



# NEWS FROM BISHOP MILLER

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March 16, 2009

Dear Friends in Christ,

Now almost half-way through my sabbatical time away from the Diocese of Milwaukee, I want to express my thanks and gratitude for the gift of this time away. While it is a challenge to disengage from the daily and weekly round of our life together, I have found the last six weeks to be refreshing and relaxing. Along with spending valuable time with my family, I have also had the chance to read, reflect, pray, and exercise, all of which have fed me richly. At this sabbatical mid-point, I want to update you on a number of things happening in the Diocese of Milwaukee of which the diocesan staff has kept me apprised.

Later this week I will break away from my sabbatical to attend the annual spring meeting of the House of Bishops. My primary focus while at the meeting will be to host bishops from the Moravian Church who will join us as part of the deepening relationship that we hope will develop into one of full communion after this coming summer's General Convention. As co-chair of the Moravian-Episcopal dialogue it has been my privilege to learn more about the life and ministry of this remarkable Christian body with deep historical ties to several communities in Wisconsin.

Beyond that, there are four principle issues about which I want to share information with you: the sale of our property in Wautoma and the future of Camp Webb, the economy, intra-diocesan communications, and the situation at St. Edmund's in Elm Grove. Each of these has significant impact on our common life as a diocese.

As we come to the mid-point in our annual Lenten journey I am joined with you in our common prayer. I will miss celebrating the liturgies of Holy Week and the glories of Easter Day with you, but I am grateful to be keeping this holy season in a very different sort of way this year.

I return to my work with you on May 4 when I will be attending the provincial synod meeting in Detroit. In the meantime, may you all continue to manifest in your lives the saving work of Jesus Christ, bearing one another's burdens, and sharing one another's joys. I ask for your continued prayers for me, and assure you of mine for you. God bless you all.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "S. A. Miller".

The Right Reverend Steven A. Miller  
Bishop

## SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Wautoma Property and Camp Webb
- The Economy
- Intra-Diocesan Communication
- St. Edmund's, Elm Grove

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## WAUTOMA PROPERTY AND CAMP WEBB

I am happy to report that on March 6, we closed on the sale of the former home of Camp Webb in Wautoma to a group whose intention is to run a summer camp on the property. The final sale price was \$1.7 million. After Camp Webb's indebtedness to the Diocese of Milwaukee Foundation, and the various other costs associated with the sale, are paid, we will have between \$1.1 and \$1.2 million dollar to invest, the proceeds from which will provide a steady income stream to help support a vital and vibrant ministry of Christian Formation in our diocese.

One component of that important work is the on-going program ministry of Camp Webb, which will take place during the month of July at the Indian Mound Boy Scout Reservation on Silver Lake in Oconomowoc. Shannon Kelly, the new Bishop's Assistant for Christian Formation is hard at work laying the foundations for this new expression of our camping ministry, and I am excited about what will be offered to the young people of our diocese this summer. Registration information, as well as information about employment at Camp Webb, will be available in our parishes very soon. ***For the most current information, please monitor's the camp's website at [www.campwebb.org](http://www.campwebb.org) frequently.***

In the current economic climate, I believe we are very fortunate to have completed this sale, and I am excited about the bright future of our Christian Formation ministry, now that the resources of the diocese can be used to support it more broadly, no longer encumbered by owning and maintaining a facility of significant size and a considerable distance from the diocese.

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## THE ECONOMY

In that vein, I want to reflect on the very difficult economic situation in our country and around the world. I have been following the news, as I am sure all of you have, and I share the concerns of many, primarily for those whose lives and livelihoods have been adversely affected, often very seriously, but also for all of our communities and congregations who are trying to continue faithful ministry with limited or even reduced resources. In such uncertain times, communities of faith are particularly called to be places of hope, and I pray that each of the congregations in our diocese can be just such places, and that in the darkness of economic distress, the light of Christ will continue to shine brightly through them.

I am grateful to all of you who try to do as much as possible with the resources available entrusted to you. Not in recent memory have we been so challenged to think of the importance of Christian stewardship. Such times call us ever more deeply to instruments of Christ's compassion, and agents of God's compassion.

Deeply aware of the economic strains on all, the diocesan staff has been going over the operating budget of the diocese searching for places to make any cost savings possible. While there is no "fat" our budget, we are looking for ways to save on everything from office supplies to our participation in regional and national meetings. As a staff we are aware of the challenges faced by each of our congregations in meeting their many financial obligations, and we are trying our best to be good stewards of the resources entrusted to us.

