

# 2019 Annual Reports to the 152nd Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Central New York

*Reports on the use of funds by diocesan ministries in 2019.*

## Congregational Development

*Submitted by the Rev. Canon Carrie Schofield-Broadbent*

Congregational Development is the ministry of helping all of our congregations—of all sizes, locations, and vitality, grow into more effective, faithful, vibrant communities of faith. Much of this work is done informally, through coaching phone calls, at vestry meetings, and in deep discussions about the work of the church. We also have some more formal ways of practicing congregational development as well.

One goal I had in 2019 was to develop a new process for Mutual Ministry Reviews. I did create that. And yet, I don't think that a "one size fits all" model will work. So, I'd like to develop other methods as well as train diocesan leaders to be able to assist other parishes in their mutual ministry review processes.

Other goals of 2019 included: 1) enriching our resources for leaving a congregation. That resource has been field-tested and used. It's on our website. 2) Increasing the capacity of our congregational development practitioners to assist in teaching and training throughout the diocese; we're bringing folks on board for this.

Getting the tools from the College for Congregational Development into the hands of our leaders is a major Congregational Development goal. The Rev. Paul Frolick, Director of our College, and I have partnered together to offer "Gather-Transform-Send" workshops around the diocese, assisted by other participants in the College. We also developed two vestry retreat models around congregational size and faith development in community. It was wonderful to see God at work in those conversations that inspired both presenters and participants alike. It's abundantly clear that the ongoing good work of the Learning Communities Initiative is also equipping our congregations in amazing ways in the work of congregational development. I see

the Spirit at work when lay people see themselves as leaders in their congregations and can make connections with all that they're learning and experiencing.

I also offered the following workshops around the diocese: The Way of Love and Difficult Conversations. God was palpably present in those places. I was deeply inspired by the Way of Love workshops and the many people who were able to share beautifully, not only how they are connecting to God in various ways, but also sharing about our perceived roadblocks. One goal I had in 2019 was to learn more about increasing our capacity for evangelism. The Way of Love workshops were a wonderful experience of witnessing people putting words to the faith that is within them. The Difficult Conversations workshops were building on the Conflict Resolution workshops that I had offered previously. In such a politically tense time, it is imperative for people of faith to be able to have good conversations about difficult things. I was inspired by the people who came to these gatherings and the skills that they are working on, to be faithful conversation partners in their contexts.

Goals I had for 2019 that I didn't achieve (yet!): Putting together an interview packet for our search committees (right now that work is done in a meeting with me, but I'd like some paperwork to go with that too.), taking another look at Celebrations of New Ministry (especially when a priest-in-charge is called as rector after a few years), and taking another look at our Letters of Agreements and doing some best practices research on those. So, there you have the beginnings of my 2020 goals!

I continue to be deeply grateful for and formed by the College for Congregational Development, led by the Rev. Paul Frolick. I'm grateful for his leadership and the generosity of the Diocese of Rochester for graciously inviting us to participate in this program.

In 2019 I was blessed to be involved with our diocesan visioning process, which served as a source of great inspiration, transformation, and learning for me. I am looking forward to this year as a time of digging into our Vision, Mission, and Rule of Life and see where the Holy Spirit is calling us to use that to grow, change, and become.

## Commission on Archives

*Submitted by Ms. Joan Green*

The Archives is the repository for the historical records of the Diocese. We prepare records of closed parishes, ministries, commissions, etc. for archival storage and answer queries from

individuals, parishes, office staff, commissions, other Dioceses, etc. The funding received is used for supplies, postage, and membership in a professional organization.

We do have some exciting news to share. In 2017, the Diocese was contacted by ancestry.com. They made us the following offer: they wanted to scan all of our Parish Registers that are housed in the Archives (only registers of closed parishes). They would then put them on their ancestry.com site for their members to view. We would be given a set of disks of the records that had been digitized and we would receive three free memberships to ancestry.com. A decision was made to go forward with this offer. Over 30 boxes of parish registers were packed up and delivered to ancestry.com

All of the registers were returned to us after completion of the project. The Diocese now has the original registers and also digitized copies of these registers. Those who are members of ancestry.com can view these records under the title: *New York-Episcopal Diocese of Central New York Church Records-1800-1970*.

