

General Convention Deputation Report (GC80)

July 8-11, 2022 (postponed from June 29 – July 9, 2021)

Diocese of Missouri Convention, Nov 19-20, 2022

Your General Convention (GC) Deputation (four Deputies and four Alternate Deputies in each order, Lay and Clerical) was elected in November 2019 for the 80th General Convention of The Episcopal Church (TEC), scheduled for July 2021 in Baltimore, MD. By the time we arrived in Baltimore to attend GC80, it had been vastly shortened twice (in duration), diminished (in numbers and events), and delayed for a year. By July 2022, Missouri's Deputation was also significantly changed. Originally elected were the following:

Lay Deputies (L1 – L8)

- 1) Shug Goodlow
- 2) Betty Bowersox
- 3) Michael Booker
- 4) Liz Yount
- 5) Lisa Fox
- 6) Adrienne Lemmons-Dillon
- 7) Pat O'Brien
- 8) Christopher Masters

Clerical Deputies (C1 – C8)

- 1) The Rev. Beth Scriven
- 2) The Rev. Ian Lasch
- 3) The Rev. Tamsen Whistler
- 4) The Rev. Leslie Scoopmire
- 5) The Rev. Mike Angell
- 6) The Rev. Renee Fenner
- 7) The Rev. Todd McDowell
- 8) The Rev. Dayna Jewson

Deputies 1-4 in each order are the voting deputies while the rest are Alternate Deputies, prepared to replace voting deputies if they resign prior to GC. **All** deputies are expected to attend Deputation meetings in the (usually) 18 months from election to the GC, and to share the work and information needed to be ready to deliberate and vote. Ten deputies are expected to attend GC; all eight voting deputies plus the first alternate (#5) in each order. If a Deputy resigns before GC, everybody on the list moves up. When no alternates remain before GC, the Bishop, with the advice and the consent of the Standing Committee, appoints an alternate. For a variety of reasons, by the time ten of us flew to Baltimore for GC80 in July, our Deputation looked like this:



Lay Deputies

- 1) Betty Bowersox, co-chair
- 2) Michael Booker
- 3) Liz Yount
- 4) Adrienne Lemmons-Dillon
- 5) Pat O'Brien
- 6) Chris Masters

Clerical Deputies

- 1) Tamsen Whistler, co-chair
- 2) Leslie Scoopmire
- 3) Todd McDowell
- 4) **THE REV.** Shug Goodlow
- 5) Canon Doris Westfall

For the Missouri Deputation, this turned out to be a crazy GC for our two Alternates! Usually Alternate Deputies attend each session seated in a separate area off the voting floor, perhaps substituting for a voting Deputy during an occasional morning or afternoon session a couple times. GC80 was different. Lay Alternate Pat O'Brien served from the first legislative day; Clerical Alternate Doris Westfall from the second. Sessions were morning, afternoon, and evening. One Deputy was

injured, and then both deputation co-chairs *plus* the Bishop came down with COVID-19. The Convention was short, intense, tiring, but good.

Significant Legislation at GC80

One method of shortening GC80 was to address only the most pressing issues, deferring some less time-sensitive resolutions to GC81 (to be held in Louisville, KY in 2024). Before being placed on the GC calendar, every resolution had to be reviewed by a legislative committee and “heard” in a public committee meeting. For the first time, Legislative Committee meetings and hearings were held virtually, before GC began. Michael Booker, Tamsen Whistler, Betty Bowersox, and Liz Yount all served on committees before and during GC80. Based on committee recommendations after the hearings, resolutions were sent to the floor of the House of Bishops (HoB) or the House of Deputies (HoD). Many resolutions that were deemed to be non-controversial were bundled together in consent agendas for a single vote, though there was a process to pull a resolution from the consent agenda for floor discussion and vote. Controversial, impactful, or complex resolutions were scheduled to be discussed on the House floors and if passed, were then sent to the other House for action. To become a formal action of General Convention, each resolution must be approved by both houses using identical language. More than 400 Resolutions were handled during GC80!

Key Resolutions from GC80

- Revised Edition *Lesser Feasts and Fasts 2022 (LFF 2022)*
- Revised Edition *Book of Occasional Services 2022 (BOS 2022)*
- Dynamic Translations of the *Book of Common Prayer 1979* in Spanish, French, and Haitian Creole (Spanish *BCP*, French *BCP*, *LFF 2022* and *BOS 2022* now published)
- Ongoing work on a new BCP; approved liturgies available at episcopalcommonprayer.org

- Eliminating the Joint Committee on Program, Budget, and Finance: Goals for more transparency, process streamlining, and ease of adding or subtracting from the proposed budget at GC. Often, resolutions passed at GC were not implemented, because the budget was set and funding unavailable for new mission. The Executive Council of the Episcopal Church will take on the role of developing a budget and will adjust a triennial budget approved by GC as necessary between GCs. There will be opportunity to adjust the budget at GC also, with at least one budget hearing during GC. GC80 passed a \$100.5 million balanced budget with 15% diocesan assessments.

