

# ***Report on Eastern & Western Michigan Collaborative Meeting***

May 16th, 2018 at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Flint

## **Participants:**

### *Eastern Michigan*

- The Rt. Rev. Cate Waynick
- The Rev. Dan Scheid, SC President
- The Rev. Ken Hitch, Diocesan Council
- Stephanie King, Standing Committee

### *Western Michigan*

- The Rt. Rev. Wayne M. Houglan, Jr.
- The Rev. Valerie Ambrose, SC President
- The Rev. Linnea Stifler, Diocesan Council
- Joanie Smith, Diocesan Council

and Katie Forsyth, Canon for Evangelism and Networking for the two dioceses.

## **The Questions on the Table:**

- What will the Episcopal Church in the lower peninsula look like in 10 years? 20 years?
- What new thing might God be calling us to do?
- In the midst of Episcopal transition in Eastern Michigan, might now be a time to undergo a dedicated process to consider juncture?
- How can we continue to collaborate and deepen our relationship across diocesan lines?

## **Core Understandings and Context:**

- We feel a “longing for relationship” regardless of financial need.
- Shared sense that continuing on in separate ministry without change is not a sustainable model for the future of the Episcopal Church in this place.
- Both leaderships have voiced consideration of coming together to their diocesan communities in some way – Bishop Ousley to clergy community, diocesan convention. Bishop Houglan in conversation with congregations during parish visitations.

### *Eastern Michigan*

- 10 months into Episcopal Transition.
- Bishop Cate was elected as Bishop Provisional part-time for one year in October 2017.
- Held five transition focused self-study gatherings – regionally and for clergy. Will report out in June 2018.
- Long-term, is financially unsustainable at current staffing and program levels, including provision for a full-time diocesan bishop.

### *Western Michigan*

- In the process of implementing extensive restructuring from deanery system to three regions, led by staff.
- Bishop Houglan was elected in 2013 and expects to retire in approximately 10 years.
- Bishop Houglan is interested in serving as Bishop Provisional for Eastern Michigan, should a process for deepened relationship be explored.

## Shared Ministries:

### *Currently Practiced:*

- **The Academy for Vocational Leadership:** A three-year program of local formation for priests (Eastern Michigan only) and deacons
- **The Diocesan Church Development Institute:** A two-year development program to coach and resource congregations for ministry in their local contexts
- **The Canon for Networking and Evangelism:** In March 2018, the two dioceses began to share a staff member to oversee communications, evangelism, and networking
- **Youth Ministry:** The dioceses collaborate and invite participants to almost all youth events and trainings across diocesan lines. Examples include Happening, The Gathering, the Progressive Youth Mission Trip.
- **The DREAM Project:** The Dominican Republic and Episcopal churches in All of lower Michigan is the shared project with the Dominican Development Group to send short-term mission teams to the Dominican Republic.
- **Lower Peninsula Diversity Taskforce**
- **The Disciplinary Board:** The three lower peninsula dioceses share a board to handle all clergy discipline and Title IV matters
- **Licensing:** Clergy licensed in any diocese in Michigan may serve any congregation in Michigan.
- **Bishops speaking together on issues of social justice, advocacy:** For example – Marriage Equality, Enbridge Pipeline 5
- **AMEN Conference:** Annual conference for clergy from all Michigan dioceses on Mackinac Island

### *Anticipated & to be Explored:*

- Revival to be led by The Episcopal Church staff in Fall 2019
- Clergy Retreat – plan to share in May 2019
- Invite, Welcome, Connect Training via DCDI in 2019
- Common presence and reporting from General Convention 2018
- Common print magazine in Fall 2018
- Relationship between deputations to the General Convention
- Clergy Continuing Education – one day workshops on different areas of ministry
- Gathering Standing Committees, Diocesan Councils, Staffs for retreat
- Discernment process and shared Commission on Ministry
- More youth programs
- Camp and Retreat Ministry for children and adults
- Young Adult Ministry
- Additional staff sharing
- What else might we share?

