

*These are the official minutes as approved by Executive Council on 9/20/2025.*

## **Executive Council Meeting Minutes**

**July 12, 2025**

Meeting conducted via Zoom

10:00am – 1:00pm

**Members present:** The Rt. Rev. Jennifer Baskerville-Burrows, Canon Brendan O’Sullivan Hale, The Rev. Canon Giulianna Cappelletti Gray, The Rev. Allen Rutherford, Mr. Mike Staubitz, The Rev. Andrea Arsene, Mr. Dick Frey, The Rev. Jennifer Oldstone-Moore, The Rev. Karen Sullivan, Ms. Joan Amati, The Rev. C. Davies Reed, Mr. Greg Seamon, The Rev. Jim Said, Ms. Connie Betts, Mr. Todd Relue, Dr. Laurel Cornell

**Members in absence:** The Rev. Dr. Jason Haddox, Ms. Amy Dobbs, Canon Mariann Scott

**Guest:** Ms. Sara Gunter

The meeting was called to order by the Rt. Rev. Jennifer Baskerville-Burrows. The Bishop led members of the Executive Council in an opening devotion.

### **Organizing for Business**

Canon Giulianna Cappelletti-Gray reviewed the Diocesan Mission and the Executive Council norms. The norms were accepted by the Council members.

### **Reunification Discernment Update**

Bishop Jennifer updated that the desire of the Reunification Discernment Committee is to slow down and strengthen relationships before voting. Mr. Greg Seamon and Ms. Joan Amati were not present at the last Reunification Discernment Committee meeting.

The Rev. Allen Rutherford noted that the models created by the committee are sufficient for now. Please continue to urge folks to go to [EpiscopalIndiana.org](http://EpiscopalIndiana.org) to better inform themselves. The committee is discerning the best time for voting. He sent a list of committees, commissions, and groups from both dioceses. How can we help overlapping groups to meet and imagine how priorities can merge? We want to be clear that the goal is not to eliminate programs/partnerships, but rather, broaden relationships.

Bishop Jennifer, Bishop Doug Sparks and the consultant will work together to determine what this pause/slowing down looks like for each diocese. We need to continue to do the deep work we are doing on reunification, but still attend to our diocesan budgets, convention, and other matters until a vote is completed. There is no current date set for voting, but the longer we wait, the closer we get to Bishop Spark’s retirement. The Diocese of Northern Indiana will have to plan for this in some way.

Canon Guiliana noted that there may not be a clear understanding that a vote will not take place. Mr. Dick Frey noted that some may not even understand that there is a vote. Joan suspects that some congregants don’t feel empowered in the decision.

### **Financial**

Treasurer’s report was presented by Dr. Laurel Cornell.

Canon Brendan O'Sullivan Hale noted that the plan for Good Samaritan repayment of debt will require input from the Executive Council. A document will be available in time for the September meeting. The central idea will ensure that debt repayment doesn't overwhelm the Good Samaritan budget. When asked, Canon Brendan noted that the finance committee can make loans of up to \$100,000 without the approval of Executive Council.

The budget formation process for 2026 is moving forward; planning without reunification in consideration. The committee is also continuing with Lilly grant initiatives. Rev. C. Davies Reed explained that he will meet with Canon Brendan before meeting with Finance Committee later in the week. The Executive Council will approve a final budget at the September meeting. Canon Brendan is delayed in calculating apportionments for congregations this year, due to changes in the parochial report. Since financial statements were not part of the parochial report this year, Canon Brendan requested congregations send them separately. Mr. Mike Staubitz inquired about consistency of the canons and the new parochial reports. Canon Brendan noted that we may have to change our canons to accommodate the change in the parochial report. Canon Brendan noted that there is no fair way to determine apportionment.

Dr. Cornell thanked Rev. Reed for his work on budget models for reunification.

### **Waycross Financial Request**

Ms. Sara Gunter explained that looking at the history of debt during COVID, has provided a window into seeing what it costs to keep Waycross Camp & Conference Center afloat without income. It was also discovered that some past bills were delayed. Ms. Gunter is paying all bills in a timely manner and catching up with delayed debts. Sara noted that she is getting a better handle on what it takes to keep Waycross solvent. A lack of true expense reports from 2024 makes it difficult to predict. 2023 audit is completed and 990 forms for the past three years have also been filed and paid.

This year, five HVAC units have failed. Many were obsolete because coolant is no longer available. Other unexpected expenses include tree removal and kitchen duct repairs. Many facilities at Waycross are the same age, so they are failing at the same time. Waycross also incurred expenses for legal support regarding staffing issues.

Ms. Gunter requested \$75,000 in addition to budgeted support.

She noted that among the many challenges faced this year, Waycross is thriving in many ways. It had the best camp attendance since 2017. There are many new events and programs offered that are drawing in people.

Rev. Karen Sullivan shared a reminder that we own Waycross. We should look at updating it appropriately so it can continue to offer its gifts to us and its guests. The Rev. Reed asked where these funds would be drawn from. Canon Brendan noted that he will draw it from the budget and then go back to other committees. The Rev. Reed asked if there will be other requests later this year. Sara predicts that there will be another request in December with a possible total deficit of 150K

Ms. Gunter offered an update on the Bear Creek property. The property valuation is \$650,000. A Lilly grant for \$750,000 is pending. She is expecting an answer in September. The Phase 2 grant does not list prop purchase, but Phase 3 does. Sara is seeking clarity on that.

