

REPORT FOR 2022 DIOCESAN CONVENTION

During the 2021 Diocesan Convention, Bishop Deon Johnson introduced initiatives within the Diocese that are intended to lay the foundation needed to begin fulfilling our Mission. One of these initiatives was to appoint a task force to investigate the feasibility of creating/pursuing a gathering space for the Diocese, with a report on their findings due to the 2022 Convention. The charge: ***To determine whether to pursue creating a space for the Diocese to gather together for shared ministry, formation, recreation, and fun as an intentional step towards exploring the ways we can come together while sharing the Good News with others.*** The Rev. Andrew Archie (The Church of St. Michael & St. George, Clayton) and Ms. Betty Bowersox (Grace, Kirkwood) were appointed as task force co-chairs.

By mid-January Bishop Johnson had invited a diverse group of individuals to share their unique gifts and skills in this discernment process. During the year a couple of members departed from the task force, but those still on the roster are listed below:

- The Rev. Andrew Archie – Church of St. Michael & St. George, Clayton, Co-Chair
- The Rev. Dn. Betty Bowen – Trinity, St. Charles
- Ms. Betty Bowersox – Grace, Kirkwood, Co-Chair
- Ms. Angela Breeher – St. Paul's, St. Louis
- Ms. Alexia Dukes – All Saints & Ascension, Northwood
- The Rev. Amy Fallon – Trinity, Kirksville
- Ms. Loretta Go – St. Martin's, Ellisville
- Ms. Rose Hayden – Calvary, Columbia
- The Rev. Luke Jernigan – Consultant
- The Rev. Kevin McGrane – Trinity, St. James
- The Rev. Bill Nesbit – Grace, Jefferson City
- Mr. Michael Reiser – Christ Church Cathedral, St. Louis
- The Rev. Clive Samson – Faith Christian Church of India, Ballwin
- The Rev. Leslie Scoopmire – St. Martin's, Ellisville
- The Rev. Susie Skinner – St. Peter's, Ladue
- Ms. Mabelle West – All Saints & Ascension, Northwood
- Mr. Kevin Williams – Emmanuel, Webster Groves, Camp Phoenix Director
- Student from Rockwell House Campus Ministry –St. Louis

Challenges: The Gathering Space Task Force (Task Force) met by Zoom for the first time in mid-January. We left with an aggressive schedule that began with discovering the background and talents of the task force members and collecting our thoughts--plus ideas from leaders in our parishes--on what a gathering space might be and what it should include. We further planned to identify experts, research gathering spaces that already existed and look for best practices (as well as gathering spaces that had failed and why), perform telephone interviews and then in-person visits, obtain more input from the Diocese, and present results and recommendations of our Feasibility Study during this Diocesan Convention. Our dreams of a quick finish were too optimistic.

Working with a consultant (Ms. Katie Ong) in May we pulled back and reset the 2022 expectations for the team. A Zoom restart-meeting was held in the first week of June to work on a list of questions that could be used to interview people about Gathering Spaces, as well as developing a list of potential people to interview. Zoom meetings held June 23-24 resulted in a list of Interview questions and over 100 names of people that

team members felt would yield helpful input if interviewed. And then--Summer happened. With input from Bishop Deon and Katie Ong, some changes will be made going forward as outlined below:

Accomplishments: Output from the Task Force through September:

- A list of nearly 60 ideas of what a “Gathering Space” might be or consist of
- A list of standardized interview questions with which to gather ideas and input on the need, use, and types of diocesan gathering spaces
- A list of over 100 people, within the Diocese and in industry, who are considered to be valuable resources to interview using the questions developed.

Goals moving forward: Task Force Changes and Work to be completed in 2022:

- ❖ The Rev. Mark Kozielec (St. Mark’s, St. Louis) will lend his experience and expertise with camps and conference centers in other dioceses and help prepare for table discussions at Convention.
- ❖ The Rev. Kevin McGrane, one of the Task Force members, has been added to the leadership team.
- ❖ Ms. Katie Ong’s expertise will be used to help the Task Force lay out the timetable for the next year, assist with planning the information gathering session during the Convention, and guide the team with a few of our first Interviews.
- ❖ The Diocesan Convention agenda will include 15 minutes for scribed table discussions on specific questions around a gathering space, which will be enhanced by an online survey following Diocesan Convention.

We look forward to the opportunity to gather information and ideas from the clergy, delegates and guests during the Gathering Space Table Conversations at Diocesan Convention. This information and the valuable lists that the Task Force has already developed, along with the several lessons learned up to this point and the additional help supplementing the leadership team, will feed into our 2023 efforts as we dream of the possibilities that lie ahead.

It is with gratitude that we give thanks for Bishop Deon and his unifying vision in initiating this project. Many thanks also to the members of the Task Force for your interest, time, input, and most of all your patience, as we move forward in our discovery on the feasibility of there being a place to bring the many locations of our Diocese of Missouri church together at a “Gathering Space”.

Are you interested in working with the Task Force next year?

Do you feel you have some great ideas about a purposeful gathering space, been a decision maker on the use of conference centers for meetings, have experience with camps, etc., and want to be interviewed by the Task Force? If so, please contact any of the co-chairs!

- Ms. Betty Bowersox – bowersoxb@gmail.com
- The Rev. Andrew Archie – ajarchie@aol.com & marlene@csmg.org
- The Rev. Kevin McGrane - kjpmcgrane@yahoo.com

Faithfully,

Betty L Bowersox
Co-Chair