

# **REPORTS TO THE 173<sup>RD</sup> ANNUAL CONVENTION OF THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF MILWAUKEE**

**Meeting virtually on October 3, 2020**

## **Commission on Ministry (COM)**

The Commission on Ministry (COM) is the body, tasked by the Bishop, to help prepare and accompany those seeking ordination in the Church. We support the work of Rectors, parishes, the diocese, and individuals in the sometimes-complicated work of discerning a call to formal ministry. The preparation of people for ordained service is prayerful and powerful work; the COM is fortunate to be called to serve and takes the work seriously.

The COM is currently accompanying four postulants (to both the vocational diaconate and presbyterate), as well as one person preparing for lay chaplaincy. We also celebrated with the diocese at the ordination of three priests this year, two of whom have been placed successfully in parishes in our diocese.

Those seeking discernment for holy orders contact the COM in January of each year, meet with their priest and the COM President, who then assist in the formation of a parish ministry discernment committee. If you have someone in your parish looking to do this kind of discernment, contact the COM President, The Rev. Ian Burch.

Thank you to Bishop Miller and to the members of the 2019 COM: Peter Luisi-Mills, The Rev. Nancy Hills, Mary Thickens, The Rev. Pippa Middleton, The Rev. Kevin Huddleston, Jen Vetrus, and Ashley Humphrey.

(submitted by The Rev. Ian Burch, Commission on Ministry president)

## **Executive Council of the Diocese of Milwaukee**

The role and duties of The Executive Council are detailed in Canon 7 of the Diocese of Milwaukee Constitution and Canons. The Executive Council meets monthly; due to the pandemic, meetings met via zoom and started at 9:30 a.m.

Each year the Council approves the Commission on Global Reconciliations grant recommendations, the Meachem grants, financial aid, housing resolutions for several diocesan staff members, and the budget along with any loan requests that are brought by the finance committee.

This year the Rev. Joel Prather assumed the office of vice-president. Issues developing from the pandemic, especially effecting parishes, were reviewed and addressed. The closing of a number of parishes along with the sale of their properties also came before the Council for review and approval.

Minutes for the Executive Council meetings are published on the diocesan website at:

<http://www.diomil.org/executive-council/>.

(Submitted by The Reverend Margaret (Marge) Kiss, Executive Secretary of the Diocese)

## Standing Committee of the Diocese of Milwaukee

Greetings to everyone in the diocese from your Standing Committee!

Since our last Diocesan Convention, your Standing Committee has been hard at work. We have approved a number of elections for Bishops Diocesan. We continue to learn about our own role and responsibilities in the life of the diocese, particularly in the area of the disposition of parish and diocesan property, drawing on both diocesan and national canons. Finally, in partnership with the Commission on Ministry, and in accordance with the canons of the church, we have met with those at various stages in the ordination discernment process, ensuring that they are following the policies and procedures for those seeking ordination.

Since our bishop has announced his retirement, we have been laying the groundwork for our role in the common life we share as members of the Episcopal Diocese of Milwaukee. We do not take this burden lightly. It remains our goal to engage in a thorough, prayerful and thoughtful process of discernment. Of course, the pandemic in which we live is the context in which we are moving forward. We continue to rely on the assistance and expertise of The Rev. Anne Hallisey as our consultant. She has guided other dioceses through search processes before and comes to us highly recommended. Her particular skills, gifts and professional background seem to be a perfect fit for us.

As you may recall from a letter we sent this spring to every parish and entity in the diocese, and in a separate letter from our bishop, our goal remains to secure the appointment of an Assisting Bishop to be ready to work with us on January 1, 2021 and then we hope to hold an election within a few months of a Provisional Bishop who will serve our diocese for up to three years. This will allow us to engage in a process of listening, soul-searching and future planning so that we can do a thorough and thoughtful search process for our next bishop. COVID-19, as it has done to so many other plans, processes and events, has also made its mark on our search. The Diocesan Search Committee, called by the Standing Committee, began its work this past winter, but put their process on hold when the pandemic made it impossible for them to do the important relationship work of visiting with the parishes in the diocese. We are confident that when we restart the search process, we'll be able to do so in whatever context we may find ourselves. To date, we have not received names for the Assisting Bishop role from the Office for Pastoral Transition at the national level, but we are in touch regularly.

Minutes from our meetings are available at:

<http://www.diomil.org/standing-committee-minutes/>

Our members include: The Rev. Jana Troutman-Miller, Ms. Tammy Prather, Ms. Celia Fine, Mr. Marcus White, Dr. Sheryl Slocum, The Rev. Andy Jones, The Rev. Gary Manning and the Rev. Scott Leannah, President.

(submitted by The Rev. Scott Leannah, Standing Committee president)