

# **JOURNAL OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE NINETEENTH ANNUAL CONVENTION OF THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF EASTERN MICHIGAN**

**Holiday Inn Gateway Conference Center  
Flint, Michigan**

## **SATURDAY, OCTOBER 19, 2013, 9:00 A.M. FIRST BUSINESS SESSION**

On October 19, 2013, the day and place designated for the meeting of the Annual Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Eastern Michigan, Ms. Lori Peyerck, St. Paul's, Bad Axe, led the opening worship. The Rt. Rev. Todd Ousley called the Convention to order.

Bishop Ousley thanked the newly constituted Diocesan Liturgy Team, under the direction of Rev. Sue Rich, for coordinating convention worship. He expressed his appreciation for those who were able to attend the workshops and banquet yesterday. The bishop stated that the purpose of this annual gathering is to do business, renew relationships, and to discover what is happening around the diocese. Having had a special convention in June to deal with canonical legislation, he noted that there is very little business on the agenda, so the main focus will be to hear reports on various ministries.

### **ELECTION OF SECRETARY**

Bishop Ousley introduced Mrs. Barb Meikle, St. John's, Midland, and asked for a motion from the floor to elect her Secretary of Convention. Motion was moved, seconded, and passed.

### **INTRODUCTIONS**

Bishop Ousley introduced Mr. Edward Henneke, Trinity, Flushing, Chancellor of the Diocese and Rev. Bruce Michaud, Trinity, Alpena, President of the Standing Committee.

### **QUORUM**

It was reported that of forty-seven congregations, forty-six were present with voting delegates. St. Luke's, Rogers City was not in attendance. Of eighty-one clergy eligible to vote, fifty-eight were present. Bishop Ousley declared that a quorum was present.

### **RULES OF CONVENTION**

The Chair noted the Rules of Convention had been included in the Delegate Packet. Bishop Ousley recommended adoption of the Rules and asked for a motion to that effect. Motion was moved, seconded, and passed. The complete list of Rules appears on page one in the Journal.

### **CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE**

Bishop Ousley recognized Barb Meikle, Chair of the Credentials Committee. Ms. Meikle moved that "pursuant to Title 1, Canon 11, Section 3, all forty-seven congregations of the Diocese of Eastern Michigan have filed their parochial reports in a timely fashion and will have voice and vote of their lay delegates and clergy at this convention". Motion was supported and passed.

### **ELECTION OF CHANCELLOR**

The Chair nominated Mr. Edward Henneke, Trinity, Flushing, as Chancellor. Motion was moved, supported, and passed.

## **MINISTRY CHANGES**

Bishop Ousley announced the following ministry changes:

HEATHER BARTA, Priest-in-Charge, Trinity, Flushing  
CHARLES CURTIS, Priest-in-Charge, St. Elizabeth's, Higgins Lake  
MARY FITZGERALD, Priest-in-Charge, Calvary, Hillman  
ANN GRADY, Priest-in-Charge, Trinity, Bay City  
ALICE LEWIS, Long-term supply, Christ, Owosso  
DONNIS REESE, Trans. Deacon-in-Charge, St. Andrew's, Rose City  
LYDIA SPELLER, Priest-in-Charge, Grace, Port Huron  
NANCY STEELE, Lapeer/Dryden/Otter Lake collaborative  
LORI JOHNSON, Trinity, Flushing, to non-parochial

Others not present with us:

DUSTY FECHT, to the Diocese of Milwaukee  
ELSA PRESSENTIN, retired to the Diocese of Western Michigan  
RICK SCHARK, to the Diocese of Western Michigan  
MARY SHORTT, Asst. Priest, St. Elizabeth's Higgins Lake

## **DISCERNMENT COMMITTEE**

Bishop Ousley recognized Mike Spencer, Canon to the Ordinary, Clerk of Nominations, and Chair of the Discernment Committee, to give a report on the Discernment Committee.

Mr. Spencer noted that in June of this year at our Special Convention, the newly adopted diocesan canons introduced the Diocesan Discernment Committee, a committee that is increasingly appearing in dioceses around the Episcopal Church. This committee is charged with discerning nominees for leadership positions elected by the annual diocesan convention. It includes a provision for a Clerk of Nominations appointed by the bishop, and a six person committee, three lay people and three clergy appointed by the Clerk with the consent of the bishop.

Since being appointed Clerk of Nominations, Mr. Spencer has been working with others to discern what the responsibilities of this committee would be. The canons only give a framework; just a few words describe the committee and its responsibilities. Former delegates may recall conventions where there were not enough candidates to fill the vacancies specified by the canons. This is an unsuitable situation, as the bodies that help govern and carry out the work of the diocese need full complements of personnel to be effective and to reflect the diverse viewpoints, gifts, and abilities each body is best served by.

The diocesan Discernment Committee, therefore, is tasked with ensuring candidates who possess the specific gifts and abilities needed by these bodies are nominated for election in sufficient numbers as to support the work of the diocese effectively. It seemed that the discernment committee's responsibilities fall into three core areas.

- 1) The first is development of position descriptions which accurately describe the duties and responsibilities of each position, the time commitment required including not only term of office but the amount of time on a weekly, monthly, and annual basis one should expect to dedicate, and the gifts and abilities an individual should possess in order to be an effective contributor to the work of that body.
- 2) The second core area builds on the work of the first. Once a position description has been developed, recruiting can take place. While a passive approach occasionally results in a few good candidates, actively recruiting for the skills needed is the best practice for successfully filling leadership positions. Self-nominations will continue to be encouraged and gratefully received, however, in the future look for active recruiting activities such as leadership conferences, coordination with clericus groups, regional

gatherings, and personal invitations. Everyone in the diocese has a role in recruiting good candidates for election. As soon as position descriptions are ready and available, everyone will be encouraged to give thought to individuals who possess the identified gifts and abilities and who have the necessary time and interest to offer the position.

- 3) Finally, the third core area is discernment. After candidates are identified, the discernment committee's goal is to recommend candidates who possess the gifts and abilities contained in the position description who have agreed to stand for election and forward them to the convention for consideration. Mr. Spencer stated his concerns to the committee, that there is a potential for this body to be perceived as having a gatekeeping role – as a way of keeping out certain people and only letting in people who we like or who might take the same side as we might on various issues. At this stage it is the committee's position that all candidates for nomination would be forwarded to convention unless there are significant, compelling, and perhaps fiduciary reasons why a particular nominee is not acceptable for a diocesan leadership role. In the future, in rare cases such as those, the committee will ask the individual to withdraw his or her nomination.

Based on that framework, Mr. Spencer nominated a slate of committee members who are thoughtful, engaged in the life of the diocese, leaders in their own right and who would be willing to work with me to start up a new committee and build it from scratch. The following individuals have agreed to serve:

In the lay order

Ms. Jane Hutchins, Trinity, West Branch; Ms. Barb Ilkka, St. John's, Saginaw  
Ms. Beverly Mills, St. Jude's, Fenton

In the clerical order,

The Rev. Josh Hoover, St. Jude's Fenton; The Rev. Linda Crane, Deacon, of Grace, Port Huron  
The Rev. Brian Chace, Trinity, West Branch

In conclusion Mr. Spencer offered an invitation to the people of diocese, for feedback to this committee about its work. There is an expectation that they will work with transparency, honesty, and integrity and that these qualities are critical to earn the trust of the diocese and to ensure that the committee's work is valued and supported.

