

## The Year Past

This congregation has been in transition for quite a while, especially staff transition. It began in 2005 or so, when my predecessor, Bob Giannini, announced his retirement. At the same time, other senior staff positions began to be in transition, some as a result of Bob's retirement, other's because some staff were approaching retirement age themselves. In addition we faced "the great recession" and the substantial effects that had on our endowment and budget.

These past years have been a challenge, to say the least. I am extremely proud of the leadership of this congregation and how they have responded to these challenges. I simply cannot say enough about the leadership of the Vestry, especially of our retiring members, John Wehr, Suzie Mead and Senior Warden Simon Crookall.

I am also happy to report that we have passed some significant milestones this past year in our responses to these challenges. The most obvious one is in the completion of the music transition. The retirement of Fred Burgomaster was every bit as significant and perhaps more anxiety producing than Bob's retirement. Last year at this time we were in the middle of a discernment process. We were anticipating a search process. Each of these processes would involve a large segment of the congregation. With the installation of Dana Marsh this past Sunday, we brought this final major anticipated transition to an end. While parts of the journey were rocky, to say the least, we have ended up in a strong position and oriented toward an exciting future in music and liturgy. (Thanks to Ron Thieme and Linda O'Neill for leading the discernment work and to Gray Lesesne and Donna Worth for coordinating the search process.)

I am also pleased to report that we have weathered the financial crisis and the decline in our endowment. Because the Vestry in 2009 responded proactively and because the staff was judicious in spending, we have not had a deficit budget throughout this crisis. And because the markets have rallied in a way no one would have predicted two years ago, we are well positioned financially for the coming years. Another milestone has been passed. (Thanks to our retiring treasurer, Jim Hebden, and his wise counsel in a difficult time.)

There were surprises. Last year at this time the amount of devastation in Haiti was just becoming apparent. We knew that we would need to respond. I was proud that the Vestry, staff and other parish leaders responded, again proactively to this challenge. Everyone knew, of course, that responding to this earthquake would be trying. Working in Haiti before the earthquake had been challenging; all knew it would be worse afterwards. This has been as anticipated.

What has been less expected has been the delay in response of the Episcopal Church. While Episcopal Relief and Development has been on the ground providing initial relief from the earliest days, the response of the Episcopal Church to the need for development and reconstruction has been frustratingly slow. A national capital funds drive for reconstruction

has finally begun this month. Groups are beginning to coordinate their efforts. Plans to rebuild are being formulated. Financial structures are being set up.

The early proactive response to this tragedy by our leadership, among the Vestry and the Mission Committee and the Haiti Task force, have empowered Christ Church Cathedral to act as a leader in promoting efforts to respond to this tragedy. Our initial mission trip for mental health response resulted in shaping how the Church Pension Group and CREDO would promote healing and wellness among the lay and ordained leadership of the Diocese of Haiti. The pledge of support inspired other churches to similarly pledge and helped prod national groups to come together in cooperation and coordination. (Thanks to Drew Klatte, Linda O'Neill, Don Doucette, Rees Olander, Andy McConnell, among many others)

I would note that the two major efforts this past year, the music search and the Haiti earthquake response, are emblematic of the two historic strengths of this cathedral church: excellence in liturgy and music, and reaching out to the community and world beyond our doors. This has been the story of our past and will be the story of our future.

Nevertheless, music and Haiti were not the sum total of what happened here—even though anyone of us could be forgiven thinking this was the case.

Here are some of the other things that were accomplished:

- The pastoral care given by one member to another has increased by orders of magnitude as our Stephen Ministry has grown to 25 or so persons visiting those in our congregation who need prayerful listening and care. This is what Christian community is supposed to be about (Thanks to Dan Hoffman, Peg Black and Gray Lesesne for this leadership). Now we are expanding this into the Hispanic community. Zoila Manzanares has gone for training and we are looking at funding the translation of Stephen Ministry training and materials into Spanish.
- Before Dana arrived, Steven Rickards decided that we couldn't wait to begin recruiting children for our choirs. A camp was organized in no time and many children benefited from this spiritual and musical training. Dana was able to arrive with new boys and girls in our choirs. (Thanks to Steven, to Stephen Strugnell, Nathan Medley, and Cyndee Giebler for their enthusiasm in getting this camp going; we're going to do it again next summer!)
- We beginning to see how Christian formation and musical training in our Boys and our Girls Choirs can be ongoing and integrated, rather than separate, distinct and occasionally competing.
- There is new growth in our ministries with children. Some of our classrooms are bursting with little ones.
- Our youth this summer participated in a plunge into poverty through the Urban Spirit program, to learn experientially what it is like to be poor and hungry.
- Liturgically, it has been a busy year: We established a weekday Eucharist at 12:05 pm, to complement our Daily Morning and Evening Prayer. We experienced an exciting Holy Week with Dean Alan Jones as guest preacher.
- Whitney Rice worked all year to establish a customary for our Sunday services describing what we do and when, and then trained everyone according to the customary. (Thanks to Whitney and to all the members of our liturgical guilds—too

