

**AGENDA - Fourteenth Annual Convention**  
Episcopal Diocese of Eastern Michigan - October 17 & 18, 2008  
St. Paul's Church, Flint

**FRIDAY, OCTOBER 17, 2008**

- 11:00 a.m. Registration (Hall) **POLLS OPEN**
- 2:30 p.m. First Business Session (Sanctuary)
- Prayers and Welcome
  - Convention Business - Rules, Roll call, Credentials, Clergy Changes, Appointments
  - Introduction of Candidates
- 3:30 p.m. Special Order of Business (Keynote Address)
- 5:30 p.m. Evensong (Sanctuary)
- 5:30 p.m. **POLLS CLOSE FOR NIGHT**
- 6:00 p.m. Food & Fellowship (Hall)

**SATURDAY, OCTOBER 18, 2008**

- 8:00 a.m. Registration (Hall) **POLLS OPEN**
- 8:30 a.m. Second Business Session (Sanctuary) **POLLS CLOSED**
- Morning Prayer
  - Treasurer's Report
  - Bishop's Address
  - Excellence in Ministry Awards
  - Report of Constitution and Canons
  - Ministry Minute
  - Ministry Minute
  - Elections Report
  - Courtesy Resolutions

Close of Business

- 11:00 a.m. Closing Eucharist (Sanctuary)

**GENERAL RULES**  
**Diocesan Annual Convention**  
**October 17-18, 2008**

1. Each business meeting of the Convention will open with a prayer.
2. All Resolutions to be considered by the Convention must be submitted in accordance with Title 1, Canon 3, Section 6.
4. All reports which have been printed and distributed to members of the Convention prior to the convening of the body and not requiring Convention action shall be presented by title only.
5. On the request of any ten members of the Convention, a roll call vote shall be taken and entered in the minutes.
5. No member of Convention shall speak twice on the same subject until all others desiring to speak shall have had the opportunity to speak one time. Each speaker shall be allowed up to three (3) minutes per speech.
6. All committees shall be appointed by the President with the consent of the Convention except where other provisions have been made.
7. Except for the election of a Bishop or Bishop Coadjutor, all elections shall be governed by the provisions of Title 1, Canon 6, Sec. 2, 3, 4.
8. The Committee on Resolutions shall report to Convention its action on each submitted Resolution.
9. The Rules contained in "Robert's Rules of Order - Revised" shall govern the Convention in all cases to which they are applicable, and in which they are not inconsistent with the Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church and this Diocese or the special rules of order of this Convention.
10. The Rules shall not be suspended or amended except by a vote of two-thirds of the members voting, a quorum being present.
11. Alternate Delegates may replace only Registered Delegates.
12. Food and drinks shall not be permitted in the Nave of the Church and other places so designated by the host Congregation.

# **JOURNAL OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE FOURTEENTH ANNUAL CONVENTION OF THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF EASTERN MICHIGAN**

**St. Paul's Episcopal Church  
Flint, Michigan**

## **FRIDAY, OCTOBER 17, 2008, 2:30 P.M.** **FIRST BUSINESS SESSION**

On October 17, 2008, the day and place designated for the meeting of the Annual Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Eastern Michigan, The Rt. Rev. Todd Ousley offered an opening prayer and called the Convention to order.

Bishop Ousley called upon The Very Rev. Martin Field, Dean of the Flint River Valley Convocation, and Jack Mills, President of Flint River Valley Convocation to welcome the Convention.

Bishop Ousley explained that we are gathered together because the Canons say we must, but more importantly to renew relationships, share in Christian fellowship with one another, and to share our hopes and dreams of ministry.

### **ELECTION OF SECRETARY**

Bishop Ousley introduced Ms. Barb Meikle, St. Jude's, Fenton, and asked for a motion from the floor to elect her Secretary of Convention. Motion was moved, seconded, and passed.

### **INTRODUCTIONS**

Bishop Ousley introduced the following people: Mr. Edward Henneke, Trinity, Flushing, Chancellor of the Diocese and The Rev. William McClure, St. James', Cheboygan, President of the Standing Committee.