## **COMMITTEE NOMINEES**

Bishop Ousley directed the convention's attention to the large screen, where pictures of nominees for vacant positions were projected. Bishop Ousley noted over the years there has been a concern related to our election and appointment process. The new discernment committee will address some of these issues, but one structural item that will be in place at next year's convention, is the distribution of ballots after the introduction of nominees during the first business session. In the past, ballots have been distributed prior to, or upon arrival at convention.

## **TREASURER'S REPORT**

Bishop Ousley recognized Mike Turnbull, Diocesan Treasurer, for the financial report. Mr. Turnbull reported that the 2012 assets, which included our investments and cash reserves, totaled 8.1 million dollars. For 2012 the operating fund showed a net surplus of \$109,000, once the restricted fund expenditures and deposits to reserves were deducted. This reflects a higher than expected surplus due to the transfer of funds from the four convocations, for future social service ministry. For 2013, a surplus of \$65,000 in the operational budget is forecast. This is due to earnings transferred from investments being considered income in the budget process. With \$37,500 being put in reserves, there is still a surplus of \$27,500. In 2013, two new staff positions were filled, which has had a significant impact on what the diocesan office can provide

congregations to carry out ministry. New computers and phone system were also installed. The Diocesan Council approved a new "5% Fund", and with added money bequeathed to the Diocese, a new charitable fund has been created for ministry purposes. This new fund is a combination of the CDRF, Building & Grounds, and Loans & Grants funds, being combined together. Looking at the budget for 2014, we projected tithe income from congregations to be 95% of the requested tithe. The new 5% Fund will be available to draw on, and our commitment to national church will remain at 17.5%. For 2014 the Diocese will put \$31,000 into various reserve funds, fund outreach at a level of \$100,000, and Camp Chickagami for \$10,000. Mr. Turnbull encouraged the congregations to access the Loans & Grants Fund, which is funded at \$50,000 per year. Revenue for 2014 of 1.06 million is made up of congregational contributions, Episcopal Endowment funds, and the new 5% Fund. Expenditures of 1.03 million is divided into administration/governance and ministry/mission categories. The Diocese is in a strong financial position going forward thanks in part to the great work of the Trustees in monitoring the investments. This means we can comfortably meet the commitments of the future.

## **BISHOP'S ADDRESS**

Bishop Ousley addressed the convention. The text is included in this journal.

## **READING CAMP REPORT**

Bishop Ousley recognized the Rev. Sharon Voelker, Priest-in-Charge, St. Alban's, Bay City, for a report on Reading Camp. Rev. Voelker explained that Reading Camp began in 2002 as a non-religious, educational ministry of the Episcopal Diocese of Lexington in the eastern part of Kentucky, and continues to operate under the auspices of the Diocese. Reading Camp serves 2nd, 3rd, and 4th grade children who have difficulty with learning to read. The mission is to promote personal and academic growth and success for struggling and at-risk students by providing non-formal educational opportunities during the summer. The program works to empower and encourage at-risk children to be not only strong readers but also engaged students. By combining confidence-building and interdisciplinary activities into the literacy learning process, the needs of the whole child are addressed and steps are taken toward breaking the connection between illiteracy and poverty.

This year at St. Alban's they worked with two local elementary schools and identified ten students whom the teachers felt would receive benefit from attending Reading Camp. The daytime program ran for five days. The formal literacy component of camp took place each morning in the Learning Centers, where, over the week, the children received over fifteen hours of one-on-one or small group instruction in six focus areas. In the afternoons, the children enjoyed traditional camp activities, including field trips, learning martial arts, a visit from the local baseball team's mascot, and worked on craft projects. Breakfast and lunch were served to the children each day as well as snacks in the morning and afternoon.

Reading Camp was staffed entirely by volunteers who were passionate about helping each child gain confidence in their reading skills. The volunteers included certified teachers, assistant teachers, teenage "amigos," support staff members, and field trip chaperones. At the end of Reading Camp, each child was given a backpack loaded with school supplies for the coming year. Each child accepted to Reading Camp receives a full scholarship to attend...yes, Reading Camp is free for campers. Many campers receive free or reduced lunches in their schools and would be unable to attend our program without a scholarship. Conducting a Reading Camp is a marvelous way to reach out into your community and provides a wonderful opportunity to help children with reading problems who may be passed over in the school system.

## **G.R.A.C.E. CENTER REPORT**

Bishop Ousley called on Doug Pryor, Director of the G.R.A.C.E. Center, and member of St. Francis', Grayling, for a report. He shared about the ministry of G.R.A.C.E. Center, including our work with addicts, families, couples, and people with mental health issues. Mr. Pryor talked about the importance of their work within the community, and efforts at educating people about the nature of recovery, addiction & codependency, as well as family dynamics. The G.R.A.C.E. Center has been in existence for the past 25 years and are very grateful for the Diocese's support for our mission.

## **BISHOP'S APPOINTMENTS**

To the Commission on Ministry:

DANIEL CANNON, Clergy, St. John's, Saginaw  
SARAH CARVER, Clergy, Holy Family, Midland  
SUE COLAVINCENZO, Clergy, St. Dunstan's, Davison  
DREW DOWNS, Clergy, St. Paul's, St. Clair  
JON STEELE, Lay, Trinity, Flushing  
DORIS SUTTON, Lay, St. John the Baptist, Otter Lake  
JOYCE THEWALT, Lay, St. Christopher's, Grand Blanc

To Constitution and Canons Committee:

DEAN BEDFORD, Lay, St. Christopher's, Grand Blanc  
LINDA RATHBURN, Lay, St. Christopher's, Grand Blanc  
TOM DOWNS, Clergy, St. Paul's, Gladwin

To the Resolutions Committee:

CHARLES CURTIS, Clergy, St. Elizabeth's, Higgins Lake

The Clerk of Nominations:

MICHAEL SPENCER, Canon to the Ordinary

Episcopal Relief & Development Rep.

HEATHER BARTA, Trinity, Flushing

Domestic & Global Mission Coordinator:

LINDA CRANE, Grace, Port Huron

## **CHRIST ENRICHMENT CENTER REPORT**

Bishop Ousley recognized Danielle Brown, Director of Christ Enrichment Center, for a report. Ms. Brown noted that Christ Enrichment Center is a faith-based non-profit entity, whose mission is to provide and promote educational growth and enrichment opportunities for all ages in the community of Flint. Their programs include youth and adult literacy, enrichment programs (computer lab, drama, dance, drawing, basketball, college-bound), summer day camps, and food & hygiene give-aways. The Center also provides low-cost/no cost space for community events. Ms. Brown is the only full-time staff person, and she is assisted by ten part-time staff, and approximately sixty volunteers (literacy, enrichment, food distribution). New efforts for the future include a volunteer services coordinator who would develop a quality program to recruit and manage volunteers.

## **CAMP CHICKAGAMI REPORT**

Bishop Ousley called upon the Hon. John Cherry to give an update on Camp Chickagami. Mr. Cherry opened his remarks by reminding the assembly that all creation has been put under our care, and we have a responsibility to be good stewards of this planet in all of its diversity,

discovering a right relationship with nature and with our fellow humans. As a diocese we offer young people an opportunity for discovery through Christ-centered camping programs. The decision last year to reorganize the governance of Camp Chickagami is already strengthening this ministry. The new board has established a committee structure and process, and adopted a balanced budget for 2014 that includes capital expenditures to improve and maintain the physical facilities and structures at Camp Chickagami. This year saw an increase in youth camping participants and an annual event has been established to recognize camp alumni and volunteers, who have devoted time and money to keep the camp viable and thriving.

The focus of the Board is shifting from the past to the future by committing to doubling the number of youth camping participants. They have approved a program expansion to offer trip camps and family camps this year. 2014 will be used to establish sound financial management practices and a long-term capital outlay plan will be adopted next year. It is also anticipated that the end of 2014 will see the approval of a vision for Camp Chickagami's future growth. Everyone is invited to take advantage of all that this wonderful camp has to offer.

