**Delegate Report from Annual Convention**

**November 1-3, 2018
Marriott Hotel, Richmond**

I recently attended our Diocesan 224th Annual Convention as the Lay Delegate representing Church of the Good Shepherd, Bluemont. This was Bishop Shannon Johnston’s final convention as Bishop of Virginia, as he had announced his retirement on August 3rd, and much of the convention was dedicated to thanking him for his 12 years of service and leadership. The gavel was passed to Bishop Susan Goff at convention recess on Friday afternoon and she led the proceedings, as our current “Ecclesiastical Authority”, on Saturday morning thru the closing of convention.

Due to Bishop Shannon’s retirement announcement the search for a second Bishop Suffragan, as approved at DOV 223 was suspended and instead a search for a new Bishop Co-Adjutor was undertaken in the fall, with the hopes that a new bishop would be called by DOV 224. However, this timeline proved to be too short, with many candidates not prepared to make transitions so quickly. Now, that search is being changed to a Bishop Provisional, with the hope this individual will be called and approved at a special convention prior to Bishop Shannon’s transitional departure in June of 2019.

Meanwhile, the convention delegates passed a resolution allowing Bishop Susan to hire a Bishop Assistant, with Standing Committee consultation, for interim support. Bishop Bob Ihloff will continue as Bishop Associate on a part-time basis, as will Bishop Ted Gulick at Visiting Bishop.

In her address on the final day of Convention, Bishop Goff said, "As I begin this period as ecclesiastical authority of the Diocese of Virginia, I commit myself again to life in community with you... As we go now into the world, we will grow in community.... As we go now into the world, we will build on all that has come before." Bishop Goff announced that she will host a series of Listening Sessions around the Diocese before Christmas to "hear your concerns, your frustrations, your joys and your hopes about our life as a diocese."

Good Shepherd is scheduled for our bishop visitation on 31 March 2019 by Bishop Provisional. It’s unknown, currently, who that may be. Bishops Goff and Ihloff are both scheduled elsewhere that day. We also need to be thinking about an evening visit by a bishop. We were allowed and encouraged to request one this year, as we did not have a Sunday invitation, although it’s probably a bit late in the year to be requesting one now.

We again heard many interesting and inspirational “Stories from the Diocese”:

* About how the Dayspring initiative is working at Church of the Epiphany, Herndon
* About the Peter Paul Development Center in Church Hill, reaching out in one of Richmond’s poorer communities and the Walking and Employment ministry of St. Peter’s, Church Hill
* About the rebuilding of the chapel at Virginia Episcopal Seminary
* About the “Triangle of Hope”, the joint initiative of the DOV, the Diocese of Kumasi, Ghana, and the Diocese of Liverpool. Bishop Daniel Sarfo of Kumasi and Bishop Paul Bayes of Liverpool were in attendance and briefly addressed the convention. Bishop Bayes brought greetings from Archbishop Justin Welby and said of the Triangle of Hope that the darkness of our colonial past is being shattered by this new Anglican light and that “new links of friendship are being forged from the broken chains of slavery.” This is an ongoing struggle against slavery.
* About the combined efforts of three middle peninsula churches in Gloucester and Matthews counties: Ware, Abingdon, and Kingston, all over 3 centuries old, calling their joint undertaking “Wabingston”, they are combining their efforts with certain undertakings to make Jesus more known in the world. Quote: “Don’t live in fear of each other but live out of hope.”

Committee reports were made and new committee members elected, including the following new members of the Standing Committee:

* The Rev. Andrew T. P. Merrow, St. Mary's, Arlington
* The Rev. Barbara "Bambi" Willis, Trinity, Fredericksburg
* Ms. Ashley Cameron, St. Mary's, Goochland
* Ms. Christie Thomas, St. Paul's Memorial, Charlottesville

Delegates approved a balanced budget of $4,946,087, down from $5.01M last year and $5.121M in 2017. The budget featured increased funding for college chaplaincies, a new ministry for the hearing impaired, and continued support growing ministries across the Diocese. Good Shepherd funding under the Committee for Congregational Missions (CCM) remained the same at $8,900 for 2019.

The following resolutions were adopted and may be seen in their entirety at the DOV website:

* R-1 Adoption of the “Way of Love” Rule of Life in the Diocese of Virginia
* R-2 Diocese of Virginia Response to Pittsburgh Synagogue Massacre
* R-3 Authorization of the Creation of the Position of Assistant Bishop and Appointment Thereof
* 3 courtesy resolutions recognizing people for their service.

On Saturday morning we celebrated the graduation of Trinity Episcopal Church, Charlottesville, from a mission church to full parish status. It was a resoundingly joyful occasion, with many folks from the Trinity congregation having made the drive to Richmond to join in the celebration, as we all sang “Lift Every Voice and Sing” as they processed their cross and banners to the podium. Trinity has been a mission church since its founding in the historically black neighborhood of Vinegar Hill in August 1919. The ceremony was capped off with the announcement by their senior warden that their vicar, the Rev. Cass Bailey, had been unanimously approved by their vestry to become Trinity’s first rector.

This makes three churches in the last two years that have transitioned from mission to full parish status, and one whose doors sadly had to be closed.

Finally, in regards to Good Shepherd specifically, I met with The Rev. David Keill, chairman of the CCM. David is the rector of Christ Ascension on the east end of Richmond, where he was called in 1999 to help rebuild the church, which has been returned to full parish status during his tenure. David was very accessible, introduced me to many folks (including Cass Bailey; Kurt Ascherman, Lay Pastoral Leader at Christ Church, Luckets, and a vestry leader at St. Peter’s, Church Hill) and offered some valuable inputs as to funding sources:

* Scott Foundation Grant (for building infrastructure), due by 1 April 2019
* Patterson Charitable Foundation (for Episcopal churches over 100 years old)
* Roan Ridge (need more info on this)
* Additional emergency funding is available in the CCM budget

David volunteered to help us in the pursuit of any or all of these. I will be following up with him.

Regarding our search for a vicar, he couldn’t offer quite as much. Said we need to reach outside the church. (?) Also, that we should invite and welcome our CCM Liaison to our vestry meetings. I also met the Rev. Matt Rhodes, Priest-in-Charge at Christ Church, Millwood who is open to exploring the possibility of sharing some of his time with us. He wanted me to meet the new priest-in-charge of Grace, Berryville, The Rev. Justin Ivatts, which I did. They wanted to get together with us for lunch after Thanksgiving to talk about how our churches can work together in Clarke County.

***Respectfully submitted by Tim Hall, Lay Delegate, 18 November 2018***