

Diocesan Council
September 13, 2007
St. Mark's Cathedral, Minneapolis

Present: Bishop Jelinek; Gary Gleason, Secretary of Council

Region 1 Carole Johnson

Region 2 Susan Dusek, Alice Olson

Region 3 John Husband, Maren Kay Welsand

Region 4 Dottie Whipple/Bill Gray, Paul Rider

Region 5 Pat Dibble

Region 6 Martha Beckwith, Jerry Doherty

Region 7 LeeAnne Watkins

Region 8 Gary Aamodt, Tom Eklo

Region 9 Stacy Abena, Paul Shaffer

Guests: Karen Olson, Executive Administrator; Jeff Langaard, Assistant Principal Financial Officer; Susan Barksdale, Recorder

Executive Summary of September 13, 2007, meeting
(Details in body of minutes)

Diocesan Council:

Unanimously accepted the audit report and associated financial statements for 2006.
Unanimously voted to endorse and recommend passage of the proposed amendment to Diocesan Canon 206, as distributed.
Unanimously voted that Council direct the Constitutions and Canons Committee to develop a canon adding clergy to those whose votes are suspended in congregations that have not complied with the conditions in the proposed amendment to Canon 206. Heard an update on the Church of Gethsemane, Minneapolis.
Unanimously voted to recommend that Diocesan Convention affirm and own the goals that are the recommendation of the Bishop's Committee on Mission Strategy (BCMS) and also to encourage the Bishop, his staff, and Diocesan Council to implement them.

The business meeting was chaired by Stacy Abena, First Vice President of Council, and opened with prayer.

The agenda was approved unanimously. Stacy noted that the charge for the day was to be "convention-ready" with the BCMS document by the end of the meeting.

The minutes were approved.

STEERING COMMITTEE: PAT DIBBLE

Pat reiterated that in planning the meeting, the committee worked on being succinct and getting "Convention-ready," especially with the BCMS report.

DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE: KATHERINE SEDWICK

Katherine reported that the committee has been working since early summer of 2006. The committee's work has been done in conjunction with the Bishop's Commission on Mission Strategy (BCMS). In addition, the Bishop's Circle dinners have been expanded to include an event in Rochester. Donations from this year's dinners will go to campus ministry, ethnic ministries, and faith formation.

In the long term, the Development Committee is working particularly with finding a development officer for the diocese; trying to create a good setting for that person; and helping that person “network” in the diocese, where helping one ministry helps others. “Development” is part of all of that, Katherine noted.

Katherine urged Council not to be afraid of words like “development” and “donor” just because they are from the secular world. “We need to develop our ministries, and we need the money to develop them,” she said. “How many of our churches are still enjoying the gifts of those who are gone? Our gifts now are supporting the future.”

Gary Aamodt asked how the BCMS findings have shaped the committee’s thinking. Katherine said it has been very exciting to see where the spark for mission is. Gary Gleason noted that one of charges of the Development Committee was to develop a climate of generosity.

FINANCE: ANN LANOUE, JEFF LANGAARD, BILL GRAY

. Apportionment revenue is still under budget, but that is not surprising for this time of year. The budget is doing well. There are the usual timing issues, however, no red flags are apparent.

The 2006 audited financial statements and report was discussed. The 2006 audit was completed on time and with again an unqualified or “clean” opinion. One minor item was noted in the management letter regarding limited segregation of duties, which is a common situation in nonprofits with small accounting staffs. The auditors also commented on the continued improvements in financial procedures. Bishop Jelinek reminded Council that both the diocese and the Trustees have received clean audits for several years. Ann Lanoue noted that the audit reports will be posted on the diocesan Web site. **The audit report and associated financial statements were accepted as presented.**

DIOCESAN CONVENTION: SARA MCGINLEY

Gary Gleason noted that the 2008 diocesan budget and a proposed canonical amendment are two of the issues to be presented at Convention.

Friday evening (October 26) is set aside for the kickoff banquet and celebration for the diocese’s sesquicentennial year. It will feature special guest Garrison Keillor. All business will be conducted on Saturday. Six pre-Convention forums will take place throughout the diocese. Regional deans have been alerted, and a number of the forums will take place at the already-scheduled regional meetings.

A revised narrative budget was distributed, which will be a large part of the budget presentation at Convention. There will also be two budget workshops on the Friday afternoon of Convention.

Sara distributed a copy of the proposed amendment to Canon 206 that was to be presented to Convention, strengthening the existing canon that denies lay representation to congregations who have not paid their Apportionment for the Common Good (ACG). This proposal came in first as a resolution from Region 4, but was then sent to the Constitution and Canons Committee.