## **REFERRED GENERAL CONVENTION RESOLUTION**

Bishop Ousley referred the convention to pages 4-6 of the Business Section. The Bishop stated that every three years at General Convention there are actions that are taken that are referred back to dioceses for consideration. When there are resolutions related to the Book of Common Prayer, they are referred back to dioceses for reading, for information purposes only, and then to invite feedback directly to the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music. This resolution was passed at General Convention 2012, in order to alleviate the discrepancy between the Holy Week readings in the Revised Common Lectionary and the Book of Common Prayer, and must be read aloud by the Secretary of Convention.

Bishop Ousley asked for a motion from the floor to accept Resolution A059: Revise BCP for Revised Common Lectionary as presented in written format, rather than reading it aloud. The motion was supported and passed.

## **WRITTEN REPORTS**

Bishop Ousley asked the Convention to receive by title, the reports from the Standing Committee, Resolutions Committee, Trustees, Commission on Ministry, Registrar, and Retired Clergy and Spouses.

A motion was moved, supported and passed. Reports are found in the Journal.

## **ELECTION REPORT**

Bishop Ousley reported that for Diocesan Council, in the lay order, Ellen Redfield, William Thewalt, and Audrey Stephens were elected. For the Standing Committee, in the lay order, Stephanie King, Laura Meyer, and Dean Bedford were elected. For General Convention deputies, in the lay order, Michael Spencer, Lori Peyer, Carol Moggo, and Elizabeth Jordan. He thanked all the nominees who offered their names for office.

Bishop Ousley asked for a motion from the floor to acclaim the following nominees who stood uncontested:

For Diocesan Council, in the clergy order – Jane Diehl, Phil Seitz

For Standing Committee, in the clergy order – Barbara Cavin, Tom Downs, Bruce Michaud

For General Convention deputies, in the clergy order – Barbara Cavin, Drew Downs, Tracie Little, Pamela Lynch

For Trustees – Steven Beckert, Brian Chace, Bruce Cook, Gary Grinn, David Whipple, Pat Wilson

Motion was supported and passed.

## COURTESY RESOLUTIONS

Bishop Ousley called upon Charles Parker, Chair of the Resolutions Committee, to offer the following:

1. WHEREAS, neither this gathering, nor our special Convention this past summer, can take place without considerable preparation, for which we depend upon a small number of staff and many dedicated individuals who volunteer their time,

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED, that this 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention of the Diocese of Eastern Michigan does extend its grateful appreciation and thanks to our **Diocesan Staff and Volunteers** who have made these meetings possible.

2. WHEREAS, the congregations of **Grace, Lapeer, St. Mark's, Atlanta, and St. Alban's, Bay City**, have opened their doors to host gatherings for discussion of the canonical revisions that were considered at our special Convention this summer,

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED, that this 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention of the Diocese of Eastern Michigan does offer its gratitude to these congregations for their hospitality and for the support they have given to the preparations for that special meeting.

3. WHEREAS, being challenged at this gathering to find our voice in the public square, we are grateful to those who have joined us to share their expertise to help us discern how to find that voice and to make it heard in ways that are effective and that truly express who we are as The Episcopal Church in Eastern Michigan,

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED, that this 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention of the Diocese of Eastern Michigan does express its thanks to our presenters, **Mr. Alexander Baumgarten**, Director of Government Relations for The Episcopal Church, **Ms. Mary Getz**, Grassroots and Online Communications Officer for the Episcopal Church's Office of Government Relations, **Ms. Katie Forsyth**, Director of Communications and Public Engagement for the Diocese of Eastern Michigan, **Mr. Michael Spencer**, Canon to the Ordinary of the Diocese of Eastern Michigan, and **Ms. Julie Powers**, Executive Director of Mid-Michigan Environmental Action, for their willingness to share that we might learn from them and in doing so, discern a bit more clearly not only our own gifts and callings, but how those relate to the place where we serve.

4. WHEREAS, the **Episcopal Diocese of Quincy**, which has been seriously impacted by mass defections, and whose continuing members have remained exemplary in their devotion to maintaining the mission and ministry of The Episcopal Church in their place, has recently rejoined with the **Episcopal Diocese of Chicago**, out of which it had been formed in 1877, and

WHEREAS, this decision to reunify has been strongly embraced by both Quincy and Chicago to form an enlarged Diocese of Chicago not merely as a measure of necessity, but to better serve the mission of the Church in both regions,

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED, that this 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention of the Diocese of Eastern Michigan does extend greetings and best wishes to our sisters and brothers of the reunified Diocese of Chicago, praising them for their example of adapting their ministries to make the best possible use of their many gifts and blessings, and thus serving as an inspiration to us all.

5. WHEREAS, our dear friend and brother, **the Rt. Rev. Edwin M. Leidel, Jr.**, has recently been blessed to celebrate what he calls the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his 50<sup>th</sup> birthday, and

WHEREAS, he continues to be an active teacher and leader in the Church, demonstrating that bishops never truly or fully retire,

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED, that this 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention of the Diocese of Eastern Michigan does extend its love, prayers, and best wishes to our first bishop on this occasion, and wishing him many happy returns yet to come, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we extend our prayers and best wishes to Bishop Leidel's family, and most particularly to his partner in life and mission, his wife, Ira, that their partnership may continue for many years to come.

**6.** WHEREAS, this year marks the 95<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of our spiritual pioneer, **the Rt. Rev. William J. Gordon**, and the 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his consecration to the episcopate, and

WHEREAS, Bishop Gordon, during his time as an assistant bishop of the Diocese of Michigan, championed the cause of creating what would become the Diocese of Eastern Michigan, and

WHEREAS, we memorialize Bishop Gordon in our diocese's highest award for service and in the name of the Coppage-Gordon School,

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED, that this 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention of the Diocese of Eastern Michigan does offer its prayers for Bishop Gordon and his memory, and does further pray that we may continue to honor him and his role in our founding.

**7.** WHEREAS, our sisters and brothers of the **Diocese of Western Michigan** have recently welcomed their new bishop, **the Rt. Rev. Wayne Hougland**, as their apostle and chief pastor,

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED, that this 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention of the Diocese of Eastern Michigan does extend its prayers and best wishes to Bishop Hougland and the members of the Diocese of Western Michigan, that together they may continue to grow and thrive in the Lord's service.

**8.** WHEREAS, our partners in common mission of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's **Synod of North/West Lower Michigan**, have welcomed **the Rev. Craig Satterlee** as their new bishop,

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED, that this 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention of the Diocese of Eastern Michigan does offer prayerful best wishes to Bishop Satterlee on his new ministry with the Synod of North/West Lower Michigan, and to the members of that synod with whom this Diocese has enjoyed our partnership to share the gifts and talents bestowed by the Lord.

**9.** WHEREAS, the **Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**, our partners in common mission, have elected and installed **the Rev. Elizabeth Eaton** as their new Presiding Bishop,

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED, that this 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention of the Diocese of Eastern Michigan does extend greetings and congratulations to Bishop Eaton as she begins her new ministry, and to our sisters and brothers of the ELCA, that they may continue to prosper in the Lord's service.

Motions were supported and passed.



