



Vergers' Guild of the Episcopal Church E-Newsletter



Service through Worship, Worship through Service

Jan 2007
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2006 National Verger Conference at Sea

**Reflections on the 18th Annual Conference
The Verger's Guild of the Episcopal Church
Boca Raton FL, Miami, FL and Nassau, The Bahamas
November 9-13, 2006**

Martha Martz
Trinity – The Woodlands

I always look forward to attending the National Verger's Conference that is traditionally held in September/October each year. This was my third conference! Certainly, I'm not setting any records, but I'm getting to know and easily recognize vergers from TN, Washington, New York, New Mexico etc. This year there were 22 states and Canada represented. For some it was their first conference, for others it was their 18th!



Holding a conference on a cruise ship was certainly a unique venue. It took giant coordination to pull it all together. We began our five days together in Boca Raton, FL at Evensong at St. Gregory's and a dinner provided by their youth group that rivaled any upscale restaurant. An early morning departure took us to the Duncan Center, Delray Beach, FL for Morning Prayer, St. Bernard de Clairvaux Church and Trinity Episcopal Cathedral, Miami. Each was wonderfully historical providing us with the spirituality and historical significance of our liturgy.

By the time we had boarded the cruise ship late Friday afternoon, vergers had already networked with each other, sharing church history, verger minutia, acolyte customaries, and family fun stories. What we all commonly share is our commitment and love of our ministry.

The remainder of the cruise was filled with a workshop every evening which left us time during the day to enjoy what the cruise had to offer. The workshops were outstanding; three days, three workshops: Fr. Andrew Sherman, Rector St. Gregory's Church presented "Images of Vergers in Scripture", Mr. Brian W. Davey, Organist and Choir Master, St. Gregory's Church and Ms. Jean Maceachron, Soloist presented "Today's Many Liturgical Musical Styles", and our keynote speaker was Bishop Leo Frade, Bishop of Southeast Florida. He spoke on "The Cultural Differences in the Liturgy". In addition to Fr. Sherman and Bishop Frade, Fr. Stuart Hoke, Chaplain of the VGEC joined us on the cruise, gave a wonderful homily at Morning Prayer and assisted at our beach Eucharist.

It was noted by our ship's captain that the weather on our cruise was the best weather they had had in two weeks. We all thought that 72 vergers, 2 priests, a deacon, and a bishop might have helped. Two final highlights were held on the islands of Coco Cay and Nassau. Bishop Frade was the celebrant of Eucharist on the beach at Coco Cay. Holy vessels were hand-carried from the mainland, a table was set with a white cloth, and a lawn chair served well for the credence table. Even a small member of the island livestock shared the occasion. As we sat on the sandy beach, a chicken made his way through the legs, arms and beach chairs.

The second most memorable day was Sunday's attendance and Eucharist at St. Agnes Parish, Nassau. Founded in 1845, St. Agnes is a landmark and beacon of higher praise in New Providence. A steadfast institution of faith, St. Agnes and its parishioners are on a mission to create tighter bonds between the church and its surrounding Grant's Town Community.

Our final evening together was a celebration of our ministry, our fellowship and to honor vergers who have completed the extensive VGEC Training Course. As we left the ship the following morning, we pledged to stay in touch, renew our strong commitment to our ministry and look forward with great anticipation to the 2007 conference in Albuquerque, NM.

Another Reflection on the 18th Annual Conference November 9-13, 2006

Eileen Brightwell Hicks
gte-hicks@worldnet.att.net

Incense. That may be my enduring memory of my very first National Verger Conference. Our first meeting was Evensong at the sponsoring church St. Gregory's in Boca Raton. It started with a verger procession and incense. In Baytown, where I have worshipped for the past 14 years the only incense we have is from the Exxon Refinery.

Another afternoon we had Communion on the beach of Coco Cay. No incense there but lovely palm trees, clear water, sugar sand beach, and definitely the presence of the Holy Spirit. The final service was a 2+ hour marathon in Nassau on Remembrance Day. The altar was incensed twice, the first time complete with side boys.

We traveled with the Bishop of Southeastern Florida, two priests, and a deacon. With all the male voices the singing was glorious throughout the trip. Dinner every night was an adventure since there was open seating among the verger group. We did have several meetings but the diverse worship services and incense were the highlights for this first timer. This year Anna Goza and husband Mark, Eileen Brightwell Hicks, and my husband, Larry also attended the conference/cruise. Next year New Mexico.

