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Share the Bread

Evangelism in the Diocese of Bethlehem

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Holy God, your Son called us to wrap the whole world in your saving embrace. By your Holy Spirit give us compassion, purpose and energy to invite into your Church those who do not yet know the transforming power of your love. We ask this through Him who has brought us from darkness to light, your Son, our Savior Jesus Christ. **Amen.**



Tell your story about what you and your church has done to tell what we have seen and heard about God's Love! The Evangelism booth at the Diocesan Convention on October 13 and 14, will give everyone who took part in our regional evangelism workshops a show their stuff!

We are looking for words and pictures that describe the two "evangelism projects" you are working on before next Eastertide. Pictures that show off some form of welcome and hospitality in your congregation would be great! We are also looking for a group photo of the evangelists in your parish or your parish evangelism committee.

There is still time to mail the 4x6 photos, accompanied by a description of the parish and names of people in the picture. Please send your pictures and descriptions to the address below. Our deadline is October 6th. Here is your chance to show-off and celebrate how you and your church have welcomed people in Jesus' name!

For more information, contact: Mrs. Virginia M. Knapp, 162 Springhouse Rd. Allentown, PA 18104, 610-530-8330, e-mail: dvknapp@peoplepc.com. Pictures can also be e-mailed to evangelism@trinityeaston.org.

Trinity, Mt. Pocono has plunged into another venue on the internet - MySpace. It was set up and maintained by the parish webmaster, Erik Gregory and his partner Joey Blanco. Erik is a newly baptized member of the parish and learned about Trinity through the parish's web site after researching various Christian traditions also through the internet.

Erik points out the reasons for having a page on MySpace, including:

- This is a free service, so we have no expense to use it.
- We have over 3000 people in a 20 mile radius of the church to reach out to.
- There are millions using MySpace worldwide, so the possibilities are endless.
- We can find people to try to reach out to, instead of them trying to find us.
- Our exposure is far beyond just the friends we currently have on our list.
- We can use MySpace in a very positive manner.
- We can reach out to people of any demographic.
- We have accumulated 28 friends and 120 views in just 5 days
- More friends and page views are being added each day.
- Thousand of people can view news, details, and events of our church (far more than we can reach without using MySpace).

The Rev. Ginny Rex Day, Rector of Trinity, says the parish is developing a bulletin for MySpace for our Blessing of the Animals on October 1st. "Last Friday morning we looked at MySpace seeking churches," she says. "We didn't find a lot of churches!"

Trinity, Mt Pocono

I've been around long enough to remember when people saying that to attract baby boomers the church needed to shift to a large church, large halls, technology using, and "contemporary" forms of worship.

The same case is often made about generations X, Y, and Z. How much is being driven by a "bigger is better" mentality, or by personal preferences in liturgy instead of what a particular group might find most attractive in worship?

Here are three things to consider in how we approach evangelism and integrating people into our parishes:

1. *In general systems will grow by building on what they are best at.* The Episcopal Church knows a lot about liturgy and spiritual life. Again and again we hear members tell us that the reason they became and remained Episcopalians is because of the liturgy.
2. *We confuse ourselves about how marketing and growth work when we start with the question of what most people might be comfortable with.* It doesn't matter if more people would like us to have worship in a theater environment offering a low participation style if – (1) others can do that a lot better than us, (2) to get there our system would have to go through huge cultural shifts (which systems don't do easily), (3) it conflicts with our core understandings about how Christian formation occurs, and (4) that no generation is all of one type.

There is some evidence that we need to pay more attention to demographic work that differentiates around values rather than age.

If we really want to double in membership we need to begin with three different questions: 'What are we really good at?' 'Are there two million people in the USA that might want what we are good at?' and 'How do we tell them?'

3. My reading and my experience with *many people in their 20's is that they are looking for more community and mystery in liturgy.* That's certainly what we are seeing at Saint Paul's, Seattle, WA. It's a progressive Anglo-Catholic parish that is growing and attracting a lot of people in their 20's and 30's including those from evangelical and unchurched backgrounds. (*See next article.*) At this time we seem to be just the right church for a number of younger people. The question is

we will take advantage of that --because it will only be true for awhile? Or will we get seduced into going off the track by promises of a bigger return if only we follow the right formula?

From a posting on the Congregational Development E-List Bob Gallagher is the director of the Church Development Institute, Seattle. (Copyright 2006 Robert A. Gallagher)

Learn more about the Church Development Institute

Church leaders struggling to blend "traditional" and "contemporary" styles into their worship learned from blended worship guru Robert Webber that a third style already is making "contemporary" obsolete. Webber, president of the Institute for Worship Studies and emeritus professor of theology at Wheaton College, told two dozen N.C. pastors and worship leaders at the Hollifield Leadership Center that the "emergent" church is gaining ground from the impetus of "20 something" Christians who find worship comfort in ancient rituals. To these serious young Christians, "contemporary worship" is too loud, too intimate and uses language too romantic in reference to God. They prefer majesty, mystery and awe in worship, and they want their worshipping companions to be their community, Webber said. These young Christians, said Webber, who is also the Myers Professor of Ministry at Northern Seminary, reject the "huge Wal-Mart church with something for everyone" in favor of very small churches in which they find community. They reject the suburban lifestyle and churches spawned by the "great disruption" after World War II that pulled people into ever more isolated, individualistic and consumerist lifestyles. "Community" is very important to the emerging church.

By Norman Jameson, "Biblical Recorder", North Carolina Baptist State Convention, Friday, Dec. 13, 2002

Read it all...

Plan Ahead...Groundwork III is coming!

Groundwork III - A new Groundwork Lenten resource (the next step building on Groundwork I and II in 2005 and 2006) will be available to congregations throughout the church. Groundwork is a program that joins the Scriptural reflection for Lent (Year C) with learning about mission and evangelism. Study groups, Lenten programs, and individuals will find real benefit in this resource.

Groundwork III will be mailed to every congregation in the Episcopal Church. It will also be available online in a few weeks. In the meantime, please consider its use for the coming Lent. Examples of the previous two years can be found on the Episcopal Church website for your consideration (www.episcopalchurch.org/groundwork).

The Evangelism Committee of the Diocese of Bethlehem

email: evangelism@trinityeaston.org

web: <http://www.diobeth.org/ministries/evangelism.html>

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