

Summer Assembly 2016



Vergers from the Diocese of Atlanta pause for a photo at their June 4 summer assembly in Rome with Bishop Keith Whitmore, and The Rev. Janice Bracken Wright In front with the bishop are Lorie Tola and Suzie Whitmore.
Photo: Curt Yarbrough

The Gathering and Holy Eucharist:

The Mark Emory Graham Chapter of the Vergers' Guild of the Episcopal Church met for their Summer Assembly on a beautiful June 4th day in Northwest Georgia. We were hosted by St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Rome. Thirty-seven vergers, clergy, and guests participated in the gathering. Nine vergers joined the MEG Chapter for the first time when they paid Chapter dues.

After registration, fellowship, coffee, and pastries, we gathered together for Eucharist. The Right Reverend Keith B. Whitmore, Assisting Bishop of Atlanta, was Celebrant and Preacher. Bishop Whitmore was assisted by The Rev. **Janice Bracken Wright**, Associate Rector of St. Peter's with a full complement of Acolytes and Altar Ministers for the service. Participating were J. C. Albritton, Brian Hampton, Alex Hodges, Tricia Richards, Bryant Steele, Curt Yarbrough and Freida Yeary. The ushers were Nat Massey and Sue Anderson, and Wanda Cantrell was the organist.



The Bishop, The Rev. Wright, JC Albritton, Lorie Tola, and Vergers and meeting host, Dawn Hampton
Photo: Bill Monk

Bishop Whitmore's homily focused on the lectionary for the day: Collect from Proper 4, the 2nd Letter to Timothy and the Gospel of Mark. He deftly wove these three strands as one, noting that they perfectly reveal the verger's ministerial components: **order, faithfulness and generosity.**

Information and Fellowship:



The Bishop's Forum

During our dialogue with our great friend, the Bishop, we touched on a number of topics. The fascinating ability of our teacher was his ability to turn almost all queries into definitions of our role as vergers.

- Which language (Rite 1 or 2) to use for a healing service? **Doesn't matter, as long as the liturgy is consistent in tone. It's part of our role to ensure that glaring incongruous elements are not present.**
- Congregants don't like incense? **Great liturgy requires all of the senses be engaged. The Bible mentions only two smells: Incense and Brimstone. We prefer incense. Our job is to find pure incense and good charcoal that won't offend.**
- Many like the Doxology at the Offertory? **Yes, but it doesn't make any theological or liturgical sense to be there. We should know why and be prepared to object to the misplaced sentimentality of its misuse.**
- Why are EMs unknowledgeable about the theology of Holy Eucharist? **It should be the job of the verger to train them to know why they serve at the Chancel. This would be an important role the Verger Chapter to play to serve the Diocese.**

Bishop Whitmore's remarks might be summarized that Worship is the act by which we give worth to God. Our actions as vergers must be designed to bring **order** to that process. We Episcopalians, as a people of the Book, need to examine our actions concerning Liturgy and judge those actions in terms **of faithfulness** to the words and rubrics of the Book of Common Prayer. Because we give our time and talent in this pursuit, we experience Sunday worship in a very different fashion from our fellow Parishioners. This is our **generosity**, our widow's mite.

The Bishop's discussion was followed by a wonderful lunch of ham and cheese quiche; spinach and artichoke quiche; tomato aspic, three different salads, followed by apple cobbler and ice cream. Amy Summerlin and Sunny Knauss prepared our feast.



Chris Palmer hard at work
Photo: Curt Yarbrough

The Cathedral Bookstore, thanks to Chris Palmer, made available a wide selection of reference materials and books to aid vergers in their ministry. Sales were brisk; clearly our members like to continue learning to become better vergers.

Special Presentation:



Special Presentation by Suzie Whitmore
Photo: Curt Yarbrough

Suzie Whitmore, a Board Member of Rainbow Village, gave a wonderful presentation that totally engaged the attendees. Rainbow Village’s mission is to transform lives for homeless families with children of North Metro Atlanta. The ministry is a community-based, transitional housing program that promotes self-sufficiency.