Verger Installation

Emmanuel Episcopal – Houston, Texas – Sunday, February 4th 2007
Tim Wade will be installed at the 11:15 a.m. service. All vergers are invited to attend
Please send RSVPs to Tim Wade at woolfwade@earthlink.net
For directions please go to <http://www.emmanuel-houston.org>
Emmanuel Episcopal Church
15015 Memorial Drive
Houston, Texas 77079
(281) 493-3161

Quartely Meeting

The next quarterly meeting of the Mace Chapter of the Vergers' Guild will be held on Saturday, January 27, 2007, from noon to 3:00 pm. Bid Drake has kindly offered her great home as meeting place, and directions to her home are included at the end of this note. A \$5 donation is suggested to cover the cost of lunch, which will be ordered once people arrive at Bid's Place. The meeting will concentrate on Mace Chapter business, including a sharing session on visioning for the chapter and planning a tenth anniversary celebration for our chapter. Taft Metcalf has kindly offered to provide music for a sing-along and a short commentary on music in a small church setting. Although walkins are welcome, RSVPs to Peggy (mlfm1943@yahoo.com) or Bid (bdrake2939@consolidated.net) would be welcome. THIS IS A CRITICAL MEETING, as this may be your only opportunity to have voice on some issues of great import to the chapter in the next year.

Bid Drake lives on the east side of Conroe in Cut & Shoot, about one hour from downtown Houston. From Highway 105 and Loop 336 east (exit 84 from I-45), go east on 105 through the next light at SR 1485, get into the turning lane, and bear left on Douget Road behind the Diamond Shamrock station. Turn left at the first corner onto Jeffcote Road. Bear right at the next corner to stay on Jeffcote, and follow it to the very end. Continue straight off the end of the road, between the white posts; it is the last house on the left, just before you disappear into the woods. #2939 Jeffcote Road, telephone 936-756-3566.

HELPPPP!!!

The Mace Chapter VGEC is considering having booths at various events over the next six months. These include the Diocesan Council in Austin, February 2006. If you can help the chapter, and our ministry, please contact Peggy Metcalf at mlfm1943@yahoo.com. We have the materials, we just need the spokespeople.

Proposed Bylaw Changes, December 2006

These bylaw changes will be discussed and voted on at the January 2007 Quarterly Meeting. Please come prepared to discuss these changes.

ARTICLE IV: OFFICERS

Current Wording

- Section 1** The officers shall be the President, Vice President, Secretary/Treasurer, Training Officer, and Communications Officer
- Section 2** In the spring of each even-numbered year, the above officers shall be elected by mail-in ballots.
- Section 2A** Nominations shall be solicited in written form (including electronic mail and/or the newsletter) at least two months prior to the election, and shall include descriptions of the offices to be filled.
- Section 2B** Written nominations, each accompanied by the signed acceptance of the candidate, must be received by the Vice President at least one month prior to the election, and shall include descriptions of the offices to be filled.
- Section 2C** Ballots listing the candidates will be sent to all voting members of the Chapter, and must be returned to the Vice President prior to the official election date.
- Section 2D** For each office the candidate securing the largest number of votes shall be elected. If no one secures more than half the votes, a second election will be held to fill that office.
- Section 3** The Board shall be elected by ballot to serve for a two year term or until their successors are elected. The election shall be by 50% plus one of the Guild members voting. Their terms of office shall begin at the close of the meeting.
- Section 4** The President and Vice President may be re-elected to serve in the same office for no more than two successive terms. The President and Vice President shall not be eligible for re-election to the office of President or Vice President until after a duration of two years beyond their last term.

Proposed Wording

- Section 1** The officers shall be the President, Vice President, Secretary/Treasurer, Training Officer/Churches, Training Officer/Seminars, and Communications Officer.

- Section 2** In the spring of each year, commencing in 2008, half of the above officers shall be elected.
- Section 2A** Nominations shall be solicited in written form (including electronic mail and/or the newsletter) by the Nominating Committee at least two months prior to the election, and shall include descriptions of the offices to be filled.
- Section 2B** *delete*
- Section 2C** Ballots listing the candidates will be handed or mailed to all voting members of the Chapter, and must be returned to the Nominating Committee chair prior to the official election date or at the election meeting.
- Section 2D, Section 3, and Section 4** *No changes from the above are proposed*
- Section 5** Commencing in 2008, Vice-President, Secretary/Treasurer, and Training Officer/Seminars will stand for election; in 2009 the President, Training Officer/Churches and Communications Officer will stand for election.

ARTICLE VI: EXECUTIVE BOARD

Current Wording

- Section 1** The officers of the Chapter shall constitute the Executive Board.
- Section 2** The Executive Board shall have general supervision of the affairs of the Chapter between its business meetings, fix the hour and place of meetings, make recommendations, and shall perform such other duties as are specified in these bylaws. The Board shall be subject to the orders of the Guild, and none of its acts shall conflict with action taken by the Guild.
- Section 3** Special meetings of the Executive Board can be called by the President, and shall be called upon the written request of two members of the Board.

