

Minutes of the Diocesan Council
January 21, 2022

In attendance: In Person - The Rt. Rev. Paul-Gordon Chandler, Christie Laughery, Mary Appel, Kim McAtee, Rev. Amy Mayes, Shirley Wildman, Jackie Hotle, and staff members Jessica Reynolds and Rev. Lara Gilbert.

Via Zoom: Rev. Doug Wasinger, Rev. Walt Seeley, Tom Johnson, Rev. Peggy Hotchkiss, Peg Larson

An opening prayer and meditation was provided by Rev. Lara Gilbert

The meeting continued with introductions.

Shirley Wildman made a motion to accept the minutes from the last council meeting of November 30, 2021. Seconded by Christie Laughery and motion carried.

Bishop Paul-Gordon reviewed the roles and responsibilities of the Council. He then went on to give Council an overview of his hopes and dreams for the upcoming year. He explained his focus is to help our churches be “nourished so they can flourish.” We are updating polices and manuals to be more relevant, and have initiated new ministry programs. He went on to explain the updates to the website, the role of the Wyoming Worship Committee, and the new music resources the Diocese has developed. He is shared ideas around youth and young adult ministries, as well for children’s ministries.

One area of major need is the development of leadership, both clergy and lay, in our churches. He also explained that we have streamlined the discernment process and the ordination checklists and are working towards Iona becoming a place of not only educational growth, but also spiritual growth. He shared that we are working on an updated ministry covenant between our clergy and their churches.

Other updates from the Bishop included:

- the Team Vicar position in Region 5 will soon be posted and that we will be accepting applications as early as next week.
- Rev. David McElwain has started in Region 1 as Rector of St. Alban’s, Worland and as Assigned Priest at St. Andrew’s Church in Meeteetse and St. Andrew’s Church in Basin.
- Rev. Bobbe Fitzhugh is doing very well in Region 4 as Missional Priest, based out of Rawlins.
- We are working on identifying Interim Regional Priests for Region 2 and 3.
- the Clergy & Spouse Annual Retreat is scheduled in late June. Poet and lay preacher Allison Seay from Virginia will be the special guest speaker.
- We are making progress in Ethete on preparing for the revitalization of St. Michael’s Circle. We are hoping to get bids from contractors within the next couple of weeks so we can break ground in the summer.
- We are preparing for GROUNDED, an art exhibition of contemporary Native American artists that will tour Wyoming, the US and then internationally.
- We have hired Keith Ware as the property manager for Wind River Reseravation.

- We have also hired Shannon Smith, for Executive Director of Wyoming Humanities Council on a contractual basis to set up the Museum of the Sacred Circle.
- In Fort Washakie, we have found a contractor and there will be a commissioning of the Mission House renovation project at the John Roberts Festival.
- The John Roberts Festival will be on February 26th and we are hoping people from all over the Diocese will attend.
- The 2023 convention will have a Native American focus.
- The Bishop and Chancellor Peter Nicholaysen are exploring are exploring a relationship with The United Church of Thane in the Star Valley, as they want an Episcopal presence. We are also exploring the possibility of moving St. Luke's Church in Medicine Bow to Thomas the Apostle Center in Cody.
- The Foundation has hired a new Executive Director, Katie Parish, and she started on January 1, 2022.
- Our 2022 Convention will be hosted in Christ Church, Cody and Celtic theologian John Philip Newell will be our plenary speaker.

The Bishop then shared gave an update about St. Matthew's Cathedral in Laramie and the financial situation it finds itself in. After much discussion, Peggy Hotchkiss moved that as the Diocesan Council is committed to the success of St. Matthew's Cathedral as a Wisdom Center for the Episcopal Church in Wyoming, that we actively support the Cathedral for 3-4 years, both programmatically and financially. This would entail, with the Bishop's assistance, the Diocese inviting a consultant to assist the cathedral to develop a strategic plan for its future ministry, as well as to allocate up to \$115,000 in 2022 in quarterly payments to the cathedral to cover a significant percentage of this year's budget shortfall. Additionally, the Bishop will assist the Dean of the Cathedral in visiting other cathedrals that are experiencing growth, in order to bring that knowledge back to our Cathedral. Seconded by Rev. Walt Seeley and the motion carried.

Susie Ponce from DA Davidson joined the meeting to give an update on the Diocesan investments. Shirley moved to accept the report from DA Davidson. Seconded by Kim and motion carried.

Peggy Hotchkiss moved to loan the Bell in Hanna to the museum in Hanna for another year. Seconded by Mary Appel and the motion carried.

Bishop Paul-Gordon and Jessica Reynolds updated the Council on the current status, as well as what they have learned, about establishing a refugee resettlement program based out of Laramie under the umbrella of the Episcopal Church in Wyoming. The Council then discussed at some length the next steps based on their findings and experience to date. There was a general belief among Council members that our diocese should continue to sincerely consider and explore the possibility of establishing a refugee resettlement initiative. However, it was decided, due to the Diocese's numerous other strategic ministry priorities at this time, and to the necessity of having to establish a refugee resettlement initiative at such short notice (in order to guarantee that the first refugees in the program would be Afghans), that it would be best practice to instead continue to explore this possibility with Episcopal Migration Ministries, albeit at a slower pace, allowing for due diligence. Therefore, the council encouraged the Diocese to in due course:

- 1- Identify a faith-based refugee resettlement partner in an adjoining state (i.e. Colorado) that the Diocese can support financially at this time, and that we can learn from, via interaction and field visits, enabling us to gain greater understanding and experience as to all that is entailed in hosting refugees.
- 2- That the Diocese continue to explore the possibility of establishing a refugee resettlement program under our umbrella in collaboration with EMM sometime in the future.

Mary Appel moved that up to \$100,000 can be withdrawn from DA Davidson for cash flow purposes as is needed in 2022. Seconded by Peggy Hotchkiss and the motion carried.

Each regional representative gave their regional report.

A closing prayer was provided by Rev. Amy Mayes.

Submitted by
Jessica Reynolds, Canon for Finance & Administration