- The Presiding Officers’ Working Group on Truth-Telling, Reckoning, and Healing presented several resolutions passed by the GC80:
 - **A125:** Establishes an Episcopal Coalition for Racial Equity, “a voluntary association of Episcopal diocese, parishes, organizations, and individuals” to facilitate, coordinate, encourage, support, and network efforts for social justice and dismantling white supremacy in collaboration with the Executive Council and the Episcopal Church Center. Funding for this new coalition is outside of the three-year budget cycle.
 - **A127:** Calls for truth-telling about TEC’s role in forcing indigenous children to attend residential schools that “stripped them of their tribal languages and cultures,” resulting in multi-generational injury. In addition to a church-wide effort, dioceses are encouraged to research their own histories and to engage in dialogue with indigenous peoples who were affected by that history.
 - **A129:** Church, including urging each diocese, to investigate the sources of its wealth in relation to slavery, social injustice, land taken from indigenous peoples

- **CO72:** Urges each diocese to learn about the peoples who once occupied the land where we live and worship; work with them to develop an appropriate land-acknowledgement; and begin all public meetings and all worship with that document.
- **The Rt. Rev. Barbara C. Harris:** Sixteen resolutions, including one from the Diocese of Missouri endorsed by Province V, recommended a date in the Church Calendar to commemorate Barbara Clementine Harris. The date chosen from among those resolutions is the date she was ordained and consecrated Bishop Suffragan of Massachusetts, February 11, 1989. She was the first female Bishop in the Anglican Communion.
- **The Diocese of North Texas** (Episcopalians from the Diocese of Fort Worth, which became a diocese of the Anglican Church in North America) merged with the Diocese of Texas. The decision was met with tears and applause.
- **New Models for Mission and Ministry:** Resolutions related to the annual parochial report required of each congregation in TEC. Questions raised for exploration in D047: Is Average Sunday Attendance (ASA) the best way to evaluate viability? Are all congregations expected to be self-supporting? Is “the Church” primarily in the building or in the community?
- **Advocacy** invited across TEC in the following areas: LGBTQIA+ rights; voting rights; gun violence; mass incarceration; repair of the earth

Elections and Farewells at GC80

- **Ms. Julia Ayala Harris** elected President of the House of Deputies—first Latina, first woman of color elected to that role in TEC history
- **The Rev. Rachel Taber-Hamilton** elected Vice-President of the House of Deputies—first indigenous woman elected to major leadership in the HoD.
- **The Rt. Rev. Deon K. Johnson** (DioMO Bishop) was elected to TEC Executive Council.
- **Farewells** and thank-you gifts and cheers for **The Rev. Gay Clark Jennings**, retiring President of HoD for her three terms, normally nine years, but TEN years in that role.
- **Farewells** and thank-you gifts and cheers to **Mr. Byron Rushing**, VP of the HoD for three terms—TEN years—and longest-serving Deputy in HoD (16 terms, beginning 1973).

Unique to GC80: COVID-19

- Delayed GC80 by an entire year
- Reduced from nine to eight and finally to four Legislative Days
- Only “essential” people: Bishops with jurisdiction (active, diocesan bishops; no suffragans, assistants, retired bishops); Only (up to) four Lay and four Clerical Deputies and one Alternate in each Order (lay and ordained); No special guests
- No Official Youth Presence (Benisha Brudy from Trinity/St. Charles had been selected as one of 17 young persons with seat and voice at GC80, now to be invited to attend GC81 in 2024)
- No Children’s Program or Youth Mission activities
- No shared worship between House of Bishops and House of Deputies
- No concurrent Triennial Gathering of the Episcopal Church Women

- No “Market Place” or food service; no representatives of TEC ministries around the world; no liturgical artists, booksellers; no FORMA, ERD, UTO
- Daily Covid rapid tests
- Mask-wearing always
- No food in House of Deputies
- Maryland Night delayed until end of GC80 Monday night and vastly reorganized to maintain social distancing and safe distribution of food, with three separate events.

The effect of these protocols and restrictions, however, was obvious. With about 1100 people gathered at the Baltimore Convention Center, there were only 36 cases of Covid-19 in the HoD and two in the HoB during GC80. Those who did contract the virus were in direct conversation with the Medical Director of GC80, had access to telehealth care, were lovingly cared for by their fellow deputies, and were comfortably isolated in their hotel rooms. (People from the same diocese with Covid-19 were allowed to spend time together, including the Bishop and two Deputation co-chairs from DioMO.) A few more cases arose as the Convention closed, but the protocols worked. Volunteers from the Diocese of Maryland took over the care and feeding of Deputies with Covid-19 when their own deputations had to leave them behind.

Looking Forward to 2024

The 81st General Convention will be held in Louisville, Kentucky in 2024. GC81 will address resolutions from GC80 that were deferred and many, many others that will arise in the next two years. The opportunity for committee-work to be done ahead of time on virtual media will, most likely, still exist. Some of the protocols for health and wellness will probably carry into the next GC. The hope is that the Market Place and the many visitors and dignitaries from around the world will be able to be present, and that the Episcopal Church Women will hold their Triennial gathering concurrently with GC81. A big event at GC81 will be the election of a new Presiding Bishop and a thank-you for Bishop Michael Curry.

Your Deputies and Alternate Deputies from the Diocese of Missouri have been honored to serve you and to do the work of the General Convention during the past four years. During our preparation, we met ten times, nine times virtually, one time in person, so 20+ hours of meetings plus many additional hours of pre-meeting preparation as a deputation. Our 2022 Diocesan Convention will elect Missouri’s deputation to the 81st General Convention. If you want to know more about the work and the joys involved, please speak to any of us. We submit this report in gratitude to the people of the Diocese of Missouri, with special thanks for the help of Deputies Michael Booker and Adrienne Lemmons-Dillon.

Respectfully submitted,

The Rev. Tamsen Whistler and Ms. Betty Bowersox, Co-Chairs, Missouri Deputation to GC80