

New Generations:

An Update on Campus and Young Adult Ministries

The Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts

FALL 2008

Dear Friends,

I am pleased to announce that our newest young adult initiative, the Relational Evangelism Pilot Project, is now underway. I am also happy to welcome the Rev. Arrington Chambliss as the director of this program. Arrington is someone who cares passionately about young adults, has an inventive spirit, and has a very deep commitment to her faith. Under her direction, this ministry promises to further our mission of welcoming all people, especially young adults, into the life of our church and into a richer relationship with Christ.

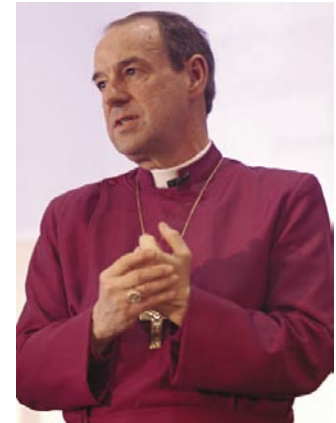
I hope you enjoy this newsletter about this, our newest endeavor. I look forward to all of the wonderful things this ministry will accomplish and pray that the young adults of our Diocese will find the spiritual direction they are seeking through their relationships, both with our evangelists and the Episcopal Church.

Please keep me in your prayers as I keep you in mine.

Faithfully,



M. Thomas Shaw, SSJE



Diocese Launches Relational Evangelism Pilot Project

On September 3rd, 2008, the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts began its newest young adult ministry called the Relational Evangelism Pilot Project. This initiative presents a unique opportunity to invite young adults between the ages of 18-30 into the life of the Episcopal Church. It differs from traditional forms of evangelism because it does not focus solely on converting non-believers or reaching out to young adults only after they have entered a church. "Instead," says the Rev. Arrington Chambliss, Director of the Relational Evangelism Pilot Project, "this ministry is really about meeting young adults where they are: schools, coffeehouses, bookstores, and other gathering places. It's about building relationships in order to find out what they care about, what their personal faith journeys are like, and what their relationship is to faith, spirituality, and the church." By reaching out to their peers, the young adults that will serve as Relational Evangelists can introduce them to the many offerings of the Episcopal Church and perhaps create some new ones along the way.

The Relational Evangelism Pilot Project came about as a result of multiple gatherings of primarily young adult clergy and others around the Boston area who were already engaging in young adult ministry. These meetings were facilitated by Lynn Campbell, who has done extensive work with

young adults and is an active member of The Crossing and the Cathedral Church of St. Paul in Boston. The group met four times beginning in the fall of 2006 to discuss questions surrounding young adult ministry with the hope of possibly creating a larger initiative. Says Campbell, "We discussed the needs of young adults, how the church could address their needs, and what we may need to change about how we do things in order to meet those needs." The group met again in April 2007 at the Barbara C. Harris Camp and Conference Center under the leadership of Bishop Tom Shaw. Based on the previous conversations in the fall and research on young adults in Boston presented by Pamela Larson Mathews, the idea for the Relational Evangelism Pilot Project was born. Campbell and Mathews wrote the grant for the program, which is now being funded Trinity Church Wall Street for the next three years.

This ministry has placed five Relational Evangelists at different sites around the Diocese, including St. Stephen's in the South End, St. Stephen's in Lynn, The Crossing in Boston, the MIT Chaplaincy, and the Boston University Chaplaincy. The evangelists are young adults who have been hired to work 20 hours per week for 1-2 years under the guidance of experienced clergy who serve at each site. They will be responsible for building relationships with

other young adults in order to find out about their academic, career, social, and spiritual needs. From there, the evangelists will build a leadership team of five of these young adults who will then organize their peers into small group-based ministry and social and faith-based action projects. By building and guiding a core group of young adult leaders at each site, the Relational Evangelists will ensure that each congregation's young adult ministry will continue to thrive even after their service is complete.

In addition to their work at congregations and chaplaincies, the evangelists will share their experiences with each other once per week and will receive training once per month on topics such as community organizing, evangelism, Anglican tradition, prayer, and what it means to "be church". Says Chambliss of these young adults, "They are so excited about their faith and are teaching me about the gifts of the Episcopal Church. Whether it is a love for our ritual or liturgy, contemplative spiritual practice, willingness to grapple with difficult topics, or engagement in public issues, they come to us with fresh eyes and hearts to experience our church." The Relational Evangelists are ready to provide our Diocese with a new perspective on young adult ministry and are ready to engage a new generation of leaders for our congregations.

