

## Discerning Our Common Call: Vital Questions

Dear Friends,

The Church is in a very interesting place. We at Christ Church are continually asking questions – vital questions - about who we are, what is the mission to which we are called, and what may be in store for our congregation for the future. We struggle with the very real challenges of the twenty-first century with a rapidly changing society and how it all impacts our Faith and Worship. We are not the only ones.

Our Diocese is also in a very interesting place. Facing the many changes and challenges that each one of its one hundred and forty plus congregations are facing – but writ a little larger. We as a Diocese are also asking questions about who we are, what is the mission to which we are called, and what may be in store for us in the future. This weighs so heavily on our minds and hearts that we are having a special Diocesan Convention on October 7th on this very subject. The Bishop sent each congregation some questions to think about as we prepare, and our Vestry reflected on them over dinner at our July Meeting. I want to share with you some of the musings of your Christ Church leadership:

1. What is our relationship to Jesus Christ and how do we explain it? *We are Disciples, Followers, a Community of Faith, a Welcoming Community, the Hands and Feet of Christ (as he works through us), Teachers of his Voice, and he is our Savior and Friend.*

2. What core values flow from this relationship? *We are called to demonstrate and embody Respect, Mercy, Charity, and Caring. We are called to do service to our Community, and be in relationship with the Larger World Community. We are a Worshipping, Listening, and Attentive Community in All Ways Obedient to the Vision of Christ.*

It is from this very central identity that we have in Christ Jesus, by virtue of our baptism into his life, death, and resurrection, that we will determine who we are as a congregation (or Diocese) and what we are called to do and be in this world in which we live. It all starts with Jesus. This identity which we both possess - and are daily learning to live into - is what will enable us to respond to the many challenges of this often volatile – but still wildly beautiful world. It is the Christ who will inform and inspire us and encourage us to engage and accomplish the mission God places before us.

We are Episcopalians. This means we hold up the Triune God and work in this world through the power of the Holy Spirit. We are Episcopalians, and as we make our way through the Catechism each week in our Sunday worship, I am reminded of what a wonderful Faith we share. I rejoice that I am counted among those who have made Christ Church not only their home, but the place they have chosen to enable their faith to reach out across race, gender, age, economics, and any other barrier to demonstrate God's love to the world.

There are times when the way is tough. When the way is rough. There are times when we are tired and become too easily discouraged. The speed of the world and all the conflicts therein can sometimes be overwhelming. But we belong to the Christ and are called by his name. We are here to face each new battle, each new challenge, each new day in the love and peace of God. I thank God that there is a body of people who will stand up for the right and keep on keeping on, simply doing the work given us to do.

Our Common Call? We know it. We live it, breathe it, pray it. We are here to follow the Christ, to be an attentive, listening, worshipping community who takes the Christ with us out into all that we do.

Peace,  
*Mother Lisa+*