

**Diocesan Council Meeting**  
**Thursday, March 15, 2018 4-6 PM**  
**Grace Church, East Concord**

Present: Bishop Rob Hirschfeld, Margaret Porter, Benge Ambrogi, Steve Baker, Terry Knowles, Chris Porter, Kevin Nichols, Kelly Sundberg Seaman, Richard Davenport, Gloria Gallant, Emily Drake, Gail Avery, Nancy Hunt, Kate Atkinson.

The Bishop called the meeting to order at 4:05 and opened with Daily Prayer for All Seasons. New Member Emily Drake from Lake Convocation was welcomed, and group introductions were made. The Bishop announced that Carol Twomey regretfully offered her resignation as Council Secretary. A card of appreciation for her and for Barbara Serafini were circulated for signing.

**Action Items/Reports**

*Diocesan Budget, Actual 2017.* Canon for Finance Gloria Gallant shared the unaudited 2017 budget as voted at Diocesan Convention 2016, with a request to show the same care and confidentiality of as we do for congregational and personal finances. The 2019 budget will follow the same format when presented. Canon for Mission Resources/CFO Kevin Nichols noted favorable numbers. Richard Davenport moved acceptance of the report, Terry Knowles seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

*Audit report.* Gloria presented a “Clean Audit.” The report is restricted and not to be shared. There was one auditing adjustment: in previous years CHiPs appeared on the balance sheet due to collections at diocesan convention. Historically there were greater contributions than expenditures, requiring it be recognized as income. Terry pointed out that category terms have changed (unrestricted, temporary restricted, permanently restricted) and now are designated donor restricted and unrestricted. Kevin pointed out the increase in assets—evidence that our numbers are moving in the right directions. Kate Atkinson moved acceptance of the audit report, Gail Avery seconded, and the motion carried.

**2019 Budget process**

Chris Porter, Chair of Finance Committee, reported on the process of developing the next budget. The committee held its first meeting of the cycle with the Bishop, who shared priorities. Subsequent meetings were delayed by bad weather.

**Mission Resources Fair Share Adjustment Recommendations**

Steve Baker, Chair of the Mission Resources Committee, presented the adjustment recommendations from the Mission Resources Committee. Overall fair share compliance has increased. We have budgeted more for adjustments than congregations will be granted, applicants are fewer and requested adjustment amounts are decreasing. The process is an uplifting and fulfilling experience for participants, according to those who attended the Hopkinton gathering. Representatives from congregations share their struggles. The outcome isn't punitive but intended as partnership. Benge Ambrogi felt at this year's meeting participants congregations questioned each other and made comments more than in the past—it wasn't only the MRC committee asking the questions. Kelly Sundberg Seaman affirmed this, from her congregations' perspective (Ashland and Plymouth). A doubter at the meeting became convinced that good work could be done within a large group—conversion happens! Gloria is aware of increased knowledge and awareness and understanding of financials. Kevin commended Steve's leadership.

At their post-presentation meeting, the committee reached consensus on the best way for the diocese to support churches in their struggles. Some decisions are easy and some are difficult. Benge pointed out that applicants are

making more reasonable asks. A Council member asked whether MRC has a time limit for congregations receiving assistance. Steve explained that there is good communication, so recipients know MRC expects year on year reduction. Kevin pointed out that most recipient congregations are in some form of partnership, except one. When asked if there are any punitive measures for failure to pay, Steve replied that it was considered when the process was set up but rejected. The plan was to change the culture, and we see success. Fair share must be fully paid in order to apply for a DAF loan. The finance office tracks payments, and there is a write-off line for nonpayment, and that amount has grown smaller over time. Terry Knowles moved to accept the recommendations, and Kate seconded. There was no further discussion, and the motion carried unanimously.

### **Bishop's Time**

House of Bishops' (HOD) meeting Spring Gathering took place at Camp Allan, Texas, with a theme of Evangelism, sharing the Good News, and the State of the Church. Jay Sidebottom of Renewal Works (Forward Movement) shared research on congregational vitality across all denominations using eight archetypes, from vital, complacent, troubled, etc. to "dead." The Episcopal Church graph on this survey showed us as not active, not thriving, and mostly troubled. But God can trouble the waters, and the Holy Spirit troubles us. *Joining God, Remaking Church, Changing the World* by Alan J. Roxburgh is recommended reading. In discussing evangelism, the Bishops asked, "What is the reform that we're being called to?" One answer lies in the areas of Christian formation, discipleship, and learning how to pray together. Our Presiding Bishop models this. The second is Apostleship, being sent—being a missionary church. (Our diocese sent Tina Pickering, Fred Chisholm, Jay McLeod, and Zac Harmon to the Evangelism Matters conference.) Both the Presiding Bishop and the President of the House of Deputies (PHOD) stressed the necessity of addressing sexual misconduct, harassment, and gender-based violence, resulting in a Mind of the House statement. Safe space at General Convention will be provided for sharing. The Bishops shared among themselves. The Bishop of Southeast Florida read letter from a parent of a Parkland School shooting victim, appealing to the bishops to encourage legislators to show courage around gun reform, expressed as a Mind of the House statement. Bishop Rob composed a lament to be used in churches on the day of the student walk-out. Bishops will go to Washington to join students in the March for Our Lives on Saturday, March 24<sup>th</sup> and attend the Interfaith Vigil at National Cathedral.

### **General Convention 2018**

There was a brief discussion of General Convention resolutions. The ECONH deputation meets soon, hoping for a "Pax on Both their Houses" (HOB and HOD).

### **Other Business, Events, Announcements**

There was positive response to the "Meet Jesus" Lay Quiet Day at St. Andrew's, Hopkinton. Georgia Atkinson is going to General Convention as Province 1 representative to the Episcopal Youth Presence. The Clergy Lenten Quiet Day is Tuesday, March 27, with ELCA Bishop Hazlewood as guest. The Vestry Training and Treasurers' Gathering will be held Saturday, May 5 at Rundlett School in Concord.

After closing prayers, the Bishop adjourned the meeting.

*Respectfully submitted,*

Margaret Porter

**Meeting Dates:** 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter: June 14, 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter: September 13, 4<sup>th</sup> quarter: October 11 and/or December 13 as required