

A Note from Mary Parmer



Reflecting on my time with you all at your convention, I recall an old saying “it just warms the cockles of my heart!” I can’t help but think of this expression every time I reflect on my time with you in Sacramento - from the honor of being invited to keynote Bishop Megan’s first diocesan convention, to folks coming up to me sharing that their vestry is reading and studying the Invite Welcome Connect book, to the woman who said to me with tears in her eyes, “I’ve been to many diocesan conventions and there’s never been one quite like this.”

As I walked around the room during the creative small group time after my short workshop, the joy, energy, and vitality was palpable!

My initial learning from my short time with you is this. As I said in my keynote address, I’ve taken this ministry from coast to coast as well as to Europe and Canada and my hosts often warn me that their context, issues, and obstacles to this ministry are quite different from everyone else’s. Northern California was no exception!

My mission with Invite Welcome Connect is to acknowledge that despite our various locations, contexts, and differences, we humans are the same on the inside: We each have a need to be seen, heard, welcomed, affirmed, and loved. The ministry of Invite Welcome Connect, if implemented prayerfully, intentionally, thoughtfully, and relationally, can meet these deep needs and desires.

My prayer for the Episcopal Diocese of Northern California is that you wholeheartedly take the challenge of creativity seriously, becoming inspired risk-takers for the sake of the Gospel! May you get out of your comfort zones by inviting someone to church and by learning to articulate your faith story. May you listen long and deeply to the stories of those with whom you worship and those who have darkened the doors of your church for the first time. May you be transformed by embracing this ministry.

Blessings to you,

Mary Foster Parmer



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