## RESOLUTION OF SPECIAL COURTESY

WHEREAS, since our 18<sup>th</sup> gathering, this Diocese has suffered the loss of one truly blessed with the gift of teaching, and of helping us all to understand that the Biblical assurance we are all created in the image of God goes far deeper than outward superficialities in our on-going struggle to overcome the sin of racism and its continuing impact on all of us,

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED, that this 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention of the Diocese of Eastern Michigan does offer continued prayers for the repose of the soul of **the Rev. Deacon Claudia Hollinger**, praying that her example and teaching may continue to grow in each of us, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, as her life in this world ended in suffering and illness, we express our joy for our sister in Christ that she is received into the loving embrace where there is no pain or suffering, and where all are perceived solely in the light of the divine grace.

Motion was supported and passed.

## RESOLUTION OF SPECIAL COURTESY

WHEREAS, it has long been said that our Lord Jesus came to comfort the afflicted and to afflict the comfortable, as in His teachings our Lord focused much attention on the plight of the poor, the sick, the oppressed, and those to whom society turned a blind or uncaring eye, while also challenging those possessing wealth and power for their role in allowing such conditions to exist, and

WHEREAS, by our Baptismal Covenant we have all pledged, whether at Baptism, Confirmation, Reception, or simply the regular reaffirmation at Easter and other occasions, to seek and serve Christ in all persons and to promote the dignity of every human being, and to some are given the particular gift and inspiration to repeatedly draw our attention back to those uncomfortable facts the majority of us would prefer to pretend we did not notice, and

WHEREAS, this year we bid farewell to an apostle of the Lord's Church who repeatedly called for social and economic justice and for peace among the nations of the world in a time when the winds of public sentiment were growing cold to the marginalized and the exploited, and to the view that weapons alone do not provide peace,

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED, that this 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention of the Diocese of Eastern Michigan does offered continued prayers for **the Rt. Rev. H. Coleman McGehee**, 8<sup>th</sup> Bishop of the Diocese of Michigan, in the joyful knowledge that he has received the loving welcome of the faithful servant who has so long carried out the work of the Lord, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we join with all others who honor Bishop McGehee's dedicated service and his teaching in upholding his memory and the legacies left behind him that the teaching will survive long after the teacher's passing into that larger life where the peace and justice he called for are the reality, not a still unrealized dream.

Motion was supported and passed.

## **RESOLUTION OF SPECIAL COURTESY**

WHEREAS, periods of rest and renewal are necessary for everyone, as is time for continuing to learn and to open ourselves in quietness to the guidance and blessing of the Holy Spirit, and

WHEREAS, our Bishop, **the Rt. Rev. Todd Ousley**, will soon be starting a well-deserved sabbatical, one which he has already delayed on account of the discernment process that led to the adoption of our new diocesan canons,

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED, that this 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention of the Diocese of Eastern Michigan does offer its most affectionate best wishes to our bishop for his dedicated service, and prayers for his period of sabbatical, that he may refresh himself physically and spiritually, that with the blessing of the Spirit he may continue to learn and grow in devotion to our Lord and His Church, and that all of this may lead to the continued increase and development of his already considerable gifts of ministry.

Motion was supported and passed.

## **EXCELLENCE IN MINISTRY AWARD**

Bishop Ousley presented Charles Parker with the Bishop William Gordon award for his dedicated service as Chair of the Resolutions Committee for the past fourteen years. This will be Mr. Parker's last year as chair, since he is moving to another city in Michigan.

## **CLOSE OF BUSINESS**

Bishop Ousley declared the convention business concluded and announced that next year's convention will be held October 17-18, 2014, at a location to be announced. The convention will be considered adjourned following the dismissal at the Closing Eucharist, taking place immediately after lunch.

## **Bishop's Address** **19<sup>th</sup> Convention of the Diocese of Eastern Michigan**

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The Holiday Inn Gateway + Flint, Michigan + Saturday, October 19, 2013

**Convention Theme: *The Common Good --- Finding Your Voice of Faith in the Public Square***

### **New Canons & Structure**

It has not been all that long since we've seen one another as a Convention of this diocese ---- just four months and 11 days ago we gathered at First Presbyterian Church in Saginaw for a one-day Special Convention for the purpose of discussing, debating, amending, and passing a complete overhaul of our diocesan canons. After brief opening prayers, and parliamentary organization, we moved to the business at hand --- consideration of completely new canons for this diocese. A few short minutes later [without discussion, debate or amendment] the proposed canons were passed with no change!

I was pleased but a bit surprised by this turn of events. Was everyone really that supportive of the changes? Were you resigned to changes but not entirely onboard? Had I overlooked someone moving to a microphone? What were we to do for the next hour as we awaited the arrival of lunch?

Our June Special Convention was the culmination of almost 5 years of slow, patient work of engaging people throughout the Diocese in conversations and decision-making regarding our hopes and dreams; our attitudes about structure, organization, hierarchy, and bureaucracy; our vision of the future of this nineteen year-old experiment known as the Diocese of Eastern Michigan. Restricted, both positively and negatively, by canonical structures that bore marks of both brilliant insight and immature reactivity coupled with naïve expectation, we had finally reached a turning point in our life together --- would we re-capture a sense of creativity and risk or would we continue to be hamstrung by ideas, canons, and structures which limited our capacity to, in the words of the prophet Isaiah, "do a new thing." (Isaiah 43:19)?

### **Tent Revival & Diocesan Ministry Focus Areas**

I continue to give thanks for your patience --- sometimes thin, I must admit --- in slowly and methodically moving toward a diocesan-wide commitment to continue along a path of creativity and risk. Having left the restrictive confines of safety and secured that commitment to move forward, we gathered six weeks ago for a diocese-wide *Tent Revival: A Revival of the Spirit and Imagination*. Building upon work with the Episcopal Church Foundation in March of this year with a broad cross-section of leadership around the diocese, we were able to take the next steps toward actualizing our named identity as "People of Hope in a Culture of Fear."

From that gathering of voices from across this diocese, you affirmed existing focus areas of diocesan ministry and pinpointed new areas for exploration.

- **SOCIAL SERVICE MINISTRIES**, which include:
  - Poverty
  - Anti-racism
  - Food Justice
  - Literacy
  - Violence
  - Healthcare and Recovery Ministries

- **CONGREGATIONAL SUPPORT**, in the areas of:
  - Multicultural Ministries & LGBT Affirmation
  - Cross-church Cooperation
  - Mentoring
  - Gifts Discernment
  - Evangelism
- **DOMINICAN REPUBLIC PARTNERSHIP**

### **Social Service Ministries**

Previous diocesan feedback sessions have enabled the Social Service Council --- lay and clergy representatives appointed by the Diocesan Council --- to focus social service grants on collaborations of congregations and agencies that work in the areas of economic empowerment, feeding programs, literacy, anti-violence and chemical dependency recovery. Not only have you reaffirmed these focal areas but further emphasis has been given since the Tent Revival with an additional \$30,000 grant for literacy programs through Christ Enrichment Center of Flint and coordination of our participation in a November 15<sup>th</sup> national webcast of the anti-racism forum, "Fifty Years Later: The State of Racism in America," along with a commitment to refocus our anti-racism efforts through updated training opportunities shared with the Dioceses of Michigan and Western Michigan. Furthermore, a soon-to-be-named person will serve as Diocesan Recovery Ministry Officer, connecting us to a national network of recovery ministries for enhancement of existing programs and creation of new ministries.

