

## Shared Ministry comes to two more parishes

*'... planning, praying and meetings ...'*

♦ **By the Ministry Development Team of St. Alban, Hixson and Janet Hale**

In 2007, St. Alban, Hixson, commissioned its newly formed Ministry Development Team. The formation of this Team involved a lot of work over a two year period with the help of diocesan consultant Rick Govan. The vestry became convinced that the parish needed to grow by stressing the work of shared ministry, that is, taking full responsibility for the ministries and programs of our parish.

As St. Alban looks back on all the planning, praying, and meetings involved in making this dream come true, it is excited about the success that has been achieved. St. Alban has explored, through a Gifts and Talents Workshop, the variety of gifts available in laity. It has been such a blessing to identify people's gifts and then affirm and engage them in the support of the many ministries and opportunities that they may become a part of. They are given the opportunity to really belong to the church in very meaningful ways.

The team meets twice a month to work on their spiritual growth and to discuss the current and future ministries of the church. Because of this team, rector and vestry are allowed to do the work they are supposed to do, without becoming overloaded with all the duties of the parish.

The team also strives to find new leadership and increase participation in ministries, by discovering individual and unique gifts and talents of all of laity. It has been a true blessing to explore, discover, and reach out to new and willing people to serve in roles of the parish. Many people were excited to be asked for the opportunity to serve and be supported in their gifts as stewards.

As the Ministry Development Team continues its work, it will be searching for new avenues for spiritual gifts deployment and affirmation. Positive feedback has been received from the congregation, especially the fact that parishioners have learned to lean on each other to accomplish ministries. If you are thinking of becoming involved in shared ministries, please talk to Rick Govan and learn how it can be possible in your congregation. It takes a lot of work, but the benefits are beyond words. St. Alban is in the process of a search for a new rector, but knows that the work of the church will be able to go on because the laity enable each other to be stewards of God. ■

## Smaller churches gather in Seymour

♦ **By David Thomas**

Let's Talk was the theme of a gathering of smaller churches from across the diocese on Sept. 27 at St. Paul, Seymour. Members of St. Matthew, Dayton, and St. Paul, Seymour co-hosted the event in conjunction with Rick Govan, Diocesan Ministry Development Facilitator.

Over 35 people from 10 congregations as far south as St. John the Baptist, Battle Creek to St. Bartholomew, Mountain City to the north were in attendance.

After a brief welcome from the Rev. A. Henry Swann, Supply Priest at St. Paul, Seymour and Treva Brodersen and Danny Attle, Senior Wardens at St. Paul, Seymour and St. Matthew, Dayton, there was a service of Holy Eucharist, celebrated by Father Swann with a Homily by Ellie Pickett, a licensed lay preacher who is a communicant of St. Matthews. Pete Walburg then gave a presentation about the important ministry to which smaller Churches are called, and the unique advantages that small membership churches have that enable them to fulfill valuable and important needs in the communities they serve.

Representatives from the churches in attendance shared information about their particular congregations, including their average Sunday attendance, outreach and pastoral care of the congregation, Christian Education and Formulation programs, and worship opportunities.

Overall, conference attendees

Participants enjoy some fresh air at lunch during the Smaller Church Gathering on Sept. 27 at St. Paul, Seymour. Front to back Left: Peter Keese, Christ Church, Rugby; John Hicks, Christ Church, Rugby (partially obscured); H.E. (Pete) Walburg, St. Paul, Seymour; Right: Kay Reynolds, St. Thomas, Knoxville; Bishop vonRosenberg, Diocese of East Tennessee.



Photo by David Thomas

praised the opportunity to discuss activities with and discover ideas from other similarly sized churches – many were amazed at the amount of ministry that goes on in even the smallest congregations in the diocese. For instance, Marilyn Bacon from St. Matthias, Rogersville, shared details of their food distribution for the needy and how they allow community service groups to utilize their building for a meeting place. Father Harold Bahlow was asked several questions about a ministry at one of his congregations, St. Thomas, Elizabethton, which serves over 300 hot meals weekly through their ecumenical "Food For The Multitude" program. The group from St. Matthew, Dayton, shared information on their very successful "Art Camp" program for children and volleyball program for youth.

Sharing information and ideas was the stimulus for holding the

conference, giving smaller membership churches an opportunity to gather to talk about their unique situations and what works and what does not.

Rick Govan spoke about shared ministry and program availability from the diocese concerning licensed lay ministry, a very important part of the equation in smaller churches without a full-time rector.

After Bishop vonRosenberg gave the blessing, everyone was treated to a delicious luncheon prepared by Kitty Fitzgerald and served by the ladies group of St. Paul, Seymour, with desserts by St. Matthew, Dayton.

It is hoped this conference will be a building block on which to plan future meetings among the smaller congregations of the diocese.

More information: Rick Govan at 423-698-1222 or [rgovan@etdiocese.net](mailto:rgovan@etdiocese.net).

## St. Luke, Knoxville commissions 8 for shared ministry support team

By the Rev. Gayle Browne

Celebrating approximately seven years of growth in clergy/laity shared responsibility and continuing several decades of commitment to shared ministry, St. Luke, Knoxville commissioned eight parishioners as members of the congregation's Shared Ministry Support Team on Sunday, Sept. 14, 2008.

This team of lay ministers will take leadership in working with St. Luke's clergy, vestry, and congregation to implement and coordinate the various ministries of the church, as well as to develop continuing lay leadership and participation.

Members of this Shared Ministry Support Team include: John Mayo (Parish Administrator and Treasurer), Jim DuBose (Minister for Church Growth and Fellowship); Karen Purvis (Minister for Liturgical Ministries and Licensure), Embry DuBose (Minister of Music), Walter Williams, Jr. (Preacher and

Minister for Engagement with Colleges and Universities), Nancy Mott (Preacher and Minister for Christian Formation), John Mott (Preacher and Minister for Pastoral Care), and Rick Roach (Minister for Community Justice and Outreach).

In a sermon preached in preparation for the commissioning, several weeks before, the Rev. Gayle Hansen Browne (then rector of St. Luke) described St. Luke's shared ministry/shared responsibility approach as a way of "being Church." She said, "One tempting understanding of being church is to see the church as a congregation of individual members grouped around an ordained minister. By this way of understanding what it means to be church, many people select a church and either stay in or leave a congregation based on who the ordained minister is. ...

"This is not an uncommon situation when being Church together is seen as being a member of a congregation centered around an ordained minister. ... But scripturally, when we look at the New Testament, which represents the experience of the

earliest Christian Churches, we see a very different picture of what being Church means. ..."

Mother Gayle continued by describing how the Apostle Paul often compared the Church community to a human body – a human body with many members, each of which bring many different gifts. She stressed that for Paul, being Church was not about the leadership of any one person, but about the ministry of all the faithful within the congregation.

She pointed out that although the Church, as a whole, has been stressing the development of lay ministry for decades, more and more congregations (of all denominations) are seeing the need to provide structures, such as the Shared Ministry Support Team, to provide an element of shared responsibility between clergy and lay leaders for the shared ministry that already exists.

St. Luke, Knoxville now joins this growing movement of shared ministry/shared responsibility, which is invigorating churches of all denominations throughout the nation. ■