## Scenarios for Transition in Eastern Michigan:

The groups from the two dioceses considered their relationship in the midst of three core transition scenarios for the Diocese of Eastern Michigan. These are flexible examples of what may happen in each case.

Regardless of the path that leadership in Eastern Michigan will choose, it is clear that continuing to collaborate and striving to deepen relationship between the two dioceses is a priority.

### *Scenario #1 – Keep on our ‘Separate’ Ways*

- Using the data from the self-studies to build the Diocesan Profile, the Standing Committee calls for the election of a full-time diocesan bishop to take place tentatively in Fall 2019.
- To avoid drawing down on endowment principal, other staff members may be laid off and ministries (Camp Chickagami, Coppage-Gordon School for Ministry, Congregational Development, Communications) may be closed.

### *Scenario #2 – Long-term Full-time Provisional*

- The Standing Committee and the Office of Pastoral Development of the Episcopal Church searches for and interviews candidates to serve full-time in a five year term as Bishop Provisional. They nominate one name to a Diocesan Convention in late 2018 to early 2019.
- The long-term Bishop Provisional must be an already consecrated bishop. May be attractive to a diocesan or suffragan bishop nearing retirement who has been in their diocese for an extended period of time.
- The Bishop Provisional will be charged with exploring continued and/or deepened relationship with the Diocese of Western Michigan and other means to creating a sustainable future for the Episcopal Church in our region.
- The Episcopal Diocese of Western Michigan will have a concurrent process to explore continued and/or deepened relationship with Eastern Michigan.
- At the end of the five years, the diocese will either call for an Episcopal election or move to coming together with Western Michigan.

### *Scenario #3 – Great Lakes Episcopal*

- The Standing Committee nominates Bishop Houglund for election as Bishop Provisional to a Special Convention in Fall 2019, to serve for a period of 3-5 years.
- The dioceses undergo a shared process of study and relationship building over those 3-5 years in line with the model underway in the Dioceses of Western New York and Northwest Pennsylvania (“Rust Belt Episcopal” – [www.rustbeltepiscopal.org](http://www.rustbeltepiscopal.org)).
- In addition to sharing a bishop, the dioceses would undergo several gatherings of study, prayer, mission strategy, and fellowship; financial analysis of each system; staff redesign and integration; and the implementation of possible joint governance structures (COM, etc.).
- At the end of the 3-5 years, at a joint diocesan convention, each diocese would vote yes or no on a resolution for *juncture*, to create a new diocese out of two. (This is in contrast to a *merger*, in which one diocese rejoins or merges back to its previous entity.)
- If yes, the proposed *juncture* would be presented for the consent of the General Convention in 2024.
- If the dioceses vote to join and the General Convention consents, in coordination with the anticipated retirement of Bishop Houglund, the new diocese would call for the election of a Bishop Diocesan.

## MAY 2018

- May 16th Meeting with Eastern and Western Michigan collaborative team.
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- June 9th Eastern Michigan "Next Steps" gathering and study de-brief.
- June 1st Canon Missioners begin their appointments.

## AUG. 2018

- October 2018 Bishop Waynick's contract as bishop provisional is up.
- October 26-27 The 24th Convention of the Diocese of Eastern Michigan.

## NOV. 2018

- November 2-3 The 144th Convention of the Diocese of Western Michigan.
- January 1st Canon Missioners have been in place for six months.
- January 2019 Joint retreat for Diocesan Councils, Standing Committees, Staffs?
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## FEB. 2019

## MAY 2019

May 2019  
Joint Clergy Retreat.

May - August  
Bishop  
Hougland  
may take a  
sabbatical  
within this  
date range.

May 2019  
Joint Clergy Retreat.

June 1st  
Canon Missioners have been in place for one year.

## SEP. 2019

- October 11-12 Tentative TEC Revival with the four Dioceses of Michigan
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- Fall 2019 The 25th Convention of the Diocese of Eastern Michigan.
- November 2019 The 145th Convention of the Diocese of Western Michigan.