

Standing Commission on Structure, Governance, Constitution and Canons  
Maritime Institute of Technology in Baltimore, Maryland  
Minutes of November 11-14, 2018 Meetings

**November 12, 2018 – Morning Session**

Members present: Sean Rowe (Co-Convener), Molly James (Co-Convener), Sharon Alexander (Acting Secretary), Nancy Cohen, Valerie Balling, Annette Buchanan, Jennifer Baskerville-Burrows, Ryan Kusumoto, Luz Montes, Jake Owensby, Bill Powel, Jamal Smith, Marisa Tabizon Thompson, Adam Trambley, Sally Johnson (representative of President of House of Deputies, attending other group meeting – joined meeting at 11 am), Gay Clark Jennings (President of House of Deputies, present for a period of time). Also present was Michael Barlowe (Executive Officer of the General Convention, present at the end of the session).

Not attending this session but at Interim Bodies meeting: Tom Little (flight delay), Wendell Gibbs (attending other group meeting), Christopher Hayes (attending other group meeting), Mark Stevenson (representative of Presiding Bishop)

Excused absences from meeting: Carmen Figueroa, Michael Glass, Mike Klusmeyer, Jane Cisluycis (Executive Council representative)

The Co-Conveners called the meeting to order at 10:30 am Eastern Standard Time.

**Travel and Expenses**

The session opened with a presentation by Patrick Haizel and Jennifer Gonzalez about expenses, travel guidelines and translation/interpretation.

Policies can be found on the General Convention/Interim Bodies website  
[https://extranet.generalconvention.org/governing\\_and\\_interim\\_bodies/interim\\_bodies](https://extranet.generalconvention.org/governing_and_interim_bodies/interim_bodies)

Please turn in your expense forms well before year end so the DFMS books can be closed. We can request travel advances from Patrick if we need to do so. On the expense form the line item for meals should include any tips associated with the meal; these tips should not be entered on the line items for tips (these are for housekeeping, taxi and similar gratuities).

Patrick will share the Conflict of Interest Form on the Extranet. Please return this promptly.

There is small budget available for a consultant if the SCSGCC wants to use a consultant.

**Translations and Interpretations**

Jennifer Gonzalez spoke about Translation and Interpretation Services. Translations are written. A committee member can translate minutes if necessary. If a document is sent to Translation Services, documents of less than 500 words will be translated in 5 business days or less and

As Posted to General Convention Office on November 26, 2018

documents of 500 words or more may take more than 5 business days. Only Word documents are accepted. For translation of graphs, a copy of the original and an explanation in a Word documents should be submitted.

Interpretations are spoken. They will arrange for an interpreter for face-to-face meetings. For ZOOM or phone conferences Jennifer should be notified as far ahead as possible.

### **Introductory Remarks and Guidelines**

Sean presented opening remarks, stating that he and Molly are co-convening this session. The group gave introductions.

Molly presented proposed Guidelines for the SCSGCC based on Visions, Inc. materials (which are also set forth on bookmarks that were circulated). The Guidelines adopted are:

#### **"Try on"**

Be open to "trying on" another person's perspective or idea when it is offered, in place of our own held beliefs.

**It's okay to disagree** – we can disagree with ideas but not with people; there are no stupid ideas or questions; engage in dialogue instead of debate. Don't say "This is a stupid idea, but . . ." We can love each other as Christians even when we do not hold the same opinion. It is not okay to blame, shame, or attack, yourself or others

#### **Practice "self-focus"**

Pay attention to what is going on with you. Speak in "I" statements. Speak up when there has been a negative impact.

#### **Practice "both/and" thinking**

Use the word "and" more often than the word "but." Assume everyone is working from good intentions

#### **Maintain confidentiality**

Maintain a courageous space instead of safe or confidential space. A courageous space is where hard truths can be spoken with respect.

#### **Step up and Step back**

If you are usually the last person to speak, sometimes speak sooner. If you speak a lot, help create space for other voices.

