

Points of Communication from the Council of Advice (COA)

Wednesday March 12, 2025

Zoom 10:00am-12:20pm



*Fragment of watercolor by James Tissot: Jésus d'assied au bord de la mer et prêche.
(Jesus sits by the seaside and preaches).
An image for this month's Dwelling in the Word: Luke 11 29-32.*

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

Mark calendars now for **June 4-7, 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.

Other 2025 dates and notices to share with Congregations:

March/April

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. The first meeting had over 50 registrants and was an interesting and lively session. Don't miss out!

Registration links:

[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](#)

*** Note from the Youth Commission – this event is currently oversubscribed but there is a waiting list. If further accommodation can be found, new registrations will be included.

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. Due to exceptional demands on Bishop Mark, proposed participants have not all been contacted, but this will hopefully be accomplished soon so that groups may begin their work.

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, who begins her contract as Canon for Programming and Communication at the end of the month. 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 invited 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

Budget Update:

Bishop Mark presented two versions of the revised budget for 2025 as requested in February. Since his first revision including the new grant and appointment of our Canon for Programming and Communication, exchange rates have already changed. We cannot know what may happen given the turmoil of the current situation. The COA approved the Revision 1 2025 Budget using the \$1.10 to 1 Euro rate and suggested a note in our official minutes that we understand that numbers will be dependent on this exchange rate remaining relatively stable. We are aware that a budget closer to Revision 2 Budget 2025 is possible.

Scheduling of regular Conseil and SCI Meetings

In order to simplify the notification and scheduling of these official meetings, Lois queried the need for defining quarterly dates. Denis reminded us that with his appointment as the official gerant of the SCI, only an AGM should be needed. This will be scheduled during the HOM gatherings in June. Quarterly meetings of the Conseil will be scheduled.

Standing Committee Matters

Oral Liaison matters as needed:

Resulting from her contact with Janet Day Strehlow, Pippa, requested the status of task force invitations. Janet had been invited to lead up the task force on Peace and Justice as defined above. Also, as already noted, these invitations from the Bishop have been delayed. Janet was encouraged to move ahead and reach out to others suggested for her group. Bishop Mark will get to further invitations as soon as he is able.

The role of the COA Liaisons was discussed and we were reminded of the description of this role prepared in the past by David Case. Some difficulties with clear communication, especially regarding the granting process were discussed in some detail. We affirmed the need for greater clarity and communication in the processes of the Convocation, especially for requesting grants.

EMM – Rainbow Initiative:

In the process of finalizing our commitment to EMM, Lois requested names and emails for members most interested in this initiative as required in their registration forms. Bishop Mark has the list of those suggested from our parishes for the LGBTQIA+ Task Force. He will follow up with them and Lois, making requests for their permission and interest in having their names and contact information communicated.

Communication news from Audrey:

Audrey was pleased to share the information that two grants have been approved that will support ministry for our 20's and 30's groups.

Council of Advice Matters**Bishop's Report and Matters Arising:**

Bishop Mark sent his written report prior to the meeting. Topics included details of the 2025 Budget calculations as noted above; confidential management and contracting issues; updates regarding transitions and concerns regarding some of our missions and parishes. He also shared his upcoming travel for the House of Bishops meetings in the USA to be followed immediately by a meeting scheduled in Amman, Jordan for the "Anglican Lutheran International Commission on Unity". With all that is on his plate currently, Bishop Mark is unsure whether the latter meeting will be workable.

Holy Trinity, Paris has entered a season of transition since Dean Harlan's March 1 retirement. Bishop Mark is acting as clergy-in-charge as he has done in the past for other parishes. Adding this responsibility to his many others as our Bishop, the schedule of parish visitations will 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:**

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

Our meeting concluded at 12:20 with members praying the Grace together.