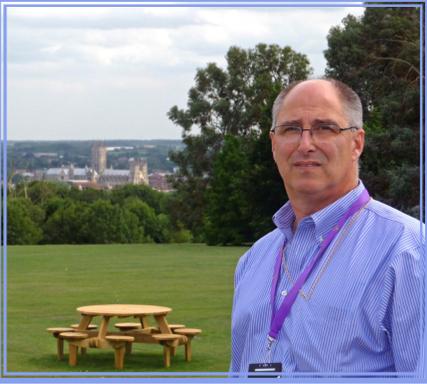


# Koinonia

Episcopal Diocese of West Virginia

July - September 2009



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Well, General Convention 2009 is over.

First, I want to go through a list of names of people who were there, for one reason or another, who have some connection to WV.

Certainly, I want to thank the Deputies: Amy Seitz, Charlie Hunsaker, Sissy Poland, Debbie Short and Beth Marquart, who served as Lay Deputies and Alternate. The Clergy Deputies were: The Very Rev. Cheryl Winter, The Rev. Canon Donald Vinson, The Very Rev. Kevin Kelly, The Rev. Eric Miller and the Rev. Richard Heller.

Along with them, at the concurrent meeting of the Episcopal Church Women, were Mrs. Pat Haldeman, Mrs. Becky Szabo and Mrs. Becki Krzywdik.

During the long walks from the third floor meeting room of the House of Bishops to the 'Worship Arena,' I was able to run into a few familiar faces, including Mr. Marc Harshman, the Rev. Betsy Walker and Ms. Pat Pate. Marc had come to lead a workshop at the ECW meeting, and Betsy was there as a Federal Chaplain.

I also saw many bishops and families formerly from West Virginia: the Prices, the Jones, the Brookharts, Andrew Rutledge, the Rev. Richard Brewer, and the list could continue on and on. For those whom I have not mentioned by name, please forgive me. It was great to see everyone!

Many people say that the General Convention of the Episcopal Church is a large family gathering, and I would have to agree. It is complete with all the relatives.

As most of you know, the Convention was set up to model the United States form of government – being of two houses. The House of Deputies is similar to the House of Representatives, and the House of Bishops is similar to the Senate. Every action of General Convention is in the form of a Resolution, originating from Dioceses, Committees (Commissions, Agencies or Boards), the House of Deputies or the House of Bishops. At some moments, it seems like resolutions are flying faster than the speed of the internet. Some resolutions, considered to be too mundane to actually spend much time or thought on them, are put on the consent calendar for action – usually several 'smaller' items are considered all at once and passed (or rejected) with one vote and no discussion.

Other resolutions are discussed and debated at length. In all, the voices of all are heard, recognized and honored.

At this Convention we had the distinct pleasure of having the two previous Presiding Bishops present as well: Bishop Edmond Browning and Bishop Frank Griswold, now both retired. Both still are actively engaged in teaching and ministry. They both gave us a brief word of reflection, from their unique perspectives.

*Continued on Page 3...*

# News Around the Diocese

## *Newsmakers and Events*

Three exciting conferences are being held this Fall in the Diocese: The sixth annual **Mountain Grace Conference** will be held September 11-12 at **St. John's, Huntington**; "**Praying with Teresa of Avila**," the ninth annual silent retreat sponsored by the Commission on Spirituality, will be held October 29-November 1 at Bishop Hodges Pastoral Center in Huttonsville; and Andrew Weeks is returning with his popular conference, **The Magnetic Church**, November 20 and 21, at **St. Christopher, Charleston**. Check the inserts in this issue of *Koinonia* for details on each of these conferences.

**Lawrencefield Parish, Wheeling**, has held adult education classes, called Episcopal 101, through the summer. A dozen people participated to learn everything you ever wanted to know about being an Episcopalian but were afraid to ask. (Evidence is that Lawrencefielders are not afraid to ask about *anything!*) Topics include Bible, Church History, Prayer Book Navigation, Liturgy, Prayer and Basic Theology. The sessions, which meet over Wednesday lunch, continue into the Fall.

In April and May, adults at **St. Stephen's, Beckley**, enjoyed a five week bible study on the book of Amos taught by their very own **John McFerrin**. St. Stephen's youth group has also had an exciting and eventful spring and summer. With the help of Fr. Eric and his wife Rosemary and a number of dedicated parishioners they have enjoyed outings such as Kids' Movie and Game Night, a delightful Easter egg hunt and an evening with the Theatre of West Virginia group.

