

A Minute for Mission

The Mission and Outreach committee will be meeting on September 10, but I wanted to share some Mission stories from the Episcopal Church General Convention held in Anaheim, Ca in July.

I would have to say that the theme of Mission was prominent during the Convention. Presiding Bishop, Katharine's sermon during the opening convention Eucharist reminded us that the heart of this "Body", the Church, is Mission, and she likened the sound of the word "Mission" to the "whooshing" sound of a beating heart.

The Convention then passed the following two mission related resolutions:

Resolution: D075: Mission, the Heartbeat of the Church

Resolved, The House of Bishops concurring, that the 76th General Convention of The Episcopal Church commend, endorse, and embrace the Presiding Bishop's statement (July 8, 2009) that "the heartbeat of the Church is mission"; and be it further

Resolved, That as a sign of our commitment to Christ's mission, the 76th General Convention challenges dioceses and congregations to participate in one new or ongoing project that engages in a relationship with another part of the Body of Christ in the world; and be it further

Resolved, That the Standing Commission on World Mission be directed to develop strategies to enable and to support individuals, congregations, and dioceses of The Episcopal Church to engage in mission activities which further our participation in God's mission.

Resolution: D027: Five Marks of Mission

Resolved, the House of Bishops concurring, that the 76th General Convention adopt the following "Five Marks of Mission" as articulated by the Anglican Consultative Council and addressed to the Anglican Communion:

- To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom.
- To teach, baptize and nurture new believers
- To respond to human need by loving service
- To seek to transform unjust structures of society
- To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth;

Another mission related resolution was passed condemning human trafficking, a serious problem for women and children in many parts of the world.

And finally the Convention adopted a Triennial budget that included 0.7 percent of income to support the U.N. Millennium Development Goals, and added a corresponding percentage for domestic-poverty initiatives. That amount for the 2010-2012 Triennium is \$970,000.

I spent the majority of my time in the Episcopal Church Women's Triennial Meeting where I was a delegate from Western Massachusetts, and that "house" of Convention has historically been mission focused.

Some of the missions and ministries the ECW supported this triennium are: the Jericho Road Housing Initiative, where the ECW raised over \$75,000 to build a house in New Orleans; the Woman to Woman Program, where grass roots needs are identified by local women and made possible with ECW grant money: a poultry farm in the diocese of Liu Sudan, Sewing machines to the Bethlehem Training Center in Southern Sudan, "Blanketing Navajoland" providing sewing machines, and funding for a Community Arts Collaborative in Haiti. For each Triennial Meeting the National ECW board chooses a local "community connection gift"; Project Dignity of Garden Grove, CA, a grassroots organization addressing the needs of homeless families and children living in motels was chosen. Our Holy Trinity ECW has contributed to all these mission projects, either directly or indirectly, including financial help to bring delegates to the triennial meeting who could otherwise not afford to attend.

During the Sunday Convention Eucharist (~7000 people) the United Thank Offering was ingathered with representatives from every diocese bringing their triennial offering, which totaled 6.7 million dollars. The Convention Eucharist offering of \$28,168.92 was added to that total for 2009 UTO grants. The Diocese of Western Massachusetts UTO triennial offering was \$49,342.47, and Holy Trinity shared in that offering.

The General Convention experience was wonderful and uplifting, but I was also continually reminded and grateful for all the mission work we do at Holy Trinity in the name of Jesus to build up Christ's Kingdom.

In Christ, Susan Howland, Chair

August 15, 2009