Attendance: 27

**Bethlehem**

Timothy Alleman

**Central PA**

Dina Ishler

**Delaware**

Kevin Brown

Steven Jones

Donna Kiessling

**Easton**

Eddie Vance

**Maryland**

Pamela Cochran

Jason Kamrath

Christine McCloud

Jessica Sexton

**Northwestern PA**

Geoffery Wild

**Pennsylvania**

Christopher Hart

Liz Wendt

**Pittsburgh**

Ketlen Solak

**Southern VA**

Helen Sharpe-Williams

**Southwest VA**

Nina Salmon

Susan Bentley

Ben Cowgill

**Virginia**

Ellyn Crawford

**Washington**

Glenna Huber

Mathy Milling Downing

Nathan Brown

Amanda Akes-Caldwell

David Wacaster

**West Virginia**

Joshua Saxe

Chad Slater

Philip Steptoe

At 9:06 AM, The Rt. Rev. Ketlen Solak (Pitt.) led us in Morning Prayer.

At 9:22, President, the Rt. Rev. Bishop Kevin Brown (DE) welcomed everyone and took a roll call of the dioceses present; confirming we had a quorum; the meeting was called to order.

At 9:28 Mr. Nathan Brown, Vice-President, presented his report on the Ordinances noting that technical changes were made to Sections: that included: III.2, III.8, and VIII.7 which passed unanimously. Other technical changes were: the italicizing and changing of gender pronouns, and changing the Chief Legal Officer to Secretary of the General Convention. This too was adopted unanimously and will be brought to Synod in the spring.

At 9:32 Dr. Pam Cochran, Provincial Coordinator, presented Ministry Reports. She reviewed the previous evening’s gather of ministry leaders in an idea-sharing session designed around our: Strengthens, Opportunities, Aspirations and Results. Each of the participants of that meeting reviewed the comments associated with those respective four topics.

**Strengths**: What are we doing well? Create space to ask/raise uncomfortable questions; collaboration, listening, responding to needs; e.g. being able to provide financial assistance for FORMA collaboration, trainings, leadership and teams to engage them and help build strong leaders; What are our greatest assets? What makes us unique?

**Opportunities**: What synergies can we create with other groups? Creation Care youth pilgrimage; UTO/ECW; Partner with other provinces/networking/support. What synergies can we create *within* our groups? More diversity.

**Aspirations**: What is your most compelling aspiration? To increase opportunities to network; raise up the next generation of leaders; Be authentically invested…

**Results**: What do you /we want to be known for? Open, helpful, available, knowledgeable; internalize our values in our operations; love of Christ and one another; How do we tangibly communicate our opportunities and aspirations to others who share them? Group meetings in-person, Zoom, and preaching/formation programs…

Also, Dr. Cochran briefly reviewed the discussion about engaging young people. How should we gather information and learn what is on their minds or is of importance to them… How can we include our ministry group members *like Race and Reconciliation*, and the *United Thank Offering* (UTO). How do we engage in information gathering?

At 9:59, Mr. Eddie Vance (Easton) presented the General Convention resolutions related to the provinces. Resolutions: C034, C005, C006, C007, and D047 will be on the Consent Calendar, he will bring them to the floor of the next General Convention.

Given the upcoming investiture of Bishop Sean Rowe, the Rev. David Wacaster (EDOW) wanted the know about the Presiding Bishop-elect’s feeling about provinces. Noting that he wants to build the church into a system that can respond to current needs, Bishop Solack (Pitt.) asked “How we can be more nimble?” The Rev. Glenna Huber (EDOW) noted that it is worth following up on ways to support the provinces given the Presiding Bishop’s stated vision.

At 10:14, the Rev. Susan Bentley (SWVA) briefed us on D047 *Response to the crisis in Sudan and support for the Episcopal Church of Sudan.* This resolution was proposed by Russ Randall. The country has been devastated by war since the 1050s; resolution D047, which was concurred, asks the Presiding Bishop to draft prayers for the Archbishop in Sudan, encourage donations through the Economic Relief and Development and the *American Friends of the Episcopal Church of the Sudans* (AFRECS). In reference to the Sudanese diaspora, Provinces III and IV have been impacted by immigration. There are 70,000 Sudanese here in the U.S. About 100,000 South Sudanese have migrated to the Midwest, Virginia, Maryland and Washington. D.C. The Rev. Bently has been a chaplain to this community since 2009. She has seen the suffering. She noted “how can we respond? We can pray.’ AFRECS is compiling prayer resources. We should use whatever connections we have to advocate for peace. Resolution D047 was presented to raise our awareness.

The Rev Tim Alleman (Bethlehem) elaborated on the work Deacon Charlie Barebo (Bethlehem) has done in partnership with the Diocese of Kajo Keli in South Sudan helping to raise over $5 million for the New Hope School System, an initiative of the Diocese of Bethlehem which created five primary schools for the community of the Diocese of Kajo Keji in South Sudan. The two dioceses maintain a companion relationship.

