

Diocesan Council Report to the 229th Annual Convention

Regular meetings of Diocesan Council were held during the past year. Minutes of these meetings are on file in the Archives at Diocesan House and are available for reference.

All financial actions of the Diocesan Council are included in the reports of the Treasurer of the Diocese and written reports of the committees and departments represented by members of Diocesan Council are attached to the minutes.

Highlights from the Diocesan Council meetings held January – December, 2012 are as follows:

- Proposed suggested changes in wording in the Joint Task Force Report to Convention and approved the policy recommendations as amended.
- Recommended that the Investment Advisory Committee develop a gift and bequest acceptance policy.
- Accepted the Report on Disposition of Assets from Closed Churches and recommended the establishment of a separate DIT investment account to hold the cash proceeds from sale of the assets detailed in the report, as well as those from future such sales, pending recommendation to next year's Convention as to their proper disposition.
- Authorized Canon Jones and Canon Powers to write a document suitable for broad distribution detailing the procedures for sale of church property in the case of a closed church, who has control over the resulting funds, and any ambiguities or inconsistencies in the Diocesan canons or between such and New Jersey law/statutes.
- Received report of the impending sale of Grace Church, Elizabeth property (closing scheduled for January 19th, 2012) and pending lease/purchase agreement for Holy Communion, Fair Haven property under negotiation with Outreach Red Bank.
- Approved the Revised Preliminary Budget for 2012. Agreed to urgent email appeal to all congregations regarding Fair Share assessments and agreed to make calls to follow up on the appeal with all congregations.
- Received update on progress of the Episcopal Election Committee.
- Received the Report on the Disposition of Assets from Closed Churches.
- Received the Report of the Standing Committee on Constitutions and Canons.
- Received the Preliminary Report of the Committee on Resolutions.
- Thanked the members of the Class of 2012: Mr. Morris Anderson, The Rev. Valerie L. Balling, Ms. Cheryl D. Browne, The Rev. Brian K. Burgess, Prof. Noreen Duncan, and The Rev. Paul A. Van Sant.
- Welcomed the new members of the Class of 2015 and the members filling unexpired terms. A brief orientation was offered.
- Diocesan Council Appointments were made for 2012:

Visitation Committee Chair	Donna Devlin
Recording Secretary	Canon Constance White
Corresponding Secretary	The Rev. Karin R. Mitchell
Finance & Budget Committee	Paul Cooper
	The Rev. Dr. Gina Walsh-Minor
Board of Missions Representative	Dr. Karen Bemis
	The Rev. Justin A. Falciani
Audit Committee Representatives	Herbert Geiss
	Paul Wolfgang
- Approved a request from the Elizabeth Fund for Iglesia San Jose, Elizabeth, for \$5,000 toward the repairs of its organ.
- Received a Report from The Rev. Canon John Sosnowski, Canon to the Ordinary, on a meeting of diocesan representatives to discuss strategies surrounding development of a Covenant on Vitality and Viability of Congregations in the Diocese of New Jersey.
- Received a Report from the Chair of the Accountability and Fair Share Task Force.