#### **Insider language**

We tend to use "tribal language" including many acronyms and insider language. Many persons do not understand the insider language so be aware of it.

#### **Be present, participate**

Participation is important, not simply showing up.

## **Logistics, Roles, Responsibilities**

Sean spoke about logistics, roles, responsibilities for the SCSGCC. There is a myth that the work covers a triennium. It is not three years, but instead is closer to 20 months. Twenty months from now we will need to have a Blue Book report ready to be submitted.

We are scheduled for two more in-person meetings. Much of our work will need to be done by phone or video conference. We will also need to do much of the work in subcommittees. This Commission typically produces many resolutions.

We have important work this triennium including doing some Blue Sky thinking. We should look at systemic issues in our governance and processes, in addition to more focused work on the Constitution and Canons. The Blue Sky thinking is probably best done in our face-to-face meetings.

One of our challenges is that members tend to be fully present at face-to-face meetings but lose momentum between meetings. By the end of this meeting we need to be structured so we can do our work efficiently.

## **Mandate**

SCSGCC's canonical mandate is set forth in Canon I.1.2(n). Some considerations are:

- (i) Other bodies have not been submitting their proposed Constitutional and Canonical amendments to SCSGCC for our review. We should have a discussion about how to encourage this, as it saves time closer to General Convention.
- (ii) This discusses the authority of the SCSGCC to propose changes on its own without a directive from General Convention. There is often a tension between whether the proposed change is technical or substantive.
- (iii) Review of the DFMS Bylaws and proposing amendments. There was consensus in favor of adding review of the Executive Council Bylaws to subsection (iii).
- (iv) The SCSGCC oversees the work of the White and Dykman group. Much work has been already been done. An update to Title III is needed as this was last done in 2006. The SCSGCC is tasked with promoting a better understanding of the Constitution and Canons. This is something we can do better, such as by having a blog or other communications.
- (v) Duties assigned by General Convention.
- (vi) Review of the structure of General Convention and TEC, including review of new Committees, Commissions, Board, Agencies. There was consensus in favor of broadening (vi) to include "Task Forces" and possibly all interim bodies.

As Posted to General Convention Office on November 26, 2018

(vii) Title IV training. Former member Polly Getz would like to continue this work in connection with SCSGCC.

Working within this mandate the SCSGCC decides the scope of its work for the Triennium.

Gay Jennings was asked what this group should focus on. She and the Presiding Bishop have discussed this. They would like to see a 35,000-foot expansive Blue Sky discussion about structure and governance of the church. Last triennium there was a lot of work on specific issues. This time it would be good to look at the bigger picture, but not neglect the “weeds.” The SCSGCC should think adaptively and systemically about how the church is governed.

Sally suggested that if we do not look at the bigger picture the weeds will not matter. We may need to amend the SCSGCC’s mandate or figure out a structure that will deal with a broader mandate.

### **Documentation and Communications**

The SCSGCC will use Google drive, Google docs, Google sheets, etc., for its documents. ZOOM will be used for video meetings between face-to-face meetings.

Michael Barlowe recommended that we share passwords and similar information with the GCO staff and add staff access to Google drive. Information on the Extranet is archived there forever and does not go away so it is wise to be judicious about how we phrase what we store there. It is good for this group to “show its homework” to the church and people who will serve on Interim Bodies in the future. We should make it easy for those who come after us to know our thinking, what data, etc., we looked at, and why we made certain decisions. There is also the potential for joint meetings with other Interim Bodies and we should think about planning these now.

Members of the SCSGCC should refer to each other by first names shown on the tent cards.

### **The SCSGCC officers elected by unanimous vote are:**

Chair – Molly James  
Vice Chair – Sean Rowe  
Secretary – Tom Little  
Vice Secretary – Sharon Alexander

The meeting recessed at noon.

### **November 12, 2018 - Afternoon Session**

The meeting reconvened at 1:30 pm with the same attendance as in the morning, with Mark Stevenson joining part of the meeting.