## Ephphatha Deaf Ministry

*Submitted by the Rev. Peter A. Williams*

Ephphatha Deaf Ministry has been in existence for many decades in the Diocese of Central New York. For years, this included ASL church services in many communities, and classes for children at the NY State School for the Deaf in Rome.

Through the years, there has been a great decline in the number of members of Ephphatha, as older members have passed away, and not been replaced by new members. All of the members of our group in the Binghamton area, for example, have passed away in the last 10 years.

Currently, we have just two services for Deaf people on Thursdays each month in Brownville and Liverpool. Usually in Brownville, we have two Deaf attendees, and a local Episcopal hearing woman who has worked with Deaf kids in public school programs in the past. In Liverpool we have 5-10 Deaf persons, but that number is certainly in decline compared to 10 years ago.

The priest for the Deaf also does some home visits to those who are not able to get out very often. We also send out a newsletter to our little group about once a month.

These were pretty much our goals for 2019: having services and keeping in touch with our shrinking membership, and we can say those goals were met.

The COVID-19 virus epidemic has curtailed our in-person services in 2020, and most are not able to connect online for services. We are keeping in touch mostly by texting.

It is clear that in the future, we are going to need a much more evangelical approach to this ministry, going out into the community, attending Deaf community events, and getting to know the non-church going younger members of the Deaf community. That will take a lot of time and commitment.

It is the suggestion of Rev. Williams that the Diocese consider the possibility of working with other mainline denominations in our region to reach out to the Deaf community, possibly with a full-time missionary (hearing or Deaf, but skilled in signing) for the Deaf community that, hopefully, a few denominations could fund together.

It really seems to be time for a major change in our approach to this ministry.

## Episcopal Relief & Development Coordinators

*Submitted by the Rev. Shelly Banner*

The 2019 funding for Episcopal Relief & Development was used at the Bishop's request to send a delegate to the annual meeting of Episcopal Relief and Development held in Houston, Texas, during the first week of May 2019. This expenditure was for round-trip travel, which was a worthy use of these funds.

The primary goal was to bring back current initiatives and the stories that go with them and disperse that knowledge throughout the Diocese of Central New York. This goal was met in a mass distribution of new Episcopal Relief & Development envelopes and coin boxes for the 1,000 Days of Love campaign. This is a three-year funding initiative directed at improving the health, housing and wealth of families who are under served throughout the world. These funds will be directed toward infant and child nutrition and early educational development, schooling for new mothers, and instructions for best practices for raising healthy food, including vegetables and animal protein.

One segment of the initiative was Disaster Relief teams for each Diocese, and upon reporting this request, Bishop DeDe Duncan-Probe appointed a team leader for the Diocese of Central New York.

First-hand evidence of the need for this Disaster team being in place was given to the members of the conference through a site visit to the small immigrant community of Vineland, a victim of mass destruction from Hurricane Harvey and the recipient of several kinds of restructuring and rebuilding aid through Episcopal Relief.

I have visited a few parishes in person as part of their Sunday worship, to share these stories. A large display of materials along with an individual distribution of more materials to each parish was completed in November at our Diocesan Convention. However, with the interruption of COVID 19 shutdown, I have not been able to continue face to face interactions with congregations.

One can not avoid seeing God at work in the efforts of Episcopal Relief and Development. In hundreds of ways, from direct financial aid, to organizing and sending work teams into disaster areas to provide relief, to initiatives to build healthier bodies, stronger families and to help dispel poverty and ignorance throughout the world, heart-changing evidence is apparent through the efforts of Episcopal Relief and I have faith that the good and generous folk in our Diocese of Central New York will support these efforts through personal donation and parish wide support.