Proposed Wording

- Section 1** The officers of the Chapter shall constitute the Executive Board, and may appoint up to four Full members (past officers, members with corporate memory, or members with special skills, etc.) to join the Executive Board in an advisory capacity.
- Section 2 and Section 3** *No changes from the above are proposed*
- Section 4** In the event of the dissolution of the Chapter, the Executive Board shall disperse the funds remaining in the treasury, to an Episcopal charity or institution.

ARTICLE VII DUTIES

Current Wording

- Section 1** The President shall preside at all general meetings and meetings of the Executive Board. The President shall represent the Chapter at official functions, shall serve as Bishop's Verger if requested, and shall otherwise promote the office of Verger throughout the Diocese.
- Section 1A** In the absence of a representative of the Guild, the President shall attend and conduct the installations of vergers of the Diocese. The President may delegate this duty to another officer of the Chapter.
- Section 1B** The President shall appoint committees as needed.
- Section 1C** The Executive Board shall appoint, or renew the appointment, of the Chaplain within one month after each general election. The length of time a Chaplain may serve is to be determined by the wisdom of the Board.
- Section 2** The Vice President will preside in the absence of the President. In the case of a vacancy in the office of President, the Vice President shall serve until the next election of officers and shall be eligible for the office of President.
- Section 3** The Chaplain shall serve as spiritual director, advisor, and liturgical consultant for the Chapter.
- Section 4** The Training Officer shall plan programs for the regular meetings and coordinate other training events with the President.

- Section 4A** An Assistant Training Officer may be appointed by the Training Officer with confirmation by the Executive Board.
- Section 5** The Communications Officer will assist the Vice President in communications to the membership and the church at large.
- Section 6** The Secretary/Treasurer will record the minutes of meetings, handle Chapter correspondence and serve as financial officer of the Chapter.
- Section 7** Vacancies in office other than the President will be filled by the Executive Board.

Proposed Wording

Section 1, Section 1A, Section 5 and Section 6 *No changes from the above are proposed*

Section 1B The Executive Board may appoint duties to non-elected positions, such as Regional Training Officers, Nominating Committee, Publicity, Public Relations, Parliamentarian, etc., as deemed necessary.

Section 1C The Executive Board shall appoint, or renew the appointments of Chaplains as soon as is practicable after each general election. The length of time each Chaplain may serve is to be determined by the wisdom of the Board.

Section 2 The Vice President will preside in the absence of the President. In the case of a vacancy in the office of President, the Vice President shall serve until the next election of officers and shall be eligible for the office of President.

Section 3 The Chaplains shall serve as spiritual directors, advisors and liturgical consultants for the Chapter.

Section 4 The Training Office /Seminars shall plan programs for the regular meetings and coordinate other training events with the Executive Board, particularly the Training Seminar.

Section 4A The Training Officer/Churches shall nominate and train Regional Training Officers and others to be trainers, and work with clergy to recruit and train new vergers.

Section 7 Vacancies in office other than the President shall be filled by appointment of the Executive Board.

Section 8 The Chaplains shall be responsible for prayers at all meetings, write columns for each issue of the newsletter, and serve as mediators in difficult situations.

ARTICLE IX
AMENDMENT OF BYLAWS

Current Wording

These bylaws can be amended at any regular meeting of the Chapter by a two-thirds vote, provided that the amendment has been submitted in writing at the previous regular meeting.

Proposed Wording

These bylaws can be amended at any regular meeting of the Chapter by a two-thirds vote, provided that the Executive Board recommends the change or the amendment has been submitted in writing to the attendees at the previous regular meeting.

The National Course

Have you ever thought about taking the National Course for vergers training? Have you wondered if it was worth the cost and time to complete the coursework? The Diocese of Texas has two vergers, Peggy Metcalf of St. Marks Houston and Bob Bliss of Grace Church Georgetown, who have completed the requirements and are Fellows of the VGEC. The coursework is much like graduate level work requiring a lot of reading, practical work and writing. Upon completion of the course you will have a well rounded perspective of the knowledge required of a verger.

The reading list is comprehensive and very worthwhile. A Priests Handbook, The Book of Occasional Services, and The Book of Lesser Feasts and Fasts are a must in a vergers library. They, in conjunction with the Book of Common Prayer, are the backbone of the way services are conducted. In addition you will be required to read books on church history, the altar guild, church music, crafting liturgy, and history of the American Prayer Book. There is also a very good book by Ormande Plater, *The Deacon in the Liturgy*, which outlines the role of the Deacon during our Liturgy.

