

Diocesan Council Meeting Minutes
Thursday, January 13, 2022 4 PM
Via Zoom

Present: Bishop, Margaret Porter, Bengé Ambrogi, Chris Porter, Emily Drake, Joyce Johnson, Elsa Worth, Sue Poulin, Terry Knowles, Gloria Gallant, Teresa Gocha, Alan MacRae, Alanna VanAntwerpen, Tina Pickering, Reed Loy, Zac Harmon, Kelly Sundberg Seaman, Barbara Buckley

The Bishop called the meeting to order at 4.02 p.m. and the opening reflection came from St. Aelred, Abbot of Rievaulx, author of *The Mirror of Charity* (c. 1142) and *On Spiritual Friendship* (1164-1167), and who regarded friendship as a field into which we can grow to experience the love of Christ.

Bishop's Time

Covid. Diocesan clergy who are fully vaccinated and boosted have tested positive, evidence points to the pandemic nearing a peak. Some churches decided on virtual worship through January. Guided autonomy continues to be the policy, and there is a heightened sense of concern and more rigor in observing masking and distancing.

Multi-diocese collaboration (NH, VT, ME). After a January 26 conversation among bishops, the discussion will move to Standing Committees, with a get-to-know-you meeting for team-building and a sharing of hope, perspectives on identity and charism and character of each diocese. Interest in the number of congregations, number of clergy, and diocesan budgets. Eventually Council may have a role.

Resolution #1, Missional Communities. Constitution & Canons is meeting this month with current missionaries to explore communities' potential relationship to convention, fair share, governance, etc. Exploring missional communities, convention, fair share, governance, etc.

Clergy Compensation Analysis Bengé Ambrogi

This analysis was spurred by Church Pension Group's published report of compensation data (October 2021), and questions that arose over the past year and more over our compensation and its gender parity, prompting a Human Resources Committee review. It was based on 2020 numbers, the most recent CPG dataset—new data will come from March parochial report. CPG doesn't take into account extra-parochial clergy, fulltime v. part-time, non-cash benefits, only 30% of church-provided housing, but do include clergy staff and bishops. (Congregations are urged to provide meaningful and accurate in their parochial reports.) NH analysis includes market value of house, full-time and part-time. The information will be shared with clergy and wardens

Based on median compensation, disparity between genders is low, which is good. On average, male clergy serve larger congregations than female. Females earn slightly more in the smaller congregations, there are more of them in those churches.

Comments. Sue: More receptivity in NH to women, even in large churches, than CPG shows. Women more willing to take on parttime smaller parishes. Bengé: will share with Wardens and Treasurers, and with clergy. Alanna: If shared publicly, this is helpful data for people looking at NH, shows a culture cultivated over time, that our leadership can be proud of. Zac: Through spouse has seen the challenge in terms of male leadership raised up as the norm—our saints, our prayer book are male-centric (teenaged confirmands notice this). Excellent to have this data, encourages thinking statistically and strategically about this. Sue: Involvement in *May She Flourish* is a women in leadership program, including all size parishes and women bishops, has shown our experience here as clergy of any size, shape, and variety is so different to other areas. This environment is not the norm.

Transitions Tina Pickering

There is discussion of the possibilities of how we talking about who we are. Katie Clark (communications officer NH & ME) is helpful with the transitions area of website, we can now really think about what stories we're telling about who we are, and use website to interact with the wider church. We can explain our actual transition process. Covid, generational and demographic shifts, pandemic resignations, have accelerated congregations seeking leadership and available clergy. We are in a clergy shortage, other parts of the country saw it before us. Some churches hover between

affording full- and part-time. They are figuring out ASA, what they can afford. That's our transition environment. Currently there are six open and active searches. Four will be appointed priests-in-charge, for a variety of reasons, rather than the Vestry or Bishop's Committee calling a rector or vicar in consultation with the Bishop. The congregation and p-i-c work together to evaluate whether they have a good fit for a longer term ministry partnership. This is more common in part-time rather than fulltime churches.

In Nashua, Kathy Boss is appointed as fulltime priest, to stabilize ministry sooner than later. Seacoast Shared Ministry (close to make a call), two congregations, two sets of buildings, two bishop's committees. In North Conway, Dan Weir is priest associate, they are discerning what could work for them part time. Richard Belshaw ended his ministry there, is a Seacoast supply priest. Pray for the transition at Church of Our Saviour, Milford, Hank retires on January 23. Kelly is leading the supply team, which includes Ed Frost and Michael Reinke. All Saints, Peterborough, and Trinity, Meredith are in robust search mode for new rectors, have completed OTM profiles. Jason is the p-i-c at St. Matt's in Goffstown. Katie Clark is working with congregations in search on their websites.

Comments. Bishop referred to past ways of doing transition: commissioning search committee, lengthy process, costly in money and human resources, glossy profiles. Covid accelerated changes. The staff is thinkin how to inform churches about what to expect, to provide guidance and clarity about where we are. Margaret: Is there a coming wave of retirements, are we preparing for that? Bishop: Aging clergy, constant uncertain of whether church is open or closed, pushback in places (a minority) against going remote—all takes a toll on the clergy. People are being clear, giving an indication of intentions. Pray for us in that work.

Mission Resources: 2022 Fair Share Adjustment process & dates *Benge Ambrogi*

Wayne Trombly is filling in while committee chair Bill Petersen is on sabbatical. The application for adjustment will be available next week, due February 18. The meeting of requesting churches is March 5, with discernment day the following Tuesday. At the March 10 Council meeting, Wayne will present recommended adjustments. Expecting more churches. Payrooll protection no longer available.

Seacoast Afghani Resettlement *Benge Ambrogi*

The Neighborhood Support Team includes Episcopal churches and other groups, working with Ascentria. NST will sign the lease for the use of Christ Church rectory. The family arrives tomorrow, spends the weekend in a hotel, moves in Monday. Multiple churches and the temple are involved, an interfaith effort. There will be an article in the *Portsmouth Herald*. We need to witness about why we believe this is what Jesus would do.

Capital Campaign *Benge Ambrogi*

Benge reporting on the ramping up of communications. Representatives from most congregations will review the communications plan and will have info to include in their communications. Share feedback with the campaign leadership team members, Benge, or Leslie Pendleton. The video (on the website) is commended to your viewing.

Other Business

Reed moved approval of the December 2021 meeting minutes, Elsa seconded, the motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Margaret Porter, Moderator/Secretary

2022 Meeting Dates: March 10, ~~Apr? Holy Week~~, May 12, June 9, ~~July 14 General Convention~~-TBD, Aug 11?, Sept 8, Oct 13, ~~Nov no meeting after Diocesan Convention~~, Dec 8 (dates might be adjusted if necessary)