

2011 SOUTHEAST ALASKA
EPISCOPAL DEANERY CONVOCATION
MAY 5-8, JUNEAU

Holy Trinity Church hosted the convocation and pampered the participants with lovely homestays, copious and delicious meals, transportation and generally meeting and exceeding all needs.

Bishop Mark Lattime opened the first meeting with an overview of his Alaska experiences since his installation. He has made visits to Ketchikan, Anchorage, Sitka and Kotzebue and several interior villages among others. One of his most cherished experiences was the visit to Sitka and a fishing trip there during which he caught a 28, or 48, or 68 lb. salmon depending on how many times he told the story. A picture of the Bishop and his monster salmon graced the snack table during the convocation.

FEED MY SHEEP—CONVOCATION THEME

“Feed my lambs . . . Tend my sheep . . . Feed my sheep” with emphasis on care for communities and the role the church can have in supporting social service agencies was the convocation theme. The Bishop spoke about the three areas of distress and need he found over and over again throughout his Alaska travels: addiction, domestic violence and suicide.

Bishop James Waggoner of the Diocese of Spokane accompanied Bishop Lattime. Bishop Waggoner is serving as Bishop Lattime’s coach in the transition from parish priest to Bishop. The national church started the coaching program to help newly installed Bishops adapt and grow into their new roles. Bishop Waggoner gave an

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overview of the Living Our Vows program in the Diocese of Spokane. The Bishop explained this program addresses community care both locally and in the mission field (Honduras) by implementing goals, strategies and actions with assignment of responsibility, resources and timelines. It also includes an element of telling community members' stories and realizing their identities through the mission and living their vows.

Representatives from five social service agencies operating in Juneau and Sitka gave presentations about their efforts and collaborations to meet community care needs.

Scott Ciambor, Co-Chair of the Juneau Homeless Coalition gave an overview of efforts to address Juneau's extreme shortage of affordable housing that leads to homelessness. Three years ago, under pressure from the Chamber of Commerce, the City and Borough of Juneau created an Affordable Housing Commission. After a year, the Commission asked the Assembly to fund the position Scott now holds. The Assembly contributed funding for an Affordable Housing position to the Juneau Economic Development Council, JEDC, and Scott now works in that position at JEDC.

Scott's first, and continuing, task was gathering data on numbers of homeless, their demographic characteristics and locations. The primary cause of homelessness was job loss. The most recent point in time count for homeless people in Juneau was 537. The various agencies estimate the actual number is 600-800.

The Average Median Income, AMI, in Juneau is \$2,267 per month. HUD guidelines provide that families pay up to 30% of the AMI, or \$680 for housing. 1-bedroom apartments in Juneau are in the \$800 range. Low income families who need more than a 1-bedroom apartment typically pay 50% or more of their income for housing.

This puts families and individuals under financial stress which, in turn, leads to domestic violence, addiction and suicide. When unaffordable rents make household finances

precarious, it only takes one event—loss of a job, medical bills, automobile breakdown—to result in homelessness and a cascade of additional problems.

After a year of collecting extensive data using methods from the Vermont Housing Needs Assessment Handbook, Scott and the Homeless Coalition were able to present the facts to the Assembly and persuade them to commit \$400,000 to an Affordable Housing Fund. This fund can provide low interest or no interest loans to developers or social service agencies who will create affordable housing.

Scott also fosters and supports the Coalition itself, a collaboration of 24 different agencies who meet and work together monthly. Each of these agencies has minimal staff. The collaboration usually involves a core group of about 6 to 8 people. Together they work toward implementing a continuum of care for people transitioning out of homelessness by identifying any gaps in the care and transition process. Some of the gaps they found were needs for emergency family shelter, homeless hospice care and winter-time shelter.

Annually, the Coalition organizes Project Homeless Connect, an event they hold in both Centennial Hall and the Youth Center. All the homeless helping agencies shut down their regular services and direct clients to the event. There Coalition members count the clients and provide service such as haircuts, medical checks, help with driver's license applications, job applications and other needs. Of the 175 participants at the 2010 event, 30 were veterans. 28 of the veterans were over 45 years old.

In Fairbanks, Mat-Su and Kenai there are continuum of care coordinators who are part-time. The Alaska Housing Finance Corporation has a grant coming out that will extend these positions to 4 years at a time.

