

ECW Triennial Report, 2009

The Episcopal Church Women's Triennial, held concurrently with General Convention, with the theme "Grow in Grace" featured major addresses by writer Phyllis Tickle and Bishop Steven Charleston, president and dean of Episcopal Divinity School, Cambridge, Massachusetts. We also heard from notables in the area such as the Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams, Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori and Anglican Observer to the United Nations Helen Wangusa, who serves on the UN Commission on the Status of Women.

In general, the Triennial focused on the Millennium Development Goals, featured several workshops and had an "Honored Women" ceremony, which recognized the ministry of women nominated by their dioceses. Kay Meyer, our National ECW President from Province IV/Diocese of Atlanta, presided at each session which was opened and closed by beautiful prayers and reflections from our Chaplain for the Triennial, The Rev. Dr. Ellen Sloan, who is chaplain and dean of community life at General Theological Seminary in New York. Daily, we participated in a Community Eucharist for over 10,000 communicants from the General Convention.

On Thursday July 9, The ECW Triennial Meeting commenced with a 7:30 AM Bylaws Hearing with a lively discussion regarding proposed amendments. Later that morning, 284 voting women left the bylaws unchanged except for adjusting an officer's title. The Triennial Nominating Member Committee presented the slate of candidates to be considered for the National ECW Board. Voting to take place on Monday.

On Friday July 10, the morning started out with the Finance Hearing at 7:30 AM. Rt. Rev. Steven Charleston, Asst. Bishop in the Diocese of CA, was the keynote speaker. Bishop Charleston is a citizen of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma where he was born and raised. "Youth Presence," high school age youth Province reps church-wide, were presented to the assembled. Two of their female members, aged

16 and 19 spoke to us regarding acknowledging the importance of youth in the life of the Church.

Prior to lunch, the Very Rev. Samuel T. Lloyd, Dean of the National Cathedral in Washington DC, spoke to us regarding the National Cathedral and its importance to this nation.

Following lunch the “Honored Women” from each Diocese were introduced, given a pin, certificate and book. Carolyn Goebel was selected from our Diocese for this honor, but was unable to attend the ceremony. Carolyn Jones, our UTO Chairman, accepted Mrs. Goebel’s award on her behalf. Unbeknownst to us, a niece of Mrs. Goebel’s, Robin Sumners ECW President from the Diocese of Colorado, was present and was able to accompany Carolyn as well!

The Plenary session ended with speeches from the nominees for National ECW office, including a time set aside to meet personally with them for any questions/answers.

The Rt. Rev. Curry, Bishop of NC was keynote speaker at the UTO Sharing Dinner.

On Saturday July 11, at 7:30 AM the session started with the UTO Hearings presented by the National UTO Committee. Available grant money this year totaled only \$2,370,303.51 – down considerably from previous years. A grant submitted by Church of the Good Shepherd Brentwood for their companion church, San Jose Obrero in Manta Ecuador for \$7,022.00 has been accepted for recommendation. Final vote will be on Tuesday July 14.

Keynote speaker Phyllis Tickle, founding editor of the Religion Department of “Publishers Weekly”, lecturer and author, presented her version of “Grow in Grace”, the Triennial Theme. Kay Meyer, our National ECW President, spoke to the House of Deputies.

Communication awards for Diocesan ECW newsletters were presented to several dioceses by Liz Habecker, VP for Information

and Communication. Mary Ann Ransom, member-at-large, multi-media, issued an invitation for the Delegates to view tables set up around the perimeter of the Plenary Room for “Share Fair”, items brought to Triennial from Dioceses willing to share what they are doing back home.

Ten workshops concluded the afternoon. I chose to attend The Rev. Kate Moorhead’s “Finding Balance: The Organic Nature of the Spiritual Life”.

On Sunday July 12, the events started with the UTO Ingathering and Holy Eucharist at 10:00 AM. UTO Coordinators/Representatives from all the Dioceses in all nine Provinces walked across the stage to present their 3 year offerings to Bishop Katharine. Carolyn Jones, UTO Chairman represented our Diocese in this procession.

That afternoon, I chose to attend two workshops: Mary MacGregor’s “So You are a Diocesan ECW President?” and “Women Leading Women” taught by MacGregor as well.

The day concluded with the ECW’s “An Evening with Elisabeth von Trapp.” Elisabeth, the grand-daughter of Maria von Trapp is an Episcopalian Church Woman. The evening was very inspirational as Elisabeth expressed many insights from her family’s escape from Austria and their homeless situation as a result. The Jericho Road Episcopal House Initiative in New Orleans that provides homes for the Hurricane Katrina victims tapped that part of her heart and as a result she has donated her time and talent to help raise donations for the project. ECW’s goal is \$110,000, of which \$56,000 has been raised.