### **Presentation on Minutes, Agendas, Blue Book**

As Posted to General Convention Office on November 26, 2018

Twila Rios gave a presentation on minutes, agendas, and the Blue Book.

### *Minutes*

We are required to submit minutes for all meetings, whether face-to-face or by phone or video conference. Twila recommends that they be written up within 2-3 day of the meeting.

Minutes should include:

- A record of votes taken (showing the number of votes for, number against, number abstaining – but not the names of the persons)
- A record of decisions made
- The dates of upcoming meetings

We should not put matters that are confidential in the minutes.

The draft minutes should be posted to the Extranet for the members of the SCSGCC to review. The minutes must be approved. It is recommended that the draft be posted with a time period for review and comment after which the minutes (as may be amended or corrected) will be deemed approved.

The Secretary then sends the approved minutes to [gcoffice@episcopalchurch.org](mailto:gcoffice@episcopalchurch.org). Agendas should also be sent to this address at least 1-2 weeks prior to meetings. Questions can also be sent to this email address, especially if we do not know to whom the question should be directed.

The SCSGCC has a webpage that will be active for the triennium but will be taken down once General Convention 2021 is over (<https://generalconvention.org>).

Choose “Interim Bodies”

Choose “Standing Commission”

Choose “Standing Commission on Structure Governance Constitution & Canons”

There is a roster, planned/current meetings (which includes agendas for upcoming meetings), past meetings (which includes minutes for past meetings), documents, subcommittees, and mandate. If we want something to be posted on this page we must tell GCO. This page goes away after GC 2021. If we want something to be permanent we must talk with GCO.

Note that Policies are on this webpage.

### *Blue Book Reports*

These are the Reports to General Convention. Our Report is due December 1, 2020 (2 years from now).

Interim Bodies will be using a Blue Book application to prepare the reports. The application will help us prepare the report in the proper format. The GCO hopes to have a link to the application via the Extranet. In 2020 we will get a link to the application. The login will be the same as our individual logins to the Extranet.

As Posted to General Convention Office on November 26, 2018

We should assign someone to be the Blue Book coordinator, who will review the entire Blue Book report to make sure everything is properly included, and then will submit the report.

The goal of the SCSGCC is not to produce the Blue Book Report; the goal is to meet the mandate for the triennium.

Supplemental materials are permitted. They must be translated into Spanish. Both the English and Spanish documents are uploaded separately as PDF documents. Copyrighted materials may not be used as supplemental materials.

We can go into the application to download a draft report and send it to someone else

SCSGCC Blue Book reports are typically longer than other reports and therefore take longer to publish. The SCSGCC Blue Book report should be posted online by the end of March 2021.

### *Resolutions*

We should have someone review all the SCSGCC resolutions for proper format before they are submitted. Most people read resolutions only on the General Convention Virtual Binder so the explanation is very important.

Contact information: Twila Rios [trios@episcopalchurch.org](mailto:trios@episcopalchurch.org), 212-716-6141

General inquiries, etc.: [gcoffice@episcopalchurch.org](mailto:gcoffice@episcopalchurch.org)

## **Small Group Discussions**

Background information on the Conversations is on the google drive at <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1NqhGZsETHpYiGPH1Cm5qNOehaM6zspH0>

### Conversation 1

Why does the Church exist? What is Church for?

Tell a story about a time when you said to yourself, “THIS is why I go to Church.”

Why do we need ordained leaders? Tell a story of a transformative moment where it mattered that you or someone involved was ordained.

### Conversation 2

Are we an **Empire Church** (highly institutional, separate from the world) or an **Incarnate Church** (a living organism, “radically open engagement with the world at its doorstep”)? Is the Church a “refuge” or a “refueling station”?

What do we want to be?

### Conversation 3

“Bivocational” ministry is about more than the priest having another paycheck. It is about sharing leadership. How have you seen this done well at a parish or diocesan level? What churchwide structures do we need to foster the Church we are becoming and to promote the thriving ministry of all the baptized? What is getting in the way? What do you need? What do you wish you had?

