

Church of the Good Shepherd  
and  
St. John the Evangelist

October 25, 2007

Dear Vestry, Parishioners and friends:

It is Easter since I last wrote a pastoral letter to you. The events of the spring with the arrival of the Pipe Organ, AC, Inaugural Concert and so much more have made it impossible to send you out the regular summer letter. Since September we have been involved with the Parish Project: ***Our True Story***. With its scripture base it has led us on a spiritual journey of discovery uncovering our origins and mission as a church. Its appeal to parish *'wellness'* using the six special liturgies has prepared us for our Wellness Manual and the writing of our new By-laws.

The work that will follow in the Review stage of the project has to do with collating opinions, discussions and records. Many people have come forward to tell their story of the years they have spent in the parish. They have recounted good times and bad. Some of our older members have filled gaps in our parish story. For this we have to be very grateful. At times the story was not easy to recover as we explored the years of conflict in the late nineties. I have written to people who have moved away from the parish, including clergy, in order to allow for fairness in our recording.

There is no doubt in my mind that the last two weeks of the project have been the most valuable as we set out to produce a vision for the future. Already that future and that vision have been influenced by the continuing work the Vestry is doing with *'shared ministry'*. This work is groundbreaking in its importance. It will not only be a blueprint for our church and parish, but it will help other churches around the diocese. Parish recovery and parish growth have become increasingly important in the diocese for several reasons. In the last few years we have had to close three churches that are no longer viable. Twenty five churches in the diocese are having serious problems. The Bishop has looked at what we are doing and says that he is encouraged that we have taken these initiatives ourselves in growing our church. He has asked to be kept informed and we will do that.

The work that we have done with the parish project will continue as we introduce and implement *'Shared Ministry'*. Shared Ministry is a concept that we have developed at Vestry level for the future government and ministries of the parish. It arose again at the *Vestry Retreat* in September and after many drafts was submitted to Vestry at the October meeting and approved.

The Rev. William J. McGinty, Rector  
110 West Catharine Street, Milford, Pennsylvania 18337  
Phone: (570) 296-8123 ♦ Fax: (570) 296-4383

Church of the Good Shepherd  
and  
St. John the Evangelist

Shared Ministry gives everyone on Vestry an area of responsibility. It does so to better use the talents and skills we have available and to ensure that every area of the parish's mission is covered. Each Vestry member then goes out and recruits individuals or a team to work on that particular area. In a way '*shared ministry*' spreads the load and does not allow all responsibility to devolve on the shoulders of a few. Projects, planning and budgets will all be affected by this new scheme. Vestry meetings themselves will move increasingly to a '*consensus agenda*.' There is a sense in which 'shared ministry' turns all of us into ministers, evangelists and God's People working together as *the Body of Christ*. It is such an exciting concept because it really takes our Episcopal style of Church and pushes it to its logical conclusion.

On behalf of the Vestry and myself, I would like to thank you for your kind participation in the *Parish Project* and so much more that has been going on at church. With the advent of the new Pipe Organ and the rebirth of the choir these have been busy and exciting days. *The First Fall Milford Walkathon* and your support of the Bishop's *New Hope Campaign* have lifted our spirits and reaffirmed God's mission and his Gospel in our parish.

Since the start of this ministry in 2003, we have been relatively conflict free as a church and parish. So many people have contributed to that life of grace including the Vestry, the Altar Guild, the Daughters of the King and you the people of the parish. As we move closer to the end of another great year, we have to think back with gratitude to God. 2007 was a historic year for us in every sense. Not only was it the year of the Pipe Organ, but also so much more that lifted us to a renewed sense of mission. I am sure that 2008 will be just as challenging, energizing and full of adventure. Watch this space.

With much love and appreciation for all you do,  
May God Our Father Bless and keep you.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bill McGinty" with a stylized flourish at the end.

Bill McGinty.  
Pastor

The Rev. William J. McGinty, Rector  
110 West Catharine Street, Milford, Pennsylvania 18337  
Phone: (570) 296-8123 ♦ Fax: (570) 296-4383