

To: The Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Central Pennsylvania

From: Joint Cathedral and Pro-Cathedral Review Committee Pro-Tem

Committee Members: The Very Rev. Dr. Amy D. Welin, Dean, St. Stephen's Cathedral; the Rev. Canon Ken Wagner-Pizza, Provost, Trinity Church, Pro-Cathedral; Aaysha Noor, Islamic Society of Greater Harrisburg; Darrel Reinford, Christian Churches United, Harrisburg, PA; The Rev. Cn. Fred Miller, St. Stephen's Cathedral; The Rev. Jeanne Jacobson, Rector, Holy Trinity Parish, Hollidaysburg; Kedren Crosby, St. James Church, Lancaster, PA; Ryan Tobin, St. Stephen's Cathedral; The Rev. Cn. Shayna Watson, St. Stephen's Cathedral; Thomas Schmidt, Diocesan Vice-Chancellor; The Ven. Cn. Daniel Selvage, Priest in Charge, St. Paul's Lock Haven; The Rev. Gene Tucker, Rector, St. John's, Huntingdon; Walter Nicholson, Christ Episcopal Church, Williamsport; Miki Rebeck, Trinity Episcopal Church, Pro-Cathedral; Greg Smith, Trinity Episcopal Church, Pro-Cathedral; Christina Ford, St. Andrew's, State College; The Rev. Canon Dolores Calhoun, Retired.

Subject: Report on the Role of the Cathedral and Pro-Cathedral in the 21st Century

Introduction

As directed by the Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Central Pennsylvania in 2018, the Committee has continued to gather and study the form and function of our cathedral and pro-cathedral. Our Committee was comprised of members from our cathedral, pro-cathedral, and the wider community, in order to capture a fuller picture of internal and external functions of cathedral life. The conversations of the Cathedral Committee Pro-Tem have been rich. Although we have considered the historic role of cathedrals in Europe and the United States, our most significant conversations have addressed the nature and role of cathedrals in the twenty-first century.

Constitutions and Canons

It is significant that the Constitution and Canons of The Episcopal Church make no specific provision with respect to cathedrals. Indeed, not all dioceses have cathedrals, and those that do take varied approaches to their organization. We have concluded that since the Diocese of Central Pennsylvania has both the cathedral and pro-cathedral, the structure of the life of these entities must follow their function. At their best, a cathedral and pro-cathedral can represent the unity of our corporate life as a diocese, in prayer and action. Cathedrals are not just parishes with a title. They have an historic role, demonstrating excellence in liturgy, music, and preaching; offering programs reflecting leadership in the ecumenical and interfaith community; and programs reflecting a unique status in the secular community (e.g., visible engagement with the community on civic, social, and other matters).

The Role of Cathedrals Redefined

The Very Rev. John P. Downey, Dean of the Episcopal Cathedral of St. Paul in Erie, PA, led our joint meeting in May 2019. The group considered the vocation of smaller cathedrals in the Episcopal Church. Downey identifies cathedrals as symbols of loss and of hope: loss, because cathedrals embody the ruins of a Christendom (the cultural establishment of Christianity) that has vanished, and hope, because they also embody the faithful remnant reaching out to the world in the name of Christ. At the end of this meeting, the Committee confirmed that we would like to see our cathedral ministries developed, not for the sake of the buildings or prestige, but for the sake of

raising up the body of Christ in support of our witness to God in the world, as faithful people, faith communities, and a diocese.

Cathedral Ministry and Church Culture

Although there may be intersection among parish and cathedral ministries, the work of the cathedral and pro-cathedral is to support and not to diminish ministry on a local and parish level. Our continued commitment is to be catalysts for our common life, from the transcendent (serving as centers of spiritual renewal and deepening faith), to the practical (offering engagement in the interfaith and civic communities, hosting diaconal ordinations, and teaching the best practices of evangelism). We also commit to supporting the entirety of God's mission in central Pennsylvania, through education, the arts, social concerns, and matters of physical and spiritual wellness.

