BOT Vice President Report for June, 2025

At our June Meeting, the Board of Trustees voted on two measures that directly reflect our Strategic Goals and will benefit congregations across the diocese. The first, creating a bookkeeper position at the diocesan level to provide services to churches in the diocese, will start small and be offered on a sliding-scale basis. Details will be made available in the coming months.

Meanwhile, I want you to know that this full-time position will help standardize church financial records across the diocese, and free up volunteers to work on growing their churches. As part of our ongoing commitment to strengthening congregational vitality, we are exploring practical ways to support our small and mid-sized churches – many of which rely on volunteers with little to no financial background to manage their books, track spending, and prepare financial reports. The diocesan bookkeeper will assist with weekly bookkeeping tasks, monthly financial reporting and general troubleshooting while helping to relieve the current burden on the diocesan treasurer and local volunteers.

In a second major vote, we approved a pilot Curate/Associate program for the diocese. This program will serve 3 pairs of churches (pairing a larger mentor congregation with a smaller partner congregation). The Curate (recently ordained clergy) or Associate (ordained within 5 years) would commit to a 3-year timeframe and would receive experience at a larger church as well as being a priest-in-charge at a smaller parish. Stay tuned for more details later this summer!

Bishop Megan shared with the Board of Trustees that the West Coast Collaborative (WCC) received an exciting grant. The WCC is a partnership for trainings deacons and preachers between the dioceses of Northern California, El Camino Real and San Diego. The WCC found that their Spanish language diaconate program could use more assistance and applied for a microgrant from the Iona Collaborative as part of their $5 million Locally Grown Leaders program from the Lily Foundation. The application shared the vision *to build a culturally and linguistically appropriate as well as educationally and contextually accessible Diaconal formation program for Spanish speakers called to serve as deacons in their communities.*

The West Coast Collaborative received a grant of $30,000 per year over the next 5 years, as well as resource support from the Iona Collaborative and their partners to develop this program. WCC hopes to receive their first cohort of students under this new program in April 2026.

The decisions the Board of Trustees made in June helped address real needs in the diocese. The diocesan bookkeeper will help congregations without accounting talent in their congregations. The new training from the West Coast Collaborative helps train members of our diocese for vital future ministries. The Curate/Associate pilot program helps strengthen larger congregations while getting our smaller congregations part-time clergy. This year the Board of Trustees has set strategic goals of enhancing congregational vitality, lifting up lay leaders, empowering regional leadership models

and answering the question of why we do this work. The initiatives we undertook during our June meeting are concrete examples of supporting these strategic priorities.

Margie Harrison-Smith