LeeAnne Watkins asked why the denial of seat and vote applied just to lay representatives and not clergy. Gary Gleason answered that adding clergy would require a constitutional change, which takes two Conventions, while a canonical change takes only one. He added that while the committee felt that there is an equity issue, this is a first step. The committee felt that as it was originally a resolution that came from a region, it should go forward. Bishop Jelinek said that if

this were to pass, he would make a public statement that clergy from those churches should be honor-bound not to vote either. Carole Johnson reminded Council that there is a clergy restriction if no parochial report had been received.

Gary Gleason stated that Council need take no action on this proposed amendment. If approved, it would take effect at the end of Convention. There was some discussion on the issue of withholding lay representation, and few suggestions on rewording. Gary stated that, if approved, this amendment would affect only about five congregations in the diocese. It was noted that existing canons on these issues are not being enforced now. **It was moved and seconded that Diocesan Council endorse and recommend passage of the proposed amendment to Canon 206, as distributed. Passed unanimously.**

LeeAnne Watkins asked that this suspension be expanded to clergy as well. **It was moved and seconded that Council direct the Constitutions and Canons Committee to develop a canon adding clergy to those whose votes are suspended in congregations that have not complied with the conditions in the proposed amendment to Canon 206. If such action requires a constitutional change instead, Council directs the Constitution and Canons Committee to prepare a constitutional change for its first reading in 2008. Passed unanimously.**

TRUSTEES: MALCOLM McDONALD

Malcolm answered some questions about real estate assets and the funds that the Trustees manages. He noted that the monies that come to the diocese from the Trustees (the annual management fees) are shown as reductions of expenses, rather than as a separate revenue item.

BISHOP COADJUTOR: DEBBIE BROWN, FRAN BLY, ANN LANOUE, BILL GRAY

An updated budget summary was presented. Fran Bly noted that the Standing Committee had sent a request to Council for an episcopal transition budget. The committee tried to be conservative yet realistic, and included much detail on how it came to its conclusions. The committee also put together descriptors of the work of both the search and transition committees. That information plus nomination forms for the committees will be available at the pre-Convention forums. The Standing Committee hopes to have one person on each committee from each region. It will also take other self-nominated and other names for the remaining nine members in order to provide a good range of representation.

Even though the coadjutor process will not be voted on until Convention, the Standing Committee has identified some funding sources that will not affect the general diocesan budget or the Apportionment for the Common Good. There were a number of questions on the funding and requests for clarity. There was also considerable discussion on how information would be presented at the upcoming forums, as well as anticipation of possible questions and responses. John Husband noted that, in his experience, an episcopal election can be a great “teachable moment” both in the church and to others. Debbie Brown added that the Standing Committee so far has discovered a great “spiritual moment” as well, and that others around the country have echoed this sentiment.

LUNCH

GETHSEMANE: ARON KRAMER

Aron distributed an update on the work and ministry of the Church of Gethsemane, Minneapolis. He related his excitement at being able to hire an administrative assistant at the church.

Gethsemane is providing space to “Sober Corps,” which offers mentoring and life style direction. It has renovated its office space at no cost to Gethsemane, and will start paying rent at the first of the year 2008. A spiritual director also has an office in the church.

The congregation is excited about BCMS, too, and has formed a missional church team. Conversations are also underway on a partnership with St. Matthew’s, St. Paul. Aron said that the most exciting thing for him is watching folks shift from a detached view — “God takes us fully in.” He told of Gethsemane’s challenge to collect enough backpacks to replace those lost by the children and youth on the school bus that was lost in the 35W bridge collapse. This group was from Waite House, a ministry which Gethsemane sends food to. As the result of an appeal to the congregation and the diocese, Gethsemane received 71 packs, enough for all the bus kids, as well as for some of their siblings. Many donors also filled the packs with school supplies.

“It’s exciting, and there’s a lot going on!” Aron said, and asked that Council “pray for our mission and ministry, and our transformation, our sense of discovering what God is doing with and among us.”

BISHOP’S COMMISSION ON MISSION STRATEGY (BCMS)

Members of the BCMS Steering Committee — Len and Lindsay Freeman, Jim Huber, Susan Moss, Dwight Zscheile, Dan Pearson, Michael Hanley, and Michelle Morgan — were present. Stacy repeated the need to be convention-ready after this meeting and asked the BCMS group what it needed from Council and vice versa. Jim Huber replied that the BCMS has gone as far as it can. Dwight and Len highlighted points of the current document. The group tried hard to incorporate suggested changes it had received. The main change is the report’s reorganization into four main areas. Len noted that the object is for the report not to be the commission’s proposal, but a report from the commission to Council, the canonical authority; only a group with canonical authority can carry it through. Following discussion of the revised part of the report, Bishop Jelinek made the following formal remarks:

I am deeply grateful to Jim Huber, the Internal Resource Person for the BCMS process, the members of the committee and Craig Van Gelder, our consultant, for all the work they have done on this process of study, reflection, listening and discernment. They have put in countless hours in this process, and they have engaged the entire diocesan leadership — Bishop and staff, Council and other elected bodies — and many Episcopalians in our congregations, well over a thousand people. I know of no time in our history in which so many have been involved in such self-reflection and introspection.

