

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I have heard about the changing generations and how 'young people' aren't necessarily relating to the standard 'customs' we have all grown to recognize; but the other day, it hit me squarely between the eyes...and MORE!

I went to a store to get new glasses. I had my examination, the new prescription was written, and I had been fitted for my glasses. I had only to return, make sure they fit, and leave with them.

I returned to the store, and found a short line ahead of me. The chairs along the side of the shop were filled, so I asked if I could sit in one of the chairs that are used by customers being fitted for their glasses. I was told I could. So, I sat down, and waited. After about 10 minutes, one of the sales associates walked by and paused. She looked at me and asked, "Are you a pastor?" Wearing my collar and purple shirt, I thought it was obvious, and rather than confusing her with the titles of Bishop, etc, I thought it was prudent to just respond in the affirmative. She stood there for a few seconds, and said, "I thought so. I saw your shirt and all, and I thought maybe it was just a nice shirt. I wasn't sure."

Has the clerical collar gotten so lost in society that our younger generation (she was probably in her mid-twenties) has no idea about what clergy look like? Is the backward collar obsolete? It used to be that we could identify clergy in their collars – usually Episcopal or Roman – without a second thought. Today, I see Baptist clergy, Lutheran and Methodist clergy all wearing clerical collars. But obviously to a certain segment of our population the collar means almost nothing.

"What's wrong with this generation?" I began to ask myself. Surely people can't be that far removed from what I have worn for almost 30 years. Certainly this young lady MUST have some connection to the Church. Then it hit me – the reports and findings of various different studies that say that our young people are truly removed from some of our old images and symbols.

I chalked it up to her youthfulness....But...

About 10 minutes later (did I say there was a short line ahead of me? It was actually quite long) an older woman walked up to me, and stopped. She looked at me, and I looked at her. I tried to place her, thinking that she recognized me from one of the Episcopal Congregations in town. I looked up and said, "hello." She smiled and said, "Excuse me. My glasses don't fit, and I was wondering if you could adjust them for me?" I smiled broadly and stated that I didn't work there. She looked at me for a few more moments and then sighed and walked away.

I watched her for a few moments as she walked away. I wanted to see if her eyesight was flawed, thus she wasn't able to see me clearly, and she made an honest mistake. No such luck. Her vision was actually quite accurate. It was just that the glasses were slipping down her nose and needed a minor adjustment.

So – it wasn't just the younger generation for whom the collar was meaningless. Our symbols, (at least this symbol of the clerical collar) which to me had been a sign of Christ's presence in our midst – clergy bearing the presence of Christ either in Word, Sacrament or person – was now a lost symbol to others. What does all of this mean? How do we regain our presence of reassurance of Christ's presence in society? I remember walking through the Brooklyn House of Detention many years ago when the inmates rattled their cages until they saw our collars, and then they apologized and said, "Hello, Father." The collar USED TO carry some symbolic presence with it. I think it still does – but to so many it is a bygone symbol with little or no meaning.

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News Around the Diocese

Newsmakers and Events

Get ready for a **Family Adventure!** Biking, hiking, fishing, swimming, white water rafting, music provided by Fran McKendree — what more could you ask for in a summer getaway? The outing will be at Ace Adventure Resort in Oak Hill (www.aceraft.com). Additional information and registration forms are on the Diocesan website at <http://www.wvdiocese.org/pages/news-familyadv.html>. If you have questions, please contact Jason Beschinski, 304-344-3597 or jbeschinski@wvdiocese.org.

Emmanuel, Keyser, announced that the **Rt. Rev. Martin G. Townsend** accepted the call to become their new Priest-in-Charge in May 2008. We welcome him to the Diocese.

Hollie Mitchell, Altar Guild Directress, is interested in hearing from those of you that are interested in a state wide unified **Altar Guild**. Contact Hollie at 304-776-8315 or WMitch8315@aol.com.

Don't forget to send **Bishop Klusmeyer** information on your church's ministry for children! At last year's Convention the **Church Commission for Children** challenged every parish in the Diocese to commit itself to establishing "at least one new ministry with, and/or, for children between October 1, 2007 and June 30, 2008, and any future plans for ministry with, and/or, for children and the estimated time frame for implementing that ministry."

Status Report from the Constitutions and Canons Committee from John R. McGhee

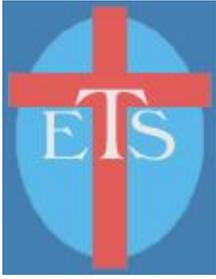
As those who attended Diocesan Convention 2007 will recall, we voted on a draft of a new constitution and passed the same for a first reading. Any changes to the constitution (including a whole new document) must be passed by two conventions in a row to become effective. There had been some discussion as to clarity of the draft that passed on the issue of who was qualified to be a convention delegate. The committee has drafted a small change to the constitution to try to clear up any confusion. At present, the plan is to vote at Diocesan Convention 2008 for what would again be the first of a two year voting process on a new constitution. At the same time we will have a new set of canons to vote upon which would be requested to become effective in 2009 at the time of the second year's vote. This process will allow for both the constitution and the canons to go into effect at the same time as doing one without the other would lead to confusion and lack of coordinated overlap. The current drafts of both documents are on the Diocesan website (www.wvdiocese.org) and hard copies can be mailed upon request from the Diocesan Office. Johnny McGhee, chair of the Constitution and Canons Committee, would like for anyone having any suggestions or questions regarding these proposed Canons and Constitution for the Diocese of West Virginia to email him no later than June 23 at jmcghee@kaycasto.com.

St. Stephen's, Beckley, has a new group called "40's and Under Group." This group was formed to give the younger generation a chance to enjoy each other's company and to bond in fellowship. In April the group treated themselves to a dinner at a nice restaurant, and in May they enjoyed a tour of the Lost World Caverns in Lewisburg.

