ECD MEETING WITH THE PRESIDING BISHOP

THE REV. BARBARA A. ALLEN PRESENTS PRESIDING BISHOP KATHERINE JEFFERTS SCHORI WITH COPIES OF A MISSIONARY CHRONICLE AND THOMAS GALLAUDET, APOSTLE TO THE DEAF.

GOOD JOB - WELL DONE!
PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE: THE REV. DCN. WILLIAM MOSIER

As I approach the last year of my presidency of the Episcopal Conference of the Deaf, I find that there is a wonderful resilience in ministry with Deaf People. We often get discouraged and wonder how we will continue being the Episcopal Church with Deaf People. I feel that deaf people will continue. We are survivors. Survivors adapt to changing times.

The Deaf community comes together in these days better than ever before. Communication technology has enabled a net work of support that has the potential to serve Christ well. We need to use it to do the work of our Lord.

I am reminded that deaf people and hearing people are all part of the body of Christ. The body of Christ is to include us all. I am also reminded that the body of Christ is not just about survival. The body of Christ is about growth and change. All over the Episcopal Church today I feel people are running too scared. We walk a cutting edge of change. Part of that change for the deaf is about becoming a more dynamic and visible part of each diocese.

For a long time deaf ministry has been hidden away, existing as an independent part of the Episcopal Church. In my travels for the ECD I have talked with hearing people from dioceses that have very vital ministries of deaf congregations. Most often those people do not know that the deaf congregation is in their back yard. They are not aware that there are deaf people worshiping together in their diocese.

There is evidence of new and developing groups of deaf people worshiping together that have no or limited connection with their diocese. These are ministries that come out of a parish and are supported by people within a local parish but not by their diocese. This fact is in desperate need of change! We simply must work to bring these ministries into the ECD and then help get them connected with their diocese.

Is your deaf ministry housed in a larger hearing church? Is your diocese generally knowledgeable about your deaf congregation? Is your ministry listed and explained on your church’s web page? What about your diocesan web page? Do hearing people know how to call you on Video Relay? Email? Instant message? TTY? Are the deaf people in your church members of the ECD?

With all the new communication tools the fields for ministry with deaf people are ready. The fields are ready for the harvest. Pray the Lord will send out workers into these fields. Pray that the larger Church and the deaf part of it will work together to be the body of Christ.

Blessings -- Deacon Bill

PRESIDENT’S REPORT OF MEETING WITH PRESIDING BISHOP KATHERINE JEFFERTS SCHORI

The Episcopal Conference of the Deaf met with the Most Reverend Katharine Jefferts Schori, May 22nd, 2007. This meeting was arranged with the goal of defining this ministry and addressing specific barriers for this work in the Episcopal Church. The ECD was represented by myself, from Monmouth, OR; the Rev. Barbara A. Allen, Vice-President, Washington, DC; Ms. Cass Martensen, Secretary, San Diego, CA; Mr. David Early, Treasurer, St. Louis, MO; the Rev. Virginia “Ginger” Nagel, Syracuse, NY; the Rev. Roger Pickering, Philadelphia, PA with his wife Sandra and, of course, “Buffy” Roger’s service dog.

Our goals were to inform her about the variety of types of ministry with Deaf People. We also wanted to introduce the concept that this is not a
ministry to people with a disability, but a ministry of people of a different culture. Much like Hispanic Ministry, the ministry with deaf people is dependent upon the language. Although Deaf People may, indeed, have physical disabilities, the major accessibility issue is one of communication. Communication is vital for Deaf people to have a relationship with God and God’s people.

We asked that video materials produced by the office at 815 be captioned for deaf and hard of hearing people. We also stressed the need for captions on teaching materials published and used throughout the Church and yet remain inaccessible to the deaf community because they are not captioned. Modern technology makes it possible to easily provide captions with video media at a very low cost.

Another goal was to reestablish liaison with the offices of the National Church. The Episcopal Conference of the Deaf is a support for ministries of deaf people throughout the Episcopal Church. This liaison would permit an interaction between the Episcopal Conference of the Deaf and administration of the ECUSA at 815.

