

Points of Communication from the Council of Advice (COA)

Thursday October 17, 2024. Rectory of St. James, Florence, preceding 113th Convention of the Convocation of Episcopal Churches in Europe

Attention!! Council Members and our Liaison partners:

Next written reports are requested before our November meeting.

All Heads of Ministry(HOM):

We hope you will be able to attend the upcoming in-person gathering of the Heads of Ministry at Tagungshotel Haus Sankt Ulrich, 86150 Augsburg, Germany.

November 14-16, 2024. Start: Thursday 18hr with supper, end Saturday 11:30hr.

Mark calendars now for **June 5-7, 2025**, the following 2025 HOM. Location to be determined.

Other 2025 dates and notices to share with Congregations:

Spirituality Retreat: 16-18 May, 2025 at Eremo di Lecceto in Lastra a Signa, Florence.

Led by Rev. David Osbourne of the Iona Community, Scotland. Eremo di Lecceto is a historic destination that has served since the fifteenth century. Booking (with the possibility of arriving one day early and/or staying an extra day) will begin after convention.

Discernment Retreat: 14-16 November, 2025 in Strasbourg, France.

Speaker to be confirmed. Booking during summer 2025. All invited to discern their answer to "What is God Calling Me to Do?"

Digital ministry grants from the Convocation continue to be funded in our budget. Grants requested for next year submitted before Oct.15,2025 will be considered for immediate funding. These specifically oriented requests for digital ministry support may be considered separately from other granting needs. Forms are on our website.

*****COA Meeting*****

The Council of Advice and Convocation staff set our intentions together by dwelling in the Word found in Luke 4:14-21. We read out our norms and attended to the organisational requirements of the meeting.

Diocesan Council Topics:

CCS Capital Campaign Update

The previous evening the COA and those members of the Board of Foreign Parishes (BFP) able to join us for Convention met for the first time. Details were introduced regarding the BFP role in managing the endowment that supports the Convocation as well as initial efforts towards a fundraising campaign. Until now, the BFP has functioned solely as financial guardian over investments that create an endowment solely dedicated to support of our churches in Europe. They have not actively raised funds, but several events this year have catalysed their commitment to solicit an increase to the BFP endowment. The campaign planned with support of the CCS group will focus on new US donations that should not compete with parish stewardship. To help motivate potential donors the BFP requests help with telling the stories of our congregations. Ideas for how to do this are being elicited, Bishop Mark suggested the idea of "Letter from Europe" Zoom gatherings that could generate excitement for our ministries. We are also encouraged to think of alumni from our parishes who are now in the US and might be in a position to contribute.

Convention update

There we were! Thanks to Audrey Shankles, Richard Cole, Richard Easterling with his parishioners and all of the Convention Planning committee for their considerable work organizing the event that was about to begin. 130 people were signed up to WHOVA.

Website

It is taking longer than hoped to get the new site up. We are invited to be patient as our helpers in New York go through a transition. To post new information to the site, communicate with Audrey Shankles.

Digital Ministry Grants

Three outstanding grant requests (for All Saints', Waterloo; St. Augustine, Wiesbaden; and Emmanuel, Geneva) were all affirmed by the COA. Audrey Shankles will notify the applicants, and funds will be distributed asap. Audrey will create a committee to assist her review of future grants before sending them to the

COA. The new website will centralize available grant documents. 2025 Digital grants requested before October 15 will be honored by year's end.

Formal appointment of a gérant of the new SCI

Last month the COA voted to formally appoint our Convocation Treasurer, currently Denis Le Moullac, to this position. The specific text of this action was clarified and unanimously approved. During discussion, Denis gave notice that he plans to retire from his position as Treasurer of the Convocation. Given the complications of our administration and legal status in France, we need to identify someone competent with French law and language for the Treasurer position.

Executive Session Council of Advice Items:

Bishop's Report and Matters Arising

Prior to our meeting, Bishop Mark sent a lengthy memorandum to the BFP, COA, and members of his staff regarding this historic occasion that brought our groups together and thus united the leaders of our church in Europe. In his words:

(the) "Convocation, a relatively small judicatory in the Episcopal Church, has one of the most complex structures to perform the basic functions of a diocese. It is canonically established in the General Canons of the Episcopal Church (Title I, Canon 15); it is legally incorporated as an association mixte under the law of 1907 in France; and the functions of property-holding, endowment management, and charitable fundraising—all things dioceses do—are in the capable hands of the Board."

The Bishop's memorandum elaborated some of the future challenges the Bishop sees for us regarding Episcopal Identity, Effective Evangelism, and Financial Stability. There wasn't time for discussion during the morning COA meeting but some elements were repeated in his addresses later during the Convention and will be topics for upcoming Heads of Ministry meetings as we look to the future and re-evaluate our budget and strategic plans.

Bishop Mark elaborated a few additions to his travel plans and commitments:

He will be in the US at the invitation of our new Presiding Bishop Rowe to attend his installation on Nov. 2.

He has been invited to be on the UNHCR (United Nations High Commission for Refugees) Multi-Religious Council of Leaders -

<https://www.unhcr.org/about-unhcr/our-partners/additional-partnerships/multi-religious-council-leaders>

He has been invited to participate on the newly mandated Task Force on AI in the Episcopal Church as resolved at our last General Convention

https://www.episcopalarchives.org/sites/default/files/gc_resolutions/2024-D020.pdf

Heads of Ministry meeting in November

Time and location details are at the top of these notes.

Topics for discussion include:

- Convention and Festival of Gathering formats, location, structure and timing.
- Confirming 2025 theme as Climate and Creation Care.
- Appointing a Convention Agenda Committee.
- Integrating new members to the Heads of Ministry.
- Mapping 2025 with relation to resolutions coming out of Convention.
- Zoom Leaders Check-ins (March 1 and Sept 13, 2025 proposed as possible dates).
- Further details of Bishop Mark's sabbatical next spring. (COA has expressed concern regarding gaps in our leadership coverage but were assured of the capacity of our Archdeacon, Walter Baer, to cover most pressing needs).

Other Business and Closing

Next meeting to be scheduled during the Heads of Ministry gatherings in Augsburg (Day and Time TBD)

Debbie to distribute the Points of Communication.

We closed with the Grace.

-