### **QUORUM**

A roll call of congregations was taken with the delegates standing as their congregation was called. Four congregations were not present – St. Luke's, Rogers City, St. Paul's, Saginaw, St. John's, Sand Point and St. John's, St. Johns. Bishop Ousley declared that a quorum was present.

### **RULES OF CONVENTION**

The Chair noted the Rules of Convention had been included in the Delegate Packet. Bishop Ousley recommended adoption of the Rules and asked for a motion to that effect. Motion was moved, seconded, and passed. The complete list of Rules appears on page two in the Journal.

## **CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE**

Bishop Ousley recognized Barb Meikle, Chair of the Credentials Committee. Ms. Meikle moved that “pursuant to Title 1, Canon 11, Section 3, forty-nine congregations of the Diocese of Eastern Michigan have filed their parochial reports in a timely fashion and will have voice and vote of their lay delegates and clergy at this convention”. Motion was supported and passed.

Furthermore, one congregation has failed to submit its parochial report. Therefore, the delegation from Grace Church, Port Huron, is not eligible to vote at this convention. No further action is required by this convention.

## **ELECTION OF CHANCELLOR AND ASSISTANT CHANCELLOR**

The Chair nominated Edward Henneke, Trinity, Flushing, as Chancellor and Eric Blackhurst, St. John’s, Midland, as Assistant Chancellor. Both were elected by motions moved, supported, and passed.

## **INTRODUCTIONS OF CANDIDATES**

The candidates for election to the Standing Committee, Commission on Ministry, Ecclesiastical Court, Provincial Synod Delegates and Trustees at this year’s Convention were asked to come forward at the request of the Chair and introduce themselves.

## **CLERGY CHANGES**

Bishop Ousley announced the following clergy changes:

- The Rev. Francoise Gelineau, Priest in charge, St. Elizabeth’s, Higgins Lake
- The Rev. Sarah Fossati, Priest, Young Adult Ministry
- The Rev. Linda Ash, Deacon, St. Paul’s Corunna Mutual Ministry Support Team
- The Rev. Nancy Steele, Priest, St. Paul’s Corunna Mutual Ministry Support Team
- Janice Hebekeuser, Administrator, St. Paul’s Corunna Mutual Ministry Support Team
- Norman Gary, Catechist, St. Paul’s, Corunna Mutual Ministry Support Team
- Irvine Smith, Evangelist, St. Paul’s, Corunna Mutual Ministry Support Team
- The Rev. Andrew Downs, Priest, St. David’s, Lansing
- The Rev. Robert Diehl, Trans. Deacon, St. Paul’s, Port Huron MMST-in-training
- The Rev. Shirley Seely, Trans. Deacon, St. Paul’s, Port Huron MMST-in-training
- The Rev. Robert Finn, Deacon, assigned to Trinity, West Branch
- The Rev. Claudia Hollinger, Deacon, assigned to St. Jude’s, Fenton
- The Rev. Thomas Smith, Deacon, assignment pending
- The Rev. Ann Norton, Trans. Deacon, St. John’s, Otter Lake MMST-in-training
- The Rev. Sarah Parks, Trans. Deacon, St. John’s Otter Lake MMST-in-training
- The Rev. Lori Johnson, Rector, Trinity, Flushing

## **FORMATION PRESENTATION**

The Very Rev. Elsa Pressentin, gave an update on the variety of formation opportunities available in the diocese and encouraged delegates to complete a questionnaire about what they would like to see in the future.

## **SPECIAL ORDER OF BUSINESS**

Bishop Ousley recognized one of the convention’s keynote speakers, Canon Ronald Spann, who spoke on.... Canon Spann was joined a little later by the second keynote speaker, Professor James Perkinson. Due to technical difficulties, the text is not available.

## **SATURDAY, OCTOBER 18, 2008, 8:30 AM** **SECOND BUSINESS SESSION**

The second business session opened with Morning Devotions.

