

DIOCESAN COUNCIL
Report to Diocesan Convention 2024
Kathy Baird, President

Diocesan Council met four times prior to the 2024 Diocesan Convention with our final meeting scheduled for December 12th, in person and via Zoom at Calvary Episcopal Church, where we will elect our officers for 2025 and welcome newly elected members from the 2024 Diocesan Convention. The mission for Diocesan Council is set forth in Section 1 of Canon V:

"The Diocesan Council shall act on behalf of the Convention when the Convention is not in session. In particular, it shall evaluate the policies, programs, and other activities of the Diocese, make recommendations to the Convention, and give general oversight to the work, mission, budget and human resources of the Diocese. The Council shall perform such other functions and tasks as the Convention may assign to it."

Diocesan Council is "convention in recess," empowered to do what the convention may do in the months between our annual diocesan gathering.

Specifically, membership in Diocesan Council consists of 12 elected members, 8 of whom are elected to and also serve on the Standing Committee while the remaining 4 lay deputy representatives are elected from each of the four diocesan districts on a rolling basis, serving up to 4 year terms. District representatives served the following terms with a new representative to be elected at the 2024 Diocesan Convention for District 4: District 1 – Bruce Quayle, Christ Church (North Hills), serving through 2027, District 2 – Bryan Webb, Redeemer, Squirrel Hill, serving through 2026, District 3 Constance Davis, Atonement, Carnegie, serving through 2025 and District 4, Louise Mead, St. Mark's, Johnstown, serving through 2024. My term and that of the Rev. Dr. Moni McIntyre, as Standing Committee Members, will end in 2024 so new leadership will be elected to preside over Diocesan Council in December.

Elected lay district representatives may serve 2 consecutive 4-year terms before needing to step aside for at least a year. The President of Diocesan Council must be selected from the opposite order of the individual elected as President of Standing Committee. I was honored to have been elected to serve for a fourth and final year, joined again by the Rev. Dr. Moni McIntyre (St. Stephen's McKeesport) as Vice President, a fellow member of the Standing Committee. Diocesan Council meets a minimum of 5 times per year and may meet in person or virtually. The Secretary of Diocesan Council may be selected from outside of council and we were very grateful for the support of our Bishop's Executive Assistant Andrea Rath serving in the administrative role while Eileen Sharbaugh was appointed to serve in the signatory portion of that role. Starting in 2024 Google Drive replaced Boardable as the online platform that facilitates the creation and distribution of agendas/minutes of, and reports to, all members of Diocesan Council. Meeting minutes are available upon request.

The remaining 6 members, by virtue of their membership on the Standing Committee are: The Florence Atwood (Calvary, East Liberty and President of the Standing Committee), The Rev. Laura Di Panfilo (St. Paul's, Mt. Lebanon), Wesley Rohrer, (St. Andrew's, Highland Park), Eileen Sharbaugh (St. Paul's, Mt. Lebanon), and The Rev. Nancy Threadgill (St. Mark's, Johnstown) and The Rev. Bonnie-Marie Yager-Wiggan (formerly Trinity Cathedral and now Calvary, East Liberty).

Ex-Officio members include Andrew Roman (Chancellor), the Rev. Canon James Shoucair (Secretary of Convention), Jim Cassaro (President of the Board of Trustees), and The Rt. Rev. Dr. Ketlen Solak (Bishop).

A number of other diocesan leaders are also invited to attend our meetings, including the canons, diocesan staff, chairs of diocesan organizations and committees.

What did Diocesan Council do this year?

Initial business included the appointment of the chair (Bryan Webb) and members (the Rev. Dr. Moni McIntyre, Wes Rohrer, Betti Rottschaefter, Bryan Webb, Elaine Zevkovich) of the Budget and Assessment Working Group (BAWG), the Nominating Committee (The Rev, Julie Smith and Thomas Moore as co-chairs) which seeks election candidates to fill open diocesan positions, Diocesan appointments to the Growth Fund Committee (Connie Davis and Louise Meade), the Judge of Audits (Betti Rottschaefter) and Judge of Assessments (Bryan Webb). This year we also appointed a Policy Work Group (Kathy Baird, Louise Mead, and Bonnie-Marie Yager-Wiggan), headed by Vice-Chancellor Steve Bloomberg, to review, critique and approve new national church Safe Church Policies adapted for our diocese by the Rev. Canon Kim Kerashin and Dr. Tim Austin.

Standard business at each of these meetings includes a written and/or oral report from the bishop (including the canons), from the presidents of the Standing Committee and the Board of Trustees, from the Chancellor, from the Treasurer and Director of Administration (the treasurer's report, a property report and Episcopal Church Women fund distributions), from the chair of the BAWG, and then various diocesan committees, missions and organizations including the Compensation Committee, Growth Fund, Commission on Ministry, Children's Ministry, Policy Workgroup, Convention Committee and the Social Justice and Outreach Committee.

In addition, Council completed its canonically required measures and appointments. This includes approving diocesan staff clergy housing resolutions, adopting a new suite of Safe Church Policies, reallocating budgetary funding as needs changed, and awarding a variety of Parish Mission and Financial Partnership Grants offering financial assistance to parishes and chosen missions and granting relief (at various levels) from diocesan assessments. Council also recommended approval of the Nominees for 2024 Diocesan Convention-elected positions, 2025 Lay and Clergy Compensation/Medical Plan Guides and the 2025 Diocesan Budget.

It has been an honor and privilege for me to serve the past four years as president of Council welcoming new and changing roles of diocesan staff and new council members. As immediate Past Diocesan Council President, I look forward to transitioning to the new council leadership and assisting in any way they may request. We are blessed with the continuing service of those invited guests who attend and actively participate in our meetings so faithfully. I am so proud of all who raised their hand to volunteer for additional duties and committee membership this year, for those who faithfully submitted written reports in advance of our meetings, and those who stepped in to fill District representative vacancies during the year.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathy Baird
President, Diocesan Council