

DIOCESAN COUNCIL
Report to Diocesan Convention 2021
Kathy Baird, President

Diocesan Council was transformed this year by the modification of Article XI of the Constitution of the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh as a result of Project CREED, with a goal to streamline and right-size diocesan governance. However, the unchanged mission for Diocesan Council is set forth in Section 1 of Canon V:

"The Diocesan Council shall act on behalf of the Convention when the Convention is not in session. In particular, it shall evaluate the policies, programs, and other activities of the Diocese, make recommendations to the Convention, and give general oversight to the work, mission, budget and human resources of the Diocese. The Council shall perform such other functions and tasks as the Convention may assign to it."

Diocesan Council is "convention in recess," empowered to do what the convention may do in the months between our annual diocesan gathering.

Specifically, membership in Diocesan Council was reduced from 18 to 12 elected members, 8 of whom are elected to and also serve on the Standing Committee while the remaining 4 lay deputy representatives are elected from each of the four diocesan districts on a rolling basis, serving up to 4 year terms. Since this was the first year of the new rotation, the Standing Committee drew lots for which districts would elect new lay representatives to begin the rolling election schedule resulting in the following: District 1 - Joyce Donadee, St. Brendan's, Franklin Park, serving a 3 year term, District 2 - Martha Shelby, Holy Cross, Homewood, serving a 2 year term, District 3 Constance Davis, Atonement, Carnegie, serving a 1 year term and District 4, Adam W. Sprankle, St. Mark's, Johnstown, serving a 4 year term.

Elected lay district representatives may serve 2 consecutive 4-year terms before needing to step aside for at least a year. Rules for the election and service of the Standing Committee Members is unchanged. The President of Diocesan Council must be selected from the opposite order of the individual elected as President of Standing Committee. I am honored to have been elected to serve in this very challenging first year of our new Diocesan Council and most especially to be joined by the Rev. Dr. Moni McIntyre (St. Stephen's McKeesport), who is also a fellow member of the Standing Committee. Diocesan Council meets a minimum of 5 times per year and may meet in person or virtually. The Secretary of Diocesan Council may be selected from outside of council and we were very grateful that Frances Dannenberg (Redeemer, Squirrel Hill) agreed to continue in that role.

The remaining 6 members by virtue of their membership on the Standing Committee are: The Rev. Noah Evans (President of the Standing Committee), Lisa Brown, Secretary and Robert

Johnston (St. Paul's Mt. Lebanon), The Rev. Annis Rogers (St. Thomas, Northern Cambria), Steve Stagnitta (St. Andrew's, Highland Park), and The Rev. Neil Raman (Calvary, East Liberty)

Ex-Officio members included Andrew Roman (Chancellor), the Rev. Canon James Shoucair (Secretary of Convention), and Jerry Stephenson (President of the Board of Trustees), and until his retirement in September, The Rt. Rev. Dorsey McConnell (Bishop).

A number of other diocesan leaders are also invited to attend our meetings, including the canons, diocesan staff, chairs of diocesan organizations and committees (e.g., Committee on Constitution and Canons, the Commission on Ministry, Social Justice and Outreach Committee, etc.).

What did Diocesan Council do this year?

Since the last convention in October 2020, Council has met five times: December 10, 2020, and February 9, April 13, June 8, and September 14, 2021, all held virtually via Zoom. Our next meeting to elect officers for 2022 will be on December 14. In December, January, and February, we met in person at Calvary Episcopal Church, but all subsequent meetings were held virtually via Zoom. The extensive minutes of all these meetings are available to you upon request.

Initial business included the appointment of the chair (Robert Johnston) and members (the Rev. Dr. Moni McIntyre, Martha Shelby, Sheila Stagnitta, the Rev. Regis Smolko) of the Budget and Assessment Working Group (BAWG), the Nominating Committee (Joyce and Michael Donadee, the Rev. Julie Smith, Connie Davis, Adam Sprankle) which seeks election candidates to fill open diocesan positions, Diocesan appointment to the Growth Committee (Connie Davis), the Judge of Audits (Sheila Stagnitta) and Judge of Assessments (Martha Shelby).

Standard business at each of these meetings includes a written and/or oral report from the bishop and the canons, from the presidents of the Standing Committee and the Board of Trustees, from the chancellor, from the treasurer (both the treasurer's report and a property report), from the chair of the BAWG, and then various diocesan committees and organizations like the Compensation Committee, Growth Fund, Commission on Ministry, Children's Ministry, Trinity Cathedral, Episcopal Church Women (ECW) and the Social Justice and Outreach Committee. Since this year included the search for and election of a new bishop for our diocese, our responsibilities this year also included staying informed and passing resolutions and motions and rules of order to support the activities of the Bishop Nominating and Transition Committees, to support the virtual Electing and Diocesan Conventions.

In addition, Council completed its canonically required measures and appointments. This includes approving necessary clergy housing resolutions, the annual diocesan budget, reallocating dollars in the budget, and awarding a variety of Formation for Mission Grants, Mission Grants, Digital Grants, and granting relief (at various levels) from diocesan assessment, as recommended by BAWG. Also as a result of Diocesan Council realignment, the task of modifying our by-laws is underway.

We are blessed with some terrific diocesan staff and clergy who made our meetings so much better. I want to thank them and all the members of Council and the many others who attend and actively participate in our meetings so faithfully. Special thanks to the Rev. Canon Kim Karashin (Canon for Mission and Director of Administration), Canon Kathi Workman (Treasurer), Jo Ann McLaughlin-Klemencic (Administrative Specialist), the Rev. Jay Geisler (Canon for Recovery Ministries), the Rev. Eric McIntosh (Beloved Community Initiative) and the Rev. Natalie Hall (Canon for Evangelism and Faith Formation), who attend our meetings and facilitate so much of the good work the Diocese does. And a special salute to Andy Muhl who served in a pivotal role this year of virtual meetings and conventions that required technology that was new to us all and was key to our ability to continue to function and elect a new bishop during the ongoing pandemic.

It has been a privilege for me to serve as president of Council during this year of transition. I am so proud of all who raised their hand to volunteer for additional duties and committee membership this year, for those who faithfully submitted written reports in advance of our meetings, to Frances whose minutes were already meticulously prepared and to the Diocesan Staff and past president Jon Delano for kindly guiding me through this first year of leadership in our new Diocesan Council.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathy Baird
President, Diocesan Council