

Southern Convocation Wednesday November 7th 2012
Notes from the CD process

Bible Study responses to Colossians 3:15-17 and responses to questions: purpose and definition of convocation and of the Diocese.

The Christian community is being called to innovation-to do things differently and with gratitude, appreciative inquiry has been successful, importance to gather to help spread Christ's teachings. Diocese is very helpful, Bishop's letters and Canon Babcock's vision is helpful. Need to attract new and younger members, development of School of Christian Studies in relationship to the role of the convocation as being a place for building reflection/learning groups.

Positives of being a smaller community within the convocation

- + Know everyone
- + The challenges of being a small congregation in the convocation are met by meeting with other smaller congregations to learn of similar challenges.
- + Impact of being a larger group together in convocation in worship/youth ministry gatherings, etc.
- + A sense of community across parishes

Challenges within the convocation

- + Convocation meetings are too spread out to enable meaningful relationships to be cultivated.
- + Inviting younger people into aging congregations
- + Need to create a welcoming approach for new members when we all know each other so well, how do you break into the "family"
- + Not being the "established church" in our community
- + Keeping the underlying joy in our BCP and liturgy and worship together
- + Not trusting because we do not know each other (laity)
- + Parishioners do not know about the diocese, communication with them is important.
- + Congregations need to "Right Size" Episcopal leadership to reflect declining membership and revenues.
- + We have lost our sense of pride as being "Episcopalians" we need to re-engage it to carry out the Gospel.
- + We need to take our faith more seriously
- + Practical issues can slow collaboration
- + Disconnect between people in the parish and the diocese

Definition and word descriptions of the Diocese of Central PA:

- + Diocese is all of us
- + 66 pieces and a diocesan center or the sum of all the parts
- + Organic entity
- + 7 convocations created by Bishop Stevenson that exist to do the work the parishes cannot do.
- + The use of the word family to describe parish and in reference to the diocese was used often.
- + Looking toward “outcome” based convocations
- + Regional span of control in convocations and diocese.
- + Diocesan youth program and joint summer camp with the Lutherans
- + Diocese is remote
- + Diocese exists to support parish life, and should provide resources such as adult education ideas.

Diocese and Convocation Spiritual life:

- + Diocesan retreat to further explore our faith and spiritual journey, we need to meet in retreat as a convocation
- + Need time together to learn from each other, to support each other.
- + Joint witness, to do something together
- + Clergy support system
- + Shared resources, ie interns and newsletters
- + Could we hold Confirmations by convocation, or other geographic regions within the convocation
- + Caring for one another by developing a convocation Stephen ministry.
- + Develop other ways for the Bishop to get to know the local parishes, not just through annual visitation and confirmation