

Report of the Clerical Representative to Executive Council

Fall Meeting October 9-12, 2020

The Executive Council met October 9-12 virtually. It was an excellent meeting with the morning worship services totally inclusive. Several different members participated in the service. Presiding Bishop Michael opened the meeting referencing Matthew 5: 6-7 and stated: "We are meeting in the midst of some pretty difficult times, but the Gospel teaches that Christians can be a light against that darkness. Now is not the time to hide this light under the bushel. Now is the time to lift up this light ... this light that we've gotten from Jesus, and let it shine, even, and in spite of, whatever may happen around us." This is a message needed while Civic unrest continues to plaque the country with unlawful and mishandling of arrests culminating in death and others taking the law into their own hands. It is time for everyone to have their voices heard and vote their consciences for a democracy where all are equal and policies are followed to the full extent of the law. As Curry said, we need to be the light and let nothing hinder us from letting that light shine so all can see our works glorifying our Father. He said we need to pray continuously and drive the Lord crazy. Just pester the Lord and tell him I told you to do so. Curry mentioned some of the ways we can have a pastoral presence: attending some of the services and webinars being held October 24- November 4:

- Washington National Cathedral is hosting an ecumenical prayer service on Nov.1.
- The Episcopal Church's Washington-based Office of Government Relations has partnered with Forward Movement to promote nine days of prayer around the election, starting Oct. 27.
- TryTank, a project of Virginia Theological Seminary and General Theological Seminary, is launching a prayer hotline with more than 200 volunteers.
- The Diocese of Indianapolis developed a campaign centered on the symbol of a candle: "Light, Pray, Vote."

The Rev. Gay Clark Jennings, president of the House of Deputies, opened her remarks by saying she was looking forward to welcoming the Rev. Chris Rankin-Williams on Oct. 10 for his presentation to Executive Council about parochial report revisions. She said Oct. 12 will mark 50 years since General Convention in 1970 approved women to be seated as members of the House of Deputies. There were 29 women who became deputies that year, but many of them have never been formally memorialized at General Convention. She hopes to correct that at the 80th convention. Jennings said the church is in a unique position to be a moral voice in these troubling times, especially with misinformation running rampant. "These are sobering times in which to live and witness to the Gospel, because truth matters, voting matters, and history matters. May God grant us wisdom and courage for the facing of this hour."

Mr. Kurt Barnes gave the Treasurer's Report, which had already been distributed. He said that the financial picture remains positive. Expenses are within budget, debt to equity ratio is good and there is good liquidity. Ms. Lloyd spoke about the 2021 budget, and reminded Executive Council of the decision to reduce expenses only when necessary. The budget assumes a 15% assessment with waivers, a 5% draw and other income, which was based on the 2019-2021 approved budget. Other variables included the 3% COLA, medical increased only by 4%, and finally budgeting for the increase in DFMS contribution to lay pensions. The 2021 budget, after much discussion by members, was subsequently approved at approximately 46 million including 1 million for relief for struggling dioceses.

Ms. Andrea McKellar gave an update on the progress of the 2022-2024 budget process. Budget priorities remain the same. The budget is due to the JSC on Program, Budget and Finance four months before General Convention. If General Convention takes place as scheduled in 2021, the budget will be due to PB&F on March 1. The timeline is to present the budget to Executive Council in January, and have a special meeting at the end of February to approve it. If General Convention is postponed, Executive Council can approve the budget in the spring.

Bishop Curry called on the Hon. Rose Sconiers, along with Canon Stephanie Spellers and Ms. Diane Pollard, to lead the discussion about diocesan diversity efforts. Canon Spellers spoke about church-wide efforts toward *Becoming Beloved Community*. Justice Sconiers shared a pledge of faith and action against racial injustice from the Dioceses of Western New York and Northwest Pennsylvania. Ms. Pollard provided historical content and current undertakings in the Diocese of New York. Resources were shared and Executive Council members were urged to bring this important work back to their respective dioceses.

On Saturday, Chris Rankin-Williams, Chair, of the State of the Church Committee, explained that the committee was charged with revising the parochial report to capture changing metrics of importance to the church. The goal of the committee is to help make the Parochial Report a tool for congregations to use in strategic planning and other matters, rather than just reporting statistics. They are interested in learning about new ministries "opportunities, innovations and challenges" that congregations experienced while dealing with the pandemic. Racism is another new section in the report, with congregations being asked to discuss how they are "actively addressing and working toward racial justice and reconciliation." The report encompasses virtual worship attendance, and does not require reporting on communions during the period of the pandemic. They hope to revise the entire report for 2021.

Sunday, October 11 the meeting began with a prayer service, and then Bishop Curry called on Mr. Thomas Alexander to provide an overview of the program planned by the JSC on Governance and Operations (GO). Mr. Alexander explained that the program was designed in response to General Convention resolution 2018-A059 that was referred to GO. Bishop Curry

introduced The Rev. Dr. Stuart Hoke, who spoke to the Executive Council about the disease of alcoholism. The Executive Council was then supposed to go into breakout rooms for discussion. Ms. Jane Cisluy cis moved to go into Executive Session for this discussion. The motion was seconded and adopted. The rest of the morning was spent in Executive Session.

Monday, October 12, after an opening prayer service commemorating Indigenous People Day and announcements by the Secretary, committee reports began. The committee chairs gave recognition to the Indigenous population in their respective areas, acknowledging and commemorating Indigenous People Day. This was followed by their respective committees' work over the past 4 days and approval of any proposed resolutions.

The secretary reported that the status of General Convention has not been determined as to the format or whether it will be held in June of 2021. Executive council is expected to have a special meeting in November and a decision on convention is expected at that time. The Executive Council meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by,
The Rev. Lillian J. Davis-Wilson