

RECORD OF THE 2019 ANNUAL CONVENTION

Minutes of the 154th Annual Convention (Unapproved)

The Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh of the Episcopal Church in the United States A.D. November 15-16, 2019

The 154th Annual Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh of The Episcopal Church in the United States (the “Diocese”) convened on Friday, November 15, 2019, at the Pittsburgh Theological Seminary (“PTS”), Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Registration of Convention Deputies began at 5:30 p.m. in order for the necessary certifications to be completed.

The Convention commenced at 6:30 p.m. The Right Rev. Dorsey W. M. McConnell called the Convention to order and following the opening prayer of convention led by Ms. Cindy Leap of St Mark’s Johnstown, the Bishop asked Dr. David Esterline, President of PTS, to offer a general welcome. The Bishop then asked Ms. Bonnie-Marie Yager-Wiggan to outline certain logistics for the Convention.

The Bishop then recognized Mr. Jon Delano, who, on behalf of Diocesan Council, nominated the Rev. Canon James D. Shoucair as Secretary to Convention. There being no other nominations, Canon Shoucair was elected as Secretary unanimously by acclamation. On behalf of Diocesan Council, Mr. Delano then moved adoption of the Rules of Order and printed agenda, which was passed unanimously.

The Bishop then appointed Mr. Jamie McMahon as Parliamentarian for the Convention, Mr. Jon Delano as Judge of Elections and the Rev. Cathy Brall as Assistant Judge of Elections.

The Bishop then appointed Mr. Andy Roman, Mr. James Moore and Ms. Dana Phillips to serve on the Committee of Claims of Lay Deputies to Seats; and The Rev. Canon James D. Shoucair, Mr. Andy Roman and Mr. Rich Creehan to serve on the Committee on Admission of Parishes into union with Convention.

Bishop acknowledged the Reverends Liddy Barlow, Aidan Smith, William Carpenter, Charles Fischer and Laura Di Panfilo in their various roles in the Diocese.

The Bishop then announced his appointment of Ms. Bonnie-Marie Yager-Wiggan as Convention Manager and directed that any logistical issues or problems be directed quietly to her.

The Bishop then recognized Mr. Kevin Hipolit, the Judge of Assessments, and asked him to give his report. Mr. Hipolit reported that all parishes were in compliance with Diocesan requirements.

The Bishop then recognized Ms. Sheila Stagnitta, the Judge of Audits, who indicated that all parishes were in compliance with the canonical requirement on assessments and parochial reports for the year. She reported that three parishes had not submitted audits, but that none of those parishes had deputies present at Convention.

The Bishop then called upon the Secretary to report on quorum.

The Secretary reported that there were sixty-seven (67) lay deputies present whose credentials had been received before the Convention. He also reported that there were thirty-four (34) clergy present who duly affirmed that they were ordained and in good standing in the Episcopal Church, and canonically and

physically resident in the Diocese for the past three months. This brought the total deputies present to one hundred (101), which constituted a quorum for the transaction of business. He also indicated that the Convention would dispense with a formal roll call and accordingly certified the roll of parishes for the Convention.

The Bishop then moved the approval of the minutes of the 153rd Annual Convention of the Diocese found in the Preconvention Journal, which was then duly approved and adopted by unanimous vote.

Following the vote, the Bishop called on Ms. Kathy Baird and the Rev. Julie Smith to give the report of the nominations committee. They presented the published slate of nominees and asked that the Secretary of Convention be instructed to cast a unanimous ballot for those offices with uncontested elections; namely The Cathedral Chapter and the clergy position on the Constitution and Canons Committee. The motion being moved and seconded, it passed by unanimous vote.

The Bishop then called upon the Secretary to report on matters pertaining to certain General Convention resolutions.

The Secretary then made the following announcement, “As required by Article XII of the Constitution of the Episcopal Church, each amendment to the constitution of the Episcopal Church which has been passed by one General Convention is to be sent to every diocesan convention secretary so that it can be made known to the diocesan convention before General Convention takes up the matter for a second, final reading and passage. A summary of these items is to be found in your convention packets and the full text can be found in the preconvention journal. Should you have any objections to the changes you may voice your concerns to the members of the 2021 deputation to General Convention when they are elected later at this convention.”

The Bishop then recognized Mr. Lionel Deimel, who asked that deputies be given an opportunity next year to discuss the proposed resolutions. The bishop agreed.

The bishop then called upon the judges of election, Mr. Jon Delano and the Rev. Cathy Brall, who instructed the deputies on procedures for balloting. The deputies then proceeded to cast their first ballot.