### **Congregational Support**

Congregational support has been enhanced by the addition of two new staff members, Mike Spencer as Canon to the Ordinary and Katie Forsyth as Director of Communications and Public Engagement. Both continue to make themselves available to support you and your congregation not only through their work at the Diocesan Center but also through weekly Wednesday office hours at regional offices made available through the generosity of All Saints' Marysville and St. Francis' Grayling. Beginning in March 2014, I will join the rotation of staffing the regional offices. Assistance to clergy, vestries, and treasurers has also been enhanced through a re-imagined Treasurer's Workshop that uses current technology and a partnership with the Church Pension Group to make available experts in various areas of financial management at limited cost. Additional support is also available through site-visits to congregations by Katharine Rose, Financial Manager. She is eager to work with clergy, treasurers, vestries, secretaries and bookkeepers to assist you in identifying and implementing best practices of church financial management.

### **Mission Partnerships**

Our partnership with the Diocese of the Dominican Republic continues to grow through a tri-diocesan project in Puerta Plata to build a church. With fellow missionaries from the Dioceses of Michigan and Western Michigan, along with our Dominican partners, we currently have three sets of dates for work in 2014 with other dates available as time, money, and work allow. Bishop Holguin is challenging our three dioceses to complete construction by summer 2014 with a grand dedication and blessing service to be held during his annual visitation. Our fair share of the remaining construction costs is \$33,000. Currently meeting in multiple homes for worship and formation, completion of the church building is essential to sustaining the vibrant growth of this community of faith. Following participation by me and 7 other members of this diocese in *Encuentro en Mision* or *Encounter in Mission*, in the Dominican Republic, a new mission partnership has been jointly undertaken by St. John's Midland and Transfiguration Indian River, to build a much-needed church in San Isidro. Tom Manney of Grace Port Huron serves as

Eastern Michigan coordinator for our tri-diocesan partnership with the DR and I'm pleased to announce that Deacon Linda Crane, as Domestic and Global Missions Coordinator, will be working with Tom and other mission partnership teams to facilitate publicity, fundraising, missionary recruitment, and diocesan support for ALL mission projects in the U.S. and abroad.

Speaking of domestic mission --- the Cheyenne River Episcopal Mission partnership with the Diocese of South Dakota and the people of Eagle Butte continues to make meaningful impact on quality of life and ministry development. Under the dedicated and able leadership of Phil Seitz, teams have partnered in ministry there for the past 8 years, undertaking significant building projects and a Vacation Bible School experiencing explosive growth. Please don't forget to take a look at the beautiful Cheyenne-River-made quilt on display at their booth and make a donation --- a drawing will be held for it before lunch --- you could be the lucky winner!

### **Next Steps**

Clearly, we've all been busy over the last few years; some of that busyness has been tangibly forward-moving and focused on mission and ministry, such as the creation of the Coppage-Gordon School for Ministry, the Cheyenne River Mission Partnership, the Dominican Republic Partnership, the creation of an office for Communication and Public Engagement, and more. Other busyness has been less visible and more preparatory in nature, such as our extensive Diocesan Review and slow process of canonical revision. We are now entering a season when it would be easy to charge forward with enthusiasm and energy, but without thoughtful reflection. We must continue our forward momentum while simultaneously taking time to discern more clearly what God is calling us to do.

To that end, a year ago I began preparing our deacon community for significant shifts in the way they exercise ministry. Deacons are called by the Church to ministries of mercy and justice exercised in the space between the church and the world. Directly under their bishop, they are to scan the landscape, scout out opportunities, bring to the church reports of injustice and unmerciful behavior. They are in many ways to act as our conscience and pester us into action. Our Presiding Bishop has referred to them as "a pebble in our shoes." I have recently challenged our deacons to be more discerning in identifying their diocesan ministries of mercy and justice, to move beyond the narrow confines of liturgical functioning in their home churches and out into the world. Already effective for some and by June 1, 2014 for the rest, all deacons will be engaged in championing specific ministries of mercy and justice and their primary assignment will be outside a congregation. Furthermore, all deacons, after consultation, will be subject to reassignment to congregations who are receptive to a new way of engaging diaconal ministry. Archdeacon Anna Leigh Kubbe will be coordinating this move and is a resource for you to consult as you consider your own or your congregation's call to diaconal ministries of mercy and justice.

Having entered the beginning of my eighth year of service among you as bishop I, too, must be about the business of discernment. Having delayed a sabbatical scheduled near the time of my election and further delayed a sabbatical at the end of my sixth year as bishop, I will be leaving shortly for a time of rest, renewal and reflection during the months of November, December and January, followed by a time of extensive travel and meetings on behalf of the Diocese during the month of February 2014. I will be travelling, spending time with my family, including watching for the first time my oldest son wrestle for the University of Nebraska Cornhuskers --- Go Big Red! --- and reading and writing on a subject of immense interest to me --- the role of "place" in one's vocational discernment. My twelve years among you as missionary and bishop have reinforced a strong conviction that individuals and the Church all-too-often overlooks the critical importance of call not just to an order or an office but to a particular place. My observation is that we ignore this important dimension of vocation at our peril. I look forward to sharing with

you the fruits of my reflection and thank you, the Standing Committee, the Diocesan Council and the Diocesan Staff for your support in making this sabbatical possible.

As my sabbatical begins, I challenge you to join me in a time of fasting --- a long-practiced spiritual discipline that prepares one for a time of reflection and openness to God's grace. My invitation is not to a typical fast of complete food denial but rather an intentional fast from our excesses in the midst of great poverty and hunger. The average SNAP or Food Stamp benefit to an individual in 2012 was \$4.45 a day or \$31.15 per week. Beginning on November 1<sup>st</sup> or as soon thereafter as you find practical, I invite you to join me for one week in an experience of solidarity with our sisters and brothers who must rely upon government assistance for their nutritional needs, by fasting from your own excess and limiting your personal food consumption to \$31.15 for one week. My first sabbatical report to you will be a reflection on this experience of solidarity with those who are less fortunate than we are, but no less blessed by God. If circumstances prevent you from joining in this experience, then I ask your prayers.

While I am away and continuing upon my return, I pray that you will also be about the business of discerning your call in your particular place --- both individually and congregationally. Our work together these past years has prepared us for this time and place and for the challenge of more deeply engaging God's particular call to us as individuals and congregations. I anticipate lively discussions and creative responses as I resume my congregation visitations next spring.

Finally, please know that I have been richly blessed to minister among you these past twelve years, seven as bishop, and I look forward with great joy to what God has in store for us in the years to come. One thing is clear: God is calling us beyond ourselves and into deeper and more significant public witness through scripturally-informed public advocacy. We've made a beginning with the calling of Katie Forsyth as Director of Communication and Public Engagement. The next bold steps are ours. We must heed the words of Gay Jennings, President of the House of Deputies, who said to the Episcopal Church Executive Council this week:

"It is precisely because we are a post-establishment church that we must speak and advocate for the values of the kingdom of God—here at Executive Council, at General Convention, in Washington DC and everywhere else that the lives of the people of God hang in the balance."

May God bless us and keep us on our way.

**Sermon at the Closing Eucharist – October 19, 2013**  
**Ms. Danielle Brown, Director, Christ Enrichment Center, Flint**

*“Whoever serves me must follow me, and where I am, there will my servant be also. Whoever serves me, the Father will honor”.* John 12:26

In this chapter, Jesus is preparing for his death. He is preparing his people. It is challenging because a lot of people don't get what he is doing. Examples: Mary saved perfume oils and Judas questioned her not selling it to serve the poor. Jesus responded that this is a special time. Everyone, including the poor would remain, but He would soon be gone. He shared fulfillment of prophesy....again, teaching. We then see in the Gospel further explanation that his time has come and providing an analogy for the people to provide significance of this death. His suffering was for the making of our life. This chapter, while it requires us to accept Christ's departure, provides a phenomenal example of how we as Christians should strive to live. Oscar Romero embraced the “living to live again” philosophy wholeheartedly. As an Archbishop in El Salvador, he chose to live close to the people he was called to serve. He encountered injustice and spoke loudly on behalf of unrighteousness. His book, *“The Violence of Love”*, calls for Christians to move to justice and peace. This requires a personal lifestyle that allows the written word of God to be alive. It is active and integrated into the fibers of our existence.