### **TREASURER'S REPORT**

Robert Meikle, Diocesan Treasurer, gave a summary of the financial position of the diocese. 2007 was a successful year from a financial perspective and the net surplus, after setting aside money for reserves, was \$ 800.00. Tithing commitments from congregations averaged 8.5%. Assets at the end of 2007 totaled 8.9 million dollars, an increase of 641 thousand dollars, due to excellent return on our investments of 10.5 %. In 2008 the projected surplus, after setting aside money for reserves, is \$9,500.00. A balanced budget is planned for 2009.

### **BISHOP'S ADDRESS**

Bishop Ousley addressed the convention. Text included in this journal.

### **EXCELLENCE IN MINISTRY AWARDS**

Bishop Ousley presented Excellence in Ministry Awards to the following:

- Pastor Raymond Orth, for life-long efforts to respond obediently to God's call and for tireless commitment to ecumenical agreements entered into by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.
- Grady Holmes, for his vision of "shalom" inspired by the words of the prophet Micah, that we become a people who do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God.
- Bob Meikle, for his ability to see God's hand at work in the detail of balance sheets, and in his patience with the "accounting-impaired" diocesan leadership.

### **YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY REPORT**

The Rev. Sarah Fossati, Missioner to Young Adults for the Tri-Cities, shared about this new ministry position, which has been in place since last year. The vision for this position was to increase attention towards the spiritual needs and development of adults between the ages of eighteen and thirty-"ish". The model involves gathering people in house church communities for worship, fellowship, discipleship and outreach, outside of a typical Sunday morning format. It is vital to build relationships and equip local leaders for each community. Planning relevant and creative worship with these leaders is also an important part of this ministry.

### **REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON CONSTITUTION AND CANONS**

Bishop Ousley recognized The Rev. Charles Curtis, Chair of the Constitution and Canons Committee who presented the following report:

**I. While the Committee was asked to consult in two matters** (Standards for the openness of Vestry Meetings, and a more measured, incremental approach to dealing with congregations not fully living into the Basic Standards for congregations [Title I, Canon 19, Sec. 2]), **there were no concrete proposals to amend the Constitution or Canons submitted this year.**

## **EPISCOPAL YOUTH EVENT REPORT**

Kris Forsyth, St. Christopher's, Grand Blanc, reported on the Episcopal Youth Event held in San Antonio, Texas, in July 2008. Ten young people and four adults represented our diocese and their days were filled with worship, keynote addresses, small group time, rest and recreation, workshops and forums built around the millennium development goals, and touring the area. Kris shared reflections, written by the young people and adults, of this life-changing experience.

## **WRITTEN REPORTS**

Bishop Ousley asked the Convention to receive by title, the reports from the Standing Committee, Trustees, Commission on Ministry, Convocations, Breaking New Ground, Camp Chickagami, Episcopal Youth Event, Formation Ministries, Global Mission Task Force, Happening, Ministries Resource Center, Registrar, Resolutions, Sheridan Scholarship, and Young Adult Ministry. A motion was moved, supported and passed. Reports are found in the Journal.

## **APPOINTMENTS FOR CONVENTION**

The Rev. William McClure, Jr. announced the following appointments to the next Diocesan Convention on behalf of Standing Committee: Barb Meikle to Credentials Committee; The Very Rev. Martin Field, The Very Rev. Elsa Presentin, The Rev. Charles Curtis, Eldon Card, Linda Rathburn, David Wentworth to the Constitution and Canons Committee; The Very Rev. Glenn Stone, Dave Little, Barb Meikle, Katharine Rose, Molly Girard to the Convention Planning Committee; The Rev. Mary Delaney, Charles Parker to the Resolutions Committee.