After the first ballot, the Bishop called upon the Rev. Canon Jay Geisler to make the report of the Committee on Resolutions. On behalf of the Committee, Father Geisler moved the following, co-sponsored by the diocesan Social Justice and Outreach Committee and Ms. Marianne Novy:

Whereas we have a Biblical commandment to love our neighbors and also to love the stranger; and

Whereas 1000 attendees at the General Convention of 2018, including Presiding Bishop Michael Curry, gave witness at the Hutto Detention Center about 28 miles away in support of the women seeking asylum, many separated from their children, who are being held there; and

Whereas the convention recommended (Resolution C009) that Episcopal congregations become place of welcome, refuge, healing and support for immigrants, and should connect with other organizations seeking their safety, security, and due process, and

Whereas the separation of children from immigrant families and the deportation and imprisonment of many immigrants is leading to many deaths and traumatized lives; and

Whereas the acceptance of immigrants has been one of our country's best ideals, if not always realized, economists say we need immigrants, and statistics say they commit fewer crimes than the native-born, therefore be it

Resolved, that the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh urges its members and all in the greater Pittsburgh area to respect the human dignity of immigrants, and its congregations to work together to provide linguistic, legal, social, medical, housing, financial and other help for them, and

Commends the work done in this region by many members of the diocese, including those in Hello Neighbor at St. Paul's Mt. Lebanon and St. Andrew's Highland Park, the English conversation and letter writing groups at St. Brendan's Franklin Park, the legal assistance and English conversation groups at Redeemer, Squirrel Hill and the collection of belts and shoelaces there and at St Andrew's Highland Park, and All Saints, Brighton Heights, and the New Beginnings pre-school program at Calvary, East Liberty, and

Also commends the work done in our area by organizations such as Casa San Jose, the New Sanctuary Movement, and Jewish Family and Community Services, as well as nationally by Episcopal Migration Ministries.

The resolution passed unanimously.

Canon Geisler then moved the following courtesy resolution sponsored by the Convention Planning Committee:

Whereas the Pittsburgh Theological Seminary has graciously undertaken the many tasks associated with hosting the Annual Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh; and

Whereas this convention has enjoyed use of PTS's fine facilities on both the night of November 15, and the day of November 16, 2019, therefore be it

Resolved that the officers, deputies, bishop, and visitors participating in this convention tender our sincere thanks for the many ways large and small that the people of PTS have worked to smooth the course of events and provide us with a welcoming site for our convention.

The resolution passed unanimously.

The Bishop then asked Mr. Brandon Cooper of Christ Church, North Hills, to lead a service of Evening Prayer.

The Bishop then gave instructions with respect to dinner and declared the convention in recess until the following morning.

Saturday, November 16, 2019

The registration of deputies commenced at 8:30A.M. The Bishop called the Convention to order at 9:00 A.M. and asked Ms. Dorothy Falk of the Church of the Nativity to lead the Saturday Opening Prayer.

The Bishop then called upon Mr. Jon Delano and the Rev. Cathy Brall to report on the results of the first ballot.

Mr. Delano reported as follows (*denotes elected):

For the Board of Trustees (two to be elected):

*Dana Phillips
*Sheila Stagnitta
Andrew Thiros

For the Cathedral Chapter (one clergy, one lay):

Clergy:

*The Rev. Joseph Baird

Laity:

* Brandon Copper

For the Commission on Ministry (one to be elected either clergy or lay):

*The Rev. Howard Gillette
Wesley Rohrer

For the Committee on Constitution and Canons (one clergy, one lay):

Clergy:

*The Rev. Nancy Threadgill

Laity:

*William Bevan, III
Brandon Cooper

For the Disciplinary Board (one clergy, two lay):

Clergy:

The Rev. Aidan Smith
* The Rev. Dr. James Simons

Laity:

*Jean Adams
*Amy Shelley
Doug Starr

For the Standing Committee (one clergy, one lay):

Clergy:

*The Rev. Jonathon Jensen
The Rev. Regis Smolko

Laity:

Shahnaz Alam-Denlinger
*Steve Stagnitta

The Rev. Cathy Brall then reported the results of the election for deputies to General Convention as follows:

Deputies to General Convention

Clergy

*The Rev. Dr. James Simons

Lay

*Michael Braxton
*Jon Delano

The Rev. Brall then explained the process for electing the remaining open positions. Deputies then completed a second ballot containing the names of those candidates who qualified according to the Rules of Order.

The Bishop then called on Ms. Kathi Workman to report on the 2020 budget. However, the bishop prefaced her remarks by commenting on the budget and staffing for 2020 as well as announcing a shift in responsibilities scheduled to occur at the beginning of the year. He announced that the Rev. Kim Karashin would take over as Director of Administration. The Rev. Karashin then addressed the convention. She outlined her specific areas of responsibility so that members of the diocese would know who to call. She also asked for everyone's indulgence as she learns the ropes!

The Bishop then called on Ms. Kathi Workman, Diocesan Treasurer, to present the proposed budget for 2020. Ms. Workman began the presentation by encouraging the convention to give Kim practice in her new role starting immediately! Then she gave a recap of the budget so far for 2019 followed by the proposed 2020 budget. She indicated that money was still available for diocesan grants until November 25, 2019. She also indicated that the Diocesan Pooled Endowment fund was open and ready to accept new accounts for parishes.

Following Ms. Workman's report and a motion for approval and discussion, the budget was approved unanimously by Convention. Ms. Workman thanked the Budget and Assessment Working Group for all their efforts in connection with the development of the budget. She also thanked Ms. Sheila Stagnitta for her efforts in monitoring parish audits. After Ms. Workman's presentation, Ms. Amy Shelly from St. David's asked the Convention to commend and acknowledge Ms. Workman for her amazing hard work and competence over the years.