Mr. Dick Fry asked if we should change the planned annual support for Waycross to reflect true needs. Sara hoped to have a clearer understanding of true needs very soon, based on all the financial work that is being done.

Bishop Jennifer noted that Waycross will never operate within a set budget. It is our goal to get close and we are much closer than we have been in many years. Given the age of the buildings, we can anticipate that there will be many repairs in the near future.

The Rev. Allen Rutherford made a motion to allocate \$100,000 in diocese funds to assist Waycross to meet immediate needs. The Rev. Jim Said noted that Sara is doing an amazing job of finding income while still hosting a record camp season. The Rev. Said seconded the motion. The motion was approved. Rev. Jennifer Oldstone-Moore abstained as we could not determine her response due to technical issues with Zoom.

### **Diocesan Convention 2025**

This year, we will have a one-day convention. The diocese will have an election of deputation. It will take place in Plainfield as it has over the last two years. The theme is a celebration of the work we are doing. The guest speaker will celebrate that. Canon Brendan noted that some votes on canonical amendments may take place. These changes are based on reunification work.

### **Executive Council Statement**

Bishop Jennifer appreciates the work that has gone into writing this statement. How do you speak when things keep shifting? The Rev. Andrea Arsene shared a new version in Realm. She expressed gratitude for the input of others who worked on this. The breadth of difference across the diocese was profound. This group worked hard to incorporate those feelings as well as our baptismal covenant. The Rev. Oldstone-Moore is worried about the statement as it is. She was unable to speak within the Zoom format so she asked to table the conversation. Bishop Jennifer did not feel a sense of urgency, but she understands the group would like to finish the work.

Bishop Jennifer also noted that several state-level communications staff have been fired, so communication about activity at the state level is being limited. Also, new changes in state law allows clergy to endorse candidates from the pulpit. She does not recommend that clergy endorse political candidates from the pulpit.

A ten-minute break was taken

### **Discussion of the Executive Council Statement continued.**

The reduction of funding for public radio and TV means that there will be a lack of information available to rural areas underserved by news sources.

The Bishop reported that the repeal of Johnson Amendment means it is possible for religious organizations to endorse candidates for office. The Bishop will not be doing this, as it is highly divisive. The Bishop will make a statement about this repeal.

We need to ask why the Executive Council is making such a statement. The Statement is based on our Baptismal Covenant. Still it is difficult to make a statement that incorporates so many different views.

It is unusual for the Executive Council to speak in this fashion. The issues change from week to week. The Bishop will continue to speak to the issues as they arise. It is important that the Executive Council make a statement, but it is not pressing, as these issues will continue to arise.

The subgroup has worked hard on the statement. They are asked to return with another draft of the Statement at the September Executive Council meeting. Members of the subcommittee are Allen, Jim, Karen, and Jennifer O-M. Andrea will be leaving the subcommittee as she has accepted a position in another diocese.

## Bishop and Staff Updates

### Bishop Jennifer

A. The visit to the Diocese of Brasilia was transformative. That diocese has 9 congregations. CCC is building a relationship with the Cathedral in Brasilia. Relationships between congregations in the Diocese of Indianapolis and the Diocese of Brasilia are beginning to be created. People from the Brazilian congregations expressed how much support they already have received from many different congregations in Indianapolis. The Diocese of Brasilia was created specifically to be the social justice arm for Brazil to advocate for and affect public policy in Parliament. They are now praying for us. People in Brazil will make a mission trip to the Diocese of Indianapolis in 2026. They will need financial support to do so.

A later comment made clear that, were reunification to occur, the new Diocese would maintain both relationships with Brasilia and relationships with Honduras, the Diocese with which the Diocese of Northern Indiana is now affiliated.

B. Via her experience at the CCD meeting of Bishops in Ohio, the Bishop realized that the Diocese of Indianapolis is chronically understaffed at the Diocesan level. Our budget is about \$5-\$6M (including the Lilly grants) for 47 congregations, with staff of 10.5 FTE. This is the smallest, by half, of diocesan staffing. The diocese needs help with stewardship, transition planning, and formation. We need to rethink and add staff positions.

### Canon Giulianna

A. 48 people are registered for CCD, representing 18 congregations.

B. Several excellent candidates have applied for the Centering Children in Worship position funded by the Lilly grant. Interviews will begin this week.

C. The newly-filled Grace Unlimited position includes ¼ time for regional young adult ministry.

D. There is considerable interest in supporting formation among children and young adults, even in addition to the work Heather already is doing as Diocesan Youth Minister.

### Canon Brendan

A. Brendan is applying for a Lilly Grant “Supporting Hoosier Churches,” which is intended to support judicatory offices such as the Diocese.

B. On Sunday he will be at St. John’s, Mt. Vernon, to celebrate the 20 years of ministry of the Reverend Allen Rutherford.

C. Anyone who would like their “heart of stone” to be replaced with Paul’s “heart of flesh” should spend time with youth, as Brendan has recently done as Chaplain to Waycross and on the Youth Mission Trip.

Additional announcements

C. Davies announced the rededication of the new space at St. Francis in the Fields for September 7.

Mike suggested that all of us reach out to Sara Gunter at Waycross, who has been enormously challenged this week with the end of camp, several HR issues, and several maintenance issues. Jim will phone her and Joan will email her on behalf of the Executive Council.

The meeting adjourned at 11:53 am. The next meeting will be September 20, 2025, at Waycross.

Respectfully submitted,

Connie Betts

Secretary of the Diocese

Secretary to the Executive Council

**Joint Leadership Retreat with Standing Committee:**

December 12-13 (Waycross)