This project will focus on engaging three groups of young adults: those who have no involvement in the church, those who have a peripheral relationship with the church, and those who are already involved but need more direction regarding their leadership role in the church. For instance, at The Crossing in Boston, the Relational Evangelist will work with local students from nearby Emerson College who have little or no involvement with the Episcopal Church. At St. Stephen's in the South End, the Relational Evangelist will connect with young parents who bring their children to the BSAFE program but are not involved in parish life. Clergy will help the Relational Evangelists decide which populations are appropriate to engage within the community, but they are also free to engage with young adults outside of their parish or chaplaincy. According to Chambliss, "Our evangelists are either part-time students or work part-time and have plenty of opportunity to interact with young adults at school, work, or out on weekends. Each Relational Evangelist understands that in their role as a minister, building relationships is what their whole life is about."

There is much excitement and hope surrounding this new ministry for both the Relational Evangelists and the young adults they will serve. Says Lynn Campbell of her wishes for the ministry, "I hope that young adults in Boston will come to see the Episcopal Church as their home. I hope that we will train dozens of Relational Evangelists who can then go out and train other parishes on how to do this type of outreach. And ultimately, I hope that both the evangelists and the young adults will grow in their understanding of God's love for them." ■

Chambliss to Serve as Director of Relational Evangelism Pilot Project

The Rev. Arrington Chambliss comes to the Relational Evangelism Pilot Project from St. Andrew's Episcopal Church in Marblehead, MA where she served as the Associate Rector for nearly five years. Chambliss has a longstanding history of working with programs committed to youth, community development, social justice, and spiritual growth. She has been a consultant for many youth and community based organizations, worked as a campus organizer for the Campus Outreach Opportunity League, and served as the Youth Minister and Seminarian for St. Michael's Episcopal Church in Milton, MA. After receiving her Master of Divinity degree from Harvard Divinity School in 1999, Chambliss founded No Ordinary Time, an organization that works with faith-based leaders, artists, and community organizers to integrate Christian contemplative and reflective practice into people's active and public lives. Her extensive history of working with young people and her passion for young adult ministry makes her a perfect fit for the Diocese's newest initiative.

When asked what drew her to become involved in the Relational Evangelism Pilot Project, Chambliss said, "I have a passion for finding God in the stories of other people." She also says that her spirit for innovation draws her to the inventive and somewhat investigational nature of this new ministry. Of course, her enthusiasm for working with young adults is a large motivating factor. "I'm excited to support young people in their ministry. It will help me take myself more seriously as a Christian and will also create an opportunity to learn together how we can live resurrected lives, creating the Kingdom of God here on earth."

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The Rev. Arrington Chambliss is serving as the Director of the Relational Evangelism Pilot Project.

Chambliss hopes that the Relational Evangelism Pilot Project will enhance other young adult ministries in the Diocese and help individual parishes and chaplaincies start to think more strategically about growth. "I am thrilled about the possibility that we might offer this ministry to the entire Episcopal Church as a model for engaging a new generation in the church." She also has hopes for the young adults who find the spiritual direction they need through this ministry. "This project is based on four values: Christian spirituality, community, simple living, and evangelism. Not only does evangelism mean sharing the good news of the Gospel, but it also means sharing the good news of people's lives and what we can do together in the world to demonstrate the power of our faith. We are viewing evangelism as a spiritual discipline emanating from our deep gratitude of God's presence in our lives. It is my hope that all of the young adults involved in this ministry will see the good news in each other, find the community they are searching for, and embark on a spiritual path that will engage them more deeply with God, each other, and the world." ■

For more information about the Relational Evangelism Pilot Project, contact the Rev. Arrington Chambliss at (617) 482-4826 ex. 205 or at achambliss@diomass.org.

Relational Evangelist Shares Personal Faith Journey

Jason Long came to Boston from Denver, CO with plans to focus his undergraduate studies in pre-medicine and then go to medical school. However, as is the case with many college students, things didn't go exactly as planned.

Now holding a Masters' degree in Pastoral Ministry from Boston College, Jason joins a team of young adults who are part of the Diocese's new Relational Evangelism Pilot Project. He will serve as the Relational Evangelist for The Crossing, an emerging church worship community based at the Cathedral Church of St. Paul in Boston and led by the Rev. Stephanie Spellers. Jason comes to the project with great enthusiasm and is not only ready to work with young adults on their faith journey, but is also ready to share his own faith journey with others.

Jason's shift from pre-med to pastoral ministry came as a result of his participation in a service-learning program at Boston College. "I was raised in the evangelical tradition and never had any academic component to my faith," he says. "Learning about theology ignited a spark in me and combined my love of academia with my desire to learn how to have an impact on people's lives." He also became deeply committed to the volunteer element of these classes and appreciated how the knowledge he learned complemented his volunteer experiences. That year, when Jason returned



Jason Long, a graduate of Boston College, is the new Relational Evangelist at The Crossing in Boston.

that for the first time he felt "a sense of God's calling on my heart." At first, he was scared – "Following God's path isn't always a straightforward journey." But after some time he decided he was okay with the uncertainty, resolving that "if we are seeking to live a more loving, honest, fully present life, God promises to walk with us."