Ms. Mary Roehrich then offered a resolution of thanks to the Board of Trustees for their work in putting parish property to more fruitful use. The motion was unanimously approved.

The Bishop then called upon Mr. James Neral to present a report from the Diocesan Compensation Committee. Mr. Neral reported that Diocesan Council had already approved The Medical Insurance Guide so that employees could participate during the enrollment period. After reporting on the changes to the medical plans and Compensation Guide, Mr. Neral moved the adoption of the revised Compensation Guide and all its Appendices as set forth in the preconvention journal. After various questions and comments, the motion was unanimously approved.

The Bishop then gave his Annual address to the Diocese, as set forth on Exhibit A. The Bishop set the stage for the re-imagining of the Diocese as envisioned by the CREED resolutions. There are multiple ways, he said, to implement these recommendations in parish communities. He urged the Convention deputies to take them as inspiration and guidance and to take them back to congregations to see what might emerge.

The Bishop then called for a short recess.

After the recess, the Bishop asked Mr. Delano to present the CREED resolutions. Mr. Delano thanked the participants in the four working groups, as well as the Bishop for the exhaustive efforts in formulating the resolutions. He emphasized that the governing resolution was formulated to provide more effective and right-sized governance for a diocese that was now significantly smaller than in the past. How was the Diocese to provide an effective and streamlined governance structure that was inclusive and comprehensive and adequately representative? He then gave the Convention the background of the work done by the governance working group in formulating the proposed resolution, stressing the need to maintain the lay leadership of the Diocese.

After questions from members of the Convention, Mr. Delano invited the Rev. Bill Geiger from the Committee on Constitution and Canons to address the Convention about the enabling resolutions for the CREED resolutions. The Rev. Geiger then proposed the four governance-related resolutions separately. These resolutions were all to be found in the preconvention journal. Resolution One, concerning the size of the Board of Trustees, was approved unanimously. Resolution Two would restructure Diocesan Council. After discussion centering on the necessity to maintain widespread representation, the resolution passed with one nay vote. The Bishop and Chancellor assured the Convention that the issue of representation would be taken up in the Canons of the diocese. Resolution Three, to remove outdated language concerning the Standing Committee, was amended to say “Bishop Suffragan” in place of “Suffragan Bishop” whereupon Resolution Three as amended, was then passed unanimously. Resolution Four, limiting representation on the Standing Committee, was then moved. After discussion, Resolution Four was amended to read “Bishop Suffragan” in the same manner as Resolution Three, whereupon the amended resolution passed unanimously. The Bishop thanked the Committee for their work.

Mr. Jon Delano then called on the Rev. Julie Smith to present the CREED resolution on Reaching Out To Neighbors as found in the preconvention journal. The resolution moved and seconded, passed unanimously after discussion.

Mr. Jon Delano then called on Ms. Amy Shelley to present the CREED’s New Ministries resolution as found in the preconvention journal. The Resolution was amended to delete the language found in paragraph 2 thereof: “(canons of the episcopal church III.1.2)”. The amended resolution passed unanimously.

Mr. Delano asked Mr. Don Block to present the CREED Communications resolution as found in the preconvention journal. The resolution, moved and seconded, passed unanimously.

At the conclusion of the CREED presentations, the Bishop asked the Judge of Elections, Mr. Delano, to present the results of the second round of elections, as follows:

Deputies to General Convention

Clergy

- *The Rev. Eric McIntosh
- *The Rev Canon James Shoucair

Lay

- *Jamie McMahon

Mr. Delano indicated that one clergy and one lay person still needed to be elected. Ballots were then distributed for the third round of voting.

At the conclusion of the voting, Ms. Dana Phillips commented briefly on the cordial relations that have developed between the diocese and the nine ACNA parishes that signed a property agreement in the previous year. She noted that the improved relations were fostered by the regular discussions that are enshrined in that agreement.

The Rev. Liddy Barlow, director of Christian Associates of Western Pennsylvania, then reported on ecumenical efforts and activities in the Diocese.

Ms. Bonnie Marie Yager-Wiggan then announced the procedure for lunch with district meetings and discussion of the CREED resolutions.

After lunch, the Bishop invited Mr. Delano to announce the results of the preceding ballot.

Clergy.

Lay

The Rev. Noah Evans
The Rev. Jeff Murph
The Rev. Kris Opat

*Shahnaz Alam-Denlinger

Mr. Delano indicated that one (1) clergy deputy still needed to be elected. Ballots were then distributed for the convention to cast their votes between the Revds. Noah Evans and Jeff Murph.

The Chancellor of the diocese, Mr. Andrew Roman, moved to invoke a provision of Rules of Order B.2 that allows alternates to be chosen as ranked by the highest votes in previous ballots. The resolution was seconded and approved unanimously.