The word of God is alive! It is more powerful than any two edged sword. It cuts and discerns truth. We live in a time where people are terrified of each other and the entire world. We, at times, see the living word of God perverted by fear. Yet we know that fear is not of God. We serve a true and living God, whose word is alive. We see these examples at Christ Enrichment Center. We have accepted a mighty challenge with this ministry. The Center provides programming for adult learners who, many times, have no hope. The only hope some see is in the face, words and actions of their instructors. These instructors believe in them and know that anything is possible. They embrace their work as a challenge that can be overcome. While we see many adult learners who need to know that they can be successful, we also have accepted that we are located in a community where danger is around every corner. At times we have heard gun shots, I have broken up fights in the parking lot, and tried to escort people with a mind for trouble out of the Center. At the same time, we have children in the neighboring park, playing outdoors in the summer with no trouble at all. Volunteers from the university and colleges enter our doors daily and we are blessed by acts of love so often and in so many unbelievable ways, that we know that is truly God!

If is God who allows the good and bad. Therefore, we have to maintain the heart of our martyred brother Oscar Romero. Speak and address injustice and relish the success. In John 12, Jesus knew he needed to encourage his people. All of us would not as readily move in faith like Bishop Romero. Some of us, at times succumb to fear, so He has left us with a comforter, the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is for direction, bringing peace and comfort to the weary soldiers of the faith. We have enormous work to do. There is a movie that came out in 2010 titled “Waiting for Superman”. It is about how schools of America are failing many children. The moral of the story is that there is no superman coming. We must be the super heroes that save the day. The food, education, housing, substance abuse, mental health, child care, domestic violence, and other ministry programs have been birthed into the saints of God. It is with the devotion of Christ, direction and comfort of the Holy Spirit, wisdom of the old and strength of the youth, that our individual communities will be changed and blessed.

As I close I want to sing my testimony song for you...Where he leads me I will follow. In the work I do, I have learned that if I don't keep my testimony close, that I will be lost in confusion. I ask that you pray for me and I will continue to pray for you.

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE SPECIAL CONVENTION  
EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF EASTERN MICHIGAN  
JUNE 8, 2013 – FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, SAGINAW, MI**

**AGENDA - Special Convention**

8:30 - 10:00 am	Registration
10:00 am	Worship and Welcome
10:30 am	First Business Session
	Convention Business - Rules, Credentials
10:35 am	Communications & Public Engagement Report
10:40 am	Constitution and Canons Report
12:00 pm	Lunch
1:00 pm	Business Session Continued
2:30 pm	Close of Business

**GENERAL RULES**

**Diocesan Special Convention - June 8, 2013**

1. Each business meeting of the Convention will open with a prayer.
2. All amendments, after being proposed and seconded, must be submitted in writing to the Secretary of Convention, prior to discussion and voting.
3. On the request of any ten members of the Convention, a roll call vote shall be taken and entered in the minutes.
4. No member of Convention shall speak twice on the same subject until all others desiring to speak shall have had the opportunity to speak one time. Each speaker shall be allowed up to three (3) minutes per speech.
5. The Rules contained in "Robert's Rules of Order - Revised" shall govern the Convention in all cases to which they are applicable, and in which they are not inconsistent with the Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church and this Diocese or the special rules of order of this Convention.
6. The Rules shall not be suspended or amended except by a vote of two-thirds of the members voting, a quorum being present.
7. Alternate Delegates may replace only Registered Delegates.



## **SATURDAY, JUNE 8, 2013, 10:00 AM FIRST BUSINESS SESSION – SPECIAL CONVENTION**

On June 8, 2013, the day and place designated for the meeting of this Special Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Eastern Michigan, Ms. Sue Wander, St. Andrew's-by-the-Lake, Harrisville, led the opening worship. The Rt. Rev. Todd Ousley called the Convention to order. Bishop Ousley noted that the purpose of this special convention is to consider one major order of business, a resolution from the Constitution and Canons Committee, for a complete replacement of our existing Diocesan Canons.

### **INTRODUCTIONS**

Bishop Ousley introduced Mr. Edward Henneke, Trinity, Flushing, Chancellor of the Diocese, Rev. Bruce Michaud, Trinity, Alpena, President of the Standing Committee, and Barb Meikle, St. John's, Midland, Secretary to Convention.

### **QUORUM**

It was reported that of forty-seven congregations, forty-five were present with voting delegates. Bishop Ousley declared that a quorum was present.

### **RULES OF CONVENTION**

The Chair noted the Rules of Convention had been included in the Delegate Packet. Bishop Ousley recommended adoption of the Rules and asked for a motion to that effect. Motion was moved, seconded, and passed. The complete list of Rules appears on the previous page. Bishop Ousley reminded delegates that an amendment to a motion on the floor, that is a substantive change in language, should be submitted to the Secretary of Convention in writing.

### **CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE**

Bishop Ousley recognized Barb Meikle, Chair of the Credentials Committee. Ms. Meikle moved that "pursuant to Title 1, Canon 11, Section 3, all forty-seven congregations of the Diocese of Eastern Michigan have filed their parochial reports in a timely fashion and will have voice and vote of their lay delegates and clergy at this convention". Motion was supported and passed.

### **COMMUNICATIONS REPORT**

Bishop Ousley introduced Katie Forsyth, newly appointed Director of Communications and Public Engagement. Ms. Forsyth is a recent graduate of Grand Valley State University, with a degree in Political Science and Non-profit administration. She has recently revamped the diocesan electronic newsletter, which goes out every two weeks, and will be working with leadership to determine a communications strategy and message for the diocese. This will include overseeing the plan once it is determined. Part of her job is to be a resource to congregations, and she is willing to answer questions about websites, social media, and print communications.

The second part of Ms. Forsyth's job is public engagement. With her background in political science, it is anticipated that the diocese will try to be more involved in the public arena. She will be working externally to influence power structures, focusing on those that affect us as individuals and congregations in our communities, and working internally to interpret policy and other major decisions for the members of our diocese in the context of being Episcopalian in Eastern Michigan. The goal is to link us to one another, across our congregations, to pray, learn, serve and grow.

### **BISHOP'S ADDRESS**

Bishop Ousley's address to the Special Convention follows these minutes.

## **CONSTITUTION AND CANONS REPORT**

Bishop Ousley recognized Dean Bedford, St. Christopher's, Grand Blanc, Chair of the Constitutions and Canons Committee for his report. Mr. Bedford noted that one resolution was forwarded to the Committee for consideration and has been deemed canonically appropriate. The Committee moved the adoption of the entire resolution "Proposed Canons of the Diocese of Eastern Michigan". The Committee recommended foregoing the reading of the entire resolution. There being no objections, Mr. Bedford concluded his report.

Bishop Ousley recognized Rev. Rob Skirving, St. John's, Midland. Rev. Skirving moved that the Resolution be considered by individual Title. Bishop Ousley clarified that the intent was to separate the current Resolution into five separate parts, based on the individual Titles I – V contained in the current Resolution. Rev. Skirving concurred, and the motion was supported. Rev. Skirving indicated that by separating the original Resolution, consideration of the individual merits of each canonical Title can be more clearly and efficiently considered.

There being no further discussion, motion passed.

