

Report from 101<sup>st</sup> Annual Council of the Diocese of Atlanta  
November 9/10, 2007

The 2007 Council was held at the Cathedral of St. Philip. Atonement delegates this year were Richard Herren, Ham Henson and Lesley-Ann Drake.

The Annual Council is a time when representatives of the Diocese come together to conduct the business of the Diocese. This includes proposing and voting on resolutions. The main resolutions for voting at this year's Council were R07-01, 03, -05 and C07-1.

R07-01 requires all vestries to "be engaged in conducting accessibility surveys of their buildings" for persons with disabilities. Each vestry is to report to the 102<sup>nd</sup> Council, which will take place in 2008.

R07-03 affirms the desire of the people and the clergy of the Diocese of Atlanta to remain members of the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion.

R07-05 approves the creation of the position of Assistant Bishop in the Diocese of Atlanta and gives approval for Bishop Alexander to appoint a Bishop for this position. The funding for this position has come from private donations for 2008 and after that, this position will be built into the Diocesan budget.

Lastly, C07-01 changed the wording about Lay Delegate Members. Until now, the number of Lay Delegates has been determined by the number of *Confirmed Communicants in Good Standing* as reported by the Annual Parochial Report of each Parish. However this number is no longer reported; instead the number of *Communicants* is reported. Thus the number of lay delegates for Annual Council will be determined according to the number of *Communicants*.

Bishop Alexander's address focused on 5 areas.

1) Ministry with children, youth and young adults is doing well. The diocese provides support and programs that smaller parishes can tap into. The Bishop stressed that the church is bigger than our individual parishes. He called for a Task Force on Camp and Conference Ministries with findings to be presented at the 103<sup>rd</sup> Council in 2009. This task force will necessarily be looking at Camp Mikell, both its attributes and its short-comings.

2) The Bishop wants to focus on Leadership Development. He said our Diocese is under-represented in the larger church. He will be looking at vestries, wardens and treasurers as potential future lay leaders.

3) As in prior years, the Bishop addressed growth in the church. He said the Episcopal Church has a unique position as an inclusive church, and that we can be a voice of sanity in the world. He called us to be the hands and feet of Jesus, to serve others.

4) With regards to the environment, the Bishop reminded us that we are stewards of God's creation and encouraged all parishes to take practical measures to help reduce waste and to recycle. He encouraged involvement with GIPL the local Inter-faith environmental organization, spear-headed by 2 Episcopalians.

5) The Bishop spoke about commitment to Global Mission and specifically requested all parishes, and individuals, to give 0.7% of their budget to the Millennium Development Goals again, this year.

In conclusion the Bishop spoke about the state of the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion. He clearly stated that the time in New Orleans with the Archbishop of Canterbury was productive and encouraging. While the press and advocates on both sides of the issues were quick to assess the Bishops' report as either "wimping out" or "over-stepping their bounds", Bishop Alexander stated that the Bishops goal had been to come to an agreement *on a response* to the request that "the Bishops of the Episcopal Church clarify their position of the last General Convention with respect to the Windsor Report". The Bishop believes that we must continue to strive for both justice *and* unity, and that to choose between them is at the peril of our souls. He also believes that the Holy Spirit does its best work when we live deeply into the tension. Bishop Alexander went on to say that as a Bishop he is committed to staying at the table, and that he is committed to building up the Body of Christ.

There was also an address by a representative of Episcopal Relief and Development. The work that they do is critical both at home (e.g. Katrina) and abroad (e.g. Pakistan monsoon) - and there is always more to be done. A lot of their work is in Africa where mosquitoes are a primary cause of death among children, through malaria. Malaria nets have been found to be one of the most efficient and cost-effective ways to protect against malaria. During the one and a half days of the Council, a staggering 3,000 families had a child die of malaria. Let's take just 30 seconds to think about this. (Sit in silence for 30 seconds.)

This concludes the report.