

**Executive Council meeting**  
**May 8, 2021**  
**Meeting via Zoom Call**

*These are the official minutes, approved at the June 26, 2021 meeting.*

**Members Present:** Dr. Mary Ellen Brown, Jeffrey Dreyer, Ms. Lara Dreyer, Mr. Dick Frey, Ms. Rose Anne Grasty, Ms. Sally Hardgrove, Mr. Michael McGraw, The Rev. Rebecca Nickel, The Rev. Jan Oller, Ms. Mariann Scott, Ms. Susan Steigerwald, The Rev. Suzanne Wille, Canon Brendan O’Sullivan-Hale, The Rev. Canon Kristin White, Dr. Laurel Cornell, the Rt. Rev. Jennifer Baskerville-Burrows, Ms. Janet Brinkworth.

**Members Absent:** The Rev. Mary Bargiel, The Rev. Paul Jacobson, Mr. Isaiah Kuch, The Rev. C. Davies Reed, Mr. John Steele, Mr. Sean Sullivan, The Rev. Holly Rankin Zaher

The meeting was called to order at 10:03am by Bishop Jennifer Baskerville-Burrows who led us in a morning devotion.

Ms. Janet Brinkworth confirmed those members present and a quorum was met.

**Organizing for business** Canon Kristin White stated the diocesan mission and the norms for Executive Council meetings and work.

**2022 Budget Process.** Canon Brendan O’Sullivan-Hale presented the 2020 process in the absence of Budget Formation’s chair, The Rev. C. Davies Reed. He noted that it is not easy to forecast what post-pandemic expenses will look like. He mentioned several items to illustrate this: there was dramatically less money used for programs because meetings were not in person and the travel budget is also very low compared to previous years for the same reason. The pandemic made clear that we can operate effectively in a virtual format for many, though not all, matters, so 2022 and future budgets may not return all the way to pre-pandemic levels in these and similar expense items. Canon Brendan mentioned that the reconstituted Mission Strategy Committee will be administering new grants in 2022, and the budget will need to account for that. The Budget committee will meet soon to discuss these and other items in greater detail. Canon Brendan reminded the Council that the diocesan canons were changed to keep us from having to meet a budget deadline of late spring.

In response to inquiries, Canon Brendan shared that there are 16-18 churches receiving aid, and some churches that have historically received aid have been able to step away from it. The new grants program will begin in 2022; to be eligible, churches must participate in the College for Congregational Development (CCD) within its first two years. Co-conveners have been identified for the Committee on Mission Strategy. The Executive Council will be the body that receives the reports and updates of the Committee on Mission Strategy both as they initiate their work and on an ongoing basis.

**Revised guidelines for In-Person Worship.** Bishop Jennifer reminded the Council that the most recent revision was discussed at our previous meeting (March 27, 2021), and the revision was published. She has planned for another revision in June and continues to discuss this with various

groups around the diocese. The Bishop reminded us that the pandemic is still in our midst, and we are being cautious.

### **Leadership and Diocesan Updates: Bishop Jennifer**

- She feels we are hitting a sweet spot by the work we are doing and the way we are working together. There are other dioceses that have slowed their workload during the pandemic. She is encouraged that we are working in deep and substantive ways in projects and in our communities.
- Mission Strategy and Global Missions committees are moving forward. There is a lot of good care happening. Global partnerships are beginning to realign and deepen, such as with Brasilia. The Cathedral is concluding its relationship with the Diocese of Southeast Mexico. She mentioned that typically individual churches do not have relationships outside of diocesan partnerships and the Diocese of Indianapolis does not have an official relationship with the Diocese of Southeast Mexico. There is currently conflict within the Diocese of Southeast Mexico which may become more public in coming weeks. Bishop Jennifer mentioned she has been involved with this diocese since her days working in the Diocese of Chicago (which has an official companion relationship with the Diocese of Southeast Mexico). The diocese will communicate a clear response to the conflict when and if appropriate. The Global Missions committee is informed.
- The Bishop reminded the Council that the Rev. Joanna Benskin will be ordained to priesthood on June 5, 2021.