Mr. Delano then reported the district election results as follows:

District 1

Chair: Bruce Quayle
Vice Chair: Eric O'Brien
Council: Peter Sweet

District 2

Chair Darrell Powell
Vice Chair: Frances Dannenberg
Council: Martha Shelby
Trustees: Bernie Roftschaefer

District 3

Chair: Amy Shelley
Vice Chair: Robert Johnston
Council: The Rev. Doug Kinsey

District 4

Chair: The Rev. Nancy Threadgill
Vice Chair: The Rev. Charles Sovallisk
Council: Dwayne Ladd

Following the election report, the Bishop then invited feedback on the district meeting CREED discussions. The Rev. Julie Smith, Ms. Amy Shelly, the Rev. Bill Geiger and Ms. Sheila Stagnitta each gave brief summaries of the discussions in their respective districts. Other deputies offered additional comments.

The Bishop then invited Mr. Delano to report on the final ballot for the one remaining General Convention clergy deputy. Mr. Delano reported that there were 97 total ballots cast, with 47 for the Rev. Noah Evans and 50 for the Rev. Jeff Murph, who was thereby elected as the fourth deputy to General Convention. The Rev. Noah Evans was therefore elected the first alternate deputy.

The Bishop thanked the members of diocesan staff as well as Mr. Jamie McMahon, Mr. Andrew Roman and the Rev. Canon James Shoucair for their hard work.

The Bishop then announced a brief recess for the Convention Eucharist. The Bishop's sermon is attached to these minutes as Exhibit B.

As the Eucharist ended, the Bishop announced October 15 and 16 as the date of the 2020 Convention and asked for a motion that this 154th Convention be adjourned. The motion, duly moved and seconded, passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,
The Rev. Canon James D. Shoucair, Secretary to Convention

EXHIBIT A

Bishop's Address 154th Annual Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh November 16, 2019

A transcript of the remarks to Convention delivered by the Right Reverend Dorsey W.M. McConnell, VIII Bishop of Pittsburgh:

Welcome, dear friends in Christ, to the 154th Convention of the Diocese of Pittsburgh. Your diocese. God's diocese. Your convention. It is a joy to see each and every one of you, and I am especially grateful for the very warm "welcome back" that you gave to me and to Betsy last night. It is just wonderful to be here. I was thinking about starting this off with a slide show about my sabbatical for about 120 minutes or so, but I thought there are more important things to do.

As an ice-breaker this morning, I would just like everybody to stand up here, just stand up, and turn to somebody who is not in your parish – wait for this – and just say this: "Jesus is everywhere, and he is always there for you." OK, can you do that? "Jesus is everywhere, and he is always there for you."

(Those in attendance do so.)

That was beautiful. Wasn't that wonderful? Don't you feel better? That was your break. *(Laughter.)* Just kidding. We have a lot to do. I am not going to rehearse all the wonderful things God is doing among us, has done among us. My report, and the report of the staff, is available in the Pre-convention Journal. Instead, I want to focus on the rather grand task implied in the Convention theme – Love. Teach. Heal. Re-imagining Our Diocese – and ask the question that must be in some of your minds, when you read this, which is one word: Really?

Now for years, when I sat where you are sitting, on the other side of the bishop's microphone and the bishop announced a strategic plan – and this was in four different dioceses prior to my coming here – or, issued a booklet on Miraculous Expectations, one of my favorites; or put out a ten-point program for growth, let's not forget that one; I would sigh and roll my eyes as rector of a parish, because I knew where such a thing would wind up if I was lucky – on a shelf someplace gathering dust, while the machinery of the church went on much as it always had.

And now, I'm on this side of the microphone, and here we are talking about re-imagining the diocese, and the question is, is this just another such exercise. And I would say that depends, it depends on how seriously we all take the work, and I would say that this work, particularly, is actually different and worth taking seriously. It has its origins in a committee that was joined together to initiate a mutual ministry review of the entire diocese and soon was dubbed Project CREED – the Committee for the Re-Envisioning of the Diocese – just in case you think it's all about the BAWG [Budget and Assessment Working Group], sometimes it's about the CREED. Many of us invested a lot of time, under the guidance of Jon Delano as convener and Judy Stark as our consultant, considerable money, efforts and hours and the carbon footprint of 68 people and more, some of whom made long commutes, to pray and talk about the ways God may be calling us to re-invent ourselves, or at least, reimagine ourselves. Sixty-eight people who soon settled on four areas – governance, communication, new initiatives and meeting our neighbor – where we might make some changes and try something new that could lead us all to see the Church differently in an inspiring and life-giving way for us all.

I'm going to try not to steal Jon Delano's thunder, or that of the other groups [who are to present to Convention later on], but I point out that the group produced four resolutions which amount to an invitation to all of us to take a few concrete steps in this direction. In a sense, what they're offering us is not the usual "grand plan" viewed from 30,000 feet, I would suggest, but rather they start on the ground. They ask us to take stock of where we are already, of who is around us. They ask us to look at the resources God has already put into our hands. These resolutions are more akin to what Jesus says to us about mustard seed that is the smallest of seed, but produces a great tree where all the birds of the air come to nest in its branches; or what he says about the seed that grows secretly, day and night, producing first the stalk, then the ear, then the full grain. So as I read these resolutions and prayed through them, I realized that a great vision, a huge change in the way in which we see God, see ourselves and the world, is often brought forth through small works begun in hope and practiced faithfully. It is such concrete works – out of which God will bring great fruit – that I believe these resolutions offer us. And in case you doubt that God can use a small thing, a chance encounter, a casual word to completely change the way you look at God and the world and life, I have, yes, a story for you.