The members of the SCSGCC divided up into small groups and discussed these questions. Upon reconvening, the members shared what they had discussed in their small groups.

### Potential Big Goals

The commission discussed potential “big goals” for the triennium, which are summarized below:

#### General Convention

- Better stewardship of time/resources
- Number of resolutions – timing
- More mission and ministry focused – send people out ready to do ministry
- Too long – young people cannot take 2 weeks off
- Ineffective reporting back
- Can other groups do some of the work (e.g., do we need a resolution to start a ministry?)

#### Bishops/Dioceses

- Creative use of resources and relationships – partnerships, provisional bishops
- Number of dioceses (also a conversation we are not willing to have) – what is best for the mission of the church
- Move conventions away from legislation and toward ministry (but still leave room for discussion and debate)

#### Local Formation/Discernment

- Intentional leadership development – all levels
- What do we need to add or remove at congregational level – vitality and viability issues
- Opportunities for parallel development (UBE, Forma, EYE)
- How to get people invested enough to make changes
- Laity – not willing to be disciples = identity issue
- How to engage/encourage young adults, especially women/minorities
- More opportunities to learn about ministries

#### Structure/Roadblocks

- Conversations we are not willing to have – e.g., because of colonial guilt
- Ability to have open and honest conversations
- Scorched earth – need healing
- Dysfunctional rescuing
- We often use “we don’t have the authority” as an excuse not to engage an issue

As Posted to General Convention Office on November 26, 2018

- Fear – emphasis on abundance instead of scarcity – resources, endowment
- How to leverage key assets (e.g., a popular Presiding Bishop)
- Competing structures in the church
- Where are, or should we, be tied to denominationalism?

The meeting recessed at 5:30 pm.

### **November 13, 2018 – Morning Session**

Members present: Molly James (Chair), Sean Rowe (Vice Chair), Tom Little (Secretary), Sharon Alexander (Vice Secretary), Nancy Cohen, Valerie Balling, Annette Buchanan, Jennifer Baskerville-Burrows, Christopher Hayes, Ryan Kusumoto, Luz Montes, Jake Owensby, Bill Powel, Jamal Smith, Marisa Tabizon Thompson, Adam Trambley, Sally Johnson (representative of President of House of Deputies), Gay Clark Jennings (President of House of Deputies, present for a period of time).

Not attending this session but at Interim Bodies meeting: Wendell Gibbs (attending other group meeting), and Mark Stevenson (representative of Presiding Bishop)

Excused absences from meeting: Carmen Figueroa, Michael Glass, Mike Klusmeyer, Jane Cislucyis (Executive Council representative)

Following opening prayers led by Adam Trambley, the Chair called the meeting to order at 10:32 am.

### **GCO Workshop**

The Commission started the day with a workshop presented by Brian Murray of the General Convention Office, on the ins and outs of the Extranet. The Extranet is the platform for interim body member communications, posting of documents (including Minutes), and scheduling of meetings. The platform is private to our group (plus certain GCO staff who maintain the site). Brian explained how to access the SCSGCC Extranet landing page; how the tabs work; the functions available on the site (including subcommittee capability); tutorials; and troubleshooting.

Brian also explained the way the GCO schedules meetings; the budgetary limitations on in-person meetings and how this has led to clustering interim body meetings on a small number of dates. The 2019 in-person meeting options are: January 25-29, March 19-23 and October 23-27. Meetings need to be scheduled at least eight weeks in advance. Airline tickets should be booked prior to three weeks in advance of the meeting dates. Reimbursement forms are due within two weeks following a meeting. Brian then explained the drill for virtual meetings using Zoom video-audio conferencing. He added suggestions for scheduling regular/recurring meetings. There are twice the interim bodies this time around than last triennium; the GCO staff is the same size. The GCO asks each interim body to designate two members as technology liaisons to the GCO, and who can gain their own expertise to assist the body.



