

LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE UPDATE

My Sisters and Brothers,

The response to the **Bishop's Leadership Conference: A New Season of Gospel Mission** has been great! The desire of so many lay and clergy leaders to come together to plan mission is most encouraging!

The title for this gathering comes from the opening line of the Diocesan Profile for the Bishop search process: *"It is our faith-filled conviction that the living God, under the nurturing power of the Holy Spirit, is preparing the Episcopal Diocese of Kentucky for a new season of Gospel mission in Christ Jesus."*

Though planning for the conference will continue up to the last minute, at this writing I see the event as beginning with two different discussions on **Friday evening (Nov. 5)** following dinner. Given the number of participants, these discussions will happen at small tables, with BRIEF reports posted on newsprint.

1) The phrase "Gospel mission" was created by the profile committee based upon survey responses and focus group discussions. What priorities would you label as "Gospel mission"? I would especially encourage you to explain your choices based upon the Scriptures, tradition, and the Prayer Book.

2) The profile states that the people of the diocese *expressed a desire for a stronger shared vision for the Diocese, more support for churches in transition, strategies for building congregations, and cultivating financial giving. Looking to the future, respondents to the survey want to see plans that will bring new members to the Diocese, build the vitality of Episcopal churches in our region, recruit strong clergy and lay leadership, and cultivate a stronger sense of involvement in the Diocese.*

For the future they hoped to see more resources for parish and diocesan ministry . . . a stronger financial profile, a reorganized Diocesan staff, and better communication strategies, particularly involving technology.

What is needed from each member of the diocesan community, and each congregation, for these desires to be fulfilled? What must each of us and each community do, or change, or let go of, in order for this hoped for future to be fulfilled?

As the program for the evening concludes, it is expected that informal discussions will continue over a favorite beverage.

On **Saturday morning (Nov. 6)**, we shall take one more look at the posted comments following breakfast in order to begin to discern what are the priorities most often mentioned, and what imaginative priority "I never would have thought of!" really grabs our attention and gets our creative juices flowing.

We will then break into discussion groups defined by geographic areas in order to pray, brainstorm, and begin to plan how the 3-5 emerging diocesan priorities and that 1 off-the-charts initiative of your group's choosing might be implemented. Again, the question we will need to ask, and perhaps challenge one another, is: what is needed and what must change in order for these priorities to be claimed and lived out as expressions of Gospel Mission in the Diocese of Kentucky?

Finally, please note that the term "recess" is used to describe the end of Saturday's time together. This will be the end of the first phase of our discussion and planning, which must continue in both parochial and diocesan settings. Each table will be asked to conclude its work by agreeing to a next step. And I look forward to continuing these conversations in the new year.

Yours faithfully in Christ,
+Terry