Congratulations to **Sarah Dyche** of Emmanuel, Keyser. She finished in first place at the 43rd annual WV Regional Science and Humanities Symposium at WV Wesleyan College. Sara, a sophomore at Keyser High School, took top honors with her project "The Impact of Organic Smoke on Grains."

The members of Emmanuel, Moorefield, recently donated three cartons of books and tapes for children to the Moorefield Library as part of the library's Literacy Program for Children that began in May. Pictured with a library employee is Kathy Ratliff, head of the church's Service Team.





Are you an **Equipping the Saints** alum, having attended a weekend, participated in a one-year program or a three-year program? Been a program tutor, mentor or on the board of directors? We'd like to hear from you so we can include you in our celebration of ETS and its ministry across the diocese at the upcoming diocesan convention.

Please email program administrator Beth Marquart (administrator@etswv.com or bethm1217@aol.com) your photo, an exterior shot of your church (both in jpg format, please) along with a couple sentences about your current ministry. If you aren't able to email, send photos and your ministry information to Beth at 109 Georges Dr., Malden, WV 25306. Thanks for your help!

Convention 2008 Logo



Spring Break for Clergy Spouses

Several clergy spouses met May 9th through 11th for a relaxing break at scenic Bishop Hodges' Pastoral Center in Huttonsville. The weekend provided fun and fellowship, with everything from movie discussions to 'crafty' pursuits.

Pictured are Joanne Fulks, Rosie Wood, Penny Snider, Edna Thomas and Marsha Klusmeyer.



Trinity, Martinsburg Celebrates *Cinco de Mayo* 'Family Fun Night' at Trinity, Martinsburg



*Photo:
Monica Moriarty and John Hudson enjoy the 'South of the Border' festivities*

The Rev. Julie Harris helps Isabel Rice hit the piñata as Nicholas Shirley and Sissy Poland watch in anticipation.



Photos: Mike Braswell

Mountain Grace Expands

Good Shepherd, Athens, will host a multi-diocese conference September 12-13, 2008. Six dioceses are invited to this year's Mountain Grace conference on the life and witness of Episcopalians in Appalachia. 'Being Church/Being Appalachian' is this year's theme, transcending the stereotype of the Episcopal Church as alien to Appalachian culture.

Launched as a one-day event by the Appalachian deaneries of Southern Ohio in 2004, Mountain Grace has grown into a vibrant gathering for Episcopalians from all over the Appalachian region. This will be the fifth conference and participants are expected from Maryland, Tennessee, Kentucky, West Virginia and Ohio.

The conference includes workshops on sustainable community development, environmental advocacy, and Appalachian music. Bishop Mike Klusmeyer will join Suffragan Bishop Ken Price of Southern Ohio as leaders of a workshop on fitting Episcopal worship and ministry to its Appalachian context.

The fee for Saturday's events, meal and workshop is \$35; total cost for Friday banquet plus Saturday sessions is \$70 (lodging not included). Scholarships are available for Saturday's conference fees by request. For additional information, please contact Ariel Miller at ECSF@eos.net.

TENDING THE VINE

A Few Words on Congregational Development from Canon Donald Vinson

Would you be willing to do just one thing to help grow your church?

If a congregation were to choose one step to make their congregation more welcoming to newcomers, the best choice would probably be NAMETAGS -- a freshly-made, single-use nametag for every church gathering.

A simple nametag makes a huge shift in the way a congregation presents itself to a newcomer. No longer is it a private club run for the comfort and benefit of the established members. Now it is a gathering of equals, all of whom can address one another by name, without distinction between 'belongers' and 'visitors.'



But fight the impulse to make permanent nametags for members, hanging on a rack in the parish hall. First, people won't actually put them on, so there they'll hang. Second, they only serve to accentuate the un-belonging of the visitor, who doesn't have one, and won't, until someone deliberately has one made for her, which could take weeks. Single use ones level the playing field. There is no distinction between member and non-member. Make them fresh, as people arrive.

Yes, there will be some curmudgeons who won't agree to wear one. Let them alone, no need to alienate them. In time, they'll ask for one. Here's a tip, though: let upper-elementary children be the 'nametag czars.' They will love to make the tags, and even the grouchiest curmudgeon will have trouble turning them down.

This one step alone will make a difference, over time, in the ability of the congregation to attract and retain new members. The experience might also lead church members to ask themselves a vital further question: What else can we do to make our church events less the exclusivist gatherings of insiders in the know, and more like celebrations of the risen Christ, designed to draw others to the light of His love?

*Continued from Page 1...*When I finally got to see the optician (yes, it was the young lady who didn't recognize my collar), she sat across from me and asked if I was a 'Catholic.' I said no, that I was an Episcopalian. She replied that she didn't know anything about the 'Catholic Church.' She said the only thing she knew about the Church came from the movie "The Omen." I assured her that she needed to get a different perspective, and that that movie, or any movie, was not an appropriate place by which to judge The Church.

All of this is to say that people outside the Church don't understand the Church, and that their knowledge of the Church comes from such strange understandings. WE are the ambassadors of Christ, and are called to translate the symbols and images, along with the Gospel – The Good News – The Message of Salvation – to those both inside and outside the Body of Christ.

We live in a changing world, and we must speak of the things that we so often take for granted. God bless you this summer and always.

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "W. Michie Klusmeyer".

The Rt. Rev. W. Michie Klusmeyer
Bishop

Diocesan Convention
October 24-26, 2008
Lakeview in Morgantown

Koinonia, Diocese of WV, PO Box 5400, Charleston, WV 25361
Fax: 304-343-3295; Email: mbailey@wvdiocese.org.

Deadline for July/August 2008 issue is July 15.