### **Discussion of Our Categories of Work**

These are the six categories tentatively identified by Molly and Sean, based on yesterday's discussions; the matters referred to the Commission by General Convention and the Presiding Officers; and work not completed by the Commission in the last triennium:

- Bishops & Dioceses
- Canonical Changes (non-Title IV)
- Churchwide Structures
- Formation
- General Convention & Rules of Order
- Title IV

Is anything missing? Tom suggested, possibly, a placeholder for a recurring discussion of the 35,000-foot-high "dreaming/reimagining ideas. Is "churchwide structures" too broad or too vague (would it include Provinces?)?

How might our members be allocated to each category (subcommittees)? Keeping in mind we will also keep our eye on the big picture issues and concerns. The members volunteered to work in these configurations:

Bishops & Dioceses: Annette, Adam,\* Jennifer, Wendell

Canonical Changes (non-Title IV): Bill, Mike,\* Sharon

Churchwide Structures: Jamal, Jennifer,\* Ryan, Tom

Formation: Valerie,\* Jake, Luz, Marisa

General Convention & Rules of Order: Nancy, Adam, Marisa,\* Luz, Ryan, Jamal

Title IV: Christopher,\* Bill, Marisa, Nancy

\* Convener

The meeting recessed for lunch and resumed at 1:30 pm.

### **November 13, 2018 – Afternoon Session**

Discussion ensued about any challenges identified in the subcommittee discussions.

The Churchwide Structures subcommittee asked for guidance on whether Provinces belong under its review. The consensus was that Provinces belong in the subcommittee. Mention was made of the 2018 Blue Book report of the Task Force on Provinces, and the fact that many if not most of its recommendations failed to get traction at the 2018 General Convention.

There was discussion about whether we are staying at 35,000-foot level discussed yesterday; concerned that we will get too far into the weeds and never get out. The Chair and Vice Chair assured that the full committee will be responsible to keep the focus where it needs to be.

The subcommittees broke out at 1:48 pm.

As Posted to General Convention Office on November 26, 2018

The full Commission reconvened at 4:04 pm following prayer led by Marisa. The subcommittees reported out on their discussions and plans; each has made corresponding notations in its spreadsheet.

Bishops and Dioceses: Adam explained the subcommittee's walk-through of the items on its spread sheet, including canonical issues regarding the election of bishops in Navajoland and Europe; mutual ministry review process for bishops and their dioceses, with process and outcomes or goals, with value for a later episcopal search; discernment, preparation and leadership formation for bishops.

Canonical Changes (non-Title IV): Bill described the subcommittee's review of its referred items.

Churchwide Structures: Ryan covered the subcommittee's review, including a series of province-related resolutions referred out from the 2018 General Convention; they need to reach out to other groups and individuals for information and guidance in order to proceed. He said the subcommittee is curious about why the clergy housing tax exemption was assigned to it. And, he said the subcommittee would like some specific examples illustrating yesterday's "leveraging our assets" and "structures that impede" discussions.

Formation: Valerie reported for the subcommittee. They plan to convene some important conversations among a synergistic collection of varied groups that are separately pursuing formation process and systems review (e.g., Scott Gunn, ChurchNext, FORMA, Discipleship Matters, Sharon Pearson). They recommend working with seminaries, and not just the usual suspects, to find out the best and emerging practices. Molly suggested also working with schools of formation not affiliated with our Church, and there was consensus around this. Canon III.2 doesn't seem to need addressing.

General Convention & Rules of Order: Marisa reported out: What are the goals of General Convention; how can we streamline communications around General Convention; how can we make General Convention more accessible (i.e., issues of cost and length); they have a number of General Convention and Rules of Order "process" issues; all have been assigned to subcommittee members. Their next meeting is January 10, 2019 at 3:00pm Eastern.

