

Northern Convocation Lay 7 22 17

- Dwelling in the Word conversation:

Churches in our diocese are scattered geographically, we need to decide how to connect.

We all live into our different gifts.

The hand of the Lord was with them and they stepped out in faith - we need to step out from the norm. Color outside the lines.

(The bishop is) in the position of Barnabas. They must have seen fear, adversity, worry, distrust and he saw the grace of God.

Was/Is the Christian label negative or positive?

Not succeeding the the Orthodox Jews, so went broader. They had the commitment to care for each other.

- What does it mean to be a diocese today?

We have an edifice complex.

Sense of isolation. New Brunswick has 3 churches in the city, has been separated for a long time.

Now the congregations are working together as the clergy have started working together.

Are church plants an option?

Parishes face two principle challenges: cost of priest and cost of building.

An outward approach is needed and people need to feel safe to go out. Lay leadership is essential.

- Vital questions

If we are not connected to other parishes and to all Christians we are not truly serving.

People need to move past where we are in our in our relationship with Jesus.

We are not in a top down situation anymore because we don't have resources to just say what has to be done.

Way of St. Paul - gave us the chance to try new and see how we can work together.

How can we tell what the needs (of each parish) are, see the common threads and see what local churches can do to try new things.

(Question) how representative of the congregation was attendance at the meeting?

Pew sitters (defined by the group as someone who attends just Sunday morning service) is all they want that short time on Sunday?

Stewardship is not just financial. It needs to include conversation about giving time and gifts.

We are overscheduled consumer society.

Church as a beacon to society, a place of relief.

Consumers come to church looking for the product, it takes focus on formation to change that.

For example, how do parishes join together for all to offer what they do best in Holy Week?

It's not a matter of resources but each church has its own special gifts (charisma) they need to own it and use it to the best of their ability.

We need to mentor local parishes and we need to be both/and - people inside the building don't all know what each place should be focused on.

Burger Church in South River - does table worship and bible study. Even had the town's mayor there.

Convocations used to be interconnected but are not any more. Now we look to the corporate

example - can we bring all the ideas together in one spot?

Even at another level - clusters that will connect 4 or 5 parishes.

We are the diocese.

Diocesan House is in Trenton near the state house. We are a hierarchical church, but how do we work in that creative tension?

What can we do to better communicate to everyone in the pews? Many still don't know what Congregational giving is, most support the local because they can see the results. If people knew what was available they would try (to make fair share)

Youth - can we get the kids to cluster and we need lay leadership to inspire this.

We have a responsibility to support the diocese.

Each vestry should have an advocate for the diocese.

How are we accountable to each other?

We need missions - they are valuable.

One congregation has a Vestry minute in the service, one had a warden/treasurer minute, one had a search committee minute - could there be a diocean minute? This would let the pew sitters really know, help to form everyone.

The diocese is a particular community.

- Suggestions and ideas brought to the meeting

Communications and youth - how to talk to them in their medium? Direct the youth to their Facebook page.

Good News in the Garden State still listed this meeting as TBA until last week. Info needs to be current.

The Lay Discernment Day in September is not on the handout.

There should be clarification as to lay/clergy meetings in each convocation.

Can we add a conversation for youth, and for Spanish speaking communities?