

Bishop's Report

The Rt. Rev. Audrey C. Scanlan

October 2023-October 2024

To prepare this report, I reviewed my calendar entries for the past 12 months. In my mind's eye, I traveled back over the many events of the year with great fondness remembering road trips to the North, regular clergy gatherings, celebrating milestones of ordinations, marking some of our clergy's entrance into eternal life at their funeral services, and the day-by-day regular meetings that I have had with staff and committees across the diocese revealing the great faithfulness of our people to God's mission.

It occurred to me that in addition to naming many of the year's events, it might be a helpful exercise to outline a "regular week in the life of your bishop" so that you might have a sense of the ebb and flow of episcopal ministry in our diocese. Early on in my tenure, I established a rhythm to my week that allows adequate time for personal prayer and study, regular meetings, travel, and meeting the demands of service outside of the diocese—working in social justice advocacy, ecumenical and interfaith work, and participation in the ministry of the wider Episcopal Church.

What follows is an outline of my "routine" and then, notation of several events in '23- '24 in the areas of Diocesan Events, Clergy Events, Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations, Administration, The Episcopal Church, the Reunification Effort, and Professional and Personal Development.

An Episcopal Routine

While the content of what a bishop does during any given day varies widely, there is some regularity to the rhythm of my week. Sunday, the first day of the week, is spent with worshipping with congregations, meeting with confirmands and vestries, and enjoying fellowship at coffee hours. If a congregation is more than 2.5 or 3 hours from home, I will spend the night in the region if my schedule allows me to travel on Saturday late in the afternoon. When I am in the Northern Tier, if there is room for me, I like to stay at our diocese's retreat house at All Saints Brookland.

On Monday I take my sabbath day. Because I love to cook, I spend a lot of time preparing food for the week ahead: menu planning, shopping and cooking. Beginning around 3 PM I spend a couple of hours preparing for the work week ahead: I review my calendar for the week, begin study of the lessons for the next Sunday's sermon, and catch up on the emails that have accumulated in the past 24 hours. Reviewing my calendar, gathering the

documents that I need for the week ahead, and preparing for the week's meetings is essential for me to enter the week feeling prepared.

On Tuesdays I take meetings in the office. These are pre-scheduled gatherings of individuals who want to meet with me, small committees, people working on projects, ordinands, etc. On Wednesdays we have staff meeting. On the first Wednesday of the month our entire staff gathers (hybrid). We share Eucharist and lunch together. In the afternoon, I conduct one-on-one meetings for supervision of our diocesan staff. On Thursdays, I am usually "on the road" meeting with a clergy group or attending meetings that are scheduled outside the office. On Fridays, I work from home, spending the morning writing my sermon and taking zoom meetings or phone calls in the afternoon. On about half of the Saturdays during the year I am out and about, attending a diocesan event.

Diocesan Events

There is so much good work that is happening in our diocese, and our parishes and diocesan committees find good reason to gather and serve in their communities. In this past year, I have attended an All Saints Evensong at All Saints, Brookland to honor all those in the cemetery who have gone before us; a rally day at the State Capitol for our Saving Lives: Ending Gun Violence group speaking out With One Voice to our legislators about the importance of gun safety; a solar panel blessing at St. Andrew's, Lewisburg; two Holy Hikes (one in the Northern Tier and one in Hershey); Lessons and Carols at the Pro-cathedral in Williamsport; two Creation Care Summits (one in the North and one in the South); the Boar's Head Festival at St. John's, Carlisle; a screening of the Philadelphia 11 film with dinner and a panel at St. Thomas, Lancaster; the Creation Care Festival in Harrisburg; a day meeting with legislators on the topic of gun violence with Cease Fire PA; an Evensong celebrating the relief of medical debt by Hope Church, Manheim and St. Luke's, Lebanon; and a field trip to the National Museum of African American History in D.C. In addition, I participated in monthly Commission on Ministry and Standing Committee meetings, quarterly Finance Committee and Council of Trustee meetings, and Stevenson School Advisory Board meetings.

Clergy Events

I meet with the clergy of each convocation six times per year for a half day of conversation, prayer and fellowship. On a monthly basis I meet by zoom with retired clergy on a "drop in call," and last year we enjoyed 2 retired clergy luncheons, one in the North and one in the South. Our annual Renewal of Vows for clergy was also held in two locations last year. The Deacon's retreat in November was a beautiful time focused on conversation around this specialized ministry of leadership, Word and service, and the Clergy Retreat this past May

was held in collaboration with the clergy from the Diocese of Bethlehem. I was blessed to ordain several people to the order of Deacon and Priest last year and, at the request of one ordinand group, I took them on a hike up to the (Bishop) Darlington Shelter on the Appalachian Trail and shared a service of Compline back at my home in “Viriditas,” a.k.a. “the Prayer Shack” in my back woods. I was honored to officiate at one clergy wedding in 2024, and to lay to rest three of our diocesan priests: The Rev. John Fetterman, The Rev. Larry Hofer, the Rev. Richard Randall, and our former beloved bishop, The Rt. Rev. Charlie McNutt.

