

Report from the 221st Annual Council of the Episcopal Diocese of Virginia

March 5, 2016

The 221st Annual Council of the Episcopal Diocese of Virginia met in a "make-up" session on March 5, 2016 at Epiphany Episcopal Church in Herndon (The council scheduled for the last of January was snowed out.) Grace and Holy Trinity Church was represented by the Rev. Bo Millner, Dawn McNamara, and Sara Jo Williams.

This year's theme, "Connected in the Kingdom: There are many members, yet one Body," was emphasized throughout the presentations by our three bishops.

Bishop Johnston spoke enthusiastically of the growth of the Diocese of Virginia and the success of the congregations that were part of DaySpring. He encouraged shared ministry in missions within the diocese and was emphatic that as a church, we cannot remain silent in the pervasive national environment of discrimination. Such action required personal transformation and commitment; we must be activists in both heart and mind. A specific gift of Episcopalians is knowing how to disagree but still love each other and focus on the Gospel of Jesus.

The Bishop was most pleased to announce that the capital campaign for Shrine Mont has significantly exceeded our original \$2 million goal. There is the continuing challenge to raise \$350,000 to meet the \$2.5 million dollar goal. The goal provides for capital improvements, more scholarships, and better salaries for staff.

Bishop Goff also spoke of the strength of the restarted congregations. As churches move forward, there is a need to reframe the question of "How do we get people to come into our doors?" The question should be "How do we go out to people?" She

stressed that going out is mission and evangelism. The going out fulfills the mission of Jesus who never said "stay and wait."

Bishop Gulick spoke of our need to be involved in the world. He stressed that every living being is an icon of God. We must not forget whose we are and act accordingly.

After considerable discussion, three resolutions were passed:

1. Justice, Pay Equity, and Leadership - for women clergy in the Diocese
2. Support for Syrian and other Refugees
3. No Guns in God's House

For complete wording on each resolution, please check the Diocesan website.

The council also voted on the canon which would change the name of the yearly meeting from "council" to "convention." Just before the closing prayers, Bishop Johnston, removed the banner with the wording Annual Council, to show the new name "Annual Convention." This gesture was greeted with a standing ovation.