Title IV: Christopher reported for the subcommittee. They have 17 items to work on: items from this past General Convention (Resolutions adopted requiring further canonical review, and referrals from General Convention), from the Commission's last triennium that were not completed, and suggestions received from various sources. The subcommittee parceled out various assignments for research and drafting. They are asking what Title IV should look like; should lay persons be covered somehow; should an under-resourced diocese be able to administer Title IV in a different way by in some respects using a regional or centralized resource (e.g., an intake officer).

Interest was expressed in getting updates, prior to adjourning tomorrow morning, from the State of the Church Committee and the Task Force on the Office of Pastoral Development. The Chair and Vice Chair will try to facilitate that.

As Posted to General Convention Office on November 26, 2018

The Commission members ruminated on the in-person 2019 meeting dates as requested by the General Convention Office (1/25-29/19; 3/19-23/19; 10/23-27/19). These dates do not work for many members. As an alternative, September 2 (starting first thing in the morning) through noon on October 2 seemed workable.

There was consensus that the subcommittees should develop a monthly schedule for their work; that the subcommittee chairs should have a call monthly (perhaps 30 minutes), and that the full Commission should have a call every other month. The next subcommittee chairs meetings will be:

1/16/19, 11:30 am Eastern  
2/13/19, 11:30 am Eastern  
3/20/19, 2:00 pm Eastern

There was agreement that once Commission Minutes are posted following a meeting, members will have one week to comment on them and to suggest edits, following which the Secretary will finalize them whereupon they will be deemed approved.

The Commission recessed the meeting at 4:50 pm.

### **November 13, 2018 – Evening Session**

The meeting resumed at 7:03 pm following prayer led by Marisa.

Jennifer Baskerville-Burrows was not present; Wendell Gibbs was present.

Sean reported that the Wednesday plenary session from 11:00 am to noon has been cancelled. The Commission will meet from 9-11 am Wednesday.

Sally Johnson described the current structure of The Episcopal Church, including a discussion of recent changes and areas where attention may be needed. A chart is posted on the Google drive illustrating the structure. Among the issues discussed:

- Constitution and Canons are based on many premises and assumptions that no longer apply or are too restrictive for our current context, such as full time clergy in each congregation, parishes and missions being the only worshipping entities (now there are missional and worshipping communities that do not fit the traditional structure), the use of terms like vicar and cure, etc.
- Provincial structure that varies widely across TEC; in 2018 the Provincial Court of Review was eliminated from the Canons
- Complicated structure including an incorporated DFMS, a General Convention Office, an unincorporated “Episcopal Church”, an Executive Council that serves both but is not a true Board of Directors although it covers some of a Board’s functions

As Posted to General Convention Office on November 26, 2018

The roles and authority of the Executive Council, General Convention Office, Presiding Bishop, President of the House of Deputies, etc were discussed. Many of the current roles and functions do not align with the Canons.

Responses to the discussion included:

Whether the discussion should instead focus on congregational vitality and what more directly affects the majority of the church's members and what more directly affects their ministries?

How much of our focus should be on the hierarchical (denominational, provincial and diocesan) structure and how much on "from the ground up" issues of ministry, etc.

How can we use a hierarchical structure to enhance ministry at the ground level, especially those parts of the structure that may be impediments?

Following closing prayers led by Adam, the meeting adjourned at 8:24 pm.

### **November 14, 2018 – Morning (Final) Session**

Present: Molly James (Chair), Sean Rowe (Vice Chair), Sharon Alexander (Vice Secretary), Nancy Cohen, Valerie Balling, Annette Buchanan, Christopher Hayes, Ryan Kusumoto, Luz Montes, Jake Owensby, Bill Powel, Jamal Smith, Marisa Tabizon Thompson, Adam Trambley, Sally Johnson (representative of President of House of Deputies).

Excused absences from meeting and those departing early: Carmen Figueroa, Michael Glass, Mike Klusmeyer, Jane Cislucis (Executive Council representative), Jennifer Baskerville-Burrows, Tom Little

The meeting convened at 9 am with Adam and Marisa leading Morning Prayer.

