

## **Daily posting from the West Tennessee Deputation at General Convention in Columbus, Ohio**

Wednesday, June 14, 2006

By Stephanie Cheney, Director of Diocesan Operations for The Diocese of West Tennessee, who is in Columbus for the General Convention

Yesterday was the first official day of the 75<sup>th</sup> General Convention in that both the House of Bishops and the House of Deputies met in plenary sessions for the first time. It was also the first morning for the daily Holy Eucharist. Presiding Bishop Frank Griswold preached and House of Deputies President George Werner celebrated. These daily opportunities to come together with fellow Anglicans from all across the globe has come to be, for me, one of the real highlights of Convention. It is also a time to listen to the music, to be still and to share conversation with others around the table during the Bible conversation time. During this conversation time, we reflected on what gifts God has given us that strengthen us for service and help us become more effective in our daily ministries.

This was the only quiet time of the day. During the morning legislative session, I sat in on the House of Bishops and listened while they went through the process of organizing themselves for the work ahead. This organizational process included a lengthy roll call of Bishops, the introduction of guests, a message from the House of Deputies regarding its organization and finally several pieces of legislation. I learned quickly that as an observer without a Blue Book to refer to, you're lost on legislation because the resolutions are referred to only by number and not by title or topic.

I attended the afternoon session of the House of Deputies. It was held in a mammoth room filled with approximately 900 deputies from 109 dioceses across the Church plus the press corps, volunteers, visitors and others. Several speakers made presentations, including the presidents of the Episcopal Church Foundation and the Church Pension Fund. Of note was a moving message from the Archbishop of Canterbury delivered by the Most Rev. John Tucker Mugabi Sentamu, Archbishop of York. You can read the full text of his message on Episcopal News Service via the diocesan web site.

Following the close of the afternoon session at 6 p.m., many of the legislative committees had public hearings scheduled for 7 p.m. Given the distance back to the hotel and the fact that most of the West Tennessee deputation was involved in attending hearings, there was no time for us to get together and reflect on the day. It was a very busy day for all of us as we got into the full swing of Convention.