

Report from the Dean of Trinity Cathedral to the 228th Annual Diocesan Convention

“He said to them come and see” NRSV, John 1:39

In the gospel of John this was Jesus’ response to many a question posed to him by the early disciples ‘**come and see.**’ He made such an impression on Philip that when Nathaniel asked him “*can anything good come out of Nazareth?*” Philip simply replied ‘**come and see.**’

What’s happening at your Cathedral you ask? ‘**Come and see.**’ Bishop Councill and I are sincerely inviting all the members of our Diocese to come and appreciate the gift of Trinity Cathedral your second church.

Trinity Cathedral is in some ways no different to other congregations throughout the Diocese facing many challenges whilst seeking to do God’s will. At the same time we are honored to be the seat of our Bishop, and a central gathering place for clergy and lay people to come together when appropriate to witness to the Trenton and our larger Diocesan community.

The Eucharistic celebration on the occasion of the 227th Convention of the Diocese of New Jersey was one such occasion. Many expressed their appreciation, not just for the hospitality, for the great sense of Godly pride and joy in being able to gather in such a spirit filled setting belonging to our Diocese. On behalf of the Cathedral, Vestry, and congregation thank you for your faith, confidence and support of the Cathedral community.

Five years have passed since I first came to this Diocese, and like the first disciples I too was invited in 2007 to ‘**come and see.**’ I have been touched by the faithfulness of the witness of fellow believers in our Diocese, Cathedral and the community of Trenton. My children who were somewhat less enthusiastic about moving to New Jersey grudgingly concede that it hasn’t been all that bad. My wife and partner in ministry Andrea who has made great career sacrifices in support of this call, has been blessed and been a blessing.

In 2011 at the Cathedral we continued to host the many Diocesan events that are integral and critical in the life of our Diocese:

- Bishop’s Ball
- School for Deacons Formation
- Episcopal Church Visual Arts Exhibits
- Acolyte Festivals
- Confirmations
- Absalom Jones Service of Witness to Black Ministries
- Blessing of Oils and Renewal of Ordination Vows
- Ordinations
- Lay and Clergy leadership training opportunities
- Youth sponsored and coordinated Cathedral Lock-ins
- Service in celebration of various disabilities (Come to the Table)
- World AIDS Day observances
- African Evensong in support of Sudan
- Recovery ministry services

are just some of these events that are hosted by the Cathedral annually.

In addition we continue to be a congregation seeking to witness to our community. I believe four areas of ministry drives all that we do as a congregation. I see them as the **most** important areas of our common life together at the Cathedral – **M**ission, **O**utreach, **S**tewardship, and **T**eaching the faith and **T**elling our story. Professor Jonathan Linman former chair of the department on Christian Spirituality at General Theological always said “it is important to connect the dots.” It is my prayer that every member and commission at the Cathedral sees this as our common purpose. We may have various manifestations, gifts and callings, but we all have a common purpose. Paul writing to the church in Corinth reminded them, *“Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same spirit, and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord and there are varieties of activities, but the same Lord who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the spirit for the common good”* NRSV, 1 Corinthians 12:4-7.

I cannot begin to say how appreciative I am for the many congregations and their clergy who support the Cathedral in ministry in so many ways, financially and otherwise. As a parish priest for 27 years, I understand that when requests are made of congregations for support of the Cathedral, you have to consider your own financial challenges, hence for this reason the Cathedral and I are especially grateful for your generosity. Our 228th Convention theme invites us to remember *“not what you do for God but what God does for you – that’s the agenda for rejoicing”* Message, Luke 10:20b.