On Monday July 13, we started with “Gathering” in the Plenary Room at 9:00 AM. Chaplain, the Rev. Dr. Ellen Sloan, opened with prayer and devotion.

Special Session 3 followed with visits and comments from Bishop Duncan Gray (Central Gulf Coast) and Bishop Charles Jenkins

(Louisiana) regarding the Jericho Road Housing Initiative. Other guests joining them were the Very Rev. David DuPlantier, Dean of Christ Church Cathedral New Orleans and Rob Radtke, President of ERD.

Also introduced were: Harriett Neer, Triennial National President 2003-2006 and the Rev. Canon Alice Medcaf, International Anglican Family and Women's Network.

Elisabeth von Trapp spoke to the assembled, following her concert last night at which \$5,134.55 was raised towards the Jericho Road Housing Initiative. Another \$10,000 was donated by St. Patrick's Church Nevada.

Election of the new 2009-2012 ECW Board was held in the afternoon. The following were elected:

President – Marcia Himes, Diocese of Wyoming

VP- Program- Cordelia Burt, Diocese of San Joaquin

VP- Information- Marilyn Rishkofski, Diocese of New Hampshire

Secretary- Kathy Mank, Diocese of Southern Ohio

Treasurer- Sandra Powers, Diocese of Arkansas

Member-at -Large Social Justice- Irene Radcliff, Diocese of Southern Ohio

Member-at-Large Media- Christine Budzowski, Diocese of Los Angeles

On Tuesday July 14, "Gathering Time" commenced at 9:00 AM with devotion and prayer by Chaplain Ellen Sloan. Plenary Session 5 continued with Regina Ratteree, UTO National President, presenting the 2009 Triennial Granting of \$2,650,472.43 for 62 grants.

Bonnie Anderson, House of Deputies President, addressed the assembly, talking about the value of ECW to the nation and world.

ECW President Kay Meyer presented her with the ECW Triennial Cross that was blessed last week by Presiding Bishop Katharine.

Workshops I chose for the afternoon were: "Clearing Clutter for Grace" presented by Rev. Dr. Jane A. Tomaine and "Finding God in Culture" presented by Dr. Greg Garrett.

I attended the Provence VII Barbeque dinner at the House of Blues. *Wednesday July 15, The Provence VII breakfast was at 7:30AM with The Rt. Rev. Andy Doyle of the Diocese of Texas as the keynote speaker.*

Following beautiful music/singing lead by David and Nancy Stankey, “Gathering Time” in the Plenary Room started our day at 9:00 AM. Chaplain Ellen Sloan led devotions and prayers. Kay Meyer, National ECW Outgoing President, introduced Past ECW National President 1994-1997 Gini Peterson from the Diocese of Atlanta.

“Takin’ It Home” by the Rev. Liz Habecker featured her views about who we are as Episcopal Church Women, what we have to offer and that we are the largest network of the women in the Church. We need to extend to others what we have to offer as women of faith.

We heard a report from the Rev. Ian Douglas from the Diocese of Long Island, chairman of the Study Committee INC 055 with 5 members of the committee in attendance. This 10 member committee appointed by Presiding Bishop Katherine Jefferts Shori and the House of Deputies President Bonnie Anderson will undertake a study of how the UTO handles its grant distribution process and its contributions. The past Triennium contributions totaled over \$7 million. After a question and answer session with the committee it was apparent that the ECW delegates wanted more representation from ECW and UTO members. As a result, we decided to go into special session that afternoon to consider a motion made by Anne Hover of the Diocese of Northwest Texas regarding the makeup of the Study Committee. So I tackled the Parliamentarian and took her to lunch. With her help I fashioned a motion that would be accepted by our ECW delegates as well as the HOB and HOD.

The new National UTO Board was inducted and introduced. The Rt. Rev. Joe Bruno, Bishop of Los Angeles, was welcomed and spoke to us regarding the importance of ECW in the church. He has used the blue UTO box on his dresser for the past 48 years.

Dave Dunlap of Project Dignity, a ministry of Orange County that offers help to homeless families spoke about this outreach that he and his late wife, Linda, founded on 1991. In addition to towels, washcloths, soap, shampoo, etc., it was announced that ECW delegates collected \$1,102 to be presented to Project Dignity. Following lunch, we regrouped for our scheduled workshops. My selection today was “The Gospel According to Hollywood” presented by Dr. Greg Garrett. What better place than in Hollywood’s backyard? That afternoon, in the special session, I presented the motion about the INC 055 Study Committee. As a result of the discussion of the motion, the delegates agreed to present their wishes in a Resolution rather than a motion. So I agreed to withdraw my motion and work with the Resolutions Committee to draft a Resolution to be presented as part of the plenary session the following morning.