- Received an overview on Spring Initiatives of the Episcopal Election Committee, Accountability and Fair Share Task Force, and the Right Onward Visioning Committee and agreed by consensus to have all three groups report fully to Council at Council's September meeting.
- Accepted a recommendation that a list of outstanding motions that require action be attached to each set of minutes to recap issues that still require action.
- Received a report from the Loan and Grant Committee and authorized the Committee to adjust its policies to allow for acceptance of applications to refinance bank loans through the VIM Loan Fund.
- Accepted a report from the Millennium Development Goals Grant Committee and approved its recommendation for the 2012 program which will make grants to parishes and other Episcopal organizations of up to \$500 with matching funds raised by the grantee. Said \$500 limit to be reviewed once applications are received. The Council also decided that future approaches for this program will be approved each year. Application materials will be placed on the diocesan website and proposals will be due in the fall.
- Received a report from the Loan and Grant Committee and authorized a ten year loan for \$12,000 to the Church of the Holy Spirit, Tuckerton for a new air conditioning unit for its sanctuary, to be drawn equally from the R. Bowden Shepherd Fund and the Capital & Revolving Fund and carrying a "blended" interest rate of 2.5%, payments to be made monthly and each payment credited in equal amounts to each fund.
- Authorized the reduction in the interest rate on the Diocesan VIM loan to St. Simeon-by-the-Sea, North Wildwood to 2.5%, contingent upon proof of audit, sufficient bonding, and signed vestry approval.
- Authorized the distribution of \$24,000 from the St. James Fund to St. Augustine's, Atlantic City in support of its various outreach programs per their proposal.
- Authorized the distribution of \$28,702 in accumulated dividends from the Elizabeth Fund to St. John's Church, Elizabeth in support of its feeding program from now to the end of 2012.
- Authorized the formation of a Diocesan Council subcommittee to review the issue of disposition of assets in situations of closed or merged congregations, make recommendations and determine the necessary canonical changes to implement the recommendations.
- Appointed Rev. Matthew Tucker to fill the vacancy on Diocesan Council created by the resignation of Rev. Christopher Rodriguez, until the 2013 Diocesan Convention.
- Appointed Steve Sroka to serve as the lay representative from Diocesan Council on the Board of Missions replacing Dr. Karen Bemis who resigned due to time constraints.
- Received a report from the Loan and Grant Committee and authorized a grant of \$3,000 from the Capital and Revolving Fund to San Jose, Elizabeth, for electrical work, as specified in the contract for such work, to be done at the Day Care Center/Parish Hall.
- Received a report from the Loan and Grant Committee and authorized the Loan and Grant Committee to ask the Committee on Constitution and Canons to raise the canonical limit on requests for grants through the Loan and Grant Committee from \$10,000 to \$25,000.
- Received a preliminary report from the Accountability and Fair Share Task Force on its recommendations for a new fair share formula. The report included reading of the charge, a presentation of the survey results, the description of the recommended formula, and a summary of the impact of the new formula on congregations. The Task Force will present its preliminary recommendations at Parish Leadership Day and at the Fall Convocation meetings.
- Received a report from the Vitality Task Force and endorsed in principal the Vitality Task Force recommendation that the Diocese commit to a "Covenant For Life," specifying proposed characteristics for vitality and viability that all congregations would agree to and covenant with each other as goals to achieve. The Task Force has formed this Covenant of Life around 3 V's: Vision, Vitality and Viability.
- Approved, under the Millennium Development Goals Matching Grant Program (MDG), twenty-two projects, from sixteen congregations benefiting ten organizations, for grants ranging from \$200 to \$500 for a total of \$10,080.
- Instructed the Finance & Budget Committee to include in the 2013 budget, that it develops for Diocesan Council approval, a line item for the Millennium Development Goals (MDG).
- Recommended to the Finance & Budget Committee that the Board of Mission's budget request of \$299,000 be reviewed for inclusion in the 2013 Diocesan budget to be approved by Diocesan Council

- Received a report from staff on diocesan activities in support of those affected by Hurricane Sandy.
- Authorized the donation of the remaining funds in the Diocesan Millennium Development Goals budget for 2012 to Episcopal Relief and Development (ERD).
- Set the 2013 budget for Mission Congregations at \$299,000.
- Approved, on the recommendation of the Loan & Grant Committee, a loan from the Venture in Mission Fund of \$140,000 at 4% with monthly payments for fifteen years to refinance the balance of the current bank mortgage of St. Martin's, Bridgewater and to fund roof repairs and parking lot paving in accordance with the bids submitted.
- Approved, on the recommendation of the Loan & Grant Committee, the conversion of the \$8,143 balance of the loan to St. Mark's, Williamstown from the Capital & Revolving Fund into a grant, also from the Capital & Revolving Fund.
- Agreed that the Diocesan Council will meet, after the 2013 Convention, in an area affected by Hurricane Sandy.
- Accepted written and oral reports as presented.

Respectfully submitted,
Mary Ann Rhoads/Constance White
Recording Secretaries