### **State of the Church**

Louisa McKellaston, Vice Chair of the House of Deputies Committee on the State of the Church, briefly discussed the work of that committee. They are looking at radically changing the parochial report, including focusing on measures for congregational viability and finding alternative ways to measure congregational vitality. The committee has a very broad mandate with a focus on ways the church can work better. One important goal is to be transparent in their work. The committee would like to make sure everyone has access to the Jesus Movement. There are structures that get in the way that need to be changed or that should go away.

If there are areas the SCSGCC would like the Committee on the State of the Church to look at we should let them know. One of the things they will look at is the TREC report to see what has been looked at in the past and what may still be applicable.

### **Reflections on Structure Conversation from 11-13-18 Session**

The group had a productive and challenging discussion. What matters most is how we have our conversations.

Some of the reflections include the following:

- The need to pay attention to the different contexts in which people are in their congregational life. What is urgent for some is viewed more incrementally by others. Our work needs to be done well because of its impact on a large number of people.
- We do not have an “either/or” situation. What happens at the denominational, provincial and diocesan level affects the congregational level and vice versa. We can look at whether the Executive Council to ask whether it should have a greater focus on missional work or more board of directors type work, and whether we need 38 people doing the work of the Executive Board. One of our key issues is resource allocation and another is to determine where the power to allocate the resources is located.
- Yesterday evening’s conversation was honest and genuine. Structure and governance was brought up to same level as Constitution and Canons. We can acknowledge that sometimes we devolve into pettiness and turf guarding. Then we can step back and ask “what does this have to do with the guy on the donkey?”
- Why do the structures of the church matter? We have the opportunity to make a huge impact because as a church with an “episcopal” structure we have structures and governance to help us do our work in ministry. We do not have to rely on just ground level resources in a single community or congregation.
- God is the decisive agent in the cosmos. We are called to engage in God’s transformation in a broken world. We should look at how we organize ourselves so that we can get things out of the way so we can be part of the transformation. We will often get in our own way. We can also do all that we can to be available to God in bringing justice to the universe. Some congregations will flourish, and some will close.
- Evangelical churches saw decline coming. They got together and set up structures for church planting and training pastors for this. They are not hierarchical and they did this hierarchical type of work. How does this look from our already hierarchical perspective? Looking at things like this example help us think “big” instead of incrementally and situationally.
- On our best days churches allow modeling of ways to work and live together with difference. General Convention does not always do this but there are moments. We are not congregational so we need to have some structure to allow us to come together.
- Because we are together we can use our gifts and resources better than we would alone. There is a gift in being together to see our different contexts. If we structure ourselves properly we can avoid duplicating efforts.

- The Church is the body of Christ but is also institutional. No one should listen to what we say because of the numbers we have. Focusing on the numbers as a measure of power or influence is a holdover from a past time. We need the organization to empower and to get the resources to where they can be best used.
- We need structure. Structure does matter to the people in the pews. They do not know the details about the structure. However, the structures are in place to aid the people and not to override them. The structures provide support so that the people can do what they feel God is calling them to do. They trust that the levels of structure are doing what they need to do. We should not betray this level of trust.
- How can we use the structure to set ourselves free for work of the Holy Spirit? We need to be wary of saying “we cannot do that.”
- Prayer and spirituality are practical and not some pious game. In order to live and pray together we have to have some structure or it can go badly. For example, we need Safe Church polices and we need structure for ways to work ecumenically.
- If we work together well, geographic boundaries and distances do not matter.
- Can we identify where we see structure working well and efficiently? This is appreciative inquiry. We can also identify where we need to stop doing things, do things differently, etc. Change comes both ways, from above and from the group up. Change is best when the change from above and change from the ground are in synch. We can come to a place where structure empowers vitality and allows us to do things we would not otherwise be able to do.
- We can listen to feedback to see whether what we are hearing is consistent with how we are articulating what we are doing. When you ask someone to come to church with you, does the person see things in the way you are describing them? This helps us to look at the impediments to empowering vitality. How do we break out of the mold? Part of the process is defining things and part is being honest with ourselves.
- Some people are in dioceses that are good at providing structure. This helps deal with change and to feel optimistic about the future. Some people have less structure supporting them and this can exacerbate concerns about the future. Good supportive structures, filled with creative and committed people, can help provide a positive outlook and hope for the future.
- Change does not just occur once and there is no longer a need for it. It is an ongoing, creative, and flexible process.
- We need to be reading the minutes of and checking in with other groups, including the House of Deputies Committee on the State of the Church, the Task Force on Church Planting and Congregational Redevelopment, the Task Force to Assist the Office of