Thanks also to our various local ministries and ministers, Associate clergy – Noel, Peter, Shawn, David and Howard, and deacons Carol and Chris, our commission chairs and their various worker bees:-

- Accessibility – Ellen
- Adult Christian Education – Dot
- Altar Guild Shop – Andrea, Regina, Howard, Georgia, Florine, Cheryl, Linda, Eileen & Sharlie
- Cast – Bernard & Deborah
- Choir – Deborah & Kerry
- Confirmation class – Chris
- Endowment Board – Phil, Brann & Tom
- Evangelism – Phil
- Flower Guild – Sue
- Food Pantry – Janet & Willie
- Fundraising – Debbie
- Hamilton Grove Care & Rehabilitation – Janet
- Hospitality – Charles
- Jubilee – Clara
- Liturgy & Music – EJ
- Outreach and Farmer’s Market – Clara & Debbie
- Parish Life – Ellen
- Paparazzi Cathedral Photography – Dot
- Property & Maintenance – Bernard
- Sunday School – Eileen, Andrea & Jon Carl

- Sustainability – Theresa
- Trenton Area Soup Kitchen – Chris
- Vestry – Willie, Clara, Ellen, Ron, Debbie, EJ, Edna, Bill, Dennie, Judith, Georgia, Larry, Maureen
- Youth – Andrea & Jon Carl

All is made possible by generous and willing hearts giving abundantly in God's service. We must not forget the staff, Patrice, Deborah, Kerry, Al and PJ, asked to perform above and beyond in attending to their duties as co-workers in the vineyard.

In 2011 we did not just do what was required of us, but we tried to envision what steps we needed to take for a healthy future. We held two additional congregational meetings in an effort to ensure our members were fully informed of what was happening at the Cathedral. Our fall retreat invited Gerry Keucher author of 'Remember the Future' to reflect and guide us to a position where future generations will call us blessed. Blessed because we were responsible stewards of what God and those who have gone before us have entrusted to our mission and ministry.

In applying for funding an organization was once asked ***"prove to us that you are not a museum or historical society as a condition of this loan."*** In many ways this is true of the church we are not a museum or historical society. We are living icons or images of the faith, God's spirit has breathe in us ***'come and see.'***

In 2011 two new manifestations have sprung from the efforts of our faithful members, Angel Tree ministries coordinated by Judith Miller, providing Christmas gifts and joy for children of the community whose families are incarcerated. Thanks to Judith and many others who worked tirelessly to make this a wonderful addition to our ministry a reality.

Urban Promise has come to Trenton. Diocesan chief financial officer, Canon Phyllis, Clara, Georgia, Dean John, Carl and countless others as well as other churches in the Diocese helped us organize a five week summer camp at the Cathedral. Needless to say it was oversubscribed and very much appreciated in our community. As a result, we now have a new Afterschool program involving many of the children and parents of the summer camp.

Planned Giving. Our church records indicate that for many years we have attempted to have a Planned Giving program at the Cathedral. I suspect that day to day challenges have oft times distracted us from this important work. A new set of individuals have committed themselves to this task of leading a Planned Giving exercise. I thank them for their efforts and ask you to support them fully in this important work.

Our seventh annual Golf Outing and Community Day continue to be one of the flagship events of our Cathedral calendar. We have new winners this year, St.Peter's, Medford. Congratulations. Please join us for the 8th Annual a wonderful opportunity to enjoy spirited fun and fellowship whilst supporting important ministries of the Cathedral.

On the feast of Pentecost, June 12, 2011, nine congregations and close to 500 persons gathered at the Cathedral for the service of Confirmation, Reception and Reaffirmation. A spirit filled time was had by all present.

Many parents, my wife amongst them have longed for more youth participation at the Cathedral and in Diocesan life and witness. It has come to pass and this December four youth from the Cathedral participated in the Diocesan sponsored Youth Lock-in. Present were 147 individuals, 109 youth and 38 adults from around the Diocese. 11,880 meals were packed for Stop the Hunger program, and they matched over 300 pairs of socks for our Jubilee Outreach ministries. More importantly the enthusiasm amongst the youth who participated was phenomenal. In addition the weekend this event took place, our boiler was not fully installed and we had no heat.

Thanks be to God we now have new heating systems fully installed at the Cathedral. We are grateful to the Rev. Frank Hubbard and the Loans and Grants Committee members for reviewing our request and supporting our application to upgrade and replace inefficient heating systems.

Our Bishop has oft times said it is his hope for every congregation and member of our Diocese to make a pilgrimage to the Cathedral. **Much is happening 'Come and See.'**

Respectfully submitted,

The Very Rev. René John
Dean, Trinity Cathedral