

Points of Communication from the Council of Advice (COA)

Monday December 16, 2024

Zoom 11:30-13:30

All Heads of Ministry(HOM):

Mark calendars now for **June 4-7, 2025**, the following 2025 HOM. Location to be determined.

Other 2025 dates and notices to share with Congregations:

Sanctuary Online Mental Health and Christianity Course: An 8 week Tuesday midday Zoom course running Jan. 14 to March 25. This will be led by Rev. Canon Dr. Alison Gray, the Convocation's Canon for Spiritual Development. The course, which was offered to great acclaim at least twice before to groups including Convocation members is an interesting and engaging way to learn about mental illness and help equip us and our church communities to support people with mental health problems.

For further information and registration, use this qr code:



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) is **now open**.

Booking link: <https://forms.gle/EpTKeeMkp5pZfbgy6>

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.

Leaders around the Convocation who will be asked to join Task Forces or Ad Hoc committees that are being formed to respond to the issues discussed during our Convention in October will be contacted early in the new year and asked to begin their work early in 2025.

These include creation of an LGBTQIA+ network; an ad hoc committee to recommend responses regarding the current major wars and conflicts; and a group working on issues of Stewardship and Financial Justice.

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

The Council of Advice and Convocation staff considered the following topics during our December meeting.

Diocesan Council Topics:

Budget Update- The Board of Foreign Parishes has offered an annual gift of 100,000 Euros for three years in order to finance the sorely needed additional staffing of the Convocation in support of Programming and Communication. As this is finalised, the 2025 budget will need some adjustments.

Convocation Grant Requests- The Council reviewed recommended grants for 2025. These had already been reviewed by the Bishop, the Finance Committee and the COMC. As many of the grants are for sustaining our Missions, we affirmed the need to clarify this in our granting policy at the same time as continuing to also make funding available to parishes for new projects. COMC along with two representatives from the Council have been asked to look into re-defining our policies before the next granting period in 2025. Notifications will be sent out in January.

CCS and BFP Fundraising Campaign- Despite fears that this might not go forward, Bishop Mark advised us that the Board of Foreign Parishes has been able to negotiate acceptable terms with the CCS group and the campaign will go forward in 2025. Any required visits of Bishop Mark to the US for support of the campaign will be planned to coincide with other already required travel in that direction.

Standing Committee Matters

No Liaison concerns were reported.

Amendments to the Constitution, Christ Church, Clermont-Ferrand, France – these were accepted as requested.

Council of Advice Matters

Bishop's Report and Matters Arising

(Because he was travelling during the time of our meeting, Bishop Mark was not present for discussion at this point).

Prior to the meeting Bishop Mark sent his written report. Much of it elaborated background regarding the grant decisions; some continuing confidential staff transitions; and progress regarding the legal concerns for governing the Convocation in compliance with Episcopal Church canons and within the laws of our European nations as reported last month.

Bishop Mark shared that he has now received an appointment to the “[Multi-Religious Council of Leaders](#)” that advises Filippo Grandi, the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees.

Other Business

Dates of Next Meetings:

Jan 13 11:30am; Feb.12 and March 12 10:00; April 7 11:30am; May 21 10:00am; June during HOM meetings 4-7 June.

Wishes to all for a very blessed and peaceful Christmas Season.