As Posted to General Convention Office on November 26, 2018

Pastoral Development, and the Task Force on Women, Truth and Reconciliation. It will be important to have good communication among these groups and likely others.

### **Task Force to Assist the Office of Pastoral Development**

Sally is a member of the Task Force to Assist the Office of Pastoral Development (OPD Task Force) and has been attending its meetings as well as meeting of the SCSGCC while in Baltimore. She gave a report on the OPD Task Force meetings. The OPD Task Force was created by Resolutions A147 and A189 from the 2018 General Convention. Bishop Todd Ousley is the Bishop for the Office of Pastoral Development.

Resolution A147 called for the creation of the Task Force to find and implement ways to assist the Office of Pastoral Development. The resolution lists 12 areas for the Task Force to focus its work. The Office of Pastoral Development oversees several areas, including oversight of episcopal transitions (approximately 20 transitions are in progress) and pastoral care of bishops.

The OPD Task Force has divided into subgroups, including one looking at how and when background, psychiatric and medical screening are performed (e.g., before the final slate is announced?) and another subgroup looking at how we can improve the process by which a person discerns a call to the episcopate. Other areas that will be looked at include the use of trained consultants in episcopal elections and whether a diocese should undergo some type of missional review before calling for an episcopal election. Ideas for missional review include having early discussions between OPD and the Standing Commission (instead of the bishop), how neighboring dioceses might be engaged early in the process, and discussions that should be started before an episcopal election is required. Resolution 2018-A156 proposed that a missional review be mandate prior to an episcopal election but it was defeated in the House of Bishops because of concerns about how viability would be determined and about the review being mandatory. The 20 ongoing elections under the current system, including lack of missional review, would provide a good case study for a DMin.

The retirement rate used to be 8 to 10 bishop retirements per year but the rate has increased significantly. Bishop Ousley thinks the current rate of retirements will remain steady in large part because bishops are retiring at a younger age. The pool of bishops has changed, with issues of diocesan viability and vitality being considered, a smaller pool of candidates because of more elections and a smaller number of Gen X clergy, and other factors. OPD has 15 trained consultants and needs 30 trained consultants to properly assist with the current number of episcopal elections.

It is not clear whether the OPD Task Force will have canonical or structural issues to address. However, there are questions the SCSGCC might consider. Do we have an opportunity to have the issues involved in episcopal transitions engaged earlier in the process? Can we try new ways on a trial basis? The Dioceses of Northwestern Pennsylvania and Western New York are entering into a five-year partnership. This is one way to try something new. There are likely other ways as well.

### **Upcoming Meetings and Video Conferences**

As Posted to General Convention Office on November 26, 2018

ZOOM video conference of the Chairs of the SCSGCC Subcommittees are scheduled for January 16, 2019 at 11:30 am (Eastern) and February 13, 2019 at 11:30 am (Eastern).

A ZOOM video conference of the full SCSGCC is scheduled for March 20, 2019 at 2:00 pm (Eastern).

A ZOOM video conference of the General Convention and Rules of Order Subcommittee is scheduled for January 10, 2019 at 3 pm.

The next in-person meeting has been requested for September 29-October 2, 2019.

The meeting adjourned at 11:00 am following closing prayers led by Marisa.

Respectfully submitted,

Tom Little, Secretary  
Sharon Alexander, Vice Secretary