Ecumenical and Interfaith Events

Our diocese continued to support the work of Christian Churches United in Harrisburg in this past year, and we enjoyed their banquet in the fall of '23 which featured a simulation of a day in the life of a person without housing... and in '24 sponsored a dramatic presentation by the African American acting troupe Sankofa.

I have attended (and our diocese has supported) the work of the Pennsylvania Council of Churches in this past year.

The With One Voice anti-gun violence rally in November featured an interfaith prayer service at our cathedral, a prayer breakfast, legislative visits, and a press conference at which I was a keynote speaker.

In this past year I have joined the organizing board of “Fairness PA” a legislative advocacy group (501c3) supporting the rights of safety and equal access for LGBTQIA+ individuals and their families. I am the “faith communities” representative on the board.

I also serve on the board of a scholarship fund administered through TFEC (The Foundation for Enhancing Communities) to distribute an annual scholarship to a student pursuing a degree in Social Work. This fund was established to honor Ms. Mary Grace Shearer, Administrator of the (former) Episcopal Home in Shippensburg.

Administration

In addition to attending Commission on Ministry, Standing Committee, Finance Committee and Council of Trustees meetings and overseeing our diocesan staff, in this past year some important projects were completed: rewriting the Clergy Handbook, a revision of the Employee Manual, and the formation of a Personnel Committee. The Commission on Ministry released a large piece of work in the summer of '24 with a revised process for administering lay licenses for service in ministry. The Stevenson School grew in leaps and bounds- both in programming and in its student body, the Shaped by Faith Grant Commission met 2 times (so far in 2024) to distribute \$69,173 in grants dedicated to

collaborative programming for mission, and they have an additional \$334, 866 of requests currently under review for the third quarter. (The total amount of SBF funds that have been distributed over the lifetime of the fund since 2022 is \$662, 946.) Finally, 12 of our congregations entered (and some completed!) the transition process of looking for a new priest. \$69,173

Work for The Episcopal Church

Each bishop is expected to “take their place in the councils of the church” which, from time to time, draws us out of the diocese to work for the benefit of wider church. Sometimes these tasks are at the invitation of the Presiding Bishop, some are positions to which we are elected or appointed, and other positions are asked of bishops’ participation because of a particular interest or skill set. And there are bi-annual meetings of the House of Bishops- in March and September of each year. In 2024 my participation in the work of the wider church was high; in the next three years I anticipate my participation to be less. In 2022 I was appointed for a two-year term to the Church-wide Nominating Committee for all elected positions in The Episcopal Church. This work included seeking, vetting, interviewing and eventually nominating lay and clergy members from across our church for offices on Executive Council, the General Board of Examining Chaplains, the Board of Church Pension Group, etc. I was also elected to serve for the past 2 years on the Joint Nominating Committee to Elect the Presiding Bishop in which we received and vetted applications and selected the final slate of candidates to stand for election as Presiding Bishop. For the past six years, with the Presiding Bishop’s Chancellor Mary Kostel, Esq., I have co-taught the class on the Title IV Disciplinary Canons at the College for Bishops. I have also been a bishop coach to two new bishops for three years each, a mentoring program run through the College for Bishops.

Closer to home, I have participated in events for Province III: Synod, Council and monthly bishops’ zoom calls. And in the diocese, with the Chaplains to the Retired Clergy, I have hosted two “Enriching your Retirement” seminars by the Church Pension Group for clergy in 2024. Finally, in 2024 I was pleased to attend the 81st General Convention of The Episcopal Church with our diocesan deputies in Louisville, KY in June.

Reunification

In October of 2022 our Convention voted to explore a possible reunification with the Diocese of Bethlehem. In October of 2023 the Reunification Discernment Committee presented their data/findings to the Convention and asked for an additional year to create models for consideration as we prepare to vote. The Reunification Discernment Committee has met regularly in sub committees, monthly online, and quarterly in person with their

consultant, The Rev. Jen Adams (Diocese of the Great Lakes). Models for episcopal ministry; staffing; finances; committee, convocational and administrative structure have been discussed and developed. The work of this committee has been prayerful, faithful and earnest. At this convention, the delegates will vote. If both dioceses choose to reunify, then 2025 will be our Year of Transition with the official reunification taking place on January 1, 2026. If we choose not to reunify, then I intend on consulting with staff and diocesan leaders to outline our work for the next 3 years until my anticipated retirement in 2027.

Professional and Personal Development

I have been blessed with wonderful mentors and colleagues who have walked with me in my role as bishop and assisted in my professional and personal development. In 2024 I met with my colleague group (5 bishops, self-selected, who have met together, now, for 6 years) monthly on zoom and in person for a 2-day meeting, twice per year. This group has been invaluable to me for its support, trouble shooting, resource lending and camaraderie. In addition, I have maintained an active discipline of keeping up with literature in church development and vitality.

I took my annual retreat this year in the week after Easter that included time for personal reflection and physical challenge in God's creation.

Conclusion

Thank you for the trust that you have put in me to serve as chief pastor of our diocese. I am grateful for a dedicated and skilled staff who work very hard to support our parishes and their ministry. They care deeply about the vitality of God's mission in this place.

I am honored to serve as your bishop and I look forward to continuing the good work ahead that God has in store for us.

In the Way of Love,

+Audrey