This little event took place at a gas station near Scottdale on the Eve of All Saints, it comes from the Reverend Biff Carpenter, newly received and rector of Saint Francis, Somerset, and this is the story in Biff's own words as texted to our Canon for Mission, Kim Karashin:

"Finished 4 pm Mass, left the church in my cassock. Stop at gas station, go in store at same time as a couple of kids in Halloween costumes. Guy comes over to me while waiting in line and gives me a buddy punch on the shoulder and says, 'Forgive me, Father, it's been six years since my last confession,' and laughed. I turned to him and said, 'Six years since you talked to papa???' Brother we are going to need shots and beers to get through this.' He laughed again and things got quiet. The costumed couple in front of me asks, 'Are you headed to Jason's party?' I shrugged and said 'I don't know Jason. I just finished mass.' Everyone laughed, I looked confused. I said, 'I'm a priest,' everyone giggled awkwardly, and I repeated, 'no seriously, I'm a priest. We're not all predators or grumpy geezers. Some of us, believe it or not, just love God, and try to love each of you the way he does.' Got really quiet and the guy asks, 'DUDE WHERE IS YOUR CHURCH?!?' I said, "Somerset and Scottdale, PA, but Jesus is everywhere and is always there for you'. It got really quiet again, but in a good way. Everyone parted ways and they said things like 'Dude you're awesome' and 'I wish my priest was like you'. I just said be there for each other and know God loves you."

(applause)

Now let's just take a moment to drink this in: a priest in a cassock in a gas station in Scottdale, PA, with three others standing in line, a little talk, a little love, a few laughs, total time five minutes, and for all four

who were there – including, I’ll bet, the priest – a new vision of Jesus, a new vision for the Church. They might as well have been Andrew and Simon Peter, Philip and Nathanael, who met Jesus in an unexpected place and time at the beginning of John’s Gospel and launched, what became, this. And it is to multiply the odds of such encounters as this, only in your own places, in your own ways, and in your own words – please do not try to do it the way Biff did it, one Biff is enough (*laughter*) – but in your own words, that these resolutions are before you.

You will be discussing these later today, focusing on how to implement the recommendations in your communities. As you might expect of such resolutions, they are rather full, if you’ve read them. And I would ask you, after some fruitful discussion here, to endorse them, not to try... I know that there’s a lot of language there you may have issue with, but that can be adjusted within your own contexts. Take them for what they are intended for, which is inspiration and guidance. Then take them, as you discuss, whether one or two or three aspects of them sparks something in you that you might want to implement. Take them back to your congregations. Ask your sisters and brothers there to pray and consider something in these texts might spark an idea, a thought a direction. For example, what do you need to communicate more effectively within your parish, with the people who live around you, and with your sisters and brothers across the diocese? How can you meet your neighbors, find out who they actually are, their joys, their sorrows, who they are, what they take in their coffee, whether they even drink coffee, hear their stories and share with them the good news of God in Christ? How can you partner with another parish in some new form of mission, even perhaps a new church plant? And how can all of us, together, reshape our governance so we are spending fewer person-hours and fewer gallons of gas on governance, and more time actually being the body of Christ in our contexts? And to help us focus our time later on, I’m just going to take a few minutes I offer my own thoughts now on what seems to me to be the most important implications of each of these, and tie them to the diocesan mission I have articulated of loving, teaching and healing.

So first – this is not the order in which you’re going to be voting on them, which is one of my clever ways of keeping you awake – first, Meeting the Neighbor. The first objective in our diocesan mission is to love, in the name and power of Jesus Christ – to love God, love the neighbor and love the enemy. These are not the imperatives of your clergy, or your bishop’s, they are Christ’s own imperatives. We may think we love God, but the Lord would say the proof in that would be if we are loving our neighbor and loving our enemy. It’s likely that none of us would really pass this test with high marks. It is hard to love your neighbor if you do not know your neighbor, and impossible to love your enemy if you spend all or most of your time with you friends. By supporting this resolution, you are saying you will take a step out the door, to meet the people around you whom you do not know yet, and to love them; even if they seem scary, or hold opinions you find objectionable, or otherwise make you uncomfortable, you will meet them and get to know them and as you know them, you will ask God’s grace to love them.

Second, Communication. The second objective in our diocesan mission is to teach – to teach the mystery of God with us, in the Lord’s incarnation; of God for us, in Christ’s Cross and Resurrection; of God in us, through the Holy Spirit. This mystery must be shared, if it is to bear fruit. We are the ones called to bear witness to the full joy, sorrow, and glory of God’s redemption through Jesus the Christ. We’re called to speak of him and write of Him, and tell of Him, declaring the mighty works the Lord Jesus has done in our lives. So, it seems to me that the most significant implication of this is first that we share the good news with each other, friends, within the Body of Christ, within our congregations and across the boundaries of our parishes. Tell the stories of what God is doing in the lives the Lord is touching in your midst, and ask to hear the same witness from others. Put it on social media, send it through the diocesan communications network this resolution envisions, but most of all find ways to tell your story of redemption to the neighbors you now know, to the ones you once walked past or ignored, but now embrace and pray for.

