



Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

April 2, 2009

Last week I wrote you to share some of my hopes and expectations as we continue to prepare for our Special Convention later this month. In that letter I wrote:

The reality is that our anticipated revenue for 2009 and beyond will not exceed \$2,000,000 annually (and may actually be less as we have not yet received all of the 2008 Parochial Reports that were due on March 1). We currently have a budget of \$2,985,835. That difference is significant and will require serious reductions in program, personnel and delivery of ministry over a period of time if we are to reduce our expenditures to more closely meet our anticipated revenue.

For a number of months, I have been prayerfully discerning, as have many of you, what these financial realities mean for us as a household. There are many decisions to make in the days to come and we will have opportunity to do so together on many issues. However, there is an area of diocesan ministry in which, I, as your Bishop, am both honored and burdened (in times like these) to carry.

Not unlike other budgets, staff salaries and related personnel costs most heavily weight a diocesan operating budget. Movement towards a budget that more closely balances revenues with expenditures cannot avoid this reality. After many conversations with our diocesan Treasurer and others, it is with a heavy heart that I have made the decision to eliminate five positions from the 2009 budget. One of the positions was never filled in the Finance Department, but the other four positions have been served faithfully by colleagues who will be deeply missed.

The following positions are being permanently eliminated:

Canon for Transitions, currently served by the Rev. Canon John Keydel

Canon for Lifelong Learning, currently served by Canon Jo Gantzer

Director of Stewardship and Planned Giving, currently served by Ms. Kristine Miller

Director of Payroll and Benefits, currently served by the Rev. Deacon Sharon Watton

Each of these four people has been invited and has generously agreed to stay on staff through May 31st to assist in a period of transition. This will be an important time to determine which ministries will be reassigned to other staff members, which ministries will need to be put down or put aside for now, and which ministries will require additional support from outside of the diocesan staff.

Finally, as devastating as these cuts are and how deeply they will be felt throughout the diocese, they still move us only part of the way towards a “sustainable budget.” We have much work to do. We need to focus now more than ever on the ministry and mission we must continue if we are to be more than a diocese in “maintenance mode.”

I ask you to join me in thanking and honoring these faithful servants. Together they have given tirelessly a combination of 35 years of ministry to the diocese. The task we have before us continues to loom large, so again I extend the invitation: come to Special Convention; help continue the work that has already begun as we discern the future direction of our common mission.

Faithfully,

The Rt. Rev Wendell N. Gibbs, Jr.