- many to mention by name, vergers, acolytes, altar guild, chalice bearers, lectors, intercessors, ushers, etc.)
- You have surely noticed the efforts of Marcella Kates in our communications, the new website and weekly email notices, and the launch of the new *Crossroads* magazine.
  - Last Easter our second Catechumenate class came to its culmination with 15 persons confirmed or received. This year we have nearly 30 new people to our community who have just begun this our third group of catechumens.
  - In an effort to begin tracking and measuring our evangelism and growth, we achieved our goal of placing nearly 25% of identified newcomers in an active ministry, guild, or the Catechumenate (thanks to Gray Lesesne and Lauren Good for establishing this process).
  - Then there were things like the Strawberry Festival, the parish picnic, the concerts, the grants made, the service projects completed, mission trips, classes taught, backpacks stuffed, adopt-a-family gifts given, babies baptized, funerals observed, bread broken, cups passed.

No, Haiti and our Music search did not dominate our life. It just seemed like it at times. Life went on and went on strongly.

### **The Year Ahead**

As I look forward to this coming year, it is my hope that we are through with major transitions and that, God willing, there will be no disasters requiring the kinds of response the earthquake in Haiti did. We can never be sure of this. A new challenge may arise. Any staff will have occasional transition, hopefully as staff members grow in their work and move on to new and bigger opportunities. Nevertheless, I hope that our energies this year will be directed to promoting new mission, renewed vision and increasing health in our common life.

I hope next year to have another long list of achievements and accomplishments describing the creative actions of our members and staff. However as I look forward I can see two groups of two, which describe the areas of action and reflection before us. They are Prayer and Service, and Evangelism and Stewardship.

#### *Prayer and Service*

Prayer and service describe the central vocations of this Cathedral church and parish. Our life of liturgy and music, on the one hand, and outreach into the larger community and world on the other, are the motivating passions of our life. This has been true in our history. It was true last year. It will be true in our future. This is who we are and who we will be. These are what is distinctive about our life, our marks of identity. I hope that this year and in the years to come, we will strengthen these strengths. Rather than try to develop other new programs, I think that we can work and deepening and broadening these two into everything we do.

Take our ministry with our youth for example. Rather than think of our youth program as something separate from our choirs and our outreach, what if we had a youth group through our liturgical service and our choirs, and that they all engage in service.

Therefore this year, there will be a choir tour—but with a difference. We will be going to the National Cathedral. The Men and Boys will sing there. But so will the Girls. And not only that, our acolytes will go too. When the service is over, the men will come home, but our youth will remain for a pilgrimage and for learning and for service. After all, our choirs and our acolytes capture nearly all our youth. It is our largest youth group. Let's recognize the groups we have and use these for learning and service and for spiritual nurture.

In addition, our music and our outreach are not in competition with each other. In fact there are ways in which they will be cooperating in the near future. During our discernment process, Ben Hutto, a visiting choirmaster who helped us take a look at ourselves, noted that what we pay the children in our choirs was originally trolley or car fare. He reminded us that the amazing musical and spiritual education we offer our boys and girls has always been a form of outreach—which has been transformative for the lives of hundreds of children who would not have had these opportunities any other way.

This year we are exploring how we may intentionally renew this part of our past. Leonardo Panigada, the director of Coro Hispano, has just completed his Ph.D. at IU and brings vast experience doing this kind of musical outreach through *El Sistema* in Venezuela. Under the direction of Dana Marsh, he will be working to get grants and to establish a program to reach out to at risk kids through music and faith.

