

Points of Communication from the Council of Advice (COA)

Monday April 7, 2025

Zoom 11:30am-1:30pm

Fragment of watercolor by James Tissot: Le cortège dans les rues de Jérusalem (The procession in the Streets of Jerusalem).



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

Mark calendars now for **June 5-7, 2025**, the next 2025 HOM gathering to be held in Augsburg, Germany. Rectors and Wardens from our Parishes will also be invited – please invite them to also save the date and look forward to further information coming soon. (Note that COA members are invited to arrive for these meetings on June 4th.)

Members of Council of Advice and your Liaison Partners:

Written reports are requested before our next meeting on 21 May. A reminder of the annual reporting months: May, July, November and February. Thank you for sending in reports to Secretary Rev. Richard Easterling by May 19, if possible.

Other 2025 dates and notices to share with Congregations:

May

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

This has proven to be a popular event. Currently places are only available on a waitlist for gatherings of Juniors(10-13)and Youth(14-18). Details and sign-up can be found at: [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>

June

HOM meetings in Augsburg: see note above.

October

Convention and Festival of Gathering: 16-18 October.

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?"

Keep abreast of events as they are scheduled on the Convocation Website using the Planning Center tab <https://episcopaleurope.org/>

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 are being invited 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.

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.

Audrey Shankles, has now begun her contract as Canon for Programming and Communication. Make sure you are on the Convocation email distribution. Please sign up and invite those in your ministries to sign up too. <https://episcopaleurope.org/newsletter-signup/>

Audrey continues to update our new website titled The Episcopal Church Europe. <https://episcopaleurope.org/> Heads of our various Committees and Commissions are encouraged to review the content in your assigned section and send Audrey suggested changes or additions. As the group supporting us from New York reorganize, we await their support in transferring all the needed information from the old website before removing it from the internet.

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

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

Diocesan Council Topics

Scheduling of regular Meetings of the *Conseil* of the Convocation and that of the SCI that oversees the Bishop apartment in Paris:

As discussed last month, scheduling these official meetings in advance will help be certain that regulations for timely notification are met. Quarterly *Conseil* meetings will be scheduled in June, September, January and April. The *Assemblée* (which manages the SCI) will hold its required AGM meeting annually at the time of Convention.

Standing Committee Matters

Oral Liaison matters as needed: There was further discussion of the roles of COA Liaisons, specifically in regard to our Missions as they already have COMC Liaisons and this can create confusion. Bishop Mark will be discussing this with the Chair of the COMC.

Consent to the Election of The Rev. Angel Roberto Rivera Rodriguez as Bishop of Cuba
Consent agreed unanimously.

Convocation Representative to General Synod of the Church of England: Two representatives, one lay, one clergy, have been elected to this role: George Battrick and Rev. Scott Moore. Rev. Scott Moore unfortunately is now unable to attend. Fr. Markus Dünzkofer in Frankfurt was nominated to take his place.

It was generally agreed that only a written report will be needed following the meetings.

Timing of COA meetings: Audrey noted that daytime meetings are challenging for many and suggested exploring evening or Saturday meetings. It was noted that meetings had been set according to preferences of the present COA members. This has been done at least annually with member turnover. Future groups will be encouraged to do the same.

Establishing structures of governance for the four current areas of focus in the Convocation: Climate and Creation Care; Beloved Community and Racial Justice; Refugees and Migrants; Children and Youth.

There was considerable discussion of the concerns and current status of these different groups that were established following the 2019 Convention. There are differing needs regarding each group. A subgroup of the COA (Bishop Mark, Ward, Audrey and Lois) was invited to explore this further.

Communications and Programming updates will be a routine item in all further COA monthly meetings.

Council of Advice Matters

Bishop's Report and Matters Arising: Bishop Mark sent his written report prior to the meeting.

Topics included:

--Calendar items and invitations to the COA regarding upcoming visits of Bishop Mariann Budde in Paris and a European visit of Presiding Bishop, The Most Reverend Sean Rowe.

--Q1 Financial Results: Results shared were prepared by Canon Plé. Our treasurer, Denis, was not able to attend the meeting but had sent word that all is in order for this time of the year. There was of course, discussion regarding implications on our budget and financial situation given the current turmoil in the world markets.

--The continuing success of the Refugee Grant Program: Following a very successful site visit from representatives of Episcopal Relief and Development, the Convocation has been invited to submit a three year grant request. Thank you to Giulia Bonoldi, Socorro Heepe, and Audrey Shanks for their excellent welcome and presentation of our projects.

--Progress regarding the transitions in Rome, Waterloo, and Paris and some confidential staff and contracting concerns.

--Resolutions for our October Convention regarding terms of COA members: The possibility of allowing a third two year term and a change of term dates to begin Jan.1 is being explored in order to allow more continuity in leadership and a smoother transition period. Resulting resolutions will need to be voted upon in October. With regard to allowing a third term, the change would only effect elections in 2026. It remains to be discussed whether changing the term transfer date could take effect following the upcoming election in 2025.

Other Business

Dates of Next Meetings:

May 21 10:00am; June during HOM meetings 4-7 June.

Our meeting concluded with members praying the Grace together.

Jesus said:

"I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in the darkness but will have the light of life." John 8:12

Warm wishes to all for a blessed Holy Week and Joyous Easter.