The Episcopal Church was the first church of any denomination to ordain a deaf priest. This history is largely unknown by most of the Church. The ministry with deaf people was built on a foundation established by the Rev. Thomas Gallaudet 150 years ago. In that time things have changed greatly. The Church no longer has the option of working with deaf students in state schools. Many established churches of the Deaf have struggled for lack of new membership. Deaf Ministry is in the process of reinventing itself in the Episcopal Church.

In addition, qualified deaf men and women often do not have access to seminary training because of a lack of funding for interpreters.

All of this and more was presented to the Most Rev. Katharine Jefferts Schori. She listened to us graciously and responded in meaningful ways. We came away feeling very positive about the possibilities of working with 815 to help us build up the ministry with Deaf People.

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THE REV. VIRGINIA “GINGER” NAGEL AWARDED HONORARY DEGREE
Submitted by the Rev. Barbara A. Allen.

On May 19, 2007 I was privileged to attend the Eighty-Second Annual Commencement at Palmer Theological Seminary in Wynnewood, Pennsylvania. When our own the Rev. Virginia Nagel graduated from there, it was called East Baptist Seminary. For those who may not know, the Rev. Nagel was the first deaf woman to be ordained to the priesthood in the church.

I attended with the Rev. Dr. Roger Pickering, his wife, Sandra, and, of course, Buffy the dog. Roger and Sandra are longtime friends of the Rev. Nagel, whom we all affectionately know as "Ginger". In fact, Ginger received her call to ordination from Roger's congregation, All Souls' Church for the Deaf in Philadelphia. All Souls' recommended her for ordination and Roger was her mentor.

The seminary conferred upon Ginger an Honorary Doctor of Divinity degree. It was an exciting day! It began with a delicious breakfast buffet to honor Ginger and one other person who was also receiving an honorary degree. Ginger's family was present including her husband, Bob, to whom she gave recognition for his years of support of her ministry. Several of her former professors spoke glowing words of her influence on them and on the seminary. They emphasized how she had educated them on the deaf world and deaf culture, helping them to realize a rich area of potential pastors and teachers of which they had not been aware.

We moved from the seminary campus to a huge Baptist church nearby where the actual graduation service was held. Interpreters were provided. It was a beautiful and impressive ceremony. We watched with pride as Ginger stepped to the podium and received her red stole and her degree. Then she spoke words of gratitude for her years of education at Palmer and to those who had been such an integral part of her call, her education and her ordination. She also graciously thanked those who have been supportive to her "circuit-riding" parish ministry in Central New York for many years.

A brief biographical sketch was included in the program. This is reprinted below with photographs of the happy occasion.
The Reverend Virginia Nagel was born in 1939 in Schenectady, New York. As a young child, she developed a severe case of pneumonia, which turned into meningitis. Because penicillin was scarce - and most of what was available went to the military - her disease went largely untreated. Her doctor was able to get enough medication to save her life, but not her hearing.

Having grown up on her grandparents’ farm, she went on to become the first deaf person to earn a Regents Scholarship in the state of New York. She graduated from high school at the age of 16 and went on to Gallaudet College, from which she graduated in 1959 with a degree in biochemistry. In the 1960s she worked at the V.A. hospital and Albany Medical Center in Albany, New York, first as a biochemist and later as a cardiac surgery technician. She was part of a group that developed the concept of coronary artery grafts (now known as the Vineberg procedure).

After developing an allergy to chemicals, she went to computer school, after which she began a position with a Philadelphia law firm. Shortly after the death of her oldest son in 1981 at the age of 22, she sought ordination. She graduated from Eastern’s School of Christian Ministry in 1985 and in 1988 graduated from the Seminary with her Master of Divinity degree.

Since that time, she has served a circuit-riding parish in Central New York, where she ministers to 11 small congregations of deaf persons. Says Bishop of Albany Daniel W. Herzog, “[Rev. Nagel’s] ministry in the Diocese of Albany and the Diocese of Central New York has covered thousands of miles and touched innumerable lives. She is a loving witness to faithful and fruitful pastoral care.”
Hello, my friends,

I received a message from The Deaf Episcopalian editor saying that some people would like to hear from me so they would know what I am doing and how I am. I thank those of you who asked after me and I have decided to write and chat with you a bit.

