

The Joint Standing Committee on Planning and Arrangements  
Minutes of January 30-31, 2019 Meeting  
Hilton Baltimore Inner Harbor, Baltimore, Maryland

Attending: Members – Devon Anderson, Michael Barlowe, Kurt Barnes, Diane Jardine Bruce, Michael Curry, Wendell Gibbs, Mary Gray-Reeves, Gay Jennings, Bryan Krislock, Ryan Kusumoto, Karen Patterson, Bryon Rushing, Scott Slater, Eugene Sutton, Patricia Wellnitz

Staff – Marian Conboy, Patrick Haizel, Chuck Robertson, Stephanie Spellers, Mark Stevenson

Excused: Sally Johnson

Wednesday, January 30

Michael Barlowe opened the meeting with a prayer. He explained that the membership of The Joint Standing Committee on Planning and Arrangements is defined by Canon, and invited each person to introduce themselves and identify their role. Eugene Sutton, Bishop of Maryland, welcomed everyone to Baltimore. He said that although the committee is meeting in the Inner Harbor, there is another side of Baltimore - an Unholy Trinity of Racism, Poverty and Violence.

The first order of business for the group was to elect a chair and vice chair. Michael Barlowe was nominated, seconded and elected unopposed. There were two nominees for Vice Chair; members voted and Diane Jardine Bruce was elected Vice Chair.

The agenda was adopted by consensus. Michael Barlowe explained the responsibilities of the committee, and then spoke of the reorganization of staff in the General Convention office. Lori Ionnitiu has left the employ of the DFMS, and the functions of her role will be divided among a Deputy Executive Officer (to be hired), a Convention and Meeting planner (to be hired), and Patrick Haizel. The hope is that they will bring new ideas and energies to the work of the General Convention. Michael expressed gratitude to Lori Ionnitiu for her decades of work as General Convention Manager.

The committee was asked to answer the question “What kind of GC do we want?” and each person had a chance to respond. Responses included:

Desire to have wider conversations

Have liturgy and worship more central to what we are doing

Provide hospitality to newcomers, encourage leadership development

Connectivity between General Convention and parish life

Grappling with big issues; a General Convention that allows for a safe place for those conversations. Engage in tough decisions in a way that doesn't destroy us in the process.

To be fully functionally bilingual, sensitive and responsive to multi-cultural reality of our church

Give people tools to engage the multi-cultural diversity, better engage the immigrant population and grow in the name of Jesus Christ in a new way.

Focus on the Unholy Trinity of Violence, Poverty and Racism, and see how they are entwined. Explore communities and neighborhoods and talk with people, and have serious discussions around this

Engage the city with prayer walks

Have a General Convention less focused on resolutions; return to a model of less resolutions. Intentionally discuss resolutions before debating and voting

More involvement with the ECW

Want people to leave with an experience of love

Would love to see a conversational mutual space

Have vibrant worship, and a General Convention where people feel like they went to church. People leave knowing they have attended a great council of the church, and know they have been heard.

Facilitate engagement from the bottom up, not top down.

We need to educate people on why we have a General Convention. This should be ongoing education. We need to spend more time listening to the organic way bishops and deputies speak to us. In the prayers of the people, ask people to pray for General Convention

General Convention is a mission convocation comprised of inspiration, education (formation) and legislative. Put these all together and then we are being The Church. General Convention should be equal parts of those three.

After this discussion, the committee toured the convention center and returned to the hotel for lunch. When the group reconvened after lunch, Michael Barlowe invited anyone to talk about some of the common threads of the morning's conversation. Gay Jennings asked that the group think about having a dedicated space where bishops, deputies and others meet – not in the House of Deputies as has been the practice in the past. There was a lot of energy around this idea. Eugene Sutton wants everyone to be aware that July 4<sup>th</sup> is a big deal in Baltimore, and we should not plan to have regular programming that evening.

Next, Michael Barlowe led a discussion about schedule. Gay Jennings gave background information about why some of the scheduling decisions were made when designing the 2018 schedule. The challenge was to have more time for committees, not reduce legislative time, have time for joint sessions, and schedule worship at a time when local people could attend. The goal of having more locals attend worship was achieved, but attendance was down among convention attendees simply because people were tired at the end of the day. The committee agreed that there is a benefit to a rhythm, otherwise people feel unsettled and the subcommittee will keep this in mind when they make their recommendations.

While discussing worship, members floated different ideas – perhaps three Eucharists – Opening, Sunday and Closing, and other options for services like a 7:00 a.m. mass, daily office, evensong, compline, morning prayer, quiet meditation. Yoga was suggested, and Karen Patterson and Pat Wellnitz said that the ECW offers daily yoga and all are invited. Michael Curry reminded the committee that Holy Eucharist is the central act of worship on the Lord's Day, but there are times when it felt like we were forcing Eucharist. Eugene Sutton also reminded the committee that July 4, 2021 is a Sunday. There will be a subcommittee on worship to make some recommendations.

The committee also discussed intentionally scheduling time for bishops and deputies to go the Exhibit Hall. There was positive feedback about the Me Too listening session and liturgy, and the taped messages from international and ecumenical guests. Other memorable events were Bishops Against Gun Violence and trip to the detention center. Members cautioned to leave some wiggle room in the schedule so allow GC to respond to witness moments that may arise, and to put a line item in the budget for it. Time to rest and take care of yourself should also be factored in while designing the schedule. The committee also discussed the need to provide the chairs with more training and require that chairs, officers and committees do more work in advance.