That evening, I met with the Resolutions committee and several other interested delegates to create a Resolution to be presented to the House of Deputies and the House of Bishops. As a result, two Resolutions were created.

The evening concluded with the Diocese of Los Angeles Gala presented in the Convention Arena for all ECW Triennial Delegates, House of Bishops and House of Deputies.

On Thursday July 16 I presented Resolution #1 which was co-signed by Diane Gabbard, Diocese of Lexington, Province IV and Lynn Tyler, Diocese of New Hampshire, Province I.

It read as follows:

Whereas, The United Thank Offering and the Episcopal Church Women have been in ministry together for over 120 years; and
Whereas, The Presiding Bishop and the President of the House of Deputies have appointed *ad hoc* Study Committee INC 055 to study the relationship of the United Thank Offering to the Episcopal Church; and

Whereas, Study Committee INC 055 has limited representation from United Thank Offering and has no specific representation from the Episcopal Church Women; be it

RESOLVED, That the Delegates of the Triennial Meeting 2009 strongly recommend the Presiding Bishop and President of the House of Deputies increase the membership of Study Committee INC 055 by adding one additional United Thank Offering representative and two Episcopal Church Women representatives from current leadership; and be it further

RESOLVED, That in the Spirit of Ubuntu the findings and report of the Study Committee INC 055 be presented to the 2012 General Convention and the 2012 Triennial Meeting simultaneously.

The Resolution was past unanimously less one.

Amy Swiernik of the Diocese of Central Pennsylvania sponsored Resolution #2. It read;

Whereas, In the Spirit of Ubuntu; be it

RESOLVED, That the 2009 Triennial Meeting Delegates invite the Executive Council of the Episcopal Church to reactivate their liaison representation on the United Thank Offering Board and the National Board of Episcopal Church Women in order to uphold current By-Laws of the respective organizations.

There was unanimous approval.

All signers to these resolutions were then directed by the delegates to deliver the Resolutions to the House of Bishops and to the House of Deputies immediately. So as a delegation, we met with the “gate-keepers” of the HOB and HOD. They assured us that the resolutions would be delivered.

After all this excitement, I left the Triennial to catch my plane back to Midland.

In my absence, the 46th Triennial meeting ended with the installation of ECW National Board Members and UTO National Committee. A

discussion about Triennial 2021 in Indianapolis was held. We were all urged to bring our 4 delegates.

On Friday July 17, –Also in my absence, the General Convention Closing Eucharist was held at 11:30 AM. which concluded the 76th General Convention and the 46th ECW Triennial Meeting in Anaheim CA.

The day opened with a gathering with music and singing, opening prayers and then Susan Johnson presented the Episcopal Women's History Project. Kay Meyer, President of the ECW Triennial, addressed the House of Bishops this day.

Bonnie Anderson, President of the House of Deputies, addressed the Triennial. The "ECW keeps its eye on the cross...we're in relationship with each other." she says. She then applauded the depth of relationship in daughters and sisters, sharing her knowledge about the Emery sisters who were early pioneers for the work of women in the church. She discussed urgency for mission and a continuation of the United Thank Offering. She shared that more than 60 grants were presented totaling \$1,997,362.43. The collection gathered at the Sunday Eucharist was \$28,168.92. This was a 37 percent increase over the 2006 convention. These funds will go to the Navajo land grant request. In all, the UTO funded 63 grants totaling \$2,650,472.43.

Southern Virginia submitted two grant requests for UTO funding. Of those, the request for Holy Cross Anglican School in Belize was awarded. The entire \$41,000 requested was granted for this project. Presentations including the Episcopal Women's History Project, started by Mary Donovan and Joann Gillespie, gave an oral history of all women in the Episcopal Church, Lay and ordained foremothers. The Young Adult representative also spoke with the message: "Continue recognition of us."

I believe that Episcopal Church Women are a diverse community striving to be faithful. I found myself listening more than contributing

to the conversation. My moderately conservative voice was quieted by so much that was heard at the Triennial and the daily Eucharists by the many speakers and presenters. Many wonderful things were said about inclusion, about social issues and the Ubuntu theme; a Zulu term for “I in you and you in me”. But, I missed the conservative voices that have walked away from the conversation.

We live in challenging times, but by the grace of God, our life together as Episcopal Church Women will continue to demonstrate the true power of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Anne Hover
ECW President
Diocese of Northwest Texas