

## **Annual Chaplains Report - 2016**

31 January 2016

### ***“I Appointed You As A Prophet to the Nations”***

- *Jeremiah 1,5*

You probably wouldn't want your kid to be a prophet.

Jeremiah, young and reluctant, has his mouth touched by God. He is told to stand up, to go where God sends him and to speak what God has given him. So the “jeremiad” is born.

Jeremiah must not associate with his people, he should not father children, and he is not to attend weddings or funerals. He must not go in any home where there is feasting. He must not sit with merry-makers.

Jeremiah proclaims the destruction of Jerusalem by Babylon. He makes and wears a yoke with that message. The official prophets smash that yoke. He becomes a laughingstock. Various plots are hatched to kill him. Jeremiah is thrown into a cistern, so his blood would not be on the hands of his murderers. Made a prisoner, he is released by the Babylonians, but then hauled off to Egypt by the fleeing governor of Judea. Jeremiah buys land in a war zone.

“I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.” Okay; is there a plan #B?

During the recent Anglican Primates meeting the Episcopal Church got to play the part of a prophet. That's the point of the “Snoopy – Joe Cool” bulletin cover.

We have supported, as a justice issue, as a scriptural command, equality for LGBTQ persons. We have reminded our friends that the Anglican Communion operates “de facto”, not “de jure”. Simply, our relationships within the communion are prayerful and pastoral, not legal. We have noted with interest, as reported by the NY Times among others, the right wing American influence (Evangelical, Catholic, Mormon) in the creation of the Ugandan “Kill the Gays” laws. Prophetic work.

We are lucky that the man called to be our Jeremiah in this moment is our African-American Presiding Bishop Michael Curry.

“I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.”

In this nation, we have joined the fight for income equality. As World War II solidarity fades into memory, the post-war national possibility of lower income inequality seems aberrant or comic rather than normative. We believe that black lives matter. The American original sin is slavery.

In this state, we have become part of the movement to add “sexual orientation and gender identity” protections to state law. Thank Ron Alting for being one of the people to support this change the next time you see him.

With Bishop Curry, we play the prophet not out of political correctness, but because of the grace we know in Christ.

“I appoint you as a prophet to the nations”.

God told the Diocese of Indianapolis to buy land in a war zone, and here we are at Purdue.

We play the prophet here. Last year I shared a series of Land Grant University quotes to make a point about Purdue’s particular vocation. Let me share this year one of my favorite quotes from the one-time President of Emory University, William Chace, playing the prophet in the place where he lived and worked. Chace is discussing here the difference between the “interpretive” and “promotional” roles of the university. Students come to understand nature, history (interpretive) and then turn toward symbol and social function (promotional).

*“ . . . students have no trouble learning the source of status. It derives, by and large, from the insulation from social anxieties that can be bought with high-paying jobs. The campus has become a full-time vendor not only of classroom learning, but also of health care, entertainment, food, job-training, remedial improvement, alumni solicitude, psychological counseling, and industrial and corporate relations. But virtually no one on any campus has sufficient moral credibility to proclaim what the better life might be other than the security provided by a good income. The campus as moral inspiration is a nostalgic vestige. Of the university, both parent and child now ask the same questions they ask of anyone with whom they have a contractual relationship: what are the costs and benefits to me? That kind of question ignores any higher obligations a student might have to the world beyond the campus. Both society and student therefore become impoverished.*

*To the degree that universities mirror social realities, to the degree that such realities are evident in the economic stratifications and consumer mentality of campus life, the future of the university as a cultural medium becomes clearer.*

*. . . the future will bring home more vividly to every student the differential of wealth vs. poverty. As controversial as affirmative action has been, what will replace it is more crass, less noble. The main coin of the realm is efficiency, reduced costs, “out-sourcing”, and as a result, diminished community spirit. Students now see the bottom line setting standards for what once was postulated to be a distinctively high-minded place.*

*Technology transfer also offers lucrative advantages for researchers, and some corporations have significant fiscal interest in academic programs. The result is to make the academy beholden to non-academic interests.*

*All of these changes are driven by a logic against which it would be folly to complain. But each defensible change is part of a greater cultural transformation. The change most important to the academy is that the “hallowed” idea of the campus is eroding. In this, it is not alone. The lawyer today is a hireling, not a “priest of democracy”. The physician today is an HMO employee, not a bearer of the code of Hippocrates. The culture will feel even more different in the next decade.”*

Welcome to the prophetic task of providing moral inspiration, a taste for the transcendent, at Purdue University.

“I appoint you as a prophet to the nations”.

God told the Diocese of Indianapolis to buy land in a war zone, and here we are at Purdue. We pay the mortgage on the land and the building.

This brings us to the numbers for this year.

Average Sunday attendance is up 6%. Our base is small, so it doesn't take much to move that number. Summer attendance did not drop off as much as it ordinarily does. We did more of everything; Baptisms, Weddings, the Daily Office, the Holy Eucharist. The number of communicants remains the same; 102 (2015), 103 (2016). Our more general population, “Baptized Members” declined from 147 (2015) to 121 (2016). The Purdue Episcopal student list is now under 40 (38). Thirty years ago it was over 400.

