

Restructuring our Governance and Diocesan Structures  
Strategic Group A: Proposals and Other Questions

*To restore all people to unity with God and each other in Christ.*

The Catechism, BCP p. 855, An Outline of the Faith.

*Continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers;  
Persevere in resisting evil, and, whenever you fall into sin, repent and return to the Lord;  
Proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ;  
Seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself;  
Strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being.*

The Baptismal Covenant, BCP p 304-5

Task Force Membership:

- The Rev. Roy Cole, St. John's, Staten Island
- The Rev. Gawain deLeeuw, St. Bart's, White Plains
- The Rev. Bradley C. Dyche, chair, St. Augustine's, Croton on Hudson
- The Rev. Deacon Gail Ganter Toback. St. James' Church, Hyde Park
- Mrs. Robin Ingram, St. John's Fountain Square, Larchmont
- W.B. McKeown, Congregation of St. Saviour at The Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine
- Mr. George Wade, St. James' Church, NYC

*Guiding Assumptions*

The committee to restructure our governance seeks to enhance the dynamic, mutually beneficial relationship between congregations and the diocese. Through sharing gifts, discerning best practices, and harnessing economies of scale, we hope to collaborate between parishes, develop leadership, and promote mission effectively.

To this end, the committee has several tasks. The committee will clarify the purpose of structures and the various roles of decision-making bodies, including those of trustees, diocesan council, standing committee and deans. We hope that clarity may highlight areas of strength, identify opportunities for greater collaboration and development, and harness the scattered gifts among us. By streamlining bureaucracy, aligning our committees and incentives, we seek to enhance and deepen relationships within our diocese, to live into our baptismal covenant.

The church is a living and breathing institution. From 2004 to 2014, the Average Sunday Attendance in the diocese decreased 17 percent, dropping almost 4 percent between 2013-2014. Public perception of the church as a useful and dynamic institution has changed as have the lives of congregants. We must be, and find new ways to be, the change we wish to see in society.

As such, structures should be large enough to represent the comprehensiveness of the church and allow for a diversity of voices; but not so large to inhibit an alignment of values and the ordering of tasks within a period of time. They shall be small enough to make decisions timely.

All of us are humbled by the amount of work before us. We affirm that the primary responsibility of a diocese is mission: to empower and encourage congregations to do the tasks

they are called to in our communities. To that end, our structures should offer satisfying, desirable incentives to foster collegiality and mission, and hold people accountable.

*We propose evolving the work of the Diocesan Committees accordingly:*

*For Each of these three bodies (Trustees, Standing Committee, and Diocesan Council):* We seek to develop a structure to ensure the Episcopacy is able to participate in all three central bodies. Aside from the bishop, no single person coordinates the work of these three groups, and yet much of their work overlaps. We encourage the development of an Executive Committee that supports the bishop and ensures all structures effectively work together.

*1) The Diocesan Trustees*

Currently, the budget is a product of both the Diocesan Council and the Trustees, but the canonical responsibility of the Council. We suggest that trustees be responsible for developing, proposing, and approving the budget. The current membership includes appointed individuals, as well as elected representatives. The trustees will also advise the Standing Committee on property decisions. The council would still have an advisory role.

This balances the need for expertise not beholden to any particular party while also including input from elected members of the diocese. This seeks to avoid redundancy between the Diocesan Council and the Trustees.

*2) The Standing Committee*

The Standing committee is a canonical requirement and remains with some changes.

The Standing Committee, in partnership with the trustees, will developing a property sale/lease/rental process to ensure that the Standing Committee makes decisions responsibly.

The Standing Committee will take an active role in the Episcopal Election process, namely, requiring the Chair of the Search Committee to meet with the Standing Committee on a regular basis throughout the search process. We will propose a canonical change to reflect a more active role by the standing committee.

*3) Diocesan Council / Council for Mission:*

The Diocesan Council will now be called the Council for Mission (CM). The CM will have several roles:

It's primary role is to assist congregations in their mission. It will facilitate this role thorough

- a) implementing resolutions passed by Diocesan and General Conventions
- b) training lay and ordained leadership (i.e. continuing education opportunities)
- c) overseeing and assisting collaborative initiatives
- d) supporting new initiatives.

The CM will oversee the congregational support plan in its new incarnation, the Board for Mission Congregations. This board will also develop principles for funding congregations and clergy in areas without full time ordained leadership.

The Membership of the CM will be reduced to no more than 20 individuals and should reflect the diversity of the diocese.

The CM will be responsible for developing a yearly Diocesan Calendar, aka the mission of the year. This calendar will be coordinated with staff to ensure announcements are timely, scheduling conflicts are reduced, and the greater mission of the diocese is enhanced.

The CM will create and implement programs to develop congregations, including non-traditional congregations.

The CM will assist in developing ordained leadership. One possibility includes composing a handbook of expectations and practices for clergy using research collected throughout the diocese.

The CM will also ensure that all congregations are aware, through the multiple communications tools of the diocese, of relevant grants available, including contact information for each grant, deadlines, and possible amounts.

The CM continues to examine the imperiled parish canon and evolve the Congregational Support Plan into a Mission Board.

