

DIOCESAN COUNCIL REPORT

The Diocesan Council met nine times during the 2008-2009 program year. On a regular basis the Council received reports from the Bishops and updates from committees and task forces.

The following are particular issues Council considered or discussed at each meeting. All meetings were held at the Diocesan Center at 138 Tremont Street, Boston, unless otherwise noted.

September 20, 2008 (St. Paul's Church, Dedham)

- Approved recommendation of the proposed 2009 Core Operating Budget to the 223rd Annual Session of Diocesan Convention.
- Voted to commission a task force to create those processes by which disbursements will be made from reserve funds created by the FY 09 budget, and to articulate criteria that will guide the implementation of that process.
- Heard presentation on the Relational Evangelism Pilot Project from the Rev. Arrington Chambliss, Project Director.
- Approved the nominations of the Rev. Frederick Moser as Clergy Alternate Deputy to General Convention; the Rev. Elizabeth Steinhauser as Clergy Deputy to Province 1 and Ms. Ella Auchincloss as Member of the Trustees of Donations, to be elected at the 223rd Annual Session of Diocesan Convention.
- Voted housing allowance designations for two clergy diocesan staff members.
- Heard report from Executive Committee including vote over the summer that removed floor pricing from the approval to sell the property formerly owned by St. George's Church, Maynard and authorization to perform immediate maintenance needs on the diocesan-owned property at 40 Prescott Street, Boston.
- Heard report on the ways in which the diocese has responded to the resolution from the 2007 diocesan Convention that called for the Diocese of Massachusetts to develop a long range plan that sets goals and strategies for measurable improvements in sustainability and environmental stewardship in the Diocesan Center at 138 Tremont Street and in each of its parishes, missions, and diocesan properties.

October 16, 2008

- Voted to accept the tentative recommendation of the Compensation and Benefits Committee to join the Medical Trust for 2009 healthcare insurance and to offer four options – three of which are functionally equivalent to the three offered in 2008 plus one to better accommodate the Islands.

- Voted to designate the Executive Committee as the task force commissioned at the September meeting “to create those processes by which disbursements will be made from reserve funds created by the FY 09 budget, and to articulate criteria that will guide the implementation of that process.”
- Voted to appoint a task force for the purpose of recommending a resolution on the House of Mercy (“Women in Need”) grant requests.
- Heard a report on the status of parish closings and property sales.

December 4, 2008

- Voted to accept the draft financial statements for the year ending December 31, 2007 as presented by the Audit Committee.
- Voted to award grants to be paid from the accumulated income from the House of Mercy agency funds to St. John the Evangelist, Boston, for its Neighborhood Action program; St. Paul's, Brockton, for its St. Paul's Community Center; and St. Paul's, Peabody, for its St. Paul's Preschool.
- Voted to allow St. John's Saugus to move from the North Shore Deanery to the Mystic Valley Deanery.
- Voted to approve diocesan staff clergy housing allowances for 2009.

January 24, 2009 (Overnight Retreat at the Barbara C. Harris Center)

- Authorized withdrawal of funds from the agency endowment funds as needed to accomplish the HVAC improvements at the Diocesan Center.
- Heard reports on the program, facilities and finances of the Barbara C. Harris Camp & Conference Center from its Executive Director, John Erdman and Bill Luke, member of the Finance Committee.
- Voted to allocate \$120,000 from the available House of Mercy monies to the B-SAFE program to fund the Chelsea and Mattapan sites for 2009.
- Heard Bishop Shaw's report on his appointments to the committee charged with making recommendations regarding the use of the proceeds from the sale of St. Andrew's, Belmont.
- Voted to appoint Ms. Candice Caines to the Budget Committee.
- Elected the Rev. Jeffrey Mello to the Executive Committee.

February 26, 2009

- Heard report from the Rev. Jane Bearden who is ending a two year diocesan Priest-in-Residence appointment in the Gulf Coast.
- Discussed proposals for the allocation of the remaining House of Mercy monies. Group designated to bring final recommendations to next Council meeting.
- Had initial discussions regarding assessments for 2010.

- Voted to appoint the Rev. Gareth Evans and Ms. Carole Foster to second terms on the Budget Committee.

March 26, 2009

- Voted to approve the sale of the former Church of the Holy Trinity, Marlborough.
- Voted to divide the remaining \$60,000 in House of Mercy monies equally among the twelve deaneries to support programs for women and children. The deanery assemblies must meet to vote on how the monies will be awarded in their deaneries. Application for funds must be made by June 30, 2009.
- Voted to appoint Ms. Lynn Smith to the Budget Committee to a term ending in 2011 and Mr. Ted Ts'o to the Budget Committee to a term ending in 2010.
- Continued discussion of assessments and heard Treasurer's suggestion for a change in the rate schedule and removal of the 6% "cap".

April 30, 2009

- Voted to table a motion to eliminate the 6-percent cap currently in place on congregations' year-to-year assessment increases and referred the matter to a special committee, to be appointed.
- Voted to set the 2010 assessment revenue target at \$5,050,000, as recommended by the diocesan treasurer.
- Voted to set the general structure of the assessment formula as: BASE multiplied by RATE minus CREDIT. It was noted that approval of this general structure provides the newly established special committee with a range of alternatives to work with.
- Voted to set the 2010 assessment for a mission congregation at two-thirds the amount of what would be assessed if it were a parish.

May 28, 2009

- Having in April approved the use of a simpler general formula structure (BASE multiplied by RATE minus CREDIT) that applies the same marginal rate and fixed dollar credit to each parish, voted to set the RATE at 15.5 percent and the CREDIT at \$6,000; that is, a parish's assessment for 2010 will be 15.5 percent of its base expenses (measured by the 2007 parochial report), less \$6,000.
- Heard report on Bishops' priorities for 2010.
- Heard an update on the HVAC work scheduled for the diocesan offices during the summer.

June 11, 2009

- Engaged in substantive conversation about the 2010 budget and asked the Budget Committee to provide access to its information and deliberations throughout the summer.
- Discussed information to be sent to parishes about the 2010 assessment formula and how it applies to each, and heard from the Rev. Canon Mally Lloyd, Canon to the Ordinary, that she, the bishops and the diocesan treasurer are calling those parishes facing the largest assessment increases to discuss the particular circumstances in each case.
- Voted to create a task force to monitor the impact of the 2010 assessment formula and to report back in January 2010.
- Voted to form a small, item-specific task force to deal with mission congregations. Members will be appointed by the bishop.
- Voted housing allowance designation for a newly ordained diocesan staff member.