

**2007 Bulletin of Reports
Delaware-Maryland Synod**

OFFICE OF BISHOP

Assistant to the Bishop

"And it came to pass..." These are the words that begin several passages in the KJV of the bible - the version that many of us still around learned in growing up. These words, in particular, have stayed with me. In fact, sometimes I call these five words my favorite words of scripture because, taken apart from any context, they say that whatever 'it' is, it came to pass - not to stay! Indeed, 2006 was a year that 'came to pass' - filled with many changes and transitions not always apparent to people not working regularly in the synod office.

The early part of the year was marked with the unknown of whether or not Bishop Knoche would accept a nomination to continue as bishop. Since Assistants to the Bishop have calls that are co-terminus with the bishop's call, this meant that both Pastor Dean Bard and I would be looking for new calls if Bishop Knoche had not both been re-elected and wanted us to continue. Once the decisions had been made by Bishop Knoche in willingness to continue, the synod in electing him, Pastor Bard in choosing to move back to Nebraska, and Bishop Knoche inviting me to continue - well, then began the search for another Assistant to the Bishop which was resolved prayerfully with the call extended to Pastor Ginny Price near the end of the year.

Meanwhile, all the 'normal' work of the synod office continued. Over the course of the year twenty-four calls were issued by congregations or the synod council (calls to special ministry situations). Of these, three were to persons 'of color or primary language other than English' (note: more than 10%!). Eleven of the calls issued were first calls - people just finishing seminary or just entering the ELCA. Those called were mostly pastors but also one diaconal minister. Most call settings were to congregations - some solo positions, some co-pastorates, some lead/senior pastors, some associates, one mission developer, and some part-time or term calls. Other settings were to campus ministry or a cooperative of congregations and retirement village. While the bishop, Pastor Dean Bard (for most of the year), Pastor Ginny Price (currently), and I jointly make decisions on candidates to recommend to congregations for interviewing, I am the 'front' person who works most with both candidates and congregations.

The work of the Candidacy Committee (Candidacy Mission Force) is detailed well in the Mission Through Leadership Team report by Pastor John Ranney. It has been a joy to be involved in this process for the last six years. This will now be in the purview of Pastor Price's work on staff.

A continuing joy is the Leadership Academy which continues to offer training in leadership skills to pastors for their growth or honing. Again, Pastor Ranney says more in his report.

New to my plate toward the end of the year is work that Pastor Bard had done with urban congregations. While this is something new to my responsibilities in this position, having served a center city congregation for twelve years, city concerns are near and dear to my heart.

"And it came to pass..." Through all the changes that 2006 brought, God is good! All the time!

The Rev. Mary Miller-Zurell, assistant to the bishop