After a short break, the committee returned to the subject of worship. This time, they discussed how to be better about diversity. Michael Barlowe cautioned that to do a really good job requires planning very far in advance and genuinely meet deadlines. Set good timelines, clear deadlines and operate accordingly. The Presiding Bishop will have a worship planning committee with Mark Stevenson as staff liaison and direct link to the Presiding Bishop.

There was a discussion regarding whether there needs to be a UTO ingathering, whether this privileges one group over another, and should there be one service that includes the many service groups in the church. This led to a deeper discussion of the tensions between UTO and ECW. Michael Barlowe suggested that establishing a subcommittee to study ECW and affiliated groups.

There was a discussion of theme, and Gay Jennings asked the Presiding Bishop if there would be a third message, following The Jesus Movement and The Way of Love, but Mary Gray-Reeves cautioned to be careful that the message is not just about Bishop Curry. Members pointed out that the theme of trinity has emerged during the discussions, and that will be explored by the subcommittee charged with theme.

Michael Barlowe suggested the following subcommittees:

1. GC Children's Program
2. Scheduling/Design
3. Worship
4. ECW Triennial and other gatherings
5. Finances
6. Theme
7. Communications

He asked the members to think about which subcommittee they might feel called to serve on, and he will ask for volunteers tomorrow. The committee was in recess.

Thursday, January 31, 2019

Diane Jardine Bruce offered an opening prayer. Michael Barlowe explained that the agenda for the day was to decide on the length of the convention, form the subcommittees, give a brief update on technical improvements, review referred resolutions, see if there are further thoughts on the 2018 or 2021 convention, discuss timeline for site selection for 2024, review tasks and adjourn.

After discussion, a motion for a 10 day committee, beginning June 30 and ending July 9 was moved, seconded and carried unanimously.

Next, subcommittees were populated. Michael Barlowe will establish conveners for each subcommittee within the next week.

**1. GC Children's Program**

No volunteers

**2. Scheduling/Design**

Ryan Kusumoto

Scott Slater

Bryan Krislock

Gay Jennings

Byron Rushing

Wendell Gibbs

Stephanie Spellers

**3. Worship**

Devon Anderson

Mary Gray-Reeves

Mark Stevenson

Byron Rushing

Pat Wellnitz

Michael Curry

**4. ECW Triennial and other gatherings**

Karen Patterson

Pat Wellnitz

**5. Finances**

Diane Jardine Bruce

Karen Patterson

Bryan Krislock

Kurt Barnes

Patrick Haizel

**6. Theme**

Ryan Kusumoto

Eugene Sutton

Byron Rushing

Devon Anderson  
Mary Gray-Reeves  
Stephanie Spellers

## **7. Communications**

Scott Slater  
Chuck Robertson  
Kurt Barnes  
Wendell Gibbs

The GCO will set up groups in the Extranet for these subcommittees. They should start their work soon, and report back to the full committee. The hope is the subcommittees will complete their work within the next few months.

Byron Rushing commented that he would like to get away from using “79<sup>th</sup>” and “80” when referring to General Conventions, and instead use the year of the Convention, like 2018, 2021.

Michael Barlowe gave a brief update on improvements planned for 2021. The most visible improvement will be in the election module, which should decrease the amount of legislative time spent on elections. Diane Bruce and Wendell Gibbs said that the House of Bishops would like to hold their elections electronically also. Michael Barlowe cautioned that the cost of software development is enormous and will impact on how many improvements are able to be developed.

Eugene Sutton said that in the Diocese of Maryland, they are careful of how they use resources, especially plastic. He would like to discourage plastic water bottles and plastic cups, and would like to ask vendors not to use plastic bags. They also have some ideas about how they can encourage people to deal with the homeless and panhandlers, perhaps by handing out cards. He asked what the financial obligation of the host diocese was, particularly around a Diocese of Maryland event. The answer is that there is no assistance for the diocese for that event, but the diocese is not even required to have one big event – they may decide to do something different, like offer several options that are self-pay. Patrick Haizel said that one expense would be the identifier for the volunteers (apron, tee shirt). The host diocese is also provided with an exhibit booth. Michael Barlowe or Patrick Haizel will have a clarifying conversation with Eugene Sutton about responsibilities of the host diocese.

Resolutions referred to the Joint Standing Committee on Planning and Arrangements:

- A003 was a change in the Canons to accurately reflect current practice.
- A281 (Translation services) will be integrated into planning
- A226 names five possible sites for GC 2024 – Anaheim in the Diocese of Los Angeles, Detroit in the Diocese of Michigan, Louisville in the Diocese of Kentucky, St. Louis in the Diocese of Missouri, and San Juan in the Diocese of Puerto Rico. The GC staff will start visiting these sites, and the committee will be given a full report in late summer/early fall and be asked to name the finalist

cities, which the Executive Committee of JSCPA will visit and make a recommendation. The timeline for the site selection had been distributed in the meeting materials.

Next steps are for the subcommittees to start their work. A zoom meeting for the entire committee will be scheduled when subcommittees are ready to report. Everyone was encouraged to use the Extranet to post files and messages to communicate with each other. Michael Barlowe thanked the committee for their leadership, and asked Gay Jennings to offer a closing prayer.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:10 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Marian Conboy