Music and Outreach. These passions are at the heart of who we are. Let's do more of them. Let's do them intentionally, spiritually, joyfully. Along the way we will deepen community. We will learn about ourselves and about our God. Together we will pray deeply, serve generously, and at the same time, we will learn together and care compassionately for one another.

### *Evangelism and Stewardship*

In order to thrive in our music and liturgy, and in our outreach and service, we need two things, renewed Evangelism and deepened Stewardship. Actually this is one and the same thing from everyone. We need to share. We need to share from the abundance we have received from God.

What we have received here at Christ Church Cathedral is pure gift. This is true spiritually. All that we have, all we are, the very air we breathe, each beat of our heart is a pure gift of God. The grace we receive spiritually in our sacraments and in our community life is ours through the work of Jesus Christ. None is our own work or achievement.

This is especially poignant at Christ Church Cathedral because so much of what we have is the result of the gifts of previous members. Of course, the endowment made possible by Eli Lilly is the most obvious example, but there are many others whose contributions and whose talents have bequeathed to us today a Cathedral church the likes of which we could never have on our own.

The size of our staff, the beauty of our music, the reach into the community, the Cathedral building, the location on Monument Circle, none of these would be possible through the energy or the efforts of this our current generation of members alone. Our vibrant life, the one I have been describing in this report, is only possible through God's grace and the faithful stewardship of previous generations. Our job is now to contribute to this through sharing generously, with others and of ourselves.

We will share first through telling others and inviting them to be part of our life. This is called Evangelism. It needn't be scary or a bad word for Episcopalians. It does not mean manipulating others or trying to convince them of anything. It merely means we recognize that all these wonderful blessings in our common life they are not ours but are meant to be shared with others. The wonderful thing about sharing God's grace is that in giving it away, we are not impoverished but enriched. We gain by giving.

Our attendance at the Cathedral has been remarkably even over the last decade. But this is only because of the foresight to begin Hispanic ministry here. This ministry planted more than a decade ago, watered and grown into a vibrant Spanish language service at 1 pm. has helped our attendance remain steady, but also masked a slow decline over a decade, particular at the 8 and 9 a.m. services.

There is no reason we cannot grow substantially as a congregation. We are part of a wonderful community of faith. There are marvelous opportunities for prayer, for service, for growth and learning. We care for one another and about the needs of the community. I had a member of the Catechumenate tell me last night, "We've been looking for this congregation for ten years." Furthermore, because of our prominence in the community and on the Circle, we get lots of visitors. And many of them come back more than once.

Our challenge is helping new persons become a part of this community, and among a far flung congregation to find friends and fellowship, being and belonging. Growth will not happen without effort. To grow we will have to commit ourselves to this effort. We must share our life with others. We must invite others in and make room in our pews and in our hearts.

That is one way of sharing. We share the richness of the life we have. The other way of sharing means giving of our own substance, of the blessings God has given us, especially financially. We need to give new emphasis to our financial stewardship. This congregation has led the way for the Episcopal Church in learning and teaching how to be good stewards of a large endowment. It is time for us to catch up with the Episcopal Church in being personal stewards. Our giving is about half of the average for the average Episcopal Church.

This is twice as important for us as an endowed congregation. Without each of us doing our own part, giving in a personal way that is financially significant for us, we don't really have "skin in the game." What we give matters to the health of the ministry of this congregation. Even more than that, it matters for the health of our own spiritual lives. Sharing is a way of saying, God has blessed me and I am thankful. Words are important, deeds more so. It is time that we begin to give attention to our giving and to what our giving says about our life and our health as the people of God in this place.

Evangelism and Stewardship. We will be exploring new ways to share in the coming year. It's going to be exciting!

Finally, this year, 2011 marks the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this building. Next year will be our 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this congregation. We will be celebrating these milestones in ways that help us share, that will teach more about who we have been, who we are and who we will become. We will become more appreciative of those who legacies make our vibrant life possible, but more than that, I hope we will be inspired to take our place, to do our part, to share our life and substance to the furtherance of Christ Church here on the Circle, a house of prayer for all, a church for our city, and the Cathedral for the Episcopal Diocese of Indianapolis.

I look forward to what this coming year will bring. And remain honored and thankful to be your pastor and dean.