## Learning Communities Initiative

*Submitted by Ms. Carol Ackley*

The Learning Communities Initiative leadership consists of seven persons, three lay, two clergy, and two Diocesan staff. Carol Ackley is the Coordinator of the team. This year an in-person training was held in March, followed by two Zoom workshops in June and September. This is the third year of the Initiative that emphasizes the LISTEN-ACT-REFLECT model. The primary goal is that action and change will develop out of good listening practices relating to God, fellow parishioners, and the neighborhood. The Team has been blessed to work together and honored to facilitate holy conversations of God's work in the Diocese of Central New York. Many Blessings to all parishes that have engaged in this process. May you continue to adapt and adjust as your awareness to God's movement grows. Thanks be to God.

# Mission of Miracles

*Submitted by Mr. Jim O'Neill*

The Mission of Miracles (MoM) medical team returned from it's 2020 health campaign in El Salvador back in February, successfully providing, once again, much needed healthcare to the five villages we visited. The team provided medical, dental, vision, and nutrition, as well as pastoral care to over 1300 Salvadorans of all ages, some receiving more than one service.

The \$6,000 funding in 2019 that was given to MoM paid half the salary of Dr. Roberto Flores, the dentist on Dr Daniella Flamenco's medical team. Episcopal Relief & Development provides the other half of his salary. During the rest of the year this team goes out to 7-8 villages on a rotating schedule providing medical and dental care. During our medical campaign this year Dr. Roberto and another dentist he asked to help (MoM paid for her service) were able to see 151 patients doing 103 cleanings, 61 fillings and restorations, 18 fluoride treatments and, because of the ongoing success of the program, only 38 extractions.

Watching the dental team as they worked, you could see the Holy Spirit at work as team members spent time with each patient, making sure they were relaxed before and during each procedure, compassionately helping each of God's children who would otherwise not receive this much-needed care. This ministry involving Salvadorans and people from CNY have been following in the way of Jesus Christ for seventeen years answering his call to help the poor and forgotten.

# Stewardship

*Submitted by the Rev. Canon Carrie Schofield-Broadbent*

I am blessed to work with a wonderful diocesan Stewardship Team. Co-led by the Rev. Elizabeth Ewing, we meet as needed to help support the spiritual practice of stewardship in our congregations. The committee includes: The Very Rev. Cathy Carpenter, The Rev. Deacon Pat Kinney, and Peter Koeppe.

Each year the diocese subscribes to TENS (The Episcopal Network of Stewardship) which offers an abundance of stewardship materials for our parishes to use. One goal we've had is to increase the diocesan engagement with TENS. Given the number of inquiries we've gotten, and from what we've heard "from the field" – we are doing well with that goal!

The Stewardship Team offered a series of workshops and a webinar about Year-Round Stewardship as well as partnered with Jim Murphy of the Episcopal Church Foundation, to create an evergreen webinar for our diocese on planned giving.

All of our Stewardship resources can be found on our special Stewardship page on our diocesan website, brilliantly pulled together by Meredith Kadet Sanderson.

<https://cnyepiscopal.org/resources/stewardship>

Peter Koeppel faithfully writes beautiful, thoughtful articles for the messenger about the breadth of stewardship as a spiritual practice. He has covered topics like gratitude, kindness, racism, and creation care. One of our goals has been to expand our collective understanding of stewardship beyond the annual pledge drive.

The Stewardship team also came together in November to provide a table of stewardship resources for those gathered at our diocesan convention.

In 2020, we're looking forward to engaging the diocesan Vision, Mission and Rule of Life to shape our stewardship offerings for the diocese.

## Training & Resources

*Submitted by the Rev. Bridget McManus and Ms. Kathy Dengler*

The Lay Preaching Program, in its 6th year, was coordinated by the Rev. Bridget McManus, assisted by Ms. Courtenay McKeon. In the two-year program, students meet four Saturdays a year for didactic sessions, preaching feedback, and master classes. In their parishes, students preach four times each year, supervised by a mentor. Students also complete a substantial amount of reading and writing, which Bridget and Courtenay read and responded to. This year we recommended two graduates for licensure and have five continuing students.