4. *Deaneries:* There is some agreement about restructuring the deaneries into larger bodies, with deans taking on specific responsibilities to foster collaboration, and strengthen the presence of the diocese. As most deaneries do not have financial responsibilities, we ask if there are other ways to render these networks more effective, perhaps aligning them along borough and county. Furthermore, there are few incentives for deans to take on further responsibilities, and no resources are allotted to support deans in their work. Would money or a title be one way of encouraging greater participation or leadership?

In this effort, we hope to bring together two goals: a) collegial and pastoral relationships amongst clergy and b) Laity and Clergy working together in Diocesan Mission Programs.

Additionally:

We ask the bishop to prayerfully consider whether it would bring together the work of the church if the staff regularly worshipped and preached in parishes to connect the work of individual congregations with the work of the diocese. This could be another visitation. As this represents a new task for Canons and others, we ask the diocese to consider adapting its work week to include Sundays.

We suggest the hiring of an HR Coordinator to:

- a) Ensure that Senior Staff of the Diocese have letters of agreement
- b) Ensure that Senior Staff of the Diocese have job descriptions
- c) Develop a handbook for new clergy in consultation members of the clergy akin to the Diocese of Texas' manual.

The restructuring committee also raises the following possibilities (i.e. these are questions that we are asking):

- *Should we relocate some Diocesan Offices?* We agree with the bishop's discretion in relocating the Diocesan offices to build collegiality. In the old adage, "The architecture wins," we find that the silo-ing of diocesan staff and programs might be better coordinated and reorganized in a different setting.
- *We also invite larger questions about whether our liturgies are the best vehicles for producing such communities* and whether or not our liturgies help create transformed people. If not, our energies spent on liturgies are lovingly misdirected toward our aim. We should be aiming for a best "bang for our buck" in terms of resources expended and the results expected. Are our liturgies transforming people? And are planning such liturgies the best use of time for clergy, especially in smaller congregations? How might these resources be pooled, across congregational lines and denominational lines. And is the Chrism Mass best scheduled when clergy are already overworked?
- *Questions about Confirmation.* Several members of our committee are committed to reforming the church around confirmation, namely, making confirmation by a priest possible. As Episcopal Visitations are now scheduled once every other year, devoting their visit mostly to the confirmation is perhaps not meeting its end. It does provide a situation in which churches are full when they visit, but those people in the pews, are not necessarily the most involved in the church. We know that this is an open conversation in the wider church and ask the bishop to prayerfully consider his position as a means of streamlining the work of the diocese.
- *Role of youth, young adults, and camps.* We struggle as a diocese to provide important and life-changing opportunities for youth and young adults across the broad-spectrum of experiences of the youth and young adults in our congregations. How might we best pool our resources? We commend Bishop Shin for beginning to address this, but also invite him to consider that many people involved in this work are already over-committed with the demands of jobs, children, and church work. Having an all day event is difficult for many to attend.
- *Campus Ministries:* We hail the efforts of the past ten years in including and continuing to include Campus Ministries in the Diocesan Budget. We hope that this work continues and expands. As more congregations call clergy part-time, we wonder if the diocese would invest in clergy as campus missionaries to create full time work.

- *Prison Ministries:* How might the church best connect and speak of resurrection to the incarcerated and their families and wider society?
- *Continuing Education.* We have at our resources some of the best theological minds and schools. Clergy also need further training and leadership development. How can we resources those for the betterment of the diocese and harness the resources of NYC to build the capacities of our ordained and lay leadership?
- *Communications:* Our communications network continues to improve. We seek a further streamlining of diocesan communications. We also invite the diocese to consider more online meetings and identify a customary for using social media, as well as further training in developing content and gaining attention.

Addendum:

Proposed: THE DUTIES OF THE DEAN

Role: the deans assist congregations through fostering collaboration throughout the diocese.

Responsibilities:

- Pastoral support of other clergy and lay leaders
- Assist clergy find supply in times of need (illness, for example)
- Incorporate new clergy into the diocese
- Help send off clergy
- Support Bishop with congregations who need it in respective deanery
- Support other congregations [in deanery], especially those without regular clergy support
- Represent for major celebrations in the life of local churches
- Pass urgent information to clergy and lay leaders in a timely matter
- Report and interpret transition and diocesan information to the clergy and congregations
- Attend meetings with bishop as a group
- Schedule regular clergy meetings, as appropriate, for fellowship and training
- Notify clergy and congregations of programs sponsored by the diocese
- Administrate collaborative opportunities
- Nominate and identify leaders for diocesan roles
- Deans will align clergy when necessary to address issues of public concern

Other questions:

How might deans be selected?

- Election by members of deanery?
- Approved by bishop / standing committee?
- Should the deans “report” to anybody? Who?
- Should there be terms?

What incentives for taking on these responsibilities (compensation, a budget)

How large should deaneries be?

As large as counties / boroughs

Larger deaneries creates a stronger critical mass and gives greater focus to its role.

E.G. Nine deaneries could replace our current arrangement

Allocated according to #of congregations and geographic unit mirroring political arrangements.

Staten Island  
Lower Manhattan  
Upper Manhattan  
The Bronx  
Lower Westchester  
Upper Westchester  
Putnam  
Duchess  
Rockland  
Ulster  
Orange  
Sullivan

Other deans can be appointed according to specific task by the Bishop (non-stipendiary /bi-vocational clergy, etc).

How often should deaneries meet? Is there a minimum? Does this depend on the size?