We have analyzed and diagnosed our problems and we know what we do poorly and the difficulties we have had and still have in coming together in God’s mission rather than our own. We have recognized and named that this is a situation embedded in our history, going back over 50 years, which is as long as we have reliable memory from people who are still alive. Members of the BCMS have come at this work from different vantage points. Some have had an overview of our work for a long time. Others have begun with their own agendas, but I am convinced that the great majority of them have come to a longing for our Common Good and have worked to that end, and I believe this report shows it.

Is this document perfect? No, nothing made by human minds and hearts and hands is. Some have lamented the fact that this names our weaknesses, but not our strengths, our inadequacies and not our strong points, what we do poorly but not what we do well. Some would like us to be more positive, yet I am of a mind that without the honest cataloguing of our weaknesses, our limitations and our resistance to coming together and being of one heart — and, when possible, of one mind — without that honesty, I am convinced we would never have named the problem we have as ourselves as a body, as a whole. To quote Pogo, “The enemy is us.”

Some would argue that the very purpose we arrived at, “to seed and cultivate vibrant congregations” is too small, too institutional, yet it is a means to the larger purpose of bringing all people to God in Christ.

Two and a half years ago, when we were considering the venture at Gethsemane, Craig Van Gelder talked about the need to venture boldly in a kairos moment to do a new thing. We did. We are. He also talked about planning carefully, as in the gospel a few Sundays ago, when building a tower, when going to war, so we may do the most thoughtful and best work we can.

As this report of the Bishop’s Commission comes back to us, the Diocesan Council, we now have opportunity to do just that. The work is in our hands, and given that the mission of the diocese is the responsibility of Diocesan Council, yours and mine, it is up to us to respond. To do so, we shall have to function at a new level of responsibility. It will take more investment of ourselves, more work than this council has ever put out before, to my knowledge. And it will take partnership — with diocesan staff (who have broad experience and knowledge and rich gifts) with Trustees and Commission on Ministry and Standing Committee and the people and congregations of the diocese.

I believe we are up to this work. I hope we are willing.

Next, the Bishop Jelinek asked Council to respond to BCMS. “This part of the process is near its end,” he said, “yet it is still called a ‘draft.’”

Before the small group discussions began, the bishop added the following comments:

We need to develop alternate strategies before convention — what we the Council will do to carry this work forward if Convention affirms it, and what we shall do if it does not. I trust we are likely to affirm it then, but what I believe we cannot do is appoint a committee prior to Convention’s action. We need to keep faith.

We shall need to decide today whether we endorse this report, and are willing to take on the work of overseeing the next stages, which will be to appoint people to work with us, develop a plan with specificity and accountability and measurability. And if we say we are willing, we have to commit ourselves and become unified in the effort — I will speak to that later.

We shall have to ensure that whatever is develop becomes so much a part of the fabric of the diocese that candidates for bishop will understand this as “our call” from God for the future and whoever is elected will commit her/him self to seeing it through.

Bishop Jelinek then asked Council to discuss the following questions in small groups.

1. What is your response to this report? Feelings? Thoughts?
2. Are there any changes, additions or comments you want to make before this is circulated to delegates in advance of Convention?
3. What action do we recommend Convention does? (Receive? Affirm goals?)

Upon Council's return and the sharing of their responses, the bishop asked the following questions:

Will you endorse this report?

We will, with God's help.

Will you take up this work with the Bishop?

We will, with God's help.

Will you serve as ambassadors to your region, your clericus, and Diocesan Convention, to help others engage in this work?

We will, with God's help.

Bishop Jelinek closed with prayer:

Almighty and eternal God, so draw our hearts to you, so guide our minds, so fill our imaginations, so control our wills, that we may be wholly yours, utterly dedicated to you; and then use us, we pray, as you will, and always to your glory and the welfare of your people; through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

It was moved and seconded that Council recommend to Diocesan Convention to affirm and own the goals that are the recommendation of the Bishop's Committee on Mission Strategy and to encourage the Bishop, his staff, and Diocesan Council to implement them. Passed unanimously.

Council concluded its BCMS business by singing the Doxology.

BISHOP'S REPORT

Bishop Jelinek and other judicatory heads have signed a document encouraging Minnesota Senators Coleman and Klobuchar to sign an upcoming farm bill.

On being asked about the upcoming House of Bishops meeting in New Orleans, the bishop expressed the opinion that they "will stand firm on what we've decided as a church" and "hold firm to our polity and not take ourselves out of the Anglican Communion." Most have said accepted their invitations to the Lambeth Conference, as they are afraid of certain voices not being at the table.

OTHER BUSINESS

Council's final order of business was to sing Happy Birthday to Susan Dusek.

The meeting was adjourned at 3 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Gary Gleason
Secretary of Council

Susan Barksdale, recorder