

Preliminary Report of the Diocesan Reimagining Task Force
to
the 176th Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Indianapolis
October 2013

DRAFT

Foreword

When the Diocesan Reimagining Task Force gathered for its first meeting in April 2013 at Waycross, we made a startling discovery. Of the more than a dozen people who had come together out of care for the future of the Episcopal Church in Central and Southern Indiana, not one was a cradle Episcopalian. Not even our Bishop, who attended our initial session. Some did not even identify as Christian before coming into the Episcopal Church.

So even as the prevailing narrative both within and outside the church is that our denomination is in decline, we are encouraged that the members of this task force are embodied evidence of the ability of the Episcopal Church to grow.

A statistical analysis of the Episcopal Church or the Diocese of Indianapolis is dispiriting. There is no denying the reality that membership is down and budgets are strained. But this task force rejects the notion that our recent path must be our destiny. Our Presiding Bishop describes the recent experience of the Episcopal Church as pruning for future growth. Not all of us agree with that metaphor, but we all agree it is time to wrest ourselves from the narrative of decline and engage with the opportunities and challenges before us to grow in numbers, in engagement with our communities and each other, and above all in faithfulness to our Lord Jesus Christ.

We take some inspiration from the 16th chapter of Paul's Letter to the Romans, a litany of greetings that emphasizes the importance of mutuality within communities and across far distances. This is in some ways an analogy for a diocese, people far and near in relationship with each other for the common purpose of deepening our relationship with God and making God known through words and actions..

In this preliminary report to the 176th Diocesan Convention, we chose to focus on relationships rather than functional areas. At this early stage in our work, we focus more on things as we have found them to be. We will make recommendations where we think there are obvious solutions to problems, but for now we assess the lay of the land, with the intention of making more substantive recommendations for change in our report the 177th Diocesan Convention.

The Relationship between Parish and Community

The Relationship between Parish and Members

The Relationship between Diocesan Office/Episcopacy and Parishes

The Relationship between Diocesan Office/Episcopacy and Members

The Relationship between Diocesan Office/Episcopacy and Community

The Relationship between Mission Strategy and Supported Parishes

Parish Relationships with Each Other (special section for yoked parishes/area ministries?)

Individual Relationships with Each Other

Not sure where to put Campus Ministries, Waycross

Topics to consider under each:

- *Leadership*
- *Communications*
- *Budget*
- *Governance*
- *Spiritual Vitality*
- *Service*
- *Sections discussing parishes may need to be broken into sections based on parish attributes including but not limited to size/ASA*