

Winter Assembly 2015



Vergers from the Diocese of Atlanta pause for a photo at their January 31 winter meeting in Columbus with Bishop Keith Whitmore and the Rev. Grace Burton-Edwards (partially hidden in second row on left), rector, St. Thomas . Photo: Bill Monk

On a brisk and chilly day in the southwest corner of the Diocese of Atlanta, the Mark Emory Graham Chapter of the Vergers' Guild of the Episcopal Church met for their Winter Assembly. The event was hosted by St. Thomas Episcopal Church in Columbus. Over thirty-eight Vergers, Clergy, and guests participated in the gathering.

After a meet and greet session with coffee and pastries, we joined together for Eucharist. The Right Reverend Keith B. Whitmore, Assisting Bishop of Atlanta, was Celebrant and Preacher. Bishop Whitmore was assisted by The Rev. Grace Burton-Edwards, Rector of St. Thomas, and by Archdeacon Janet Tidwell and Deacon Chris Lemley.

Our theme for the entire gathering was "leadership." Bishop Whitmore described Vergers in his homily and later as parish leaders during his dialog with the Assembly. He identified Vergers as the joyful leaders of the "Parade" inside the Church and exhorted us to lead the procession out into the community and serve as examples through our lives outside the Church.

This was a brilliant segue into the remarks of Archdeacon Tidwell and Deacon Lemley. The Deacons explained their role as agents for God's Kingdom outside of the Church as Ordained Ministers of Christ's message to the poor and downtrodden. The Bishop and Deacons continued the emphasis begun in last summer's meeting on the Benedictine doctrine of sending God's word/work out from the Church.



After the Eucharist Bishop Whitmore and Chapter Chair Lorie Tola displayed the Resource Customaries booklet. Photo: Bill Monk



Deacon Lemley and Archdeacon Tidwell in the mist of their presentation: Leading God's People – Developing Leadership. Photo: Bill Monk

The business portion of the meeting began with a prayer. Chapter Chair Lorie Tola called the meeting to order. The Chair listed the primary achievements of the MEG Chapter since the Summer Assembly meeting:

- ✓ Distribution of Resource Customaries to all parish rectors and vicars
- ✓ Vergers serving as tellers and other support functions at Annual Council
- ✓ Serving as hosts at the Diocesan Outreach “Hearts to Serve” conference

The Chair concluded the business meeting by naming future action items to undertake:

- Developing our Chapter Mission Statement and incorporating it into the bylaws
- Revising our Chapter bylaws to be approved at the Summer Assembly meeting
- Continuing to support the biannual Acolyte Festival
- Announcing the Summer Assembly meeting will be hosted by St. Simon's in Conyers

A gallery of photos of our Assembly Meeting, courtesy of Bill Monk, may be found at this [link](#):