### **Canon Kristin.**

- Diocesan anti-racism work continues in multiple areas. The April 17 workshop with Dr. Catherine Meeks included 73 people from 22 churches in our diocese. Sacred Ground has trained approximately 200 people. The fifth workshop in the ongoing music series, Brave Worship, was April 22. The sixth and final session will be May 27. The Rev. Cathy Scott is working to coordinate a 2 ½ day training to fulfill the requirement for ordination and to be offered to other diocesan leaders who choose to take part. The Racial Justice and Education Team are working alongside these events. Their page on the diocesan website has many resources.
- Canon Kristin mentioned she is also involved and working on the Indiana Avenue project.
- Members of Canticle Communications (the diocese' communications team) met with the Executive Team regarding the work being done in preparation for the new website. Canticle remarked that the consistency in understanding and practice of the diocesan mission across the diocese is remarkable. The new website should be ready by the end of 2021. Executive Council will see the new website before it is live.
- The College of Congregational Development (CCD) will be in-person at Waycross in July. Safety measures have been implemented including only having individual rooms and watching capacity restrictions.
- Canon Kristin reported on Spring neighborhood meetings that have occurred and are upcoming. The Racial Justice and Education team are reaching out to neighborhoods to share information and resources, to discuss A Covenant to Root Out Racism, and to invite volunteers from all neighborhoods to participate in the work of the UBE resolution approved at the 2020 diocesan convention.

- Canon Kristin remarked that she is working on the request she received to have some small group break-out meetings during Executive Council meetings.

#### Canon Brendan.

- Canon Brendan reported that all parochial reports are now filed, and he mentioned how important it is to be able to compare numbers from year to year. He reminded the Council that there were questions on this year's report related to the pandemic and commitment to anti-racism, and as he looked quickly through, he read some interesting things.
- Regarding the Thriving Congregations grant, a new name has been set for this group: Church Buildings for Collaborative Partnership (CBCP) to more succinctly identify the work of the group. They have identified 20 congregations between 2 dioceses to participate in this study. As a reminder, there are four groups involved in this partnership: the Diocese of Indianapolis, the Diocese of Northern Indiana, Partners for Sacred Spaces, and Indiana Landmarks.
- There has been additional discussion regarding the Community purchasing alliance (utilities, copier contracts, solar panels) which was mentioned at the previous meeting on March 27. The building assessments as part of CBCP provide an opportunity to collect information regarding the economic imprint of their buildings.
- The Rev. Holly Zaher & Canon Brendan will conclude the Spring training for Faithful Innovation Learning Communities in the coming week. The training has proven well-suited to an online format, and future iterations will likely be online even post-pandemic.
- Registration for the Iona Pilgrimage 2022 has opened and is filling up, with only two rooms left. Canon Brendan and the Rev. Cathy Scott have been working on this.
- A milestone has occurred for online giving to congregations using the diocesan website—more than \$320,000 since March 2020. Canon Brendan is encouraged that so many are using this system.
- The annual Indy Pride Festival is June 12 and will be a virtual event. The virtual format is not well-suited to the way the diocese hopes to relate; we are seeking alternate ways to be supportive.
- Trinity Haven had their ribbon cutting ceremony last Friday (4/30/2021). Canon Brendan said it was a great event and long-awaited. He noted that Trinity Haven has several staff who identify as non-binary, but all of the lay salutations in the medical insurance enrollment form are gendered, and the salutation field is mandatory. CPG has not responded to this issue, so as an alternative approach, Trinity Haven has turned to the available non-gendered clergy salutations, landing on “the venerable doctor” as the preferred option until CPG attends to the issue more deliberately.

*Took a short break.*

The Bishop advised the Council that she will travel at end of the month to Montana to visit Bishop Marty Stebbins there as part of her responsibility as a Bishop Coach. She also announced that she will have her first in-person visitation (since March 2020) on Pentecost, May 23, 2021, at St George's in West Terre Haute. She will balance in-person and virtual visitations going forward. She will be meeting with Bishop Sparks from the Diocese of Northern Indiana on Monday (5/10/2021), having not met in person in over a year.

**Approval of Minutes.** There were no additions or corrections. A motion for the minutes from March 27, 2021, to be approved was made by Dr. Mary Ellen Brown, with a second by the Rev. Rebecca Nickel. APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY. None opposed and no abstentions.