**Clergy: Mark your calendars now for the 2010 Clergy Conference: May 10-12 at Peterkin!**

### **St. Matthews, Charleston, Camp E.D.G.E. Vacation Bible School July 14 – 17 & 19, 2009**



Camp E.D.G.E. took over 100 campers on an extreme adventure to Experience and Discover God Everywhere. It was an action filled week that captured the imagination of all our age groups, from 3 year olds through 6<sup>th</sup> grade.

St. Matthews was transformed with mountain scenery, camping scenes, rivers and waterfalls, under-sea sets and an Antarctic wonderland complete with igloo and icicles.



The week ended with Sunday VBS Worship in the camp-decorated church followed by a Grand Finale Carnival. We applaud the



volunteers for their hard work and creativity in making this an enormously successful way to outreach to so many children in the community!



### **"Let the Light Shine"**

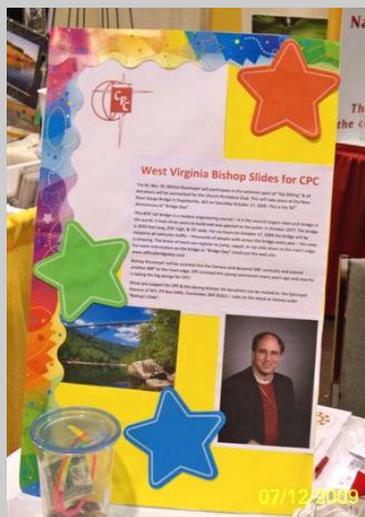
By Missy Gray

**St. Paul's, Sistersville**, is shining new light with its brothers and sisters within the community. Activity in a church can turn a flickering light bulb into a beaming light.

Recently they hosted the local ministerial meeting, thanks to the work of Mary Ann Worst. This ministry helps to keep parishioners informed of events and needs in the community.

Acolytes T.G. Gray and Brian Worst, also known as "Acolytes Supreme," represented St. Paul's at the community gospel sing held at a local Nazarene Church. St. Paul's hopes to host this event next summer.

Melissa Gray, Nancy Miller, Dorothy Lockett, Mary Ann Worst and Lou Ann Henger spruced up the church yard this year by planting an array of flowers. The variation of color that flows around the church's white background is a reflection of pure beauty and has given the exterior of the church an entirely new look that has sparked the attention of viewers. That light is getting brighter and brighter!



## Bishop Slides for CPC

Bishop Mike Klusmeyer will participate in the extreme sport of "Zip Sliding" and all donations will be earmarked for the Church Periodical Club. This will take place at the New River Gorge Bridge in Fayetteville on Saturday October 17, 2009. This year marks the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of "Bridge Day".

Bishop Mike will descend 300' vertically and extend another 400' to the river's edge. CPC assisted this young seminarian many years ago and now he is taking the big plunge for CPC!

The above photo is the poster at the Church Periodical Club booth at General Convention. Convention attendees were the first to donate money to the Bishop's Slide for CPC.

Show your support for CPC and our daring bishop! All donations can be mailed to: Episcopal Diocese of WV, PO Box 5400, Charleston, WV 25361. Please note on your check or money order that it is for "Bishop's Slide."

For more information about CPC, please see the Women's Ministries page of the diocesan website at [www.wvdiocese.org](http://www.wvdiocese.org).



Above is **Bob DuBose** in character as John Brown in the play 'John Brown's Body.' Despite wishes of some in the town, and undoubtedly some in the Diocese, he has not agreed as yet to reenact the hanging.... (just kidding).

The play 'John Brown's Body' was created in the 1950's by Charles Laughton from the Stephen Vincent Benét poem and has not been performed in fifty years. It limns the whole civil war, and forges in great and powerful words the awful ambiguities of those trying times and the strange character of John Brown (killer or sainted martyr?).

Bob, as Chairman, is heavily involved in the sesquicentennial commemoration of John Brown's raid on Harper's Ferry. Many events are planned around the actual dates of October 16, 17 and 18. Even President Obama might make an appearance! (Check this website for a list of activities through December: [johnbrownsraid.org](http://johnbrownsraid.org))

Everyone in the diocese is invited to Harper's Ferry to enjoy the activities of the next few months. If you plan to go, give Bob and Georgia a call at 304 535 2009.



### *Bishop Klusmeyer: continued from Page 1...*

What I found most interesting (and others commented on it as well, and the thought made it into at least one publication) was Bishop Griswold's reflection on the nature of the two Houses.

