

**Document 19**  
**Report to the 223<sup>rd</sup> Annual Diocesan Convention**

**Trinity Cathedral - An Overview of 2006**

At the Major Chapter meeting where Bishop Councill nominated René John to be our next Dean, he paid a tremendous compliment to all of us in Trinity Cathedral parish. He said that he found it remarkable how smoothly the search process had worked; how respectful everyone had been of it; how there had been a complete lack of political maneuvering and no attempt to interfere with the process or with the confidentiality of the search committee's work. He had never seen a search process work better.

Of course much of that is to the great credit of Phil Lewis's leadership of the search and profile committees and the dedicated work of everyone who worked with him. The search committee has found us a wonderful leader, and before that committee began its work, the profile committee set strong foundation for the search. The representatives from other parishes who worked so hard and so well with the members of our parish deserve our profound gratitude.

We said goodbye to Diane in June with both sadness and joy because she had become our dear friend as well as our Dean and will always have a special place in our hearts. But thanks to the love of God and the wisdom of Bishop Councill, we were blessed to be joined in ministry by Bert Draesel. We could not have had a more conscientious leader. He was with us through our interim period, and was generous with his time and his affection for us and our parish.

During our time of transition, life at Trinity Cathedral continued in many of the same ways it always has. Members of our Altar Guild kept our sacristies prepared for our regular Sunday services, and provided special accommodations for the dozens of diocesan services we host each year. Our Lay Eucharistic Ministers visited over 1,500 communicants through our ministry to the Mercer County Geriatric Center, as well as our homebound parishioners. Our Food Pantry experienced a record year for our annual Turkey Day giveaway, with 141 turkeys with trimmings distributed - in total, 2,468 adults and children were served in 2006. Our Altar Guild Shop continued to serve the needs of parishioners and visitors alike, offering the best in spiritual gifts, liturgical books, icons and seasonal items. The Shop's net proceeds of over \$9,000 will go a long way toward supporting the Cathedral's liturgical needs.

The children's programs at Trinity have grown exponentially, and we now host multiple Sunday School classes for about 40 children. A summer music and theater program and a regular Tuesday program featuring music and drama rounded out a host of children's activities. Two Interfaith Forums were sponsored with great success by our Adult Education Commission, with speakers including The Rev. C. Elizabeth Geitz, a Rabbi, an Imam, and representative of the Buddhist faith. Our Property and Maintenance Commission focused on the challenges of maintaining such a large complex, including extensive grounds work and renovations to our Memorial Garden (thanks in part to a donation from St. Matthew's, Pennington.)

Financially, we did experience another year of red ink in spite of extraordinary fund raising and rigid cost controls. Unaudited data shows we ran a deficit of nearly \$73,000 in funding our \$714,000 budget, and we expect this to occur again in 2007. We make up the shortfall with further invasions into our unrestricted investments (which are nearly depleted), and the sale of real estate. The end of these fungible resources is clearly within sight. On a positive note, we are pleased to report that the average pledge for 2007 is over \$36 per week!

And now we have met René and his family (please take a look at the accompanying biography.) They have been called to be with us in friendship and ministry. We welcome them with joy into our community. We look forward to this new chapter in our communal life.

We have been blessed this year by the way our year of transition has turned out to be a year of continuing friendship and strength in this faith community. We have seen how we can count on God's

love among us to carry us through what could have been a difficult and wrenching time in safety and confidence. A year that we anticipated with some trepidation has turned out to have been a very good year.

And so we can be sure that as we work together this year, we will continue to be strengthened by those hallmarks of this community that we treasure: acceptance of one another, welcome for the new friends among us, the joy we take in having fun together, our willingness to work hard together, our mutual love for our church and our parish.

**The Very Reverend René Rory John,  
Sixth Dean of Trinity Cathedral**



***Dean John with his family: Wife, Andrea;  
daughters Gabrielle and Gemelle; son Akeem.***

The Very Rev. Fr. René John is the Dean of Trinity Cathedral, Trenton, New Jersey. He has been a priest for twenty two years, and was originally ordained in the Diocese of Trinidad & Tobago.

He ministered in Trinidad & Tobago for six years before migrating to New York in 1989 and New Jersey in 2007. In Trinidad & Tobago and New York, Fr. René has served on various Diocesan Committees – Diocesan Council, Department of Stewardship, Department of Budget, Programs and Services and The Commission on Ministry.

Fr. René is a graduate of Codrington College and the University of the West Indies. He is at present completing a Masters in Sacred Theology at General Theological Seminary. He is an avid traveler and has conducted several pilgrimages with his former congregation in New York to countries such as Israel, Egypt, Greece, Turkey, Ghana, and South Africa.

Prior to coming to the Cathedral he served at St. Thomas' in Brooklyn, a parish with twenty different nations represented among its members: Jamaica, Panama, Haiti, Montserrat, the Dominican Republic, Barbados, Trinidad, and the United States of America, to mention but a few of them.

Fr. René is the proud father of three – thirteen-year-old twin daughters and a nine year old son, and is married to Andrea Sandiford John, formerly of Barbados.

During Fr. John's time, St. Thomas reached out and worked in the community. Some of the many programs include: "Prison Fellowship Ministries", welcoming International Students to the city and exposing them to different cultures, working with "God's Love We Deliver" to take over 30,000 meals to persons afflicted with AIDS, providing space for Job Readiness and Computer Literacy Training, and working with the DA's Office to cut down Student Truancy. Fr. John was President of Duncan Genns Senior Citizen Corporation, and a member of the Board for Family Service Network of New York. He also served on the Wyckoff Hospital Advisory Council.

On October 24<sup>th</sup> 2006, Trinity Cathedral of the Diocese of New Jersey unanimously elected Fr. René John as Dean of the Cathedral. The Diocese of New Jersey is the second oldest Diocese in the Episcopal Church.