**Financial Business.** Canon Brendan indicated that the March financials sent to all in advance, indicates the diocese is doing better than expected. Apportionment assistance was requested by 11 congregations. 9 requested all 6 months and 2 others requested less than that. It is likely that more requests may be made. Expenses continue to be depressed, consistent with continued low levels of in-person activity. He reminded the Council that adaptability is important, and the budget had to be revised twice last year and this may be the case this year also.

**Indiana Avenue Update:** Canon Brendan indicated that much has happened. He reminded the Council that “OG Ink” is an informal group of people seeing that something happens on the Indiana Avenue site that honors both black history and the future of Indiana Avenue. The Diocese has been participating with them. OG Ink is now incorporated. The Diocese is to be a fiscal sponsor, but to keep both organizations at arm’s length from one another, each must have different legal counsel. OG Ink has retained an attorney referred by Indiana Landmarks, Inc. Appraisals have been received of 719 Indiana Avenue and the parking lot of St Philips. (The appraisals were 4.65 million and for 3 million, respectively, -both of which seem high to Canon Brendan). OG Ink has been in conversation with Lilly Endowment, though there is no indication yet of their participation. Other potential financial participants include the City of Indianapolis and Lafayette Square, a private equity firm focused on real estate developments in disinvested communities with financial backing from Morgan Stanley. There was a gathering set for June 8 for community stakeholders, but it was postponed until July because the focus needs to be on site acquisition.

The Rev. Lang Lowrey, who has had a leadership role in multiple high-profile real estate dealings around the Episcopal Church, will meet with Bishop Jennifer and Canon Brendan in the coming week, to provide guidance on how to proceed. To date the conversations have been conceptual, but more concrete plans are needed. The Standing committee meeting is on Wednesday (May 12, 2021) and Canon Brendan will advise them of this. This could begin to move faster and indicated there might be a future, quickly called meeting for Standing Committee and Executive Council.

Canon Brendan further advised the Council that there is a balloon payment due in August by Madam Walker Theater and they want to sell the property to make this payment. Our group is trying to obtain the property to then engage the community for future plans. The Council had some questions including whether the Investment and Finance Committee agrees to this plan (they do). The Bishop concluded this discussion indicating this is an exciting endeavor and often a project like this will move very slowly.

**Treasurer’s Report.** Dr. Laurel Cornell spoke about the Investment and Finance committee’s search for a financial advisor. They decided to hire a paid professional and are considering working with Felipe Witchger of the Community Purchasing Alliance and will have a small committee to interview investment firms to find one that fits with the committee’s needs. They plan to have a new advisor in place by year’s end. In addition to the standard array of questions the Request for Proposal (RFP) will ask firms how they encourage and support diversity in employees and how they could create an opportunity for local investments in the community. These are unusual questions for an RFP, but this is being reviewed. Canon Brendan indicated

that we are seeking to align our finances with our values and are looking for someone who is aligned with the diocese and able to grow with us. The Bishop indicated her support that this is happening and aligning our investment values with our moral and legal values.

The Treasurer's Report was emailed to all in advance. A motion to approve the Treasurer's Report was made by Mariann Scott, with a second from Michael McGraw. APPROVED FOR AUDIT UNANIMOUSLY, none opposed, no abstentions.

**Old Business.** The Bishop indicated that the 2021 diocesan convention will be a hybrid offering with both virtual and in-person participation at the Embassy Suites and Conference Center in Plainfield. Delegates will take part in person along with clergy and staff; others will participate electronically. There is sufficient space to offer an appropriately distanced one-day convention (11/13/2021). The hotel waived convention contract requirements for rooms and meals. Canon Kristin has indicated that a convention survey is going out at the end of May to inquire about how many people plan to attend in-person or virtually. There will be no workshops or children's program offered. Workshops may be replaced with a one-on-one conversation between the Bishop and a special guest. The Bishop remarked that moving back to in-person meetings will take time to work out all details to make it work. Canon Kristin also noted that nomination forms should be available in the next few weeks and to please consider untapped leaders who might serve on a committee.

**New Business** – none offered.

The Council concluded with wishing a "Happy Birthday" to Jeffrey Dreyer. The meeting was then adjourned at noon.

Respectfully submitted,  
Janet Brinkworth