

Points of Communication from the Council of Advice (COA)

Wednesday February 12, 2025

Zoom 10:00am-12:00noon



Blessed are those who do not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers.

But their delight is in the law of the Lord, and on that love they meditate day and night. They are like a tree planted by streams of water which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever they do prospers.

Psalm 1:1-3 - Dwelling in the Word for this meeting.

All Heads of Ministry (HOM) and All Rectors and Wardens:

Mark calendars now for **June 4-7, 2025**, the next 2025 HOM gathering. Location to be determined. Rectors and Wardens from our Parishes will also be invited - please invite them to also save the date and look forward to further information.

Other 2025 dates and notices to share with Congregations:

February

APL | RJBC Presents: All Sinners Are Welcome: Saturday 22 February online gathering. 10:00am – 12:00pm

Racial Justice Beloved Community, in partnership with EICS, presents a second session of their APL series *"All Sinners Are Welcome"*, encouraging and teaching how to explore radical hospitality, self-reflection, and the pursuit of Beloved Community within the church. Further details: [RJBC APL](#)

March

European Institute of Christian Studies (EICS) Lenten APL: Episcopal 101: March 11-April 1, weekly meetings on Tuesdays, 19:00-20:30

"Episcopal 101" is an online course meant to introduce newcomers or re-familiarize long-term members with core tenets, traditions and beliefs in the Episcopal Church. Each week will have a separate theme, and each requires individual registration. Join 1 or all as you wish!

Registration links:

[March 11: History](#)

[March 18: Polity and Mission](#)

[March 25: Liturgy and Sacraments](#)

[April 1: Anglican Temperament and Spirituality](#)

May

Convocation Youth Event: May 29 - June 1 (Strasbourg, France)

We warmly invite all Juniors (10-13) and Youth (14-18) to join this gathering. This year's theme will be "Together in Europe" with workshops led by members of the Racial Justice and Beloved Community Ministry in our Convocation :[Youth event detail](#)

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>

November

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 will be asked to join Task Forces or Ad Hoc committees. The following four groups are being formed to respond to the issues discussed during our Convention in October and proposed participants and will be contacted very soon. It is hoped that they can begin work as soon as possible.

Task Force on Convocation Mission and Budget Priorities:

Purpose: To discern and articulate the major elements of God's call in mission to the Convocation over the next ten years; review the Convocation's pattern of spending with respect to these priorities; and recommend changes in budget priorities.

Task Force on Teaching Stewardship:

Purpose: To teach about the theology of stewardship and provide resources for those who lead stewardship initiatives in our congregations.

Task Force on LGBTQIA+ inclusion:

Purpose: To gather a community of shared interest and practice among congregation-level leaders of LGBTQIA+ inclusion efforts; to develop a Convocation-wide story to share about our theological thinking about welcome and inclusion.

Task Force on Peace and Justice

Purpose: To teach about major questions of peace, war, and human displacement/migration, and to provide accessible summaries of the teachings of the Episcopal Church on these questions.

Shout Out to Audrey Shankles, our soon to be Canon for Programming and Communication, with gratitude for the first edition of the **Convocation Currents** newsletter distributed by email to those on our mailing list and now a second reminder of upcoming events. Please sign up and invite those in your ministries to sign up too.

: <https://episcopaleurope.org/newsletter-signup/>

*******The COA Meeting*******

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

Diocesan Council Topics

Budget Update:

As previously explained, a donor to The Board of Foreign Parishes has offered an annual gift of \$100,000 for three years in order to finance the sorely needed additional staffing of the Convocation in support of Programming and

Communication. The 2025 budget has thus been reviewed and adjusted to include this gift and subsequent expenses for Audrey Shankles, who takes up her post as Canon for Programming and Communication on April 1, 2025. There is general COA approval of the budget but due to the current potential of fluctuation in the \$US vs Euro rate, Council has requested further information to compare projected scenarios before a final vote.

External Grants Reporting Timelines: The Convocation has received several TEC grants for specific projects and objectives. These will require reports. Bishop Mark showed a list of such grants received, but also noted that in several cases, although grants were announced, the actual funds were not received in a timely manner. Because of their late receipt, reporting is a challenge. The reports will be compiled soon in any case.

Standing Committee Matters

Liaison matters were reported:

Thank you for the written reports received from most of our partners. The Council of Advice is grateful to learn about so much activity across the Convocation. The question of allocating specific time for Committees and Commissions to meet during our annual Convention was discussed again. Bishop Mark reminded us that Convention is a precious but short time to bring us together, not to separate into our separate groups. Also, not all members of any individual committee or commission will necessarily be in attendance at Convention. It should however be possible in 2025 to schedule more informal gatherings during meals and free time as the Convention will be held at the Wilhelm-Kempf-Haus near Wiesbaden, Germany, which has space where this will be easier than in 2024.

Please remember our Liaison connections for communicating concerns throughout the year, not only when written reports are expected.

Vote on the Reunion of the Dioceses of Bethlehem and Central Pennsylvania: This was approved unanimously.

Approval of change to Emmanuel's Articles of Organisation: This change which allows for Vestry members to stand for a fourth year after completing a three year term, was approved. The two Emmanuel members abstained. Bishop Mark concurred.

Council of Advice Matters

Bishop's Report and Matters Arising:

Bishop Mark sent his written report prior to the meeting. Topics included questions regarding the budget changes and confidential discussion regarding current transitions in four of our parishes.

Saint Paul's Within the Walls, Rome is interviewing its final candidates.

All Saints', Waterloo, Belgium will continue during its time of transition supported by The Reverend Jo Jan Vandeheede as associate rector.

Christ Church, Clermont-Ferrand is exploring a few possible avenues toward its future. Bishop Mark remarked that they are functioning successfully in our model of "lay led, clergy supported" missions -but as a parish.

Holy Trinity, Paris will begin a season of transition on March 1, with Dean Harlan's retirement. In the weeks ahead, hopefully about 90 days, Bishop Mark will act as clergy-in-charge as he has done in the past for other parishes.

Parish visitations will thus be interrupted. His next scheduled visitation will be to Frankfurt on Trinity Sunday, June 15. He hopes to make up for other visits during the summer months.

Other Business

Dates of Next Meetings:

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

Our meeting concluded with members praying the Grace together.