We are very excited and energized for the work ahead. Once again we thank you for your prayers and participation.

Faithfully,

The Rev. Patricia S. Downing, President

The Rev. Mary L. Allen

The Rev. Paul Gennett

Ms. Teri Quinn Gray

Ms. Carol H. Kunz

Mr. Jon Rania

Mr. Bruce Vrana

The Rev. Max J. Wolf