

## Annual Chaplains Report - 2017

15 January 2017

### ***“I Will Give You As a Light to the Nations”***

- Isaiah 49:6

Some of you will remember Bob McGinn. Bob died in 2001. He was an insurance agent, a Republican county commissioner, and our treasurer (1992-2000). Our processional cross was given in memory of his wife Jane. Bob would bring wine to the vestry meetings. Almost always his treasurer’s report was brief – very brief – “we are solvent”. That was the report. You would have to press for details. “We are solvent.”

We *are* solvent. Good Shepherd is doing fine. We’re okay.

The 2017 Chaplain’s Report could just end there; we’re good. We know our vocation, to be a “light for the world”. We have the means to get us to that end, “Ritual, Community, and Free Food”. We have the data points to prove we are doing well.

We “turned a profit” of \$24,000 last year. (No, there will **not** be a dividend check for each of you.) Our worship attendance was up 4%. It was up 6% last year too. Now, given our size, it doesn’t take much to move that number. The arrival of the Gngang family may account for the entire 4%! Also, for the first time ever the university generated number of Purdue Episcopal students fell under 30. Thirty years ago it was 430. But our church school had it’s highest number of students ever – 44. This is due to our high school “Friday School” plus pizza lunch.

So “we’re solvent.” We’re fine. Go have a doughnut.

BUT

There are three challenges in the year ahead. Two we can do absolutely nothing about, one, hopefully, we can have some control over.

First, we are going to have a new Bishop. Bishop Waynick is retiring after 20 years here, and the Rev. Jennifer Baskerville-Burrows has been called to be the 11<sup>th</sup> Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Indianapolis. (In an aside, did you know the first diocesan cathedral was St. John’s Lafayette? When Bishop George Upfold arrived in 1849 it was the only church in the diocese with a parsonage. Soon Bishop Upfold would move to Indianapolis.)

Bishop-elect Burrows is 50, an African-American, and she has a six-year old son, Timothy. She is currently the Director of Networking for the Episcopal Diocese of Chicago. (No, I do not know what that means.) Raised in NYC, Jennifer graduated from Smith, from Cornell (where she developed an interest in historic preservation), and from the Church Divinity School of the Pacific. She was the Rector of Grace Episcopal Church and Chaplain to Syracuse University from 2004-2012. Bishop-elect Burrows wrote a cooking blog while in Syracuse. She lived in a house built in 1890. Jennifer spent her recent sabbatical transcribing and preserving her relatives old Bahamian recipes.

Just think of all the boxes she tics for us Bunders!

But she is not Ted Jones, who hired me 31 years ago. She is not Cate Waynick, who has been my boss for the last 20 years. She will probably do things differently. You would hope she would do things differently. One of the things the Bishop-elect may do differently is campus ministry. My job during this summer is to meet with Jennifer Baskerville-Burrows to discuss her hopes for college work. That's our first challenge.

We have a new Bishop.

Second, we are going to have a new President. (Did you know President-elect Trump attended an Episcopal church on Christmas Eve? It was reported that he took communion. The Church of Bethesda by the Sea was also the site of his 2005 wedding to Melania Trump.)

This is not the place to review the sociology of the Presidential election. My favorite explanation is a literary one. Liberals took the President-elect literally, and so not seriously. Conservatives took him seriously, but not literally. "Build a wall" is a rhetorical device meant to dog whistle racial suspicions. "Pussy grabbing" is code for old white men need to be in charge, more white men than at anytime in the 35 years since Ronald Reagan. "Repeal Obamacare" was a way of attacking the current President; Trump won't *really* take away our health care.

The Episcopal Church is preparing to take the next President both literally and seriously. We are prepared to offer some resistance. Christ Church Cathedral is preparing to become an immigrant sanctuary. Dean Steve Carlson has the resources to take on this project. Carlson's associate, the Rev. Shannon Macvean Brown, has written about health care. She makes the point that HSA's (health savings accounts) are a joke to the poor. If you are living paycheck to paycheck, how do you put money away in a savings account? You need the insurance subsidy provided by the ACA. Jennifer Baskerville-Burrows has preached on "Black Lives Matter", and has spoken about the dangers of raising a black boy in Chicago.

This represents a change in tone, if not in policy for the diocese. As our nation takes one step back, we will do our best to see to it that it is one step only.

Let me add a personal note. Take a moment of personal privilege. In November of 2014 my daughter Molly spent a week at the Northwestern Medical Center with a neurological disease that proved difficult to diagnose. NMO (neuro-myelitis optica)? MS? It is frightening to live on a technologically impressive ward in a major medical center next to a seriously ill young adult surrounded by middle-aged men in white coats who all look puzzled. As Molly's condition worsened, they decided to blast the illness with a course of steroids. That worked. Her illness became an idiopathic viral neurological event. Her brain and spinal scaring was minimal.