It is recommended to complete an entire church year cycle and capture the specifics of each type service in writing. From these notes and checklists the most important aspect of the coursework is produced, your own customary tailored to your congregation and the vision of the rector. The customary will contain everything needed to perform both regular services and services on special occasions. It is an essential document both for the vergers and other lay ministries. It is also a large portion of the document that is submitted for review by a board of assessors.

The course is comprehensive and requires dedication on the part of the student to complete but is very worthwhile. No one is going to watch over your shoulder and give you deadlines. It is all self paced and can get as detailed as you want. It really is up to you. You'll get out of it what you put into it but if you spend the time you will be rewarded with a greater understanding of what a verger needs to be capable of doing. The last thing that is required is to plan and write a Special Service that differs from your usual Sunday Morning worship. Some also plan an installation service for the Installation of a Verger.

Please consider taking this course! If you have any questions regarding the course please contact either Peggy Metcalf at mlfm1943@yahoo.com or Bob Bliss at vergers@graceepis.org . Either Bob or Peggy will be glad to answer questions that you may have.

Please Note Our Quarterly Meeting Information

January 27, 2007

Quarterly Meeting/Mace Chapter

A room has been reserved for "the Vergers" in "Peggy Metcalf's" name.

Time: noon to 2:30 pm.

Silver Palace Chinese Buffet

4005-H Bellair Blvd.

Houston 77025

713-661-1963

Upcoming Meetings

"In the works" for meetings for the coming year are a celebration of the tenth anniversary of the Mace Chapter of the Vergers' Guild of the Episcopal Church, a meeting with a Rabbi at a local Houston synagogue to discuss their liturgy and prayer books, and the possibility of having a meeting at Palmer Memorial Episcopal Church, with the Rev. Mark Crawford and/or the Rev. Henry Stobel as speakers. Fr. Crawford is the chaplain to Rice University, with St. Bede's Chapel at Palmer, and Fr. Stobel, who is a professor at the University of Texas Medical Center, is chair of the diocesan Bioethics Commission. We are also planning a meeting with folk from the Iona Institute, the diocesan organization headed by Mary MacGregor, which concentrates on education opportunities for lay and clergy and providing consultation to organizations within the diocese. And don't forget to sign up for the March 10 seminar. The brochure is on the website, www.texasvergers.org.

Calendar Events of Interest to Vergers

January 27, 2007

Quarterly Meeting/Mace Chapter

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Silver Palace Chinese Buffet

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Houston 77025

713-661-1963

February 9-10, 2007

Diocesan Council, Austin, Texas Host church is St. David's, Austin

March 4-7, 2007

Diocesan Altar Guild Retreat, Camp Allen

March 9 - 10, 2007

5th Annual Mace Chapter Seminar, Grace Episcopal Church, Georgetown

February 2008 Diocesan Council, Galveston, Texas

New Brochure

You can download the new official Walter Mace Chapter Verger brochure from our texasvergers.org web site. Just go to the Resources page and you will find it in a .pdf format.

The E-Newsletter

You have now seen the E-Newsletter. What can you expect from the newsletter? What you can expect are articles on what we do as vergers, what we do as Lay Ministers and perhaps what we should be training to do. You will also find stories of interest submitted by our chapter members and from other Chapters of the Vergers' Guild of the Episcopal Church. What you will not find are discussions on either church politics or politics as a whole. If you have materials that you would like to submit please send them to Bob Bliss at: vergers@graceepis.org.

Officers

President

Margaret Metcalf - St. Mark's – Houston — mlfm1943@yahoo.com

Vice-President

Gary Burnhauser - Good Shepherd - Tomball — maesgrampy@sbcglobal.net

Secretary/Treasurer

Patricia Shepherd - St. Mark's – Houston — patannds@hotmail.com

Training Officer

Ron Robertson – Emmanuel – Houston — v224296@aol.com

Joe Sturdevant Interim Training Officer — sturdev@swbell.net

Communications

Bob Bliss - Grace - Georgetown — vergers@graceepis.org

Helpful Links

Vergers' Guild of the Episcopal Church: www.vergers.org

Church of England Guild of Vergers: CEGV

The Hunger Site: www.thehungersite.com

Episcopal Church USA: www.episcopalchurch.org

Episcopal News Service (ENS): www.episcopalchurch.org/ENS/

Episcopal Relief and Development (ERD): www.er-d.org

Episcopal Diocese of Texas: www.epicenter.org

Forward Movement Reading of the Day: <http://www.forwardmovement.org/todaysreading.cfm>

Finally...

"Invite a Friend to Church"--Share the good news of Jesus Christ with others and invite them to "come and see."

Contact Information

Please address all communication to the following address:

Bob Bliss, Verger
Grace Episcopal Church
1314 E. University Ave.
Georgetown, TX. 78626
or by email to: vergers@graceepis.org