Fewer students mean fewer students parents to solicit. For the third straight year pledges and gifts declined. In 2014 we budgeted for \$56,000 in pledges, in 2015 \$53,000, in 2016 \$50,000. Our annual diocesan grant has fallen below \$50,000. Our gift income is lower, and slower to arrive. Last year I promised a big red donation button on our home page. Well, it's here; a big orange button. We have a decent donation page, thanks to the people at “Network for Good.” At this point however, donations through the page are not covering the cost of the page.

Our best donors are our oldest donors. I told the story of Susan Miller last year, and it's worth repeating. Susan's daughter was a student here decades ago. Elizabeth is now a high school principal in California who “likes” our posts on Facebook, but is in the middle of her life and does not donate. Her 80-year-old mother Susan still does. We can't poach pledging units from St. John's (Lafayette). They enjoy a kind of Anglican Shangri-La; young clergy with young children and a full choir bathed in light filtered through stained glass. The Episcopal Church is disciplined as a denomination by the Anglican Communion for supporting LGTBQ people, but LGTBQ people are not beating down our door. Yes, using our fellowship space from time to time, but not yet over their suspicion of organized religion. We have a woman Bishop, but Roman Catholic women are not flocking to the shield of St. Andrew and St. George. The alma mater is not easily abandoned for an ideology or a theology. Liberal academics like us, but fewer are now arriving here at Purdue than are leaving Purdue. Ask the UU's here about their financial troubles. Then there is always the option of a pied-a-terre in Chicago.

In the short term, there is no problem. Good Shepherd “made” \$30,000 last year. The winter has been mild. We have the parking revenue from Fresh City Market. We raised the price of basketball parking.

BUT you can't have your numbers dropping with a new Bishop coming. That's not a good idea. The nominees for the 11<sup>th</sup> Hoosier Bishop will be announced April 16<sup>th</sup>. The election will take place in late October of 2016. The convention delegates we select this fall will vote for the next Bishop of the Diocese of Indianapolis. The new Bishop will be installed in April of 2017. The new Bishop will shape the 2018 diocesan budget. I will be 67 then.

I bet nothing changes as long as I am around. I have a kind of tenure here. But I am very expensive, and when I retire there will be those transition committees you have come to know and love which will “reimagine” this ministry, “enhancing the role of the baptized”, and teaching the congregation “how to work smarter”. Which in other settings has meant 30-hour clergy appointments (M-W-F and Sunday), and the combining of back office functions.

The corporation is not always interested in appointing a prophet to the nations.

What to do? Fill out a pledge form if you haven't already, whomever you are and whatever you think you can give. We need the pledging units to keep moving up, even if the pledge income goes down. If you are student, fill out a pledge form – and be sure and share your home address with us so we can recruit the next Susan Miller.

Don't be shy. We work **at** showing what is divine, transcendent, in the young adult's, in any adult's, search for identity, intimacy, and an answer to mortality. We do this **in** a full and free domestic, intergenerational, Christian (though the word has been marginalized) community. We do this **through** "Ritual, Community, and Free Food". **Share.**

Some share very well, which brings us to our annual award presentation.

For the last few years, Good Shepherd has given away a \$1000 student scholarship. This began as a sponsored scholarship designed to identify Purdue freshmen. It has become a more general award given to that student who can come up with the best reflection on this line from 101 Reasons to Be Episcopalian:

*"Where else can you be 40 and still be young" – Lesley Adams, Diocese of Rochester*

How would you fix this?

The best answer this year came from Erin Kelly. You may recall that it was Erin who helped us tie-dye t-shirts in the back yard. Erin has a big personality in a denomination that is short of cheerleaders. (Did you see her in the "Paint Crew" in that bandana of hers during the BTN broadcast of the basketball game yesterday?) Her presence with us these past four years has been a blessing. Erin Kelly.

We have three leadership awards that we distribute from time to time. One is for the grown-ups here (I leave you to find your own best definition for that group), one is for non-Episcopalians, and one is for our student leaders. Named after Angela Falzone, one of our first senior wardens, this year's student leadership award goes to Danielle Hrachovec.

As an officer in the Episcopal Student Association, Dani has been most responsible for keeping our student organization on the right side of the ODOS Division of Student Affairs. And she shows up at stuff. She appears, in various hair colors, in most of the publicity photos we take for Good Shepherd. Her stewardship talk this year warmed the hearts of the "grown-ups" here, all of whom take the intergenerational ministry of Good Shepherd very seriously. Danielle Hrachovec.

The annual meeting of the Chapel of the Good Shepherd will take place immediately after the service this morning. There will be an organizational meeting of the new vestry back here in the chapel immediately after that.

"I have appointed you a prophet to the nations".

Amen.

