

Preface to the Reports to the 81st General Convention of The Episcopal Church

After the initial flurry of post-convention activity, the close of a General Convention provides a period of relative calm. It is often a time for evaluation, fine-tuning of plans for the upcoming triennium, organizing interim work, and outlining future projects. Not surprisingly, that was not the case with 2022; while apparent “calm” may have been observed, it was the serenity of a swan in a seemingly effortless glide – while its limbs are in constant motion beneath the surface of the water. In fact, so temporally constrained and so concentrated was the work between the 80th and 81st conventions that we never settled on a name: was it the *Biennium*? Was it a truncated *Triennium*? Or was it best described as a *Mini-ennium*, containing all the requisites of three years but fulfilled in under two?

Whatever it is called, the interim between these conventions has been more of a sprint than a marathon, with much accomplished in that most finite of all treasures: time. As you read and study these *Reports*, I hope you will say a prayer of thanksgiving for the faithful Episcopalians who labored under enormous pressure and have done so by keeping their attention on God’s mission in their common work. Thank you all!

I have announced my retirement as the Secretary of the General Convention and Executive Officer for later this year. Later in these *Reports*, you will find a narrative of some of what has been accomplished since 2013. As I complete over eleven years in this ministry, I am filled with gratitude for the friends and colleagues who have supported me in my work, and who shared a vision that sensible governance, ably administered, is foundational to the mission of the church. It has been a pleasure and honor to serve as Secretary of the General Convention.

The Rev. Canon Michael Barlowe, D.D.
Secretary of the General Convention and Executive Officer

A note about this year’s color for The Blue Book:

Even in its virtual form, I have retained the custom of selecting a particular shade of blue for the Reports to the General Convention. For this edition, the color I have chosen is “Cornflower” (hexadecimal color code #6F90F4), Cornflower Blue was, famously, used by the 17th century Dutch artist, Johannes Vermeer, and has been described by Picsart.com as representing “depth, tranquility, contemplation, and peace. It can also be used to convey a sense of idealism, trust, loyalty, sincerity, wisdom, confidence, and stability.” Cornflower blue seems a fitting color for times such as these. (<https://picsart.com/blog/post/cornflower-blue-color#>)