

2025 Diocesan Convention Report from the Canon to the Ordinary for Mission, Vitality, & Administration/Chief of Staff

Dear friends and colleagues,

I am thrilled to be serving in the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh. At the end of October, I will have been on staff for seven months. While the learning curve has been steep, I am immeasurably grateful to the members of the diocesan staff, governing bodies, and lay and clergy leaders who have offered me wisdom, patience, and grace as I climb.

During my time we have had conversations about how the diocesan staff can be responsive, efficient, and transparent. I firmly believe that our purpose is to serve our congregations, whether in stewarding shared assets or in helping individual churches thrive. This risks seeming obvious, but without congregations, there would be no need for a staff. Diocesan ministry is first and foremost a servant ministry.

Seven months is not long, but many things have happened:

- A newly formed Growth & Revitalization team was formed by the Bishop to address a major diocesan priority. We have met monthly as a large group and monthly as smaller working groups. The new communities group has been in conversation with Church of the Incarnation and the Episcopal Education Exploratory Committee led by Eileen Sharbaugh (EEEC). Another group is evaluating diocesan campus missions strategy, and a third group is working with congregations on revitalization. As of this date, three congregations have completed FaithX's Congregational Vitality Assessment and are considering appropriate next steps.
- A working group was formed by the Board of Trustees' Property Committee to consider options for the Donegal property formerly occupied by Bishop Duncan. After evaluating several possibilities, the group has made a recommendation to the Board.
- I have met with the EEEEC founding board and remain connected with their work, including participating in a Board retreat.
- I have managed processes for funding requests through the Clergy Assurance Fund, the Advancement Society, the Growth Fund, and diocesan financial assistance.
- In August the previous diocesan Treasurer resigned after serving seven months. I assumed the Treasurer's responsibilities at that time and was formally appointed in September. We have been working for many months to complete the audit, given the turnover in that position and the difficulty of scheduling additional time with the auditors.
- We have completed several rounds of employee self-evaluation, with movement toward goal-setting and monitoring. We will continue to strengthen goal accountability.

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- Under the direction of Andy Muhl, the diocesan archives have been moved to allow for building improvements at Trinity Cathedral. Work remains to reassemble the archives in a new location at the Cathedral.
- I have visited congregations on Sundays and shared special events. I am committed to visiting every parish in person.
- Recognizing how important it is to EDP, I joined the Bishop for staff commissioning as a way of visiting Sheldon Calvary Camp.

Faithfully,

Canon Joann Saylor