## **CAMP CHICKAGAMI REPORT**

John Pettipher, Camp Chickagami Board chair, gave an update on the Camp, which began with a brief history. Work weekend 2008 was a huge success, involving over sixty dedicated volunteers completing much needed improvements and maintenance projects. This summer's two-week program saw forty-six youth campers and twenty-five counselors participate in three camping programs – intermediate, junior high and senior high. Group rentals generated about thirty thousand dollars revenue, which is important in assisting with our youth camp expenses. Communication was enhanced through newsletters, new website, and the diocesan newspaper.

## **COURTESY RESOLUTIONS**

The Chair recognized Mr. Charles Parker, St. John's, Dryden, who moved the adoption of the following special Courtesy Resolutions:

1. WHEREAS, the Rt. Rev. Todd Ousley, 2<sup>nd</sup> Bishop of Eastern Michigan, has challenged us to put aside hesitancy, shortsightedness, and fear, and instead to move forward in faith, wisdom, and courage to release and realize the tremendous potential of God at work within us and within those around us, and

WHEREAS, as a part of this challenge, our bishop has announced the development of **The Coppage-Gordon School for Ministry** to serve as a local resource for educating and equipping individuals and groups for leadership, and to promote on-going learning among our entire community,

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED, that this 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention of the Diocese of Eastern Michigan does applaud this challenge and the announcement of the Coppage-Gordon School for Ministry as a means toward meeting a part of this challenge, and does prayerfully encourage our convocations, our congregations, and our individual members to support, uphold, and make full use of the resources of this school as they become available.

Motion as supported and passed.

2. WHEREAS, the Rt. Rev. Todd Ousley, 2<sup>nd</sup> Bishop of Eastern Michigan, with the unanimous support of the Standing Committee, has called for a thorough **Constitutional, Canonical, Structural and Programmatic Review of the Diocese of Eastern Michigan** by a task force empowered by the authority of the bishop and the Standing Committee to determine which of our structures are currently promoting, supporting, and fulfilling our founding vision of collaborative leadership and grass-roots ministry, and which of our structures are not, and that this task force is directed to present its report to the 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention of this diocese, and

WHEREAS, it will have been about nine years since a structural review of any similar degree has been conducted in this diocese,

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED, that this 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention of the Diocese of Eastern Michigan does applaud and encourage this timely and appropriate action to assess our present direction and programs against our vision and our goals, does encourage our convocations, our congregations, and our individual members to support and facilitate the task force in every way possible, to consider with faithfulness, with wisdom, and with courage our own futures and that of our diocese, and does pray that those who will serve on the task force, those who will seek to answer its questions and offer recommendations, and those who will serve as delegates to our 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention having responsibility to review and pass judgment on the task force's report and recommendations, will do so in prayerful contemplation of the limitlessness of God's blessing and of the still unrealized potential of our Lord's Church in Eastern Michigan.

Motion as supported and passed.

The following Courtesy Resolutions were offered:

1. WHEREAS, the congregation of **St. Paul's, Flint**, while assessing both the challenges and the opportunities facing their ministry, has remained unwavering in its determination to be a beacon to its community, providing generous and faithful outreach, and has remained equally sure in its support of the larger Church, including the sharing of its facilities, its gifts, and the many talents of its members to receive and make welcome this gathering of the diocesan family,

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED, that this 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention of the Diocese of Eastern Michigan does extend its most grateful thanks to the host congregation for offering a place to enjoy fellowship, to join in worship of our Lord, and to conduct necessary business, and for the tremendous hospitality of its members.

2. WHEREAS, from the earliest days when Jesus sent his disciples out in groups, the ministry of the Church has been done in groups, and the **Flint River Valley Convocation** is

such a group, a collection of congregations bringing together the talents and resources of many for common purpose, including the support of this gathering,

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED, that this 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention of the Diocese of Eastern Michigan does thank the host convocation for its support of this gathering, and offers prayers for its on-going mission and ministries.

