



From the bishop's laptop

A new year for fostering community

Beloved,

I want to continue to thank you for your gracious and warm welcome to the Diocese of Kentucky and the Commonwealth. There is no shortage of hospitality in this diocese! In many ways, I already feel at home here.

As you can imagine, for our family the last few months have been filled with transitions. Often I am asked, "Other than friends, what do you miss most following your move here?" My first thoughts seem to focus on favorite eating spots: The Landings' unique chicken strips, the Mexican restaurant we discovered just a few weeks before moving, and the out-of-this-world-pulled-pork-Carolina-style-sandwich from Oklahoma Joe's. But in the end, perhaps what I miss most is the short honk of a car horn.

I do not mean the blaring horn of an impatient and rude driver, but the sound you hear while you are out working in the yard or walking down a neighborhood sidewalk. That short beep that causes you to look in the direction of the sound, where you see the smiling face or friendly wave of a parishioner, neighbor or parent of one of your kids' friends. I miss that sound because in a sense it confirmed that I belonged there, that I was known.

As bishop and people, we have begun building a relationship. I say again, your welcome has truly helped my family and me begin to feel at home. But it is important for me to realize that it takes both time and effort on my part to make that sense of belonging strong and enduring.

Much of our common life in this diocese has to do with building a sense of belonging, reminding each other that we



Bishop White reads a children's story during a Christmas party for youngsters who attended last summer's reading camp at Grace Episcopal Church, Paducah. Photo by Dan Songer

belong to God and are united to each other. When we live out our baptismal covenant faithfully, belonging and community are created, and the fruits produced by such an authentic community are evangelism and mission.

People feel a kinship with the Body of Christ when our allegiance to Jesus compels us to take seriously the challenges facing our neighbors, when we speak for the voiceless, promote justice and make no friends with oppression and prejudice. When our claim to be servants of Christ is seen and experienced, and when we live for the chance to do compassion (pardon the grammar), that fosters a sense of belonging that cannot be created through words alone. Conveying the message that all belong to God opens us to risk. Yet, to do less is to avoid the cost of discipleship.

In this new year, as we live into the mission and ministry of our particular congregation, let us remember how we have been made to feel a part of the household of God. May we give thanks

for how we have been fed, nurtured and invited to take our place in Christ's ministry of reconciliation. And throughout our diocese may sacrificial generosity and acts of courageous graciousness build up our common mission. Let us find new ways to sound the friendly "honk of the horn" that clearly says to all, "You are not only welcome here, you belong here." I look forward to Coming Together at Convention in February!

A blessed new year of grace to us all.

With affection,

+Terry

Conference engenders deaneries, shared leadership

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of "consistency" between what he heard at the conference and what he read in the search profile from a year and a half ago. "There really is a desire for shared visioning and implementation between the bishop and congregations. That will lead to a stronger mission and healthier

relationships that will allow a lot of conversation back and forth."

Shared leadership is something he values as well. "You have to have as many people as you can on board with things ... [but] it is by no means a congregational polity, it still is an Episcopal

polity." His role, he said, is not so much selling ideas to people to get things done as much as it is to tell them, "Here is what we have all said' ... I get to be the agent of the process as opposed to trying to get everybody to give lip service if not actual support to an idea."