

DIOCESAN COUNCIL

The Diocesan Council exists by virtue of Article XI of the Constitution of the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh. Its responsibilities are summarized in Section 1 of Canon V as follows: “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.”

Since the 2014 Annual Convention, Council has met six times: December 1, 2014, and February 2, April 13, June 1, September 14, and October 5, 2015. Minutes of these meetings are or will be available from the diocesan office. In addition, in January, Council acted under Section 9 of Canon XVII (electronic voting) to approve a housing allowance for a member of diocesan staff; in June, approved via electronic vote a mission grant application from St. Thomas, Canonsburg; in July, approved via electronic vote four mission grant applications (Advent, St. Brendan’s, Calvary, and St. Paul’s, Kittanning) and one grant from the Diocesan Mission and Faithful Remnants budget for Marc Jacobson’s ministry in the Philippines; and in August, approved a housing allowance for the Rev. Dan Isadore and the term of office and compensation of the new Director of Administration, the Rev. Ted Babcock.

Meetings consist of reports from the Bishop, Canons to the Bishop, President of the Standing Committee, President of the Board of Trustees, Chancellor, Treasurer, and the chairs of various diocesan committees and organizations, and action items as needed.

December meeting: Council approved a revised 2014 budget; approved a grant to Good Shepherd, Hazelwood, for emergency plumbing repairs; approved the transfer of \$55,000 to be made available for mission grants during 2015; approved allocation of funds in support of the Millennium Development Goals pursuant to the Lambeth 0.7% resolution; and elected Council officers for 2015.

February meeting: Council approved revised assessments for St. Stephen’s, Wilkinsburg, and St. Thomas, Canonsburg, and revised the 2015 diocesan budget. Council appointed Kevin Hipolit, Emmanuel, North Side, to a three-year term on the Growth Fund Committee.

April meeting: Council approved the use of up to \$150,000 for the cost of Trinity Cathedral renovations until reimbursed from a pending bequest to the diocese; approved grants to Emmanuel, North Side, and Good Shepherd, Hazelwood; and approved a mission grant to Good Shepherd, Hazelwood.

June meeting: Council approved the Treasurer’s report as submitted, and approved five mission grants as recommended by the Budget and Assessment Working Group: St. Barnabas, Brackenridge; St. Paul’s, Mt. Lebanon; St. Matthew’s, Homestead; Atonement, Carnegie; and All Saints, Brighton Heights.

September and October meetings: Results not available for this report. Minutes will be available from the diocesan office.

The following Committees have continued to function over the past year: Budget and Assessment Working Group, chaired by Kathy Baird of St. Peter’s, Blairsville; Social Justice and Outreach, chaired by Nancy Lapp of Holy Cross, Homewood; Resolutions, chaired by Jeff Dunbar, St. Paul’s, Mt. Lebanon; Nominations, co-chaired by the Rev. Vicente Santiago, Advent, Jeannette, and Jon Delano, St. Paul’s, Mt. Lebanon; and Compensation, chaired by Jim Neral, Christ Church, North Hills. Joe Baird, St. Peter’s, Blairsville, serves as Judge of Assessments, and Linda Getts, St. Thomas, Oakmont, serves as Assistant Judge of Audits.

Report of the Social Justice and Outreach Committee

Since our last Convention report, the Social Justice and Outreach Committee has undertaken several projects and promoted a number of causes, employing various forms of publicity and personal contact.

The Community Gardens, aided by our grants last summer, resulted in significant contributions to food banks and the needs of participating churches and organizations. Additional funds for these grants were provided by Outreach committees from St. Paul's, Mt. Lebanon (last year, and again, this year) and Christ Church, North Hills. The number of gardens and grants we offer has been growing each year, and we plan to continue this program.

In the fall, we sponsored a panel discussion, "May Peace be with You," a holy discussion on gun violence. It was held on Saturday, October 25, at Calvary, and about 40 persons and friends of the diocese attended. Chuck Weiss planned the program and moderated the panel, which included representatives from Cease Fire PA, the Center for Victims, and the Pittsburgh Police.

We provided the optimum number of volunteers needed for our day at the Food Bank, November 22. As usual, this is an opportunity for fellowship among churches of our diocese as well as the service provided.

Our recommendations for the distribution of 2014 Lambeth funds included: \$1000 to Episcopal Relief & Development to respond to the Ebola emergency, \$1000 to Episcopal Appalachian Ministries, and \$1,053 for Jeremiah's Place. Our recommendations were accepted.

In January, we were one of the sponsors of the diocesan-wide baby shower for Jeremiah's Place. This was a great success and this new ministry is going well.

Also in January, we were one of the sponsoring organizations of the satellite Trinity Wall Street conference, "Creating Common Ground," hosted by St. Paul's, Mt. Lebanon. This was preceded by the November showing of the film, "Inequality for All," sponsored with PEP, as a "teaser" for the upcoming Trinity Wall Street conference.

Our committee also serves as a conduit for special needs and programs that come to our attention. In the past year these have included Operation Safety Net (which provides meals for street people particularly during bad winter weather); PIIN's various advocacy and action programs; ECW's collection for Christmas on the River through the Seaman's Church Institute; the Greater Pittsburgh Literary Council (for which we ran a special appeal for volunteers in *Grace Happens*); Rural and Migrant Ministries, which we have supported in the past through Lambeth funds; and, we made a special donation to the emergency needs of the Coal County Ministry from our budget. The work of the Diocese of Jerusalem in the Holy Land was brought to our attention by a representative from the American Friends of the Diocese. This resulted in a letter request to our diocesan delegates to General Convention asking for their studied consideration of the resolutions concerning justice and peace in Israel and Palestine.

Report of the Resolutions Committee

As of the time of submission of this report, no resolutions have been offered. The Committee will take appropriate action on any resolutions presented after the date of the submission of this report.

Report of the Budget and Assessment Working Group

This group meets regularly to evaluate requests from parishes for reduced assessments or grants funded by the diocesan operating budget. It then recommends action to be taken by Diocesan Council. Members also work with the Bishop, Treasurer, and Board of Trustees to develop the diocesan budget for submission to Annual Convention. On occasion, members of the group work with parishes to assist with financial issues. Current members of this committee include: Kathy Baird, St. Peter's, Blairsville, Chair;

Joe Baird, St. Peter's, Blairsville; Courtney Harder, St. David's, Peters Township; the Rev. Vicente Santiago, Advent, Jeannette; and the Rev. Lou Hays, St. Paul's, Mt. Lebanon.

I would like to thank all members of Diocesan Council for their faithful service since last year's Annual Convention, and those who regularly attend and participate in Council meetings. It has been a privilege serving as President of Council and with Terlene Brown, Vice President, and the Rev. Carol Henley, Secretary.

Respectfully submitted,
The Rev. Lou Hays
President of Diocesan Council