3. WHEREAS, our **Diocesan Staff and Volunteers**, who already work very hard to carry out their regular tasks to keep our diocesan ministry functioning, are also called upon to assume many of the vital tasks for the holding of this convention, including mailing and processing registrations, preparing and mailing packets to delegates, and conducting registration and collection of ballots when the convention is in session, and many other tasks too numerous to name,

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED, that this 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention of the Diocese of Eastern Michigan does extend its most grateful thanks to these dedicated souls, without whose faithful commitment this gathering could not take place.

4. WHEREAS, our friend, brother, and former leader, **the Rt. Rev. Edwin M. Leidel, Jr.**, recently celebrated the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his birth, and

WHEREAS, throughout his life, Bishop Leidel has sought and continues to bring people closer to God, and has been blessed with tremendous gifts for ministry and a warm heart that has earned him the deep affection of those of us privileged to know him and serve with him,

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED, that this 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention of the Diocese of Eastern Michigan does offer its most affectionate best wishes to our first bishop on this occasion, recognizing that the best among us only grow better with increasing maturity, and prays that our Lord will continue to be with him as he continues to grow in his life in Christ.

5. WHEREAS, **the Rev. Canon Ron Spann** and **Dr. Jim Perkinson** have joined us to share their teachings on the on-going factors of racism and to make us more fully aware of the circumstances of white privilege, and

WHEREAS, Canon Spann and Dr. Perkinson reminded us that even though these are factors not of our own individual making, we as Christians nevertheless have an obligation to work to make a difference both in overcoming racial discrimination and in addressing those aspects of White Privilege that require others to be held in disadvantage,

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED, that this 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention of the Diocese of Eastern Michigan does extend its prayerful thanks to Canon Spann and Dr. Perkinson for the sharing of their knowledge and experiences to increase our own awareness.

6. WHEREAS, our sisters and brothers of the **Diocese of Northern Michigan** are now engaged in a process of Episcopal Ministry Discernment, to identify their current needs, priorities, and goals, and to present to a special convention in January of next year the name of the person whom God has already selected to be their next bishop,



BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED, that this 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention of the Diocese of Eastern Michigan does offer its prayers to our brothers and sisters to the north, that the Holy Spirit will be with them and among them to guide and direct their discernment, leading them to the selection of a faithful pastor who will care for the Lord's people in Northern Michigan, equipping and challenging them to grow still further in their system of local ministries in which they have so long been leaders in the Church, and to still more fully realize the full potential of the ministry of all the baptized who are the Body of Christ.

7. WHEREAS, in the **Episcopal Diocese of San Joaquin** and in the **Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh** are men and women who, though holding a broad range of opinions on issues of current controversy, have faithfully and courageously chosen not to add yet another willful tear to what was once the seamless garment of Christian unity, and

WHEREAS, these Episcopalians, standing against the pressure of local majorities that demanded separation and schism, have chosen to remain fully engaged, recognizing that Christ calls us in baptism to be one, and now struggle to reclaim, reconstruct, and renew the ministry of the Episcopal Church in their regions, while continuing to support the Episcopal Church as leaders from within, rather than choosing to be critics from without,

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED, that this 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention of the Diocese of Eastern Michigan does extend greetings, prayers, and best wishes to our brothers and sisters of the Dioceses of San Joaquin and Pittsburgh, thanking them for their courage and their witness of a God who is larger than mortal issues, and for making the Episcopal Church as a whole the stronger by their presence, their witness, their diversity, and their commitment.

8. WHEREAS, in August of this year, our partner in Common Mission, **Bishop John H. K. Schreiber** of the Southeast Michigan Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, died suddenly of a heart attack, and

WHEREAS, the shock and suddenness of Bishop Schreiber's passing, too soon by the standards of we who cannot see things as God does, has left an emptiness in the lives of our Lutheran sisters and brothers of the Southeast Michigan Synod who have lost a gifted and beloved leader, and of his family and his friends,

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED, that this 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention of the Diocese of Eastern Michigan does offer its prayers for the repose of the soul of our brother in Christ, Bishop Schreiber, and its sympathies and prayers for his family, his friends, and those whom he was called to serve, that in the memory of him and of his ministry, all who were privileged to know him and serve with him may be drawn still closer to the one God, whom he spent a lifetime proclaiming.