I continue to live in an upper corner of my parish priest’s bookcase where I can look out of the window and over his shoulder, and by that I am able to keep up pretty well with what is going on in the world and in the Church in general.

I continue to be in pretty good health and keep busy with my hobbies and reading. My family is in good health too after going through some really bad times last year and this year, and we have lost some of our family members and friends, but we will remember them fondly and will look forward to being with them again when God calls us all home.

Not long ago someone came into my priest’s office and said, “How can we live as Jesus said we should, with all the problems in the world? Every day we read about, or see on TV, murders, wars, sickness, cheating, drugs and so many other things going on in the world. What can we do to live better lives and be closer to what Jesus wants us to be?”

Good question. What can we do?? My suggestion is to try this: Take time to really try to be a holy person. It’s not easy, I know. It helps if you often talk to Jesus in prayer. Not just by shutting yourself away from people for a while and praying, but by actually talking to Him as you go through your daily life as if He were your best friend and walking right beside you (and He is). Speak to Him as you would a friend and confide in Him. Ask for help and guidance, for strength to cope with a bad situation. Go even further and, perhaps, say, “Sorry, Lord, I really goofed up on that one.” You need to live in Jesus to make Him live in you. You need to be friends with all His people. All people are our brothers and sisters, no matter if we like it or not. We learn about this in the Bible, God’s word. We need to feed on His words. To show that we are His children we need to help those who are weak; the people who are starving, lonely, sick, homeless, without hope. And, finally, we must always remember to look for God’s blessing in our lives. Think of the blessings we have: feed enough, clothes, shelter, maybe medicine that keeps us well enough to enjoy life, a beautiful sunrise or sunset, family, friends.... so many things if we only stop to think about it. And we should give thanks and there is nothing wrong with, when we are talking to Jesus, asking for more of His blessings.

There is a song that I read in one of the priest’s songbooks a few weeks ago. It goes like this:

Take time to be holy, speak oft with thy Lord:
Abide in Him always, and feed on His word.
Make friends of God’s children, help those who are weak,
Forgetting in nothing His blessing to seek.

That, in four short lines, covers everything I have said up above, and the poetry is much more beautiful than my ramblings.

I might write again from time to time, my friends, because I miss you. You will see. As always, you can write to the Deaf Churchmouse in care of the editor if you wish. I am thinking of getting an e-mail address just for me for those who might prefer that.

Goodbye, my friends. As always, pray for me and I will pray for you, and remember....

Your friend,
The Deaf Churchmouse
For reasons beyond the control of the ECD Board, the original plans for a 2007 ECD Convention had to be cancelled. Because planning for a full convention must start more than a year in advance, it was impossible to hold our regular convention. In its place the Board decided to sponsor a much smaller ‘Conference on Ministry’

From June 12th to June 15th, 21 clergy and lay leaders from many of the ECD member congregations gathered at the Pallottine Renewal Center just outside of St. Louis, Missouri to worship, learn and socialize together.

The Rev. Marianne Stephens celebrates the Eucharist, assisted by the Rev. Dcn. William Mosier.

The Rev. David Vryhof, S.S.J.E. presented the first workshop “Contemplative Life’, teaching us how to deepen and strengthen our relationship with God.

‘Children and Youth’ was the subject of the workshop led by the Rev. Dcn. William Mosier.

Bill was assisted by Sara Hallowell and Ben Cavaletto, who told us about their experiences working with young deaf people and taught us games and activities to enjoy.

Karen Neimeyer was a big hit teaching us how to make sock puppets and paper masks.
There was also time to catch up and socialize with old friends, as well as make some new ones.

Br. David’s 2nd workshop entitled ‘Refresh, Renew & Change’ focused on spiritual practices for the renewal of our lives. Why it is sometimes difficult to sustain a spiritual practice and what can get in our way. He gave us new ways to think about prayer.

Often we feel it is like a conversation with God that we begin and God listens; but if we can understand that prayer is a conversation that God begins and our job is to watch and listen and pay attention to what God is saying or doing in our lives, then, in this way prayer becomes a gift from God, not a duty that we must perform.

