**119th Convention of the Episcopal Church in Utah**

**Report of the Diocesan Council**

**Members**

\*Bishop Phyllis Spiegel - President, \*Don Wood - Vice President and Salt Lake Regional Representative, \*Nick Ellingson - Secretary and Salt Lake Regional Representative, \*The Reverend Canon Pablo Ramos, The The Reverend Pat Hart - Clergy, The Reverend Gabriel Atem - Clergy, The Reverend Kathalin Walker - Clergy, Connie Witt - Eastern/Southeastern Regional Representative, Sandra Corp - Southern Regional Representative, \*Frank Ascione - Northern Regional Representative, Marlin Haws - At Large Representative, Bill Potts - CFO/Ex Officio Member, Jim Palmer - Treasurer/ Ex Officio Member

**Changes in Membership as of this Convention**

Leaving Council: Connie Witt, Nick Ellingson, The Reverend Gabriel Atem

Coming onto Council: Eastern/ Southeastern Regional Representative - Cole Manwaring, Salt Lake Regional Representative - Joseph Frank, New Ex Officio Appointment - \*Nick Ellingson, 1 Clergy Member and 1 Lay Member At Large to be determined during convention

\*Members of Council Executive Committee

**Mandate**

The mandate of the Diocesan Council is to understand the missions and ministries of the Diocese of Utah, understand the priority of each, and to ensure that they are appropriately funded, AND ensure that the Diocese of Utah is fiscally sound.

2023 Goals

* Minimize the deficit that was built into the 2023 budget. **We ended the year with a significant budget surplus**
* Better understand the missions and ministries funded by the 2023 budget. **We met with the budget holders for the six highest expense components of the budget**
* Provide guidance to all parishes and mission churches in the diocese have robust stewardship programs. **A diocese-wide training program was established and implemented**
* Establish priorities for developing the 2024 budget and ensure that it would be a balanced budget (no deficit). **A zero deficit budget was developed for 2024**

2024 Goals

* Approve a balanced budget for 2024 and ensure that we “track to budget”
* Explore fund raising best practices to share with parishes and mission churches (TENS Program)
* Establish relationship linkages between council members and each church in the diocese to provide fund raising training and other helpful resources
* Participate in the “Vitality Initiative” to develop an action plan for improving the vitality of the diocese and its churches
* Encourage mission churches that are close to becoming “financially independent” to move aggressively to parish status
* Make the diocese less reliant on draws from the Perpetual Trust by controlling expenses and improving income. Our emphasis is on improving income.

**Analysis of Actions**

* A balanced budget was approved for 2024 and performance to budget is tracked monthly at our Council meetings
* We are beginning to utilize the resources of TENS to improve our knowledge of fund raising best practices so we can begin sharing them with our churches
* Each council member has been assigned to each of the churches and is beginning to reach out and establish a relationship. This work is on-going.
* Three Council members as well as the Bishop are participating on the Diocesan Vitality Initiative. We are currently establishing goals and action plans.
* We have identified two of our mission churches that are close to attaining parish status and have met with the clergy in charge and wardens to aggressively move to becoming parishes
* We have established a target of reducing our draw from the Perpetual Trust by $1.1 MM through increased income from other sources (many are described above) and if necessary through expense reductions. This target will be met over time and movement to this goal is built into the 2024 budget and will continue in subsequent budget cycles

**Findings and Conclusions**

We have not yet mentioned the “TRI-Meeting” which has been held in both 2023 and 2024 where the Diocesan Council, Standing Committee and Perpetual Trust Trustees meet. All of the goals and actions described above are consistent with strategies we developed together during those meetings. We have found that we can have an integrated approach to ensuring the continued financial and operating stability of the diocese. We have moved from having deficit budgets to balanced budgets, even with end of year surpluses. While we are beginning the process of having a closer relationship with our churches, we are excited to be moving in that direction.

**Recommendations**

* Continue to meet annually or even more frequently with the Standing Committee and Trustees
* Aggressively move forward with the actions described in this report and solicit the support of the entire diocese to make them happen

**How does the Diocesan Council’s work fit into the mission strategy of the diocese?**

The Council is the group that operationally funds and drives the mission of the Diocese of Utah. It is our job to ensure we have sufficient resources to continually move the mission forward year after year.