Motions were supported and passed.

## **ELECTION RESULTS**

Jack Carlsen, Trinity, Flushing, Chair of Elections presented the following report:

### **STANDING COMMITTEE**

Audrey Stephens  
Karen Strausbaugh

Heather Barta  
Philip Seitz

### **ECCLESIASTICAL COURT**

Sue Rich  
Charles Stuart

Michael Herman

### **TRUSTEES**

William Elliott

### **COMMISSION ON MINISTRY**

Sarah Fossati

Bishop Ousley congratulated the newly elected. He thanked all those who had been nominated for making themselves available for service.

## **CLOSING**

Bishop Ousley declared the convention business adjourned and announced that next year's convention would be hosted by the Blue Water Convocation at Grace Church, Port Huron, October 23-24, 2009. Holy Eucharist was celebrated following the close of business.

## Address to the 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention of the Diocese of Eastern Michigan

**The Right Reverend Todd Ousley**  
**II Bishop of Eastern Michigan**  
**St. Paul's Flint**  
**October 18, 2008**

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Charles Dickens begins his novel, *A Tale of Two Cities*, in this way:

*It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of light, it was the season of darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to heaven, we were all going direct the other way . . .*

Set in a time of great social and political upheaval --- The French Revolution --- Dickens established early in his novel the notion that all situations can be seen from multiple viewpoints, through different lenses, with different postures and attitudes. We hear in his words the echoes of wisdom collected by the editor of Ecclesiastes (3:1-8):

*To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted; a time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; a time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away; a time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak; a time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace.*

To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven . . . What time is this? What time is it for the Diocese of Eastern Michigan? Is this the best of times or is this the worst of times? Events of recent weeks would lead us to believe that this is indeed the worst of times and it is also the best of times. As the stock market declines in historic numbers and rises again in historic numbers it is a time to buy, it is a time to sell, it is a time to sit tight, and it is a time to pray.

Certainly the economic news coming from Washington, Wall Street, and Lansing is not encouraging and closer to home the news can be equally discouraging. The Michigan economy continues to slide deeper into recession; overall congregational giving is flat around the diocese and has been for the past 3-5 years; Average Sunday Attendance has declined by 26% since the diocese was created 14 years ago; only 11 out of 50 congregations can afford full-time clergy leadership with half of those being subsidized through diocesan and/or convocation redevelopment grants --- this means that today only 22% of our congregations can sustain the traditional model of clergy leadership with the likelihood that the percentage will hover between 10-15% in the next five years; 38% of our congregations have attendance and/or budgets so low that their future viability must be carefully examined.

Ecclesiastical pundits, having examined the statistics, analyzed congregations and this diocese from the isolation of their own well-appointed offices and practiced self-congratulation based upon their self-conceived worldviews, have suggested that I am both the second and the last Bishop of Eastern Michigan. To them, I say, "Come visit. Ask questions. Live with us in our situations of economic challenge. Observe the faithfulness and creativity of the people of this diocese, then, write of the signs of God's presence in our midst. Report of the hope in places you thought you'd find despair. Apologize for your prophecies of doom and marvel at the abundance you discovered in the midst of what the world calls scarcity.

These are indeed the best of times . . . for faithfulness . . . for wisdom . . . for courage.

These are the worst of times . . . for hesitancy . . . for shortsightedness . . . for fear.