Vice President Mr. Nathan Brown (EDOW) led a discussion on new ministry areas like digital evangelism. He advocated for a greater emphasis on digital ministry, noting that we do not have a churchwide digital ministry. We examined how could partner with Nathan is an issue. One idea was to conduct a pilot program. Nathan noted that thus far there has not been much interest in this ministry at the executive level. The Rev. Dr. Nina Salmon (SWVA) noted that we need to be mindful of branding and asked what already is out there and is working. The Rev. Joshua Saxe (WV) acknowledged that digital evangelism must be “content-driven” and build on a *walk in love* program. The Rev. Ben Cowgill (SWVA) asked: “how do we connect the digital communities that already exist and how do we create online spaces” In 2015, he had a taskforce to leverage social media for evangelism, midway through the process “815 hired someone to do that, but this person does not have that title though there is a TEC website. One comment made was “where are the disconnects with what we already have; what Nathan is proposing takes actual people, so how can we fully utilize the resources we already have.”

At 11:03, Canon Jason Kamrath (MD) presented his Treasurer’s Report. He is no longer using QuickBooks and is using Excel instead due to its simplicity and flexibility. Three dioceses are behind in submitting their apportionment. The Treasurer noted that the Provincial Coordinator has been undercompensated and is due her full benefit. She will be paid in full when he has access to the account to make the deposit.

The 2024 YTD budget was reviewed. He noted that the 2025 budget is adjusted to reflect the Province Coordinator’s pension contribution which was approved and will be paid. The 2026 apportionment level will not be changed it will be presented to Synod in May 2025 for approval.

At 11:18, the Rev. Dina Ishler (CPA) and Tim Alleman (Bethlehem) reported on the reunification process that will create the Diocese of Susquehanna by January 1, 2026. The Episcopal Diocese of Central Pennsylvania and the Episcopal Diocese of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, voted for reunification of their two dioceses at their joint convention on October 18-19, 2024. This was the culmination of over two years of prayerful discernment on the part of the reunification committee with ample opportunity for feedback from all the members of both dioceses. The new name of the reunified diocese will be the Diocese of the Susquehanna, honoring the great river that gives life to God’s glorious creation as it runs through both our current dioceses.

There is still much good and holy work ahead as the actual reunifying process begins in earnest, including continuing to listen and hold space for the eagerness, the concerns and the tender places around this decision. Change is never easy for humans, and we approach this decision with this understanding fully in our minds and souls so that we might be patient, compassionate, and present to one another. Next year, 2025, will be a time of transition with both dioceses still independent and working together to figure out many details. Please keep us all in your prayers as we go forward with faith and hope and seek to be the hands and feet of Christ in this time and in this place.

At 11:27, Bishop Brown (DE) presented the President’s Report. He reviewed his intent to host another Province III bishop’s retreat, a special *House of Bishop*’s meeting, and First Thursday calls. He shared his insight as of the new Presiding Bishop’s agenda. The Rev. Christine McCloud (MD) echoed the concerns of many for The Rt. Rev. Sean Rowe’s apparent position on the *Association for Episcopal Deacons*. Others wanted to know if he will articulate his priorities quickly? President Brown and the Provincial Coordinator felt he would. It was acknowledged that there will be changes within the church during a time of transition.

The investiture will be scaled-down and held in NYC at the Chapel of Christ the Lord. Attendance was limited to two province representatives. Each was invited to submit a sample of their region’s water to be used for the ceremony. President Brown and Vice President Brown will attend and bring with them water from the Chesapeake Bay. It was noted that there was a feeling of loss by not having the investiture in-person, especially given the tension around upcoming national elections.

At 11:45, Mr. Nathan Brown presented his Vice-President’s and Provincial Leadership Council Representative’s Remarks. He shared that PLC meets quarterly and online. He added that the PLC meetings have been really valuable, but that because of recent elections in all the provinces, there is leadership turnover which is still getting acclimated to the new roles. Also, he asked members of Council to let him know if there's anything they want him to escalate to the PLC in the future, especially areas in which there may be a desire for cross-provincial coordination. The Vice-President also noted that every province has had representation on the PLC in all the meetings he has attended so far, indicating a vibrancy in provinces.

At 11.48, Dr. Cochran (MD) presented her Provincial Coordinator report. She commented that in her university classes, she often teaches on historical pandemics and pointed out that they have had sweeping impacts on the church and its theology. She noted that after the (2020) pandemic, “we are still a (post-quarantine) transition still…What we don’t think about is that pandemics have even changed the church, even in our theology and we don’t know what the church will look like…” Christian Formation and Youth Ministry still meet monthly. FORMA retreat programs are meeting online and in-person, utilizing a hybrid model based on Province III’s successful retreat-conference gathering last year. Environmental Stewardship plans to have a retreat in early 2025 to discern where each diocese is, reconnect and identify priorities. The website in November will be switching over to using a new platform, but it will look and feel the same for the visitor. Pam Cochran was commended by David Wacaster for the Province luncheon at General Convention which drew a round of applause from all.

At 11:57, Mathy Milling Downing offered a few words about UTO and warmly recognized the province’s past president, the Rev. Nathaniel Pierce (Easton) for his generous contribution of $500. The UTO has invested in province and will continue to do so via its grants.

The Rev. Nina Salmon (SWVA) reminded everyone that she looks forward to sharing her insight on Executive Council as our provincial representative.

At 11:59 Under “New Business”, Ms. Lynn Crowford (VA) commented that all council members should attend the reunification ceremony between the Diocese of Bethlehem and Central Pennsylvania. Also, the Rev. Christine McCloud commented about Sacred Ground being formally a component of anti-racism training. The Rev. David Wacaster, her anti-racism ministry partner, said he has a template for a diocesan resolution.

At 12:05, President Brown ended the meeting with a closing prayer.

Faithfully submitted,

Steven W. Jones

Secretary