Bishop Ousley proposed that for discussion purposes, the convention consider Canon 1-6, of Title I. There being no discussion, the convention was asked to consider Canon 7-13, Title 1. There being no discussion, the convention was asked to consider Canon 14-20, Title I. There being no discussion, the convention was asked to consider Canon 21-28, Title I.

Rev. Josh Hoover, St. Jude's, Fenton, proposed an amendment to Title I, Canon 28, Sec. 2.  
**Of the Camp Chickagami Board**

*Add – Diocesan Council minutes will reflect all names proposed or considered for membership on the board.*

The motion was seconded. Rev. Hoover spoke about his concern that having the Diocesan Council appoint all members of the Camp Chickagami Board, may result in a lack of transparency and accountability.

There being no further discussion, the amendment passed. Bishop Ousley called for a vote (moved?) to accept Title I, as amended. The motion was supported and passed.

Bishop Ousley asked the convention to consider Title II. There was no discussion and the motion to accept Title II passed. Bishop Ousley asked the convention to consider Title III. There was no discussion and the motion to accept Title III passed. Bishop Ousley asked the convention to consider Title IV. There was no discussion and the motion to accept Title IV passed. Bishop Ousley asked the convention to consider Title V. There was no discussion and the motion to accept Title V passed.

The business being concluded, the following delegates rose to speak:

Rev. Shirley Seely thanked those who worked on these new canons.

Rev. Heather Barta encouraged people to take the Preaching Practicum to become a Licensed Preacher.

The Rev. Rob Skirving, St. John's, Midland, moved adjournment. Bishop Ousley requested that the motion to adjourn be suspended temporarily so that those delegates waiting to speak would have an opportunity to do so.

Ms. Stephanie King spoke about St. Alban's Reading Camp.

Mr. Jack Mills thanked all those who had been part of the Flint River Valley Convocation

Mr. Charles Parker reminded delegates to keep in mind that the new canons reflected a different deadline for submitting resolutions to convention.

Ms. Nelda Wardell shared a personal story of healing.

Rev. Robert Diehl encouraged the churches to send children to Camp Chickagami

Mrs. Beverly Mills registered a concern. Knowing that there is a difference between canons and policy, would like to hear who is going to be responsible for writing policies for the diocese.

Bishop Ousley noted that policies and procedures in the diocese are handled in a variety of ways. If it is an internal operational matter for a particular elected or appointed body, then they determine their policies and procedures. Diocesan policies and procedures are, under the new canons, to be approved by Diocesan Council. Bishop Ousley also pointed out that the new canons call for a Discernment Committee. This committee will be tasked with helping the diocese move into a process of more deeply discerning the gifts needed for a particular position and the persons who are available.

In closing, Bishop Ousley reminded the convention that with adoption of the new canons, the procedure for elections and appointments at this year's annual convention will change. All of those who are currently serving on committees, will have their terms expire. Those persons nominated at this year's annual convention, will be designated to fulfill one, two, or three year terms, based on the number of votes they receive at the convention.

Bishop Ousley closed with prayer and the Special Convention adjourned.

## **Bishop's Address + Special Diocesan Convention + June 8, 2013**

Today, we gather to consider a substantive initiative, a complete replacement and significant streamlining of our Diocesan Canons. While the specific action that led to today's Special Convention was my call at the 2008 Diocesan Convention for a Diocesan Review Task Force, there was much work and action prior to that moment. While serving as Bishop Coadjutor in the Fall of 2006 and continuing into my initial months as Bishop Diocesan in early 2007, I conducted a *Bishop's Listening Tour* of congregations, convocation councils and clericus gatherings. The hopes, expectations and dreams of the Diocese discovered during *The Tour* are:

1. Clear Communication and Connectedness --- people are looking for accurate, clear, and concise information delivered on a timely basis about events and developments in congregations, the diocese, the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion.
2. Equipping Leaders --- the Diocesan Office is seen as being the primary "instigator" for ministries to equip leaders for service in the church with support being given by convocations and congregations.
3. Flexibility --- a great deal of value was placed on the Bishop and Staff remaining flexible while at the same time going further to develop consistent approaches to situations. This may seem contradictory, but is interpreted to mean that people/congregations are treated with predictable equity while taking into consideration unique local circumstances.
4. Stewardship --- the sluggish Michigan economy is continuing to challenge congregations, but a genuine spirit to enhance stewardship is growing. Specific

assistance has been requested with the following areas of stewardship: financial, gifts discernment, better use of available gifts, and creativity with “limited” resources.

5. Grassroots --- while a desire to continue honoring local determination of ministry initiatives is clearly present, a conversation to determine a common definition of “grassroots” is proposed.
6. Anglicanism --- people are proud to be Anglicans and Episcopalians and want some assistance in learning how to articulate what it means to be “Anglican/Episcopalian.”

By mid-2007, I was able to announce the next steps to be taken with the information gathered during *The Listening Tour* which focused on continuing conversations to further clarify any new directions or dimensions for the mission and ministry of the Diocese of Eastern Michigan. Initiatives at that time included:

The meaning of “grassroots” is being explored in Anglican Connections and in various leadership gatherings around the diocese

The diocesan communication system, *FirstClass*, was replaced!

Applications began to be received for an Assistant to the Bishop for Ministry Development who would oversee the various aspects of equipping all the baptized for ministry at the local level (which later would include the Coppage-Gordon School for Ministry)

Conversation among the Bishop, Deans, and Convocation Presidents about how our diocesan and convocation structures might be better structured to serve the mission of the Church

Creation of a Missioner to Young Adults for the Tri-Cities area to reach out to the 18-30 age cohort --- a position which was jointly funded for three years by St. John’s Midland the McElroy Fund of the Diocese of Eastern Michigan

New models for congregational pastoral leadership are being actively explored

An excerpt from the Bishop’s Address to the 2008 Diocesan Convention reads as follows:

When this diocese was formed, the overarching vision was one of collaborative leadership between laity and the ordained, as well as decision-making and empowerment at the most appropriate level in the diocese. Our fourteen years of experience as a diocese have shown us that while we continue to embrace the overarching vision, our diocesan structures impede our ability to realize the dream. Some structures --- constitutional, canonical, and programmatic --- no longer serve the mission and thus the dream, but rather function to inhibit possibility and prevent us from realizing our vision. With profound respect for the continuing vision of a new kind of diocese and church and the unanimous support of your Standing Committee, I call for:

a comprehensive Constitutional, Canonical, Structural and Programmatic Review of the Diocese of Eastern Michigan to be conducted by a Review Task Force appointed jointly by the Bishop and Standing Committee of the Diocese of Eastern Michigan. The Task Force will be charged with undertaking this review with a goal of reporting its findings and recommendations to the 15th Annual Diocesan Convention to be held October 23-24, 2009 at Grace Church in Port Huron.