God is present in the midst of 19 faithful souls who gathered for Holy Eucharist with their bishop last Sunday in Rogers City. The average age at St. Luke's must be at least 70 but they aren't letting income defined by the Social Security Administration stop them. Despite the fact that they are lucky to have Eucharist four times per year, they gather faithfully. They visit the sick. They tend to the needy. They reach out into their community. Yes, they struggle to make it to diocesan convention and we miss their presence with us today. But they make room for the stranger in their midst, practicing a radical hospitality from which we all could learn. Rather than quiet a little child or usher him to a quiet place away from worship, they use the limited resources they have to proclaim a God of abundance. With a soft space at the front of the church and an abundance of toys and books to occupy the active little mind and hands, they invite children to join with them in worship and to be an integral part of their life. Last Sunday, Cody celebrated his fifth birthday while worshipping with folks old enough to be his great-grandparents. He helped collect the offering and he gave the dismissal, much to the delight of the assembled worshippers. The only disappointment to the day was that I had to decline his invitation to his birthday party on Tuesday of this last week.

God is present in the wisdom of a rector and vestry that see the need to embrace the fullness of God's call to ministry. And so, the people of St. Christopher's Grand Blanc have determined to enter a capital campaign to retire existing debt --- the most difficult capital campaign of all --- and all this in the midst of a frightening Michigan economy.

God is present in the courage of a congregation so richly blessed with financial endowments that it is willing to defy conventional wisdom and to fund ministries that not only reach well beyond its locality but beyond obvious benefits to the congregation itself. St. John's Midland, rather than hoard the money or spend it for its own needs, wants, and desires, has reached out across the ocean, across the diocese, and across political and theological divides in funding children's homes in Kenya, evangelism efforts based out of the Diocese of Pittsburgh and the Diocese of Tabora in Tanzania, human needs ministries out of St. Andrew's Flint, and alternative models of church in the Tri-Cities of this diocese.

And so, these are the worst of times . . . for hesitancy . . . for shortsightedness . . . for fear.

All across this diocese, there are faithful witnesses to God's power working in us which can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine. Together, our task is to recognize God at work in us and through us and to partner with God to be people of faith, people of hope, and people of abundance. Our diocese has reached a point where we can no longer afford to be hesitant, shortsighted or fearful. Without hesitancy, I am pleased to announce:

that preliminary plans are being made for the creation of a Diocesan School for Ministry that would utilize a variety of service delivery methods to provide both basic and enhanced education, formation, and transformation of individuals for faithful, creative, and sustainable lay and ordained leadership to advance the mission and ministry of the people who are the Diocese of Eastern Michigan. This school is being imagined with the values of budgetary restraint and programmatic creativity; empowerment of the ministry of all the baptized; and, responsiveness to the needs of the people and congregations. In short, this school will embody the values of two of the literal and spiritual architects of this diocese --- its first Diocesan Administrator, John Coppage and its first bishop, in spirit if not truth, Bill Gordon. I call upon this Convention to embrace the concept of a comprehensive and creative ministry of leadership formation, known as The Coppage-Gordon School for Ministry --- a school for individual and group Christian formation, vestry and congregational leadership formation, a local school for equipping ordained leadership, and a catalyst for our becoming a learning community of faith.

When this diocese was formed, the overarching vision was one of collaborative leadership between laity and the ordained, as well as decision-making and empowerment at the most appropriate level in the diocese. Our fourteen years of experience as a diocese have shown us that while we continue to embrace the overarching vision, our diocesan structures impede our ability to realize the dream. Some structures --- constitutional, canonical, and programmatic --- no longer serve the mission and thus the dream, but rather function to inhibit possibility and prevent us from realizing our vision. With profound respect for the continuing vision of a new kind of diocese and church and the unanimous support of your Standing Committee, I call for:

a comprehensive Constitutional, Canonical, Structural and Programmatic Review of the Diocese of Eastern Michigan to be conducted by a Review Task Force appointed jointly by the Bishop and Standing Committee of the Diocese of Eastern Michigan. The Task Force will be charged with undertaking this review with a goal of reporting its findings and recommendations to the 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Diocesan Convention to be held October 23-24, 2009 at Grace Church in Port Huron.