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## INTRA-DIOCESAN COMMUNICATIONS

One major cost-saving measure I want to announce is the decision to cease publication of the Covenant magazine. The cost of publishing such a document, even on a quarterly basis, and with very modest press runs, is simply more than we can afford at this time. I know that this will be a loss to some, but I also believe it is an area in which we can seek to excel in new and different ways and continue to support the mission of the diocese.

As a 'Lenten discipline' the diocesan staff is working on the development of two new forms of electronic communication to enable this. The first is a regular, weekly 'news e-bulletin board' which will be sent to all parishes, clergy, and any parishioners who wish to subscribe—at no cost. We will use an emailing service to support this, which will allow each recipient to be responsible for keeping his or her email address up-to-date. The first such e-news will go out before the end of March, and will then be updated and distributed on the same day each week. Barb Klauber will be principally responsible for keeping this communication vehicle up-to-date.

The second initiative has to do with the creation of an entirely new website for the diocese. Unlike previous attempts which have been updated versions of older websites, this site is being built from scratch using a free platform from Google. It will allow us to have a clean, user-friendly site, easily updateable by those with responsibility for particular ministry areas. It will also include a significant and easily accessible section for diocesan news stories, which will be posted on a regular basis, and archived when out of date. It is envisioned that these stories will be items of depth, and not merely announcements of goings-on. The first of these will be available on the current website later this week. Recognizing that not all have computer access, it is my hope that in each parish, there will be a process for printing material of interest and sharing it with those who do not have such access.

While our 2009 budget provided for the consolidation of several pieces of contract work into one full-time Communications Coordinator at the diocesan level, we have held off filling that position, to allow us to monitor the impact of the economic downturn on our available funding. However, in this vein we are working with an intern from the Journalism School at the UW-Madison. Chelsey Lewis, a senior journalism major, is honing her skills in the communications area, and has already begun researching and writing in-depth stories about facets of our diocesan life which will form part of the news section available on our website. Chelsey is also planning to offer a Saturday workshop later this spring for parishes interested in having their communications vehicles looked at by a trained and objective eye.

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### ST. EDMUND'S, ELM GROVE

Finally, I want simply to let you know that the Diocese filed a law suit in Waukesha County Court on February 16, seeking the return of the assets and property of St. Edmund's Episcopal Church from a group who claim to be affiliating with another branch of the Anglican Communion. To date, we have had no response to the suit, although the requirements of civil law state that the defendants named in such a suit must respond to the court within twenty days of receiving notice of the suit. As more information becomes available, we will do our best to keep the wider diocesan family abreast of whatever can be appropriately shared.

While I continue to grieve the necessity of this course of action, I am completely committed to protecting the interests of the Diocese of Milwaukee, which is a sacred obligation I willingly undertook when I

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## ST. EDMUND'S, ELM GROVE, CONTINUED

*(Continued from page 3)*

became your bishop. I look forward to the day when the members of St. Edmund's Episcopal Church can worship once again in the home that they have known through the decades.

In the meantime, a group of parishioners from St. Edmund's Episcopal Church are meeting at 4:00 p.m. every Saturday afternoon at Trinity Church in Wauwatosa, to celebrate the Eucharist together, and to continue to support one another in Christian community. These services are open to all, and I invite you to attend one as show of solidarity with those who find themselves in a difficult and painful situation. I am very grateful to Fr. Tom Winslow, who has graciously made himself available to be the celebrant at the lion's share of these services.

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### PRAYERS FOR OUR MISSION AND COMMON LIFE TOGETHER

Almighty God, you alone can bring into order the unruly wills and affections of sinners: Grant your people grace to love what you command and desire what you promise; that, among the swift and varied changes of the world, our hearts may surely there be fixed where true joys are to be found; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

Almighty and everlasting God, by whose Spirit the whole body of your faithful people is governed and sanctified: Receive our supplications and prayers which we offer before you for all members of your holy Church, that in their vocation and ministry they may truly and devoutly serve you; through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

Almighty and eternal God, so draw our hearts to you, so guide our minds, so fill our imaginations, so control our wills, that we may be wholly yours, utterly dedicated to; and then use us, we pray, as you will, and always to your glory and the welfare of your people; through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. *Amen.*