Molly has aged out of our insurance. But through the Affordable Care Act and its monthly subsidy, she was an actor able to afford insurance good enough to get her into the Northwestern Medical Center and to continue to use their doctors. Now that is at risk.

If Molly gets sick again, and she has no insurance or her insurance is not as good as it was under "Obamacare", and her life is dramatically changed by the return of this illness, how do you think I will feel anytime I meet a Trump voter? (I know my council district split 60% Hillary, 30% Trump 10% "other". I would guess those of you in the pews this morning split along the same lines.) I will blame you 15 Trump voters. Completely irrational I know, unprofessional. But if you voted for the President-elect, you voted to take away my daughters health coverage. Imagine what I will think of you.

We have a new President.

By way of introducing our third challenge, I would note that our 2017 budget has a \$2500 "Transition" line item. This represents a first savings installment toward a search budget that could cost several thousand dollars. I will reach 66 years old in 2017. I will then qualify for my full social security benefit. Bishop Waynick retired at 69. Ed Tourangeau retired at 66.

My job in the next year or two is to see to it that you get the same deal Good Shepherd got back in 1985, the year of my hire. You should be treated like a parish in the transition process.

The Bishop controls this clergy position. Her money pays me. So she could roll out of bed one morning and appoint someone new to Good Shepherd. My job is to argue that as an exercise of this parish's vocation, and as a part of the renewal of that vocation, you should be the chief player in a transition to new clergy leadership. In order to do that, the vestry will, someday, appoint a search committee. That search committee will need a budget. We have begun this year to set some money aside.

Will it be a long interim? Maybe. Remember Larry Minter's stint at St. John's? The diocese would pay the interim clergy person's salary. It may take awhile to ease out of a 30+year pastorate. You all mostly look, act, taste, smell like me. The rest of the Episcopal Church does not quite look like this. There is a default setting.

Will it be a short interim? Perhaps. The Bishop could appoint somebody to this position after a brief search. This job is not a marriage. There are no more "country parsons". Thirty-year tenures are impossible. Generally, searches take 18 months. Generally, clergy serve a community for five years. So no Bob McGinn stories. Everything is refreshed.

All this is just over the horizon. Like "planet nine", the math says we will see it soon, but it still cannot be seen. It is beyond the reach of even the best telescopes. But you will see it soon. So the vestry has been given a copy of an Episcopal Church Foundation Vestry Handbook with a blue post-it stuck at the beginning of Chapter 7, "Transitions".

"A light to the nations"; that's us. We're solvent. We're doing fine. We have two awards and one scholarship to give away that help make that point.

First, the **Nellie Johnston Award**. Nellie wove our altar cloth decades ago, and was good fun for a younger Peter Bunder to visit at Westminster. You could join her at 4:00 for the medicinal scotch she had been prescribed. Her daughter Kathleen paid for the upstairs kitchen here. So this award goes to the "grown-up", whatever that means, who has done something here above and beyond the usual and customary at Good Shepherd.

This year the award goes to **Mark Diekman** and **Patti O'Callaghan**. Patti is our sacristan, our church laundress. More importantly she is responsible for helping to maintain this congregation's focus on social justice. Mark, in his retirement, has become the parish painter. Do you like the look of the shutters outside or the baseboards inside? Thank Mark. Both embody the spirit of Nellie and Kathleen Johnston, and the adult commitment to our mission that has kept us in business for 61 years.

Next, we have the **Angela Falzone Student Leadership Award**. Angela was elected our first (graduate) student senior warden in 1987. This year's Falzone Award is given to **Connor**

**Henebry.** The manual labor theme of this years awards continues. As junior warden, Connor has been responsible for our building's physical fitness. Connor has done that, from polishing the kick plates on our doors, to fixing (well, almost fixing; or frequently fixing) our doorknobs. Most notably he shoveled the entire church parking lot during our first snow. And he's from California. Young people have so much energy! The Falzone Award for 2016 goes to Connor Henebry.

Our **Good Shepherd Scholarship** goes to the undergraduate who demonstrates need and is best able to propose a solution for this line found in the book "101 Reasons to be Episcopalian"; "Where else can you be considered a young person until you're forty?" The winner of our essay contest is **Marcus Fuller**. His answer is a relational one. Can you begin to tell another person what Christianity, what the Episcopal Church, has meant for your life? We might all want a cleverer website, but this is how this little community has always rebuilt itself each two or three years of its history.

Our God is. Our God is with us. Our God is with us in a way that is full and free. Our God would have us be whole and safe, holy and saved. Our God changes how we love and what we do in the places where we live and work.

That is our good news. It is already that for you or you would not be here this morning listening to the story of Jesus and breaking bread in his name. It makes our presence at Purdue an Epiphany, a light to the world, as it has been and will be year after year after year.

Join us upstairs after the service for our annual parish meeting. Later the new vestry will meet back her in the chapel for an organizational meeting.

Amen.