

# What we have heard from the Diocese

A compilation of  
congregational conversations on episcopal ministry

As members of the Episcopal Ministry Discernment Team (EMDT), we have spent time at our first four meetings seeking to consider carefully the results of the congregational conversations that took place throughout the diocese in January and February. We deeply value the work of each congregational gathering at which a variety of voices were



heard, and not all voices were in agreement. The following summary, finalized at our meeting on May 17, 2008, distills the essence of what we learned about *who we are* and *what we value* as a diocese, our diocesan *vision of episcopal ministry*, and what we need to do as a diocese *to make this vision a reality*.

## Who we are

We live in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, an area of beauty and challenge

- Geographically large with small communities
- Challenging distances and weather
- Economically and financially limited
- Declining and aging population

We are a small diocese of small congregations

- Champions of Mutual Ministry
- A sense of connection within the diocese and with the wider church

## Time Line for Discernment

- I October 2007  
Convention Table Discussions
- II January—February 2008  
Congregational Conversations
- III October 2007—February 2008  
Gathering of information
- IV February 2008  
Formation of EMDT
- V **May 2008**  
**Report results of diocesan-wide  
Conversations**
- VI March 2008—January 2009  
EMDT meets and works
- VII Presentation of results to the diocese
- VIII January 10, 2009  
Affirmation of Discernment Results at  
a Special Diocesan Convention

- A history of relaxed relationships with our bishops
- Limited resources: members and finances
- High level of involvement
- We have a pioneering, creative, persevering, can-do spirit
- Independent, interdependent
- We are grieving economic, historic and personal losses

## What we value

- A sense of family on the congregational, regional and diocesan level
- Ministry founded on the Baptismal Covenant
- Outreach
- Inclusiveness
- Relationships
- Shared leadership
- Education and formation
- Youth participation
- Open communion table
- We respect the gifts and talents of all

## Our vision of episcopal ministry

We have a vision of a shared episcopate modeled upon Mutual Ministry in which the Bishop's primary focus is pastoral, relational and canonical in full partnership with an Episcopal Ministry Support Team.

## To make our vision happen

- We will continue to build on the organizational structures that are in place to support the life and ministry of the diocese.
- We will identify an Episcopal Ministry Support Team that includes the Bishop.
- We will make greater use of technology to facilitate communication.
- We will strive to increase an understanding of Mutual Ministry throughout the diocese.
- We will be realistic and responsible about our finances.
- We will determine what an Episcopal Ministry Support Team may do.