In the years that followed, Jason stepped back from some evangelical ministries he had worked with in the past and found himself engaging in different faith traditions and new life experiences. This led to a three year period when he wasn't a member of any worship community in particular, but instead became interested in the emerging church movement. The emerging church movement is a new way of looking at church that seeks to meet the spiritual needs of all people in our society using both traditional and alternative methods of worship. At first, Jason's interest was limited to books and conversations around the topic. But after receiving the opportunity to participate in a ministry-based internship through Boston College, he wanted to see if this kind of worship community existed in the Boston area.

After some internet research and several emails later, Jason discovered The Crossing, the Diocese's emerging church worship community, and became a member in January 2007. The Crossing offers a compassionate, progressive, creative, generous, "radically welcoming" expression of God's life and love in the city of Boston. The group meets Thursday evenings for worship services but also meets in small groups and spiritual practice circles and engages in social justice efforts around the city. "It may look different each week," he says, "but people come because it is a place where they can be themselves. It's authentic." In less than a year, Jason became an integral part of the leadership of this emerging church community.

During a planning retreat for The Crossing last fall, Jason and other Crossing leaders decided that they wanted to hire someone to lead the group in community outreach and organizing. However, they hadn't figured out how they were

going to pay a new staff person. At the same time, the Rev. Stephanie Spellers became involved in planning the Relational Evangelist Pilot Project and realized that this was exactly what The Crossing needed – a part-time paid staff member whose purpose was to reach out to young adults and help build their worship community. When the opportunity arose, Jason asked Spellers if he could become a part of this new ministry and she was eager to have him on board. He began his work as The Crossing’s Relational Evangelist in early September.

While Jason recognizes that there are challenges to being involved in a new ministry, he is excited about his new role at The Crossing. His philosophy is that “worship communities should respond to the needs of the local community. Once we find out what those needs are, we should go back to our worship community and figure out how to address them. This project is really about making church a place where all voices matter.” ■

MIT Seeks to Reach Out to More Students

The Lutheran Episcopal Ministry (LEM) at MIT certainly knows how to keep busy. During the academic year, 40-50 regular attendees share the Eucharist on Wednesday evenings, join together for a Monday night discipleship group, go on retreats and engage in community service. In addition, many of them participate in the Technology and Culture Forum, which provides an opportunity for students to learn about and discuss the ethics of science and technology. “The forum is a type of relational evangelism,” says the Rev. Amy McCreath, Episcopal chaplain at MIT. “We welcome all students and show them what the church cares about. After a forum, new students may join us for worship or volunteer event. It’s an important witness.”

With all of this activity, it seems that LEM wouldn’t need the help of a Relational Evangelist. But with over 10,000 undergraduate and graduate students and more than 300 student groups, LEM knows it has to do more to get their attention. “These kids aren’t joining the Russian Club,” jokes McCreath. “This is MIT. They have the opportunity to start their own corporations or save remote villages. We have to do more to get on their radar screen, which is where the Relational Evangelist can help.”

McCreath has been involved in the Relational Evangelism Pilot Project since its early planning stages. She was a part of the small group of Boston area clergy who came together in a “season of conversation” to discuss young adult and campus ministry. “We weren’t sure if we were ready for a huge undertaking, but by talking with one another we were able to share ideas and start thinking about what we could do to bring young adults into the Episcopal Church.”

Now that this ministry has begun, McCreath and her group at LEM are excited to be a part of something that could help grow their chaplaincy.

While attendance at LEM has increased a bit, thanks to student leadership, McCreath knows the group has even greater potential to reach out to more students. “They are making crucial decisions during these years and face all sorts of crises, like dealing with academic pressures or dealing with the death of a loved one for the first time. Having the church as a companion is essential – I can’t think of anything more important.” She says that while her current students can talk at length about science and technology, they struggle when trying to talk about their faith, which hinders them from doing things like inviting their friends to join the group for services or a retreat. Their new Relational Evangelist, Allison Brown (MIT ’08), will help teach current LEM students how talk about their faith stories and then show them how to share their stories with others. Once current LEM students are able to talk about their faith, McCreath hopes that they will ultimately become comfortable inviting their friends and classmates to become a part of this active, welcoming worship community. ■



Students gather from MIT’s Lutheran-Episcopal Ministry (LEM).

Young Adults in Boston: Quick Facts

The following facts and figures regarding young adults come from Pamela Larson Mathews’ presentation entitled *Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts College and Young Adult Assessment and Exploration*.

- **At least 400,00 young adults reside in the geographic area of the Diocese; 260,000 of them are college students**
- **54% of out-of-state students will remain in Massachusetts after graduation**
- **Currently, only 10% of Episcopalians are between the ages of 18-29**



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