The Rev. Marianne Stephens led a workshop titled ‘Lay Leadership’, or ‘When You Have No Priest.’

She used a series of “W” questions - Who...? What...? Where...? Asking about all different situations in a congregation - things church members need to know when they are called to a leadership position in the congregation and especially if there is no priest.

**OUR THANKS TO ALL THE PRESENTERS WHO MADE THIS CONFERENCE SUCH A GREAT SUCCESS!**

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**PLANS ARE BEING MADE FOR OUR 2008 ECD CONVENTION TO BE HELD ON THE CAMPUS OF RIT/NTID IN ROCHESTER, NEW YORK. THE TENTATIVE DATES ARE JULY 21 - 26. WE HOPE TO PUBLISH FULL DETAILS IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF THE DEAF EPISCOPALIAN.**
The Rev. Jay L. Croft received the Pauline “Polly” Peikoff “Service to Others” Award
At the 38th Annual Charter Day luncheon held on Saturday, April 21, 2007.
The citation reads, in part:
In appreciation of his dedication and extensive contribution to the various constituencies within the Deaf and hard of hearing community, the Gallaudet University Alumni Association is honored and pleased to present the Pauline “Polly” Peikoff “Service to Others” Award to JAY L. CROFT.
CONGRATULATIONS, JAY!

Jim and Ginny Lindsay celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary on June 17th at St. Barnabas’ Church of the Deaf, Bethesda, MD during the coffee hour.
Joining them were members of their family including daughter Kathy and son Gavin and their spouses. Their other son Andy and his wife could not attend because they are busy with their newborn baby. So, Ginny and Jim are now grandparents, another reason to celebrate.
HAPPY ANNIVERSARY TO YOU BOTH!

WE WELCOME THREE NEW WORKERS IN THE FIELD OF DEAF MINISTRY:

0Left: The Rev. Emily Davis, Curate at Grace Church, host to St. Thomas’ Church of the Deaf, Kirkwood, MO, will also serve as part-time Vicar of St. Thomas’.

Right: Suzanne Johnston, currently studying to become a Deacon, will serve Ephphatha Mission for the Deaf, Rochester, NY.

The Rev. Maria Santaviega (no picture available) will serve as the part-time vicar of St. Ann’s Church of the Deaf, New York City, NY.
THE REV. MARIANNE STEPHENS AND MR. VERNON KROLL WERE MARRIED on Saturday, July 14, 2007 at St. Stephen’s Episcopal Church in Vestavia Hills, Alabama, just across the street from St. John’s Church for the Deaf. The happy couple were married by the Rt. Rev. Henry N. Parsley, Bishop of Alabama, assisted by the Rev. Alison Carmody, Assistant Rector of St. Stephens.

The Celebration and Blessing of the marriage and Eucharist service was followed by a lovely reception in the Parish Hall. Relatives and friends from across the country made the day very special. After a short time away, the couple lives in Birmingham.

Marianne and Vernon Kroll and the family:
Left: Marshall, Kevin, Douglas, Alex and Zachary Stephens, along with Best man, William Treadway.
Right: Ivy, Elizabeth, Anne Marie, Kellen Kroll, and Catherine Stephens. Carly Stephens was Maid of Honor.

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EPISCOPAL CONFERENCE OF THE DEAF
of the Episcopal Church in the United States of America
A National Organization of Episcopal Church Workers Serving the Deaf

Membership in the ECD is currently $10.00 per person per year, including a subscription to our publication *The Deaf Episcopalian* sent by third class mail. A subscription only, by third class mail, also costs $10.00 per year.

Please indicate whether you are interested in a *Deaf Episcopalian* subscription only or if you wish to become a member of the ECD. Checks should be made out to the ECD. Membership is open to any person interested in supporting the Episcopal Church’s ministry to the Deaf community.

☐ Membership including subscription third class mail - $10.00  ☐ Subscription third class mail only - $10.00

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If you wish photographs to be returned, please provide a stamped, self-addressed envelope for mailing.

Visit the ECD Website: www.ecdeaf.com

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