As he stated, the members of the House of Deputies are elected for THIS Convention. They may not have been at any previous Conventions and the Diocese from which they come may not elect them to the next Convention. The House of Bishops, on the other hand, if filled with Bishops who come to Conventions 'for life.' They are elected to serve until retirement, death or resignation. During their episcopacies, they attend every General Convention, as well as meetings of the House of Bishops and even Lambeth Conferences.

Deputies have an immediacy and urgency about their presence, while Bishops have the opportunity to see the longer/larger picture. Some deputies campaign for their position, and so feel the need to act on issues NOW, rather than waiting for a future that they might not see. Bishops are required to be at Convention – whether they care about any specific issue or not.

This creates a certain tension that perhaps the founding members of the Episcopal Church wanted to create: the immediacy versus the long view, and the local versus the universal Church.

Can we have one without the other? Or are both included to provide a 'both/and' rather than an 'either/or'?

Interesting perspective, I believe, and certainly one that will continue for the life of the Church.

In Christ,

The Rt. Rev. W. Michie Klusmeyer  
Bishop of West Virginia



## THE BESETTING SIN

by Canon Donald Vinson

Study of the Enneagram indicates that each of us has a “besetting sin,” a sort of innate fall-back position we cling to by habit or reflex. We come by it naturally, or have chosen it so early in life that we don’t remember the choice. It seems to work for us. We’re quite capable of committing all the other sins; it’s just that this one is our favorite. It is part of who we are. We don’t usually consider it to be a sin. In fact, we tend to value it as normal, and assume others must feel the same way about it, or would if they were as well-informed as we are.

Of course, in fact, they have their own, which may be different, and they hold to theirs just as strongly. Unfortunately, the besetting sin is still a sin, and it harms us because it limits our field of choices. It forces us to look at life through its prism alone, and therefore to see only its spectrum of colors. We see our world through our sin-colored glasses.

I am of the opinion that Christian denominations (and I would extend this observation to other religious groupings as well), also have a besetting sin that not only forms, but limits them. These arise out of the origins and formative years of the group, and they may be either baggage brought from some former entity, or they may be a reaction against what they have left behind or what has stood in opposition to them. To know the besetting sin, one has to know the history of the denomination. For example, the Roman Catholic Church is all that is left of the western half of the Roman Empire. As such, it has inherited the Imperial legal system and structure, with Pope as Emperor, right down to the tiny left-over scrap of being also a head of state. Consequently, the Catholic Church has historically been compelled to define, in legal terms, absolutely everything to the most minute detail. There can be no mystery, and certainly no ambiguity. The Church must be poised to go to court over every minutia of doctrine, at any time, and it must speak with unequivocal authority on anything. Their besetting sin, therefore, in my opinion, is authoritarian legalism.

But how about us Episcopalians? What is our crutch, our fall-back position? What piece of our identity, rooted in our origins, not only defines us in our own minds, but also inhibits us and holds us back? I would submit that it may be Anglo-*philia*—our inordinate, unreasoning fondness for all things English. Like most colonials, we go to such extremes that we are sometimes more English than the English. Many of our church buildings look as if they had been plucked whole from the English countryside. Our worship vestments are not just churchy, they are English Churchy. If we had an ethnic event, such as the Greek Orthodox sometimes have, ours would be High Tea—or “Pub Night,” as my congregation in Huntington used to have. We set great store in being part of the Anglican Communion, more so, it seems, than much of the Anglican Communion sets in having us. For many of our bishops, the Lambeth Conference is like a pilgrimage to holy Mecca, and that tea with the Queen (note “the” queen, not “their” queen) is a peak experience for a lifetime.

So what is wrong with all this harmless amusement? Nothing, of course, as long as it remains that; it can be benign and healthy as long as we retain our senses of humor and proportion, which this article hopes to encourage. If it becomes a box for us to take refuge and confine ourselves in, not so much. We have not been an Anglo church here in the U. S. for more than a generation, and as participation in our General Convention will attest, we are no longer a national church, either. If we expect non-Anglos of whatever type to conform to our preference for Englishness, we do them and ourselves a wrong.

There is more that goes with Anglo-*philia*, too, that is less benign, and we see it in our church culture as well, to our harm: classism, cultural elitism, excessive nationalism, and some of our racism have their roots in English tradition. Those jokes about Episcopalians “hating tacky worse than sin,” and for whom “sin is not knowing which fork to use at dinner,” harken to our early, Tory days in America. We’ve been working for some time to eradicate these negative influences. My hope is that simply raising to our awareness some of their origin will help us to accomplish that.

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***Deadline for the October – December issue is November 15.***