Leadership Day 2019: 130 people from 32 parishes gathered for a day of formation. Bishop Duncan-Probe and Canon Schofield-Broadbent led the group in a Diocesan Visioning session. Vice-Chancellor, Martha Berry, and Diocesan Treasurer, the Rev. Steve White offered a session on Financial and Fiduciary responsibility for vestry members. The Rev. Paul Frolick and Meredith Kadet Sanderson led a session: Marketing Your Congregation from Deep Gladness. The day was concluded with a celebration of the Eucharist.

# Transition Ministry

*Submitted by the Rev. Canon Carrie Schofield-Broadbent*

Transition ministry helps priests and parishes connect with one another when they are looking for new leadership partnerships. Transition ministry also helps congregations and clergy who are discerning new models of ministry, helps facilitate the transition to retirement for clergy, as well as assisting congregations who have discerned that it is time to close.

One goal I had in 2019 was to continue to support and develop the AIM (Adventures in Ministry) program, which is a learning cohort of clergy new to their calls. We spend time building relationships with one another, supporting one another through the ups and downs of ministry, learning congregational development and leadership theories and skills, as well as developing relationships with other clergy in the diocese through guest presentations. This goal has been met and continues. I feel the presence of God at each of our gatherings, when clergy support one another, ask good questions, show up in their vulnerability and humility, and as we seek to be stronger leaders for Christ's Church. The alumni of AIM are included in our emails and are invited to attend some or all of the gatherings even after they've finished the program. Many have chosen to check in with us from time to time - either because the topic intrigues them, or they are in a particular pinch-point in ministry. I am so grateful that a community of learning and support has grown that continues to welcome people in as well as provide support for those who've completed the program.

I also endeavor to continue to support congregations and clergy in all areas of transition. Particular areas of focus include: providing intentional support through regular check ins with new rectors, helping clergy transition out of conflicted parish situations with minimal damage and as much grace as possible, providing pastoral care and leadership guidance to parishes in transition, and preaching and teaching through the fertile areas of transition. I'm grateful to have a relationship with many of our clergy (especially the new clergy) who can reach out to me when they have a question or need support. We've also been able to match up priests together for the purposes of mentoring. I continue to work with wardens, vestries, and congregations in times of transition, especially when they are without clergy, to provide not only worship leading and preaching, but also to serve as a resource and support.

I continue my own work in dismantling racism and intentionally recruit candidates of color for positions in our diocese. In the future, I hope to be able to become an anti-bias trainer, so that work can help inform how I equip search committees.

An ongoing goal is to nurture and expand relationships in the broader church and encourage talented priests from far off to discern possible calls in CNY.

I also endeavor to develop and maintain good relationships of trust with other diocesan transition ministers. It's essential in the work of reference checking, and they serve as great sources of wisdom and inspiration for me. I have served in leadership on the national level for some of these gatherings. Travel to our Transition Ministry Conferences is very important in developing and strengthening these relationships and the wisdom shared in those times we gather is invaluable.

It is an honor and a privilege to serve the diocese in the work of transition ministry. I am constantly inspired by the faithfulness, creativity, hard work, and compassionate hearts of the people in our diocese. It's an honor to be with congregations and clergy in these liminal times when the Holy Spirit is so active and creative. I've been blessed to see God bring reconciliation when no one thought it was possible, brilliant partnerships between priests and congregations that were birthed from the Holy Spirit, as well as times when faithful people have had the courage to make hard decisions about their futures. I've seen God at work in the joyous moments, like Celebrations of New Ministries, as well as in difficult moments of hurt, conflict, and leave-takings.

Transitions are a time when things are up in the air and sometimes things seem a bit unsorted and unsettled. I like to think of that as the Holy Spirit's favorite playground. It is a profound honor to be invited into that holy space with God's people.