Third, New Initiatives. The third objective in our diocesan mission is to heal – heal the person, heal the church, and heal the world. This healing comes through the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. We all know that – it’s in our Baptism vows – but that knowledge doesn’t come just through communicating by our words. It comes through the intentional building of communities rooted in the good news of Jesus, in the mercy of His Cross and the power of His Resurrection. As you get to know your neighbors, can we all then take a step to show the love of Jesus in their midst? This can mean simple acts of care you undertake with your new friends for the benefit of those around you, or meals offered in a parish hall for anyone who wants to come and eat, or big things like planting new communities. I know by my own experience that people get healed through such endeavors; that is how I got drawn in to this magnificent, chaotic adventure we call the Church. Churches become strengthened and more confident when they do this, and the world around us begins to move from an anxious and threatened place toward becoming more merciful, more generous, as the hand of God moves among them showing them that Jesus is in fact everywhere, and always there for us.

Now, I know these initiatives, as you look at them, that you may think that they’re great on paper. But I also there is another question, which is: “Is this just more stuff we have to do? Our congregation is already stressed just by the tasks of keeping the doors open, taking care of the people we already have, worrying about the budget and the boiler and the roof.” Friends, believe me, I get it. We worry about your budgets and your boilers and your roofs, about your people and your clergy, which is why we pray for all of the above, every day, all of you are in my prayers and the prayers of your diocesan staff. Every Sunday, the parish I am visiting that day is held up in prayer by all the others through our diocesan cycle. And this is the key, my friends. Whether it is communicating the good news of Jesus, or getting out to meet your neighbors, or building new mission initiatives or planting new communities, the message is you can’t do it alone. Because, if you try that, it is going to be just “more stuff to do.” But, if we join together in this, seek out sister congregations with whom to build a partnership in the Gospel, then all of this can be truly life-giving for any of us who participate.

One last piece, and a couple of other notes. The resolution on Governance, which I will address briefly in a moment, envisions re-vitalizing ministry districts. I would encourage us to interpret that vision broadly. Because the right partners for you may be down the block or in the next town, but they may also be three counties away. Explore the possibility that you have gifts another community needs even if it means driving an hour or more to share those gifts, and similarly that they may have resources you need, which you will not discover unless you get to know them. Somebody has to take the initiative to make that happen, so please don’t wait for it to be somebody else besides you. Great things can happen when a vestry person, or just someone sitting in the pews, picks up the phone and calls a different vestry person in a different parish and just invites those people to dinner with their people. Or, makes a date for a joint prayer walk in a neighborhood. Or, shares experience in reaching out to 12-step groups in their community. We have resources in this budget, both in funds for mission grants and formation for mission grants, to support your efforts in all of this in communications, neighbor-knowing, and new mission, and I suspect council will look most favorably on proposals from parishes who have twinned in an interesting and effective way.

So, to recap, if we adopt these three resolutions, it seems to me we are doing the following: We are making a commitment in a variety of ways to communicate better with each other what God is doing among us, and to set up a few simple structures to facilitate that communication. We are making a commitment to get to know the people around us, through something as simple as a Meet-Your-Neighbor Day, in the hope that will become a habit. We are making a commitment to undertake some form of new mission where we are, whether that’s a limited engagement addressing a single human need, or something larger, such as planting and nurturing a new community of faith. So, endorsing these resolutions is an expression of our commitment to take a concrete next step in each of these areas, and that’s more

important, I would suggest, than taking some time just to add or delete information or language that gets your attention.

There are two other aspects of these resolutions – and thank you for your patience, but it needs to be said – I want to point out before moving on. First, is the commitment at the center of the resolution on New Ministries that every parish or congregation encourage a diversity of leadership in new ministries in regard to race, color, ethnic origin, national origin, sex, marital or family status, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, disabilities or age, with particular attention to historically under-represented populations. This is not just there to mimic the words of national Canons or of General Convention resolutions. Early on in the discussions which lead to this work we all agreed that we have to redouble our efforts as a diocese to deal with historic under-representation, particularly of racial minorities, and especially of African Americans, in the leadership of the Church. The history of racism in Pittsburgh – the historic burden left particularly to black neighborhoods and churches from 350 years of chattel slavery – has been a concern of mine since I began my tenure among you over seven years ago, and disquiets me at every moment of every day, as it should disquiet us all, no matter where in this diocese we live. I passionately hope that our efforts in regard to communication, mission, and meeting our neighbor will especially focus on incorporating people who have been historically excluded, and I promise I will do all that I can to make this a priority for our common mission going forward. Second, I note in both the resolution on Communications and in Governance, there is an expectation of diocesan funding. I have already mentioned these funds are there, through the lines for mission and formation grants and other possibilities, and I will ask Diocesan Council particularly to favor proposals for partnerships that, among other things, intentionally enhance this diversity in congregational, mission, life and leadership. Amen? *Amen.* Thank you.

