



September 2004

Dear Fellow Episcopalian:

Let us pray that we—wherever we find ourselves—may be signs, agents and ministers of [Christ's] all-embracing love for this fragile and fractured world. Let us pray also that we may be signs, agents and ministers of his love within the church, whose mission is to proclaim and live the costly and all demanding mystery of reconciliation.

So prayed Bishop Frank Griswold, Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church, preaching on Sunday, September 12, 2004, in St. Paul's Cathedral, London.

As Bishop Griswold spoke, and as this letter is written, our Church hungers for the "demanding mystery of reconciliation," as it faces an imminent threat of schism and disunion, not just within the worldwide Anglican Communion, but within our Episcopal Church and, indeed, within our Pittsburgh Diocese and many of our home parishes.

I need not detail either the events that have led us to the current precipice or the events of the coming months that will shape our future as a church. I am sure that you, as a faithful Episcopalian, are keenly aware of our situation and of the roles played by our Diocese and by our Bishop, the Rt. Rev. Robert W. Duncan. You are also, no doubt, aware of the efforts of Progressive Episcopalians of Pittsburgh to preserve the unity and comity of our Church, both locally and nationally.

When the group that was to become PEP began its life in 2002, we never dreamed that the bonds that hold the Anglican Communion together would be so sorely tested. We could not have conceived of a time when diocesan bishops would not receive the unquestioned respect and affection so long part of our understanding of traditional Anglicanism.

Mere weeks from now, the Lambeth Commission appointed by the Archbishop of Canterbury will recommend how its members believe the Anglican Communion can be held together in such trying times. Our Church and the Anglican Church of Canada may well face censure, suspension, or worse for actions consistent with their polity and not incompatible with our churches' understanding of Anglican theology. Hard upon the release of the Lambeth Commission report, the

Diocese of Pittsburgh will hold its Annual Convention, at which the diocese is sure to be further estranged from the Episcopal Church, if not nominally separated from it.

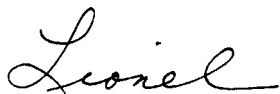
PEP is organizing to resist such developments and to be an instrument of Christ's reconciling love that Bishop Griswold invoked in St. Paul's. We have allied ourselves with a dozen similar groups across the country working to preserve our Church. We have issued many public statements and written many letters supporting the traditional Anglican "via media" and opposing those who, in the name of "orthodoxy," have advocated radical and hurtful innovations. As a group, as part of Via Media USA, and as individuals, we have expressed our heartfelt opinions and to the Lambeth Commission. We have nominated candidates to diocesan office, and we have advanced diocesan convention resolutions whose goals are unity and reconciliation. And we look forward to sponsoring social events and educational programs that comfort and enlighten, and to sharing our hopes, our concerns, and our prayers.

In all of these efforts, our effectiveness depends critically on the talent, effort, and support of our members. It is with this in mind that I urge you now to renew or establish your membership in PEP by filling out and returning the enclosed form, if possible, along with a check. PEP memberships begin September 1 and run through August 31, 2005. I also urge you to become a PEP activist, by attending our meetings and events, by participating in committee work, by helping us reach others in your parish, and by telling us how you think PEP can best help to preserve the faith and the Church that have nourished us on our life's journey.

Note that we have created two membership categories to accommodate the needs of both local and distant, active and passive supporters. Active membership, for those connected with the Diocese of Pittsburgh who contribute at least one dollar to PEP as dues, entitles you to vote and to hold office. Affiliate membership, designed especially for those who can participate only electronically, are asked simply to fill out a membership form and make whatever offering you deem appropriate.

If we join and work together, we will surely bring nearer that great "morn of song" envisaged in the one hymn that we all seem to know, whatever our past, "The Church's one foundation is Jesus Christ her Lord."

Faithfully,



Lionel Deimel

President, Progressive Episcopalians of Pittsburgh