

URGENT AND IMMEDIATE

February 2, 2009

To the Clergy of the Diocese of Kentucky, Standing Committee, Trustees and Council Members, Diocesan Staff, and Senior Wardens of Vacant Cures.

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

Having had two substantive conversations with the Rev. Libby Wade, Grace Church, Paducah, and Libby having had consultation with her Vestry, it has become clear that we must change the location of this year's Diocesan Convention. As of this moment, the hotels in Paducah are filled to capacity, many people are still without power, and the work of repair crews, insurance adjusters, and FEMA workers will continue for many days, if not weeks. The congregation's best energies are going towards people with survival needs, clean up, and assessing the costs both personal and financial of this devastating winter storm event.

I made a phone call to the Rev. Michael Blewett, Rector of Christ Church, Bowling Green, and he immediately, graciously, and generously agreed to host a paired down Convention that will be focused on fulfilling the canonical necessities of a Diocesan Convention. As I thought and prayed about what to do in this time of crisis, I chose to call Christ Church first because for most in the Diocese it is the location that is large enough to accommodate the gathering and also central enough that few of us will have to procure overnight accommodations to attend this abbreviated convention.

Here is the plan:

- Hold an opening Eucharist at 9:00 am Central Time at which I will give my somewhat abbreviated (non-Power-Point) address as the sermon.
- Proceed after the Eucharist to the parish hall to adopt the budget.
- Do the elections we are required to do.
- Welcome new clergy and diocesan staff.
- Hear a report from our Standing Committee about decisions concerning the Episcopate Search

- Enjoy being together as members of this Diocesan Body.
- Ask that all resolutions submitted to this convention that do not have a time certain urgency be tabled to a more opportune time.

Simple pastries and coffee will be available upon our arrival and boxed lunches will be served. It is my sincere hope that we will be able to return to our homes by 3:00 pm. One immediate effect in this change of plans is that we will be able to lower the costs as we will not be having a banquet and secondly not having the need of hotel accommodations will save churches much needed funds.

By the time of this writing I have heard from most of our clergy and I am pleased to report that all of the clergy have survived the storm, but, many have lost and still have no electrical power. I found one of our priests at Nashville and one at Sewanee and some are at home shivering, but, most have had power restored.

The Diocese of Fort Worth

For those of you who have access to ENS or the Courier Journal, you may have read the news that I have been nominated by the Presiding Bishop and now by the steering committee of the recovering Diocese of Fort Worth to be the Provisional Bishop of Fort Worth until the meeting of the General Convention of the Episcopal Church in July, 2009. The Presiding Bishop and Bishop Clay Matthews approached me in early January and asked if I might be willing to secure the permission of my Standing Committee to assume this ministry. Fortunately the Standing Committee had a meeting scheduled on January 21st, 2009 and having received the letter from Katharine assented to her request and gave me permission to be interviewed by the Steering Committee of the recovering Diocese. Last Thursday, January the 29th, I made a 24-hour trip to Fort Worth and was interviewed by the Steering Committee. They unanimously chose to concur with the Presiding Bishop's nomination. The Convention of the recovering Diocese will be this Saturday, February 7th. I am the only nominee for the position. What the Presiding Bishop purposed and what our Standing Committee has granted is for me to serve both Dioceses in a half-time capacity for six months. The Diocese of Kentucky will be reimbursed for 50% of my total package during this time of extended service. Oddly enough, this added revenue to our Diocese approximates the shortfall we will receive from decreased parish giving. Although this

was not a factor weighing heavily in my own discernment, it is a not insignificant benefit! I know that a factor in Bishop Matthews and the Presiding Bishop's consideration was that our Diocese is stable, generally happy, and possessed of skilled lay and ordained leadership. They are asking a strong diocese to lend their Bishop for this missional opportunity and profound need. When Bishop Katharine was elected in 2006, I wrote her a handwritten letter and I pledged, among other things, to do whatever she would ask to assist her in her ministry. This is what she has asked of me and all of us. Like you, I practice my obedience to Jesus, by serving my Bishop.

Having met with the Christians in Fort Worth who want to remain in the Episcopal Church, I also what you to know I personally feel called to them as well. The hardest part of this discernment personally was related to the timing of the ice storm. I left Thursday afternoon for a 24-hour trip to Fort Worth before I was able to contact many of you. I had hoped to be the first to communicate the particulars of this new ministry; however, Episcopal News Service and the Courier Journal broke the story of Thursday night's concurrence before I could communicate it to you. I am sorry for that unfortunate timing!

I am about to find myself as Vicar of a two-point cure or the proverbial person trying to serve "two masters." I will do everything possible to keep the life of the Diocese smooth and functioning; obviously however, some visitation schedules will need to be adjusted and some weekend commitments moved to mid-week, but I would hope that you would know that I would do everything possible to keep these adjustments at a minimum. Bishop Reed has graciously offered to assist me particularly with the Confirmation schedule if needed and at present I plan to spend more Sundays within this Diocese than Fort Worth, so schedule changing should be kept at a minimum. For your calendar purposes, I will announce that this year there will be only one Renewal of Ordinations Vows and it will be held on Maundy Thursday at 11:00 am Eastern Time at a place to be determined.

I hope that all of you will keep me, this Diocese, and the Diocese of Fort Worth in your prayers as we all in our particular realities offer our service in the one Gospel.

Thank you for the effort to read this lengthy epistle. Please send us pictures and stories of the realities of the storm and occasions of service that it has brought forth. We want to put them on our Web site. I am attempting to contact Episcopal Relief and Development to see how they might help us address human needs.

Thank you one and all for our partnership in the Gospel. If there is anything I can do for you individually, please let me know.

The Rt. Rev. Edwin F. Gulick, Jr., D.D.
Bishop of Kentucky.

EFG/mgh