The Rainbow Village program provides intervention for adult residents, but if the cycles of homelessness, poverty and domestic violence are to be broken, they must model good habits and critical life skills to the children. Children must be taught to live self-sufficient lives. Ideally, their parents teach them how, but sometimes their residents can’t teach what they don’t know or don’t have the ability to model. Rainbow Village works together with both the adults and the children, providing them skills for a lifetime that they will be able to pass down for generations to come.

Each family invited to participate in the program moves into a fully furnished home where they may live for one to two years. The furnishings in their homes are theirs to take with them when they move to provide a sense of continuity in the transition. Rainbow Village has the capacity to serve 18 homeless families at a time with their current facilities. After a successful capital campaign, they will be able to serve 30 families on site.

The MEG Chapter has been invited to assist in one of Rainbow Village’s fundraising efforts. They are celebrating their 25th Anniversary with a day of BBQ, music, and fun with world-renowned band Banks and Shane. Vergers of our Diocese will usher, assist the Rainbow Village staff, and assist the Brotherhood of St. Andrew as they serve BBQ. Additional details are found below in the **Future Dates** Section of this issue.

Business of the Chapter:

The meeting was called to order by Chair Lorie Tola, followed by an opening prayer, approval of the 2015 Assembly Minutes, and a report from the Treasurer Karl Sachsenmaier. There is over \$1,200 in the treasury; \$500 was contributed to fund the Acolyte Festival in September.

Ken Singleton gave a report on the September 10 Acolyte Festival. Yolande Collins announced she would be conducting a Safeguarding God’s Children training session on August 13 at the Cathedral. Additional details for both topics are found below in the **Future Dates** Section of this issue. Chuck Dale provided the Communications report, followed by a report on the progress the VGEC Host Committee is making towards hosting the biggest Conference ever.

The following Chapter Officers were elected by acclamation for the 2016 – 2018 Term:

Chair	Phillip Knight
Vice Chair	Martha-Sue Blythe
Secretary	Rolando Thorne

Treasurer
Training
Communications

Karl Sachsenmaier
Ruth Anne Tatum
Chuck Dale



Chuck Dale, Ruth Anne Tatum, Phillip Knight (Chair), Rolando Thorne and Karl Sachsenmaier.
Not shown: Martha-Sue Blythe
Photo: Curt Yarbrough

Mary Beth Westmoreland presented an amendment to our bylaws formally acknowledging our tax exempt status as an auxiliary organization of the Diocese. She moved for acceptance. The motion was approved unanimously. Ruth Anne Tatum reminded everybody that numerous training opportunities through the national VGEC were available: free trial memberships for 6 months, reduced dues for seniors, reduced price for training course which could be completed as a group, a large archive of customs archived for research.

At this point retiring Chair, Lorie Tola turned over the gavel to our new Chair, Phillip Knight.



Lorie Tola presenting the MEG gavel to Phillip Knight
Photo: Bill Monk

The first official act of new Chair Knight was to present, with our thanks, an engraved gavel and plaque to retiring Chair Lorie Tola. He then thanked the gathered assembly for their confidence in him and our new Board.

He intends to lead us in a dialogue oriented to “in- reach,” an exploration of our motto *Service in worship, and worship through service*. We have concentrated for a few years on leadership: we lead congregants and ministers on Sundays, and are called to lead people of the community the other six days of the week. As an organization, he feels it is time we provide our members with the inner tools, the spiritual foundation that they need to carry on this ministry of leadership. We often speak to one another about the lonely challenges of our ministry. Would that we as oft mention the special joy! The MEG Verger Chapter has a tremendous amount of work ahead of us, eight public functions in the next 18 months. We will need to remember the joy in serving.

The meeting concluded with a prayer.

To view Bill Monk’s Photo Gallery of the Summer Assembly, [click here](#).