Finally, Jon [Delano], even though I've stolen a lot of your thunder, I want to steal a little more. There are a few structural changes that cannot be done without constitutional amendments. That's what is coming before you next. A constitutional amendment requires approval by two consecutive conventions. Even if you have substantial questions regarding the specifics of these amendments to the Constitution, or with the entire approach, a positive vote of endorsement on the constitutional changes at this convention will give us a basis for further discussion in the coming year. The language can be discussed in district gatherings later on; further shaped by Council, if necessary; and even amended by Council, in which case the amended proposed amendments to the Constitution would be brought back to you [next year] as a first reading, requiring approval also at the convention of 2021. So there is space and time. On the other hand, not to approve these changes in some form at this time, I am afraid, will kick the whole question of structural reform indefinitely down the road. So I pray that we may focus our debate on this, as well as the other resolutions, to matters of substance, and leave here with something in hand that will make a substantial beginning to the task of right-sizing our governance to a shape and form appropriate to a diocese our size.

And with that, I am done – almost. As I turn this conversation back over to you, however, I ask you to keep in mind the Church we have not yet seen, but that is the Church which God sees all the time. I mean the people, women and men and children, who get up in the morning, somehow make it through the day, and go to bed at night wondering if their lives mean anything. They may be in our poorest or richest neighborhoods, because no matter how good you look or what you drive, you may still be afflicted by the demons that assault us all, forces of anger, fear, self-loathing, lust, despair – I think we all could add to the list. The only difference between those inside our churches and those outside is that the former have found a place to come and lay these burdens before a holy and merciful God. And if it is true that Jesus is everywhere, then those we see every Sunday are only a small portion of His Church, the others being those beyond our doors who struggle to get through life with some semblance of hope, unaware that there are communities like yours where they may find Christ's own mercy and blessing and peace. And that is why Christ commands us to go, to meet these His children, not only for their sake but for ours,

because as we meet them, we will meet Him. So, let's go. And remember, he is indeed everywhere, and He is always there for you. Amen. *Amen! (applause)*

EXHIBIT B

Bishop's Sermon 154th Annual Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh November 16, 2019

A transcript of the sermon preached by the Right Reverend Dorsey W.M. McConnell at the closing Eucharist:

“And the Lord said, ‘I will build you a house.’” May the words of my mouth and the meditations of all our hearts be always acceptable to you, O Lord, our rock and our redeemer. Amen.

Oh, oh, David. David, David. You have to pity King David. Have a little compassion for him. He was dreaming. It was a good dream. Think of it, one night in his new house, safely ensconced in his new kingdom, God had brought him through so many dangers, toils and snares. God had preserved his life from an insane boss, King Saul, who tried to kill him on more than one occasion. God had saved him in the heat of battle and given him victory over his enemies. God had granted him favor with all Israel and Judah, with all the tribes, well most of them anyway, and he had built peace and prosperity. And now, here he was reflecting on all of this, in the privacy of his new and lovely home.

I imagine he invites the prophet Nathan to dinner with several friends. After a lovely five-course meal and several wines, the king lies back on his couch, maybe an apple in his hand, and thinks aloud to the prophet, “You know, Nathan, God has been good to me. No, I’m serious. God has been really good to me. I mean, look he’s given me all of this – the throne, the house, the wives, and what have I done for him? I mean, I live here and God lives in a tent, in my driveway. It’s not right. You know what I’m gonna do for God, Nathan, I’m gonna build him a house. That’s what I’m gonna do. I mean somebody’s given me a little piece of property, and there’s a family that will pay for the windows, and all we have to pull together the funds for a boiler and a roof, and it’s a done deal. So what do you think, Nathan, what do think God would think of my idea, Nathan?” And Nathan replies, “Well, your majesty, I don’t know, sounds good to me.” And the King says, “Yeah, that’s what I thought, too.”

And the evening breaks up, and everybody goes home and goes to bed, and sometime during the night, it is Nathan who dreams. The word of the Lord comes to him and says, “Go tell your boss he needs to get over this idea. In the first place, I have never lived in a house, but have always lived with my people, have always been with them; and because I made you their king, I have always been with you, and always will be, wherever you or they go, that is where I will live. And tell him furthermore, ‘I will make you a house, not of stone or cedar, I will make you a house of your descendants, a house of human flesh and God-breathed faith and deep human spirit, and I will live with that house forever.’”

And so Nathan, I think maybe trembling, brings the king this message, and waits for the explosion. But there’s no explosion. Instead, a miracle happens, and that is this – King David, already a proud and haughty man, is humbled. He goes into the tent and sits before the Ark of the Covenant, full of

amazement and gratitude. He pours out his heart before God, saying, “Who am I, and what is my house, that you have brought me this far?”

So, I ask us all, sisters and brothers, just to take this moment and join with David’s prayer of gratitude and amazement. I mean, for those of you who were around a decade ago – or looking back even further in Pittsburgh and southwest Pennsylvania, through wars and depression, through bitter divides of race and religion – to sit here, together, in this place, in the presence of the living God, hearing God’s promise once again to us, as to David, a promise now fulfilled and yet continuing – that God has built us a house; the house of living stones, declared by Saint Peter and Saint Paul, whose foundation is Christ; the house of countless lives of faith and obedience from the prior generations into this one; the house into which we have been built, knit together – just look at one another and how beautiful this house is.

