

Diocesan Council Report to Deanery
September, 2013
(Notes from Spring and September Meetings)

Bishop's Time

Both bishops are on the road to recovery. Bishop Tom continues to undergo treatment. The tumor is still there but is smaller. He is taking 2 days off a week and is planning only one event on Saturday and one on Sunday. Gayle is stepping up more.

As this is Tom's last year, he has planned no new projects. He is concerned with how we respond to the situation in Syria, but he believes there is space for that.

B-Peace is exceeding expectations. 700 Episcopalians of all ages from parishes all over the diocese participated in the Spring Walk. This event offers a model for the rest of the diocese. Tom was present at a hearing at the State House. He hopes to have influence around the issues of violence and gun control.

Diocesan Resource Day is scheduled for Saturday, September 28 in Roxbury. He is encouraging all parishes to send at least 10 members.

Budget

There is not much change from last year, about \$200. We now have a working model that can be used from year to year. Council voted to accept for presentation to Convention.

Together Now Campaign

The Together Now Campaign has exceeded its goal of \$20 million. Another \$12 million was raised in separate capital campaigns in various parishes.

Gun Violence Resolution

The Council voted to be a part of the Mass. Coalition to Prevent Gun Violence. There were some varying questions regarding our participation. But it was pointed out that last year's Convention created a Taskforce on Violence and that our participation on the State Coalition was an embodiment of that resolution. The Taskforce was asked to report back to Council.

Assessment Coordination

There were inquiries received from six parishes for assessment relief. Four applications were completed and accepted. The Committee did not actively recruit parishes other than **to ask deanery representatives to announce to their parishes to apply if they needed help**. Information also went to parishes when they received their assessment letters. **The Committee will follow a similar path next year.**

Convention

The Annual Diocesan Convention will be only one day this year. Its theme is *Gratitude and Celebration* Tom will present two meditations and Gayle will preach. Five resolutions will be brought forth – B-Peace, Carbon Tax, Environmentally Responsible Investing.

Some elections are highly contested and others have no opponents.

Attendance is encouraged for the preconvention meetings where the candidates will be present, the budget and resolutions presented.

Staffing

Ellen Stewart has been hired as a Communications Assistant. She has been a big help already to Tracy.

Three consultants (who are on the CREDO faculty) are working with staff to help them through the transition process. It is the role of Diocesan Council to also help.

Bishop Election/Transition Process

The Standing Committee which is overseeing the election/transition process met with Bishop Clayton Matthews. There are not many rules of the road. Canons are actually thin on electing bishops. We work with knowledge of best practices from those dioceses which have gone through it. However, Massachusetts is very different from other dioceses.

Two committees – Discernment and Transition – have been formed to lead this process which will take eighteen months to accomplish. By January, the Discernment Committee will have four to five vetted candidates to present to the diocese. There will be a Special Convention in April to elect with the consecration to take place in September, 2014.

Council has been debating how to fund this process as no money has been put aside in previous budgets for this purpose.

Four options -

- asking the Trustees of Donations for some money from their surplus
- drawing some from the Diocesan Unrestricted Endowment
- **adding a tiered assessment to parishes over three years (\$100 for small, \$250 for medium and \$750 for large parishes)**
- or combining a couple of the above options.

Parishes are already paying their regular assessments, campaign pledges and annual fund donations, so asking for an additional assessment may be asking too much. A decision will be made at a later meeting.

About \$550,000 over the next three years is needed for discernment expenses, including consultant services, listening events, administrative costs, and transition costs which include election, consecration, and dual salaries until such time Tom retires.

Money will be put aside in future annual budgets for the future bishop elections.

Status of Parishes

Bishop Bud reported on Grace Chapel in Brockton which is currently an outreach ministry of St. John's in Holbrook. The hope is that Grace Chapel will become a "Ministry of the Diocese", a possible new category, in the future.

St. Paul's in Peabody has merged with Calvary in Danvers to become All Saints', North Shore.

Money was voted from Use of Proceeds Fund to support St. John's in Saugus as it works towards sustainability.

Funds were also voted to support St. Luke's Chelsea's remodel project to help the parish become better suited to serve the community through its outreach ministries, including an enlarged Food Pantry.

Council met in September in Allston. The property there that once housed St. Luke's and St. Margaret's is being developed into a new model of ministry.

- Phase 1 - The rectory has been renovated to provide living space for an intentional community
- Phase 2 – the Church will become an adaptive worship / training center.
- Phase 3 – The parish hall will be come a residential area and office space.

The three building/ phases of growth will allow for three distinct phases for growth and renewal, the end result of which is a revenue-generating, financially sustainable community.

The Council was impressed by the tour of the property, with the work that has been done, and what they plan to do. The Council voted to give \$50K from the proceeds of the closing of Christ Church, Somerville to hire an architect for the next phase of design development.

Use of Proceeds

There has been much discussion over the last few months as to how to use the proceeds from the sale of church property. There was a process in place which proved to be too cumbersome. The Council finally decided to go on a case by case request basis. **Council Representatives are urged to inform their deaneries that money may be available from this fund to support special parish projects.**

Situation in Syria

With a population of 23 million people, six to eight million have no place to live. Many children have no place to go to school. Military intervention will not help as there are six different factions fighting for control. People need cash for rent and food.

***Note: Please feel free to respond to me regarding any information in this report, especially that which is in boldface..**

Respectfully Submitted by:

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