While I hoped that such a Task Force could be constituted in fairly short order and begin its work in early 2009, the deepening worldwide economic crisis and the clear need to continue some already-begun diocesan vision work led to a delay in the appointment of the Task Force. Organized in September 2009, the Diocesan Review Task Force made an initial report of its organizing activities at the 2009 Convention and a recommendation to the Bishop and Standing Committee prior to the 2010 Diocesan Convention. During that time, Mr. Donald Romanik, President of the Episcopal Church Foundation, worked with me and the Task Force as initial consultant to our process. Members of the Task Force and their respective congregations (at the time) were:

<b><u>Laity</u></b>	<b><u>Congregation</u></b>	<b><u>Convocation</u></b>
Eric Blackhurst	St. John's Midland	Saginaw Valley
Mary Lou Creamer	Grace Port Huron	Blue Water
Stephanie King	St. Albans Bay City	Saginaw Valley
John Pettipher	St. Jude's Fenton	Flint River Valley
Audrey Stephens	St. Paul's Flint	Flint River Valley
Karen Strausbaugh	Transfiguration Indian River	Northern
Mike Turnbull	All Saints' Marysville	Blue Water
<b><u>Clergy</u></b>	<b><u>Congregation</u></b>	<b><u>Convocation</u></b>
Elizabeth Morris Downie	St. Christopher's Grand Blanc	Flint River Valley
Darren Elin	St. John's Saginaw	Saginaw Valley
Anna Leigh Kubbe	Archdeacon	Blue Water
Bill McClure	St. James' Cheboygan	Northern
Rob Skirving	St. John's Midland	Saginaw Valley

Providing support to the Task Force were:

<b><u>Name</u></b>	<b><u>Organization</u></b>	<b><u>Role</u></b>
Jack Carlsen	Trinity Flushing	Diocesan History
Chuck Curtis	Retired Clergy	Constitution & Canons
Ed Henneke	Trinity Flushing	Diocesan Chancellor
Bob Meikle	St. Jude's Fenton	Diocesan Treasurer
Todd Ousley	Diocesan Office	Bishop

Over the course of 2009, a series of articles in Anglican Connections, our diocesan monthly newspaper at the time addressed questions regarding the nature of a diocese and the role of a bishop in the 21st century. From those articles, I quote:

**What is a diocese?**

In essence, a diocese is a geographic region of the Church containing a number of congregations across that particular geographic region, and classically, a diocese is described as the fundamental building block of the Church. The implications for such a definition deserve careful attention. Underlying assumptions of this definition are that the most important unit of the Church is the diocese and that congregations exist because a diocese exists. Furthermore, these assumptions presuppose a particular worldview: linear, ordered, predictable, rational, hierarchical --- in short, Western and mechanical. However, as we enter more clearly into an era being described as postmodern, these assumptions and this worldview begin to lose their effectiveness and truth.

In a world which has become flattened and in which organic networks describe relationships and structures, continuing to live as if the world is linear, ordered and predictable only produces anxiety, discomfort and unintended and negative consequences for all of us. Let me offer another perspective.

*“What is a diocese?”* A diocese is a covenantal community of people and congregations engaged in God’s mission, in the name of Jesus Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit. Please note that I have not described a diocese in terms of geography or hierarchy but rather, in terms which direct us toward relationship --- covenant, community, people and congregations. We certainly have geographic boundaries to our diocese and even geographic division within the diocese (convocations) but these are merely tools to bring some sense of order; they are not THE defining elements of diocesan identity or, in particular, who we are as the Diocese of Eastern Michigan.

In our postmodern world, rigid understandings of “diocese” create chaos rather than bring order. We live in a world which is organic and flexible and is perhaps best characterized by the world wide web, the internet. The structure and character of the internet is such that relationships can develop between people, institutions, groups, and information in ways that are simultaneously bound and free. Creative connections and surprising synthesis is possible; the only limits are our willingness to imagine and community-created norms of expectation and behavior. A diocese which begins to imagine itself as a covenantal community is one which recognizes the infinite and holy possibilities inherent in structures which are flexible but shaped by norms that are mutually agreeable to all members of the diocese.

### **What is a bishop in a Diocese as Covenantal Community**

Re-imagining the character and definition of “diocese” must lead us to consider the role of the Bishop in such a diocese. Beyond the canonical expectations of apostle, chief priest and pastor, a bishop in such a diocese should reflect the relational character that is required to be a covenantal community. In addition, a bishop in a “diocese as covenantal community” must exercise collegial and shared episcopal authority. In other words, the Bishop must recognize that the office of bishop is larger than any single person and that both the office and the officeholder must reflect healthy relationships. In practical terms, this means that in all areas possible, authority must be shared with the community through its designated leadership whether ordained or not. Glimpses of this can be seen in the role that rectors play in exercising a measure of episcopal oversight at the local level on behalf of the bishop, in the role that convocation deans play with clergy in a geographical division of the diocese (convocation), and in the role that missionaries, whether lay or ordained, play in exercising shared episcopal oversight for those congregations employing non-rector approaches to local congregational leadership. Also, the role that Diocesan Center staff exercise is a form of shared episcopacy --- serving people and congregations on behalf of both the bishop and the larger covenantal community known as the Diocese.

### **Beginning with Relationships**

This diocese began with a desire to create a community shaped by local initiative and non-interfering centralized support for the local. It was a desire canonized in structures limiting centralized authority and expecting local responsibility. We began with an ideal needing room to discover its practical applications but we quickly created rules, regulations, procedures and structures that were born not of our lived experience but rather from our fears of abuse. The biblical narrative calls for us to stay flexible, to make complex rules and regulations only if needed, to be open to renewal and revision. Our experience has been one in which the structures often have served us well but equally

as often have limited our capacity to be full covenantal partners with God and one another. We live in a moment when a re-examination of our covenantal relationships must be made in order that we might be more faithful. Practically speaking, it means that we must be able to shed imaginatively the canonical and structural accumulations of our early history in order that we might rediscover the core of our covenant.

### **Who are we?**

Born out of a desire to try a different way to be a diocese, we have embraced in theory if not fully in practice, a notion that we can be decentralized and connected, episcopal but not authoritarian, diverse yet united. Both our successes and our failures to embrace these notions have clarified our hopes that we might be a diocese shaped by baptism and characterized by The Baptismal Covenant. [We still have some distance to go in realizing our dreams, but progress is being made]

The collaborative spirit among congregations and . . . leaders is increasing; mutual respect and responsibility [has been] enhanced among diocesan leadership; a desire to see our community as going beyond our own geography is expanding [--- witness our continued commitment to Eagle Butte on the reservation in South Dakota and our expanding tri-diocesan relationship with the Dominican Republic and the recent naming of Katie Forsyth not only as Director of Communications but also as Director of Public Engagement]. We are finding new ways and new successes in attempts to be decentralized and connected; episcopal authority and responsibility is being shared more broadly; respect for diversity of opinion and unique local circumstances has been enhanced. However, if we are to move forward in our covenantal relationship, we must follow in the footsteps of Jesus by stripping away the accumulated layers of practice that inhibit our faithfulness to God's call. We must [reform and renew] all aspects of our life together and return to our most fundamental ideals.

### **Who is God calling us to be as a diocese?**

Over the past [6 ½] years as your bishop I've spent a great deal of time in prayer, conversation and reflection, to faithfully discern God's call upon our life together as a diocese. Discerning God's call is a process that does not easily lend itself to a quick-fix, a weekend retreat, a tightly managed technique, or the use of the latest fad from the business world. Rather, discernment requires patience, a high tolerance for ambiguity, comfort with loose ends, maximum openness and flexibility, and a willingness to ask questions without easy answers.

We've experimented much over these past years. We've tried on structures and processes for size and fit. We've given ourselves permission to experiment, even going so far as to "suspend" the canons for a time to test new ways of being and acting. These actions have born much fruit and allowed us to build trust with one another, clarify mutual expectations and to expand our flexibility, our nimbleness as a diocese. In a follow-up to his initial consultation with us, Donald Romanik of the Episcopal Church Foundation helped us to see that a rather wordy and clunky Diocesan Vision, Mission and Core Values Statement needed simplification and update. Emerging from that strategic thinking process was this statement of who we are as the Diocese of Eastern Michigan:

### ***A People of Hope in a Culture of Fear***

Acting today to replace our Canons with the proposal that will come before us, is a step of faith that moves us one step closer to realizing our collective desire to be people of hope. Let us not be afraid.