And, you know, the language of the temple in the New Testament almost immediately morphs into language of the Body – the stones become members, hands and feet, eyes and ears, sinews and heart of the Body whose head is Christ; that Body, and that house, we are. And if you think of this just for a moment, then I know that whatever challenges or worries, whatever needs or heartbreaks, whatever loss or fear of loss you have brought into the presence of God today, you will remember that God is more than up to the task of healing it all. Healing it all. And you will know here, that you are being filled by the same spirit of thanksgiving David knew. So we can all join with him and say together, “Who are we? Who are we? And what is our house, that God has brought us this far?”

You see, it is only when we remember where we started, that we can recall how far we have come. And only when we have that in mind, frankly, does following Jesus further makes any sense at all. I mean, He does phrase the invitation – to be built into the house of God, built into His Body as its members – in the starkest terms, again and again. We hear that getting through the door of this house involves dying – dying to self, dying to the world, dying to our own ambitions and desires and plans. I don’t know about you, but I find it hard to hear, hard to take. It’s no wonder Simon Peter tries to talk Jesus into a more upbeat marketing plan. You know that moment. “I mean, Lord…” Peter pulls him aside after Jesus predicts the cross once again. Peter can’t take it anymore and says to Him, “Have you considered positive thinking? Or self-actualization? There’s an idea. Those could be a great draw. You’re such a charismatic figure.” And Jesus turns and sees these little ones, and says, “If you would be my disciple, deny yourself and pick up your cross and follow me; for whoever would save their life will lose it; and whoever loses their life for my sake will save it.” Sisters and brothers, if that doesn’t scare us, then we are not listening.

But once we start to listen to Jesus, to the Jesus of the Cross, then we can also hear something else, a promise. You see, the good news is, that this house is not built on our death; it is built on His death. That is the rock Christ asks us to build our house on, not the sand of our own little dreams, but the rock of his death – the foundation, as Saint Paul says, on which everything depends. Jesus, the Son of God, has already gone through everything that so terrifies us, and He has done it for us, and not only for us, but for the world. Yes, for the whole world, the whole world – believers and non-believers, for everyone. Do you see, universal atonement?

Do you notice the banners at Steeler games, sometimes, you know, John 3:16? Does anybody still hold that up? John 3:16, which is what?” *God so loved the world, that he sent his only-begotten Son, that all anyone who believes in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life.* Do you ever see a banner with John 3:17? *For God sent his Son into the world not to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.*

And we need that assurance. Once you see the fullness of Christ’s Cross, you can begin to be less terrified of your own. You can begin to pick it up, to know it, to carry it, to stand in the place of our own

weakness and need. You can actually start to bear a confident testimony that God is stronger than any of this and, in fact, uses all of our emptiness as the vessel into which He pours His love for the sake of the world. Perhaps then, trusting in the power of His Resurrection, we may be ready to receive the treasure He has prepared for us in the lives of those we do not yet know – because He has prepared a treasure for us in the lives of those we do not know.

When I was rector of the Church of the Epiphany in New York, we had had a homeless dinner program for years. The way this worked was that all the homeless would come into the nave and spend a half-hour in the church, before we let them through the “magic doors” to go down into the parish hall to receive their dinner. Some of them slept, some of them talked, and I’m sure there was more than one drug deal going down in the back. Finally, at one point, we said, “How about we give a service for them in this time?” The idea, you see, was that we were going to share the Gospel with all these people, right? Beautiful. Share the Gospel. Bring Jesus to the homeless – that’s what we were going to do. So we started this service. About three weeks into it, it started to dawn on us that at least half of this company already loved Jesus, believed in Jesus, and were so grateful, not because we were such great evangelists, but because they were just looking for someplace where they could pray and not feel ashamed. And we, who thought we were bringing Christ to them, discovered they – you got it – were bringing Christ to us. We helped them, [but] we did not give them a voice; we just loved them until they found it, their own. And as they found that voice, they began to speak and teach and love one another. In the course of it, they strengthened us, brought new life to us, brought Jesus to us. And that is the House of God. What a poverty it would have been had we not seen the fullness of His house.

In a moment we will commission a whole crowd of apostles: those who have accepted elected office; those who have completed or are beginning study in LTH, the Love.Teach.Heal. Academy; those who are going out to serve as chaplains in the world. I suppose one way to look at them is that they are doorkeepers in the house of God, greeters in the house of God; and their one commission is to keep the doors open, always. We have talked about re-envisioning the diocese, and if there is one move that would help us, it might be this: suppose we saw the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh – the house of God – not only as the people in our churches, but as those outside. Suppose we understood our calling not as bringing people to Christ, but meeting Christ with them on the road. Suppose we were pointing to the One who walks with them, and as we do, seeing that One through them. Suppose we began to understand that if we want to see Jesus in His fullness, we must see Him in the faces of those we do not yet know; and we can only know them, not by inviting them into our world, but by accepting Christ’s invitation to come into their world. I think as we learn to see the world in this way, and walk as though we believe in what we are seeing, we may be filled with the same spirit of humility of David, so that we are always saying, “Who are we? And what is our house that God has brought us this far?” If we get to that, let’s also hear God’s answer to that prayer – you guessed it – Jesus is everywhere and He is always there for us.