These are the best of times. Our challenges are great but our hope and faith sustain us. The numbers tell a story of a diocese that can ill afford to repeat the patterns of the past in false hope of different and more encouraging results. We have been given an opportunity to experiment, to creatively imagine, and chart a course toward a different future. As I enter my eighth year of ministry among you and my third year as your bishop, I count myself blessed to have been afforded the awesome privilege to serve God in your midst. These are indeed the best of times.

Let us pray.

*Grant us, Lord, not to be anxious about earthly things, but to love things heavenly; and even now, while we are placed among things that are passing away, to hold fast to those that shall endure; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.*

**CONGREGATIONS IN UNION with CONVENTION  
of the DIOCESE OF EASTERN MICHIGAN  
October 17 and 18, 2008**

<u>Place</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>Congregation</u>	<u>Organized</u>	<u>Admitted</u>
Alma	Gratiot	St. John's	1885	1995
Alpena	Alpena	Trinity	1866	1995
Atlanta	Montmorency	St. Mark's	1960	1995
Bad Axe	Huron	St. Paul's	1881	1995
Bay City	Bay	St. Alban's	1965	1995
Bay City	Bay	Trinity	1854	1995
Bridgeport	Saginaw	St. Mark's	1962	1995
Cheboygan	Cheboygan	St. James'	1880	1995
Corunna	Shiawassee	St. Paul's	1865	1995
Davison	Genesee	St. Dunstan's	1953	1995
Dryden	Lapeer	St. John's	1902	1995
East Tawas	Iosco	Christ	1880	1995
Fenton	Genesee	St. Jude's	1860	1995
Flint	Genesee	Christ (inactive) **	1907	1995
Flint	Genesee	St. Andrew's	1915	1995
Flint	Genesee	St. Paul's	1839	1995
Flushing	Genesee	Trinity	1942	1995
Gaylord	Otsego	St. Andrew's	1954	1995
Gladwin	Gladwin	St. Paul's	1903	1995
Grand Blanc	Genesee	St. Christopher's	1941	1995
Grayling	Crawford	St. Francis'	1956	1995
Harrisville	Alcona	St. Andrew's-by-the-Lake	1956	1995
Harsens Island	St. Clair	St. Paul's	1926	1995
Higgins Lake	Roscommon	St. Elizabeth's	1959	1995
Hillman	Montmorency	Calvary	1884	1995
Indian River	Cheboygan	Transfiguration	1958	1995
Lapeer	Lapeer	Grace	1878	1995
Lexington	Sanilac	Trinity	1871	1995
Long Rapids	Alpena	Grace	1896	1995
Marine City	St. Clair	St. Mark's	1863	1995
Marysville	St. Clair	All Saints'	1953	1995
Midland	Midland	Holy Family	1957	1995
Midland	Midland	St. John's	1870	1995
Mio	Oscoda	St. Bartholomew's	1987	1995
Oscoda	Oscoda	St. John's (name change) ***	1880	1995
Otter Lake	Lapeer	St. John's	1883	1995
Owosso	Shiawassee	Christ	1858	1995
Port Huron	St. Clair	Grace	1840	1995
Port Huron	St. Clair	St. Paul's	1873	1995

Congregations in Union with Convention, continued --

<u>Place</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>Congregation</u>	<u>Organized</u>	<u>Admitted</u>
Rogers City	Presque Ile	St. Luke's	1942	1995
Rose City	Ogemaw	St. Andrew's	1948	1995
Saginaw	Saginaw	Calvary Memorial	1889	1995
Saginaw	Saginaw	St. John's	1851	1995
Saginaw	Saginaw	St. Matthew's	1954	1995
Saginaw	Saginaw	St. Paul's	1854	1995
St. Clair	St. Clair	St. Paul's	1848	1995
St. Johns	Clinton	St. John's	1864	1995
Sand Point	Huron	St. John's	1957	1995
Sandusky	Sanilac	St. John's	1903	1995
Standish	Arenac	Grace	1901	1995
West Branch	Ogemaw	Trinity	1901	1995

\*\*Now known as Christ Enrichment Center

\*\*\*As of 2004 known as Hope-St. John's (with ELCA)