Executive Council
Meeting Minutes
January 31, 2026
Zoom Meeting
10:00am – 12:30pm

Members Present:
The Rt. Rev. Jennifer Baskerville-Burrows, The Rev. Canon Giulianna Cappelletti Gray, Mr. Todd Relue, Dr. Laurel Cornell, Ms. Louise Boling, The Rev. Dr. Jason Haddox**,** Mr. Steve Lawson, The Rev. Jennifer Oldstone-Moore, The Rev. Adam Pierce, Ms. Natalie Rodriguez, The Rev. Spencer Ruark, The Rev. Allen Rutherford, The Rev. Jim Said, Mr. Benjamin Sapp, Canon Mariann Scott, Mr. Greg Seamon, Mr. Mike Staubitz, The Rev. Karen Sullivan, Ms. Connie Betts

Members in Absence:
Canon Brendan O'Sullivan-Hale, The Rev. C. Davies Reed

Call to Order
The Rt. Rev. Jennifer Baskerville-Burrows called the meeting to order at 10:03 and led the group in an Opening Devotion.

Roll Call was conducted by Connie Betts.

Organizing for Business
Canon Giulianna reviewed the Diocesan mission and Executive Council norms. All members agreed to these norms.

Minutes
Connie Betts presented the minutes for edits and approval.

- Minutes for May 17, 2025 were presented. Mr. Mike Staubitz moved to approve the minutes as presented. The Rev. Jim Said seconded the motion. Motion approved**.**
- Minutes for September 20, 2025. The Rev. Allen Rutherford moved to approve the minutes as presented. Mr. Mike Staubitz seconded the motion. Motion approved**.**
- Minutes for December 13, 2025 Canon Mariann moved to approve the minutes with corrections. The Rev. Jim Said seconded the motion. Motion approved**.**

Bishop & Staff Updates

Update on Open Letter from Bishops

Bishop Jennifer noted that typically, letters come from a meeting, making it difficult to put forth anything. They felt something had to be said prior to the next House of Bishops meeting. A group of Bishops met online to create the statement. She noted that there is strong language, but the bishops felt that it was necessary. It was aired just prior to the meeting. She is prepared to engage in an open dialogue with anyone in the diocese to address concerns.

Collaborative Work and Relationship Building with the Episcopal Diocese of Northern Indiana

Bishop Jennifer shared goals will be forthcoming from Convention Leadership, Clergy, Laity. Executive and Diocesan Councils from both dioceses will gather in the near future.

Diocesan Staff Size vs. the Size of our Diocese

Bishop Jennifer shared a conversation among Bishops from Indiana, Ohio, and Michigan who met with consultants from the College of Congregational Development. When they compared the size of our diocese and our budget with other dioceses, we realized that our diocese is understaffed. The Diocese of Indianapolis has the smallest staff with the largest budget. Our budget is the same as Diocese of Chicago, but our staff is much smaller, creating overstressed points in the administrative structure. Jolene Johnston will increase hours to help fill in the gap, and we will explore ways to increase staffing.

The Rev. Spencer Ruark noted the addition of recent local and national events increases the demand on each staff member. Additional staff will provide necessary support for current staff.

Rapid Response Immediate Plan

How do we resource leaders and neighborhoods to support and assist if needed? Canon Giulianna noted that Ms. Elise Schrock is already working congregations to understand what they should do to support vulnerable congregants.

Process for Planning Future Canonical Changes

The Rev. Allan Rutherford presented plans for working on changes to our diocesan canons. He explained that this comes from work in the Reunification Team. They discovered that some of the canons are very old and have had several updates, making them bulky. There are also some items that are located incorrectly between the constitution and canons. Some canons are redundant to the national canons and may be removed. A committee will be convened to complete this work. It will begin with a review of the Reunification Team's template and proceed from there. Mr. Greg Seamon moved to authorize work to review and revise for clarity and relevance of the Constitutions and Canons of the Diocese of Indianapolis, subject to approval at the Convention consistent with the existing constitution and canons. Steve Lawson seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Mission Strategy Next Steps

Canon Giulianna discussed reenvisioning the Mission Strategy Committee. The current committee expressed that they felt they were not capturing the deeper work that needed to be done. Without a functioning group right now, Bishop Jennifer, Canon Brendan, and Canon Giulianna are working directly with congregations. The goal is to merge what the canons say and what the committee believes needs to be done. A high functioning mission strategy group will function under the Executive Council and be centered on our diocese's mission pillars.

- Goals to have several aspects
    - Provide more direct support through the process from beginning to completion of funded projects.
    - Improve transparency by developing a portfolio to include past and current information about grant recipients.
    - Make recommendations for future plants and missions.
    - Incorporate aspects of the College of Congregational Development.
- Examples with Specific Congregations
    - Ongoing support for Good Samaritan Church
    - Redevelopment: Strategic work to renew and strengthen existing congregations
        - St. Paul's Jeffersonville: Rev. Allan Wallace will serve as priest in charge in addition to continuing as the rector of St. Paul's in New Albany. There will also be additional staff to co-support both congregations.

- St. Phillip's founded in 1901. They are the oldest church in that area. They are poised to offer campus ministry to support and care for staff and students at Purdue Indianapolis. The Rev. Peter Gray, Interim Rector, was tasked with finding ways to fund ministry. Prior rectors have been full-time. They are considering a search for a part-time priest in charge with potential to add on other responsibilities to create a full-time position.

Diocesan Leadership Day, April 18
Canon Giulianna shared plans for the Diocesan Leadership Day. In addition to offering workshops and inspiration, there will also be time for neighborhoods to hold their spring meetings. This allows neighborhood representatives to convene one time instead of two.

Financial Reports
Dr. Laurel Cornell gave a financial update and presented the Treasurer's report.

Bishop Jennifer reminded members that we are continuing to work to prepare capital campaign to go public later this year. More specific information will follow soon.

Leadership and Diocesan Updates
Updates were provided by Executive Council members:

Rev. Rutherford noted that Church Buildings for Collaborative Partners published a story on their website about St. John's Mount Vernon.

Canon Mariann Scott shared that she and Kathy Scott are presenting a program on Christian Nationalism with around 70 participants. She also co-chairs Indiana Faith Voices, an interfaith group which advocates for fair and equal governance in Indiana.

The Rev. Jim Said noted that Good Samaritan will be working with Family Promise to offer the vicarage at a reduced rental rate.

The Absalom Jones service will take place on February 14 at St. Philip's at 11 a.m.

The Ordination of Rev. Dr. Carolin Frueh to the priesthood will take place on Saturday, February 28th at 11am at Good Shepherd in West Lafayette.

Canon Giulianna gave an update on congregations in transition. She noted that we have welcomed a third ELCA clergy to serve as priest in charge (Christ Church in Madison, St. Matthew's, St. Paul's Indy)

No old business was presented.

No new business was presented.

Bishop Jennifer offered a closing prayer and adjourned the meeting at 12:13 p.m.

2026 Executive Council Meeting Dates:

RSVP to Bethany Baugh (baugh@indydio.org) by dates listed below for Waycross planning purposes.

- March 28 (*RSVP by March 13*) – Waycross
- May 30 (*RSVP by May 15*) – Waycross
- July 18 (Zoom, if needed)
- Sept 12 (*RSVP by Aug 28) – Waycross*

Joint Leadership Retreat with Standing Committee and Neighborhood Conveners:

- December 11 – 12 – Waycross