

**Diocesan Council Meeting Minutes
Thursday, July 8, 2021 4 PM
Via Zoom**

Present: Bishop Rob, Margaret Porter, Barbara Buckley, Kelly Sundberg-Seaman, Chris Porter, Sue Poulin, Valerie Benoit, Emily Drake, Terry Knowles, Shelli Gay, Gloria Gallant, Reed Loy, Kathy Olson, Tina Pickering, Alan MacRae

Bishop's Time

Congregation updates Grace Church, E. Concord, is doing communion. Hopkinton is hybrid, so people feel included even though in-person worship has resumed, after the Peace they have celebrations. Littleton meets in person, they have summer visitors and are almost back to normal; the offering basket is kept at the back of the church; Curtis is on sabbatical. Emmanuel has also had visitors, although during onlin church they didn't have any outsiders. Sunday is Kelly's last service at Emmanuel, she will continue as Dean of our School for Ministry. Since Pentecost, Dover has offered hybrid worship; the sanctuary space is large; they no longer require advance registration; after the Bishop's letter they had good and hard conversation; they continue masking and social distancing and may make masks optional in future; offering communion in one kind.

Convocations and Co-Convener Proposed Resolutions

All convocations were represented at the co-conveners' meeting called by the Bishop. There is a desire for stronger connections between the Bishop's office, the geographical regions, and exploring how convocations can solidify and strengthen those bonds in their role of church governance. There is a proposed change to the role of co-conveners, making them also the convocation's representatives to the Diocesan Council, to provide a more cohesive and coherent link. This change would have to be done by a convention resolution. It was pointed out that some of the conveners are already Council representatives. There was consensus in the Council that this would be a beneficial and well-timed change, adding weight to the role, consistency, and direction. Council would be listed as a resolution supporter.

The Bishop stated that with added and dual responsibilities in the re-imagined role, in time the terminology might also be changed from Convener to Dean.

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Resolution on Intentional Missional Communities

Our Constitution and Canons lack a designation for a non-parochial worshipping community that isn't a mission church. Yet these forms are happening around the Episcopal Church of New Hampshire, in an improvised way, as gatherings for prayer and worship, under lay or ordained leaders. We therefore need a trellis, or a "tomato cage" with a nimble form of governance and some sort of advisory team that doesn't necessarily follow Episcopal canons and rubrics. In advance of the Council meeting, members received a canon from the Diocese of Connecticut that could be adapted to serve as a model for a convention resolution.

While there was consensus that this was a desirable option, Council members pointed out that guardrails would be necessary in the areas of finance and accounting, transparency, safe church protocols, Episcopal oversight, staff support as needed, and walking the fine line between looking over their shoulder and letting them flourish in their own way,

Jason and the Resolutions Committee will help with the wording on the Co-Conveners/Council Reps resolution and the one for Missional Communities. Diocesan Council would be listed as supporting it. The Bishop added that Connecticut changed their terminology of "intentional episcopal community" to "worshiping episcopal community," because all communities are both intentional and worshipping. This change gives permission to think outside of where we are, and could refresh congregations and make house churches possible. Kelly pointed out that there are already

provisions in our canons to make sure there aren't negative repercussions, preventing a pod of disgruntled members from leaving the mother church.

Transitions

Gail Avery returns from sabbatical on the 19th.

Josh Hill, chaplain at Holderness, accepted a call as new rector of St. Albans in St Elizabeth ME. 2022

Long Term Team,

Kelly explained that members joined various book reading groups of *The Church Cracked Open*, prompting conversations about how we might need to revise, update, and refresh our mission. We asked ourselves to be on the lookout for good things, good news, resurrection of reconciliation. The group is evolving into a team that is still listening to the people of the diocese as gatherers of signs of life, growth, networking, and share. The Bishop added that the vision of co-conveners as Council reps and providing for the missional communities resulted by conversation in the long-term committee, as well as the pandemic. Kelly noted that the patterns and habits include the nurturing of contact and connectedness between clergy, and other things we don't want to lose.

According to the Bishop, in advance of both General Convention and the Lambeth gathering of the bishops of the Anglican Communion, all the things discussed today are conversations and topics being addressed by every diocese throughout the world, demonstrating that the movement is of the Spirit.

Other Business

Chris moved acceptance of the May meeting minutes, Kathy seconded, and the motion passed.

Closing prayers included the Diocese of Haiti and the people of Haiti.

Next meeting date: September 10, 4 pm. Venue TBD, could be in-person at Diocesan House or Grace, E. Concord, or hybrid.

Respectfully submitted,
Margaret Porter, Moderator/Secretary