



Preliminary Report of the Diocesan Reimagining Task Force

to

the 176th Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Indianapolis

October 25, 2013

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 this initial session. Some members of the Task Force did not even identify as Christian before coming to 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, as well as 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 the relationship 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, which articulates a litany of greetings emphasizing 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.

Following the 175th Diocesan Convention, the call for members was sent out in November and read aloud

in each parish. Seventeen members were announced in February, and the task force was first gathered in April at Waycross Camp and Conference Center. Since then, the group has convened monthly via the WebEx teleconferencing software, and held a second in-person meeting at Christ Church Cathedral on September 21. The group has been actively engaged in gathering information and establishing connections throughout the diocese through establishment of a dedicated web presence, engagement on social media, and by committing to visit every parish and ministry in the diocese prior to the 177th Diocesan Convention. We have influenced and supported the diocese through the organization of stewardship teleconferences, a New Media Mondays series, and a workshop at the 176th Diocesan Convention.

At the 177th Diocesan Convention, we will deliver a list of recommendations to the household which is short, actionable, and impactful. In the meantime, we ask for you to engage with us through connections in person and online. Most of all, we ask for your continued prayers for this work.

Ways to connect:

Web: www.reimagineindydio.org

Facebook: facebook.com/reimagineindydio

Twitter: [@indydiotf](https://twitter.com/indydiotf)

Members of the Task Force & Locations

The Rev. Bill Barfield, St. Augustine's Danville (advisory)

Will Boggs, St. Francis in the Fields Zionsville

The Very Rev. Steven Carlsen, Christ Church Cathedral Indianapolis

Randy Conner, St. Paul's Evansville

Lara Dreyer, St. Mark's Plainfield

Alissa Goudswaard, St. John's Lafayette

Katherine Holtzleiter, Trinity Anderson

The Rev. Enid Morrison, St. Matthew's Indianapolis

Jaimie Murdock, Episcopal Campus Ministry at Indiana University Bloomington

The Rev. Rebecca Nickel, St. Timothy's Indianapolis

Brendan O'Sullivan-Hale, All Saints Indianapolis

The Rev. Karen Sullivan, St. Philip's Indianapolis

The Rev. Mary Taflinger, Trinity Lawrenceburg

The Rev. Marc Vance, St. Paul's Columbus

Scott Wilson, Holy Family Fishers