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Mariya Lovishchuk, Executive Director of the Glory Hole, a homeless shelter, described its services. It has 43 beds. There is a limit of 60 days for staying there, although in some circumstances, it can be extended another 30 days. The Glory Hole receives funding from churches, fundraisers, small federal grants and food donations from local stores. They have a small garden.

Juneau Youth Services Director, Kwame Diehl explained the capabilities of Cornerstone emergency home services for youth. They provide counseling, psychiatric services for youth, family outpatient services, chemical dependency programs. The emergency services facility has room for 14 to 16 clients for up to 18 months. They provide the only emergency services for 16 to 17 year olds.

Cornerstone serves pregnant teens, but once the baby is born, they cannot continue to provide shelter.

They handle prison releases, but Kwame reported that more and more of their clients are runaways.

A Physicians' Assistant, Carole Knuth, from Sitka, gave a presentation about the SEARHC clinic in Juneau. She joins with a nurse practitioner in caring for people with chronic needs and walk-ins. The clinic provides dental care, prescriptions, mental health counseling, socks, razors, toothpaste, hats, scarves, reading glasses and other incidentals. 300 to 400 people per year take advantage of the clinic's services.

Carole explained that homeless and very low income clients have frequent infections and diseases, such as boils and tuberculosis, related to lack of access to hygiene facilities.

Sitka has an organization, The Easter Group, an ecumenical community of faith, whose mission is to strive to end extreme poverty and empower people. The Group commits to identifying and implementing local projects that serve those in need, www.eastergroup.org.

FAITH INTO TOMORROW ENDOWMENT

Father Wilson Valentine gave a presentation about the Diocese's Faith Into Tomorrow Endowment. The people of the Diocese established this endowment in 1993 in response to a challenge at the Diocesan Convention to explore their calling in the areas of service and financial support. The fund distributes interest from its principle in areas of ministry development, youth ministry, caring for victims of poverty and abuse, facility enhancements and spiritual growth and development. There are grant applications available for:

- Facility emergency repair or replacement
- Traveling Work Team Support—up to \$500 for work teams from outside the community who come to build or repair churches

DEANERY MISSION AND ACTIVITIES

The Deanery budget shows the priorities the Deanery has developed for its activities. Following is a list of the projects and organizational functions on which the Deanery expends funds:

BUDGET ITEM	AMOUNT
Camps/Events	\$1,900
Youth Ministries	\$2,000
Clergy Retreats	\$2,500

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Matching Grants	\$500
Native Convocation	\$1,000
St. Saviors Mission -Skagway	\$300
Paul Mather School for Ministry Continuing Education Program	\$500
Millennium Development Goals (.7% of income)	\$105.64
Resource Travel	\$500
Dean's Travel	\$525
Officer Travel	\$500
Convocation Speaker	\$2,000
Convocation Expenses	\$1,700
Seafarerer website	\$80
Office Supplies	\$500
Postage	\$20
Teleconference Calls	\$250
TOTAL	\$14,880.64

Two prime items in the budget are the family camp and the clergy retreats. The Diocese does not have any funds for family camp. The only support for this comes from the Deanery. The Deanery considers family camp an important experience for families themselves and for families to connect with other families in their Alaska Episcopal community. The twice-yearly clergy retreats provide a vital source for collegial interaction among clergy who can share experiences, support each other and re-energize.

Every year the Deanery sets aside some funding for a native convocation. This convocation does not happen every year. The money set aside goes into a restricted

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fund and accumulates for the time when native congregation members plan their convocation.

New Officers and Committee Members

Mim McConnell of St. Peter's in Sitka will take over as Dean for the 2011-2012 year from Father Gordon Blue. Father Wilson Valentine of Holy Trinity, Juneau, assumes the duties of Assistant Dean. The Standing Committee representative will be Father Bob Stevens of St. Brendan's, Juneau.

Father Ron Kotrc volunteered and was chosen to serve on the Ecclesiastical Court. Deborah Hayden, St. John's Deanery representative, will serve on the Budget and Program Committees.

The next Deanery Convocation is scheduled for April 19-22, 2012 in Wrangell. The next Diocesan Convention will be October 5-9, 2011 in Kodiak.

Respectfully submitted,

Deborah Hayden

St. John's 2011 Deanery Representative

May 15, 2011