

March 14, 2011

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

It is an honor and a joy to write as your chaplains and to share a word of welcome as you prepare for the upcoming House of Bishops gathering at Kanuga. The theme guiding the meeting is “Growing in Confidence as Bishops as We Proclaim the Gospel in 2011,” and we look forward to serving as your prayerful companions before, during and after the gathering.

The Rev. Simón Bautista Betances returns as Chaplain, and brings rich experience from his work as the Canon for Latino Ministries in the Diocese of Washington. Born in the Dominican Republic, he was ordained a priest in the Roman Catholic Church, serving in parish ministry and as head of a non-profit rooted in Dominican and Haitian communities. He moved to the United States, where he taught high school students, and he was received as a priest in the Diocese of Washington. Today, he balances work supporting Latino ministries with engagement in social organizations serving Latinos in the greater D.C. area. He is married to Amarilis Vargas and they have four children: María Teresa, Simón Antonio, María Leaquina and Amarilis de los Ángeles-Lili.

The Rev. Stephanie Spellers is beginning her term as a Chaplain, and she shares a deep love for Anglican theology and contextual mission. A native of Kentucky, she is the founding priest for The Crossing congregation at St. Paul’s Episcopal Cathedral in Boston and the Consulting Editor for Emergent Resources at Church Publishing Inc. She is also the co-chair for the Standing Commission on Mission and Evangelism, the author of *Radical Welcome: Embracing God, The Other and the Spirit of Transformation* and editor of *Ancient Faith, Future Mission: Fresh Expressions in the Sacramental Tradition*. Though she travels and consults across the country, for the last 18 years she has lived, studied and ministered in the Boston area.

Together, we look forward to providing support to you, the members of House of Bishops, in a variety of ways. Perhaps most importantly, we are aware that ours is a unique calling: to meet the pastoral needs of the pastors. We will be present in your meetings, learning and listening by your side, ready to offer prayer or counsel to the House as needed. Should any of you desire private prayer, spiritual direction or the Rite of Reconciliation, you may seek us in passing or sign up for time with one of us in the pastoral office/prayer space we have arranged at Kanuga. If you have a personal emergency, we will help the Presiding Bishop’s staff and Kanuga staff to offer support.

In partnership with gifted Music Minister Dent Davidson and the Bishops’ Worship Planning Team, we are also excited to serve as your worship leaders. The planned liturgies celebrate the breadth of the Anglican and Episcopal tradition that is God’s gift to us and our gift to the world.

Morning Prayer will be a simple Book of Common Prayer-based gathering, usually with one or two songs and always following the Daily Office lectionary. Those who wish may arrive 10 minutes early to join us in prayerful singing as we “warm” the space for worship. In the Bible Studies, the emphasis will be on breaking open the Word of God together. We will offer brief reflection to engage the text and a simple yet compelling question for consideration, followed by a Lectio Divina-style Bible Study, trusting the Holy Spirit to once again lead us into all wisdom.

The Eucharists will draw primarily on resources within our broad Episcopal family, including the Book of Common Prayer, Enriching Our Worship, the 1982 Hymnal, Lift Every Voice and Sing II and Wonder, Love and Praise, with additional music and prayer forms to fill out our worship, as appropriate. As you have no doubt come to expect, Dent Davidson will lead us in songs that reflect the many cultures where we live out the mission of God. Each Eucharist will weave together the Lectionary readings and meeting theme for the day:

- **Friday evening Eucharist:** We will celebrate the Annunciation and mark the Renewal of Commitment to the Core Values of the House of Bishops, with Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori serving as preacher and presider.
- **Saturday afternoon Eucharist:** We remember Richard Allen, first bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, and reflect on fresh ways to proclaim the gospel with youth and young adults. The Right Reverend Wendell Gibbs will preside, and Rev. Spellers will preach. You should expect some echoes from The Crossing community, where Rev. Spellers serves, although the core of the liturgy will be drawn from authorized resources.
- **Sunday evening Eucharist:** Our companions from the Moravian Church will lead a traditional “Singstunde” – literally an “hour of song.” Moravians are known for their love of congregational singing, and this song-filled Eucharist is an ideal way to celebrate the initiation of full communion between our two Churches.
- **Monday afternoon Eucharist:** The Right Reverend David Álvarez presides at this Spanish-language Eucharist commemorating James T. Holly, bishop of Haiti and the Dominican Republic. Rev. Bautista will preach and we will ask: Who is my neighbor?
- **Tuesday afternoon Eucharist:** We recall the witness of John Keble, one of the leaders of the Oxford Movement, and hold before God the conversations regarding the Anglican Covenant and the formation of young leadership. The Right Reverend Dena Harrison presides, and Rev. Spellers preaches.
- **Wednesday evening Eucharist:** We close our time together with a celebratory, multicultural Eucharist commemorating Innocent, Bishop of Alaska. The Right Reverend Mark Lattime will preside, Rev. Bautista will preach and the Prayers of the People will be prepared by gifted liturgist The Right Reverend Geralyn Wolf.

\* \* \*

In 1930, Anglican divine Evelyn Underhill wrote to the Lambeth Conference: “The Church wants ... a disciplined priesthood of theocentric souls who shall be tools and channels of the Spirit of God: and this she cannot have until Communion with God is recognized as the first duty of the [clergy].” We have no doubt that this House of Bishops meeting will be productive and enlightening. It is our hope that you will also be blessed with moments of silence and deep communion with our triune God and one another, without which the rest of our labors are in vain.

Please travel well, and may God be with you until we meet.

Your companions in Christ,

*Simon*

The Rev. Simon Bautista Betances  
202-294-4256 / sbautista@edow.org

*Stephanie*

The Rev. Stephanie Spellers  
617-312-5218 / revsteph@gmail.com