Over the past two years, **St Stephen's Cathedral** and **Trinity Pro-Cathedral** have developed new missional projects on an experimental basis:

Mission and Outreach

- St. Stephen's hosted Mary Parmer and her ministry *Invite, Welcome, Connect*, in November 2018, offering the workshop on practical evangelism at minimal cost to parishes in our diocese.
- St. Stephen's and Trinity have been exploring collaborative mission projects.
 - In summer 2019, we partnered in the Transforming Jersey Shore Area mission of Trinity Episcopal Church in Jersey Shore, PA.
 - In spring 2020, we are jointly sponsoring a pilgrimage to Scotland.
 - We are considering the development of a local acolyte festival in collaboration with Stevenson School and our Diocesan Youth & Young Adult Committee.

Worship

- St. Stephen's and Trinity seek to collaborate with other parishes throughout our diocese to create innovative spaces for worship modeled after other episcopal forms of Celtic, Contemporary, and Jazz services. These models help us to appreciate and integrate various forms of music and meaningful worship for parishioners, and community at large.

Creation Care

- The Harrisburg branch of the diocesan Care of Creation ministry offered workshops on using local plants to ensure environmentally sustainable gardens. Over the summer of 2019, the group planned to cultivate local support for the Episcopal Church pledge for creation care. This group engaged young people in Harrisburg during the week of climate action in late September 2019.
- Former Sycamore House member, Chloe Selles, led us in participation with the Global Strike in September 2019, meeting hosted at St. Stephen's Cathedral.

Arts

- St. Stephen's is hosting an exhibit of contemporary icons in September and October 2019. As part of the experience of the iconography, there are workshops on writing icons for adults and children; lectures on the history of icons and their spiritual meaning.
- St. Stephen's is exploring offering very low cost community workshops in winter 2019-2020 on the role of art in sustaining the soul, focusing on the spiritually therapeutic experience of creativity.

Music

- Trinity is cultivating local networks for mission. On Nov. 2, the local chapter of the American Guild of Organists will be offering an ecumenical program for children (grades 4-10), called “Pipes, Pedals, & Pizza.”
- Trinity is exploring musical programming for First Fridays in Williamsport, a local art and music scene, and is considering connecting this with outreach work.

Social Justice

- As part of the commitment of St. Stephen’s to the interfaith community in Harrisburg, the cathedral has hosted a series of social events to discuss the gift of diversity and to build relationships across the boundaries of faith traditions.
- As one piece of a commitment to engagement with issues confronting the wider community, St. Stephen’s has hosted a series of workshops on civil conversations across difference, as a partner with the Pennsylvania Council of Churches.

Conclusion

Moving forward in the Episcopal Diocese of Central Pennsylvania, we perceive that the most valuable work we can do as cathedral and pro-cathedral will be to support and connect the members of the Episcopal Church in this area and to cultivate our relationships with other people of faith. This is a ministry of service, connected with our identity but not identical to our function as parishes.

- We anticipate committing resources of St. Stephen’s Episcopal Cathedral and Trinity Pro-Cathedral to the service of the Diocese of Central Pennsylvania, including offering more workshops, retreats, and readily accessible resources for parish mission.
- The Dean of St Stephen’s Episcopal Cathedral and the Provost of Trinity Episcopal Pro-Cathedral commit to meeting twice a year, to build relationship and to discuss direction for our mutual ministry, under the direction of the Bishop.
- We support the continued ministry of Trinity Pro-Cathedral in Williamsport, because we perceive that the physical size of the Episcopal Diocese of Central Pennsylvania is not conducive to reasonable day travel to one location for services (for example, for ordinations and renewal of clergy vows).
- We recommend the development of a process to select Canons from parishes and the wider (non-Episcopal) community, for the purpose of supporting and expanding the role and work of the Cathedral Chapter. The Canons will develop and assist in carrying out the work of the Chapter, which is distinct from the work of the vestries of St. Stephen’s and Trinity parishes.
- We recommend retaining one Cathedral Chapter for the development and administration of the work of Cathedral and Pro-Cathedral, to include representatives from both St. Stephen’s and Trinity, as well as the Canons, recognizing that the Cathedral and Pro-Cathedral serve as the seat of the bishop and are in relationship with her.
- We look forward to expanding the ministry of an active cathedral Chapter in order to support the mission of God in central Pennsylvania.

Submitted by the Very Rev. Dr. Amy D. Welin and the Rev. Canon Ken Wagner-Pizza