

Executive Council Minutes

April 7, 2020

Meeting held over Zoom

Attendance: **Present** **Absent** **Excused**

Officers:

The Rt. Rev. Dr. Marc Handley Andrus Bishop and President **P**

The Rev. Jane Stratford Chair **P**

Richard Patenaude Vice Chair **P**

Mees Tielens Secretary **P**

Class of 2020:

The Rev. Jane Stratford **P**

The Rev. Debra Low-Skinner **P**

Aidan Jobe Sea **P**

Thomas La France **P**

Charles Mader **P**

Patrick Anderson **A**

Class of 2021:

Bruce Morrow **P**

Eleanor Prugh **P**

Mees Tielens **P**

Richard Patenaude **P**

Don Miller **P**

The Rev. Merry Chan Ong **P**

Class of 2022:

Marj Leeds **P**

The Rev. Ginger Strickland **P**

Tom Matthews **P**

Anna Haight **P**

Birgit Eschmann **P**

Bishop's Appointees:

Robyn Amos **P**

Miguel Bustos **P**

The Rev. Liz Tichenor **P**

Ex-officio members:

The Rev. Richard Edward Helmer Secretary of the Convention **P**

Brad Barber Treasurer of the Diocese **P**

Diocesan Staff:

The Rev. Canon Abbott Bailey Canon to the Ordinary **P**

Tom Ferguson CFO **P**

Stephanie Martin Taylor Working Group Head for Communication **A**

Other attendees:

Christopher Hayes, Esq. Chancellor of the Diocese **P**

Kathleen Piraino Executive Director of the Episcopal Impact Fund **P**

Albe Larsen Standing Committee **P**

4:34 PM Call to Order and Opening Prayer (Jane Stratford)

4:32 PM Approve Agenda

Item added to agenda: St Dorothy's Rest

4:37 Norms (Richard Patenaude)

Richard briefly highlights two particular norms of Executive Council, describing how they were put into practice in a recent Finance Committee meeting:

Respect others and assume good intentions by others

Allow for dissent and check in to make sure both sides have been heard

4:40 Bishop's Time

- COVID-19 updates and guidelines

Bishop Marc is heartened by the creativity and diligence with which the people of the diocese have responded to the pandemic and the work of the COVID-19 response team. He highlights the resources available to congregations and institutions, including recorded webinars and help in applying for assistance.

The Bishop notes that the Executive Council had, fortunately, already been attending to the financial health of several more fragile congregations and institutions. Some congregations may face insuperable financial challenges and the EC needs to be prepared to respond with prayer and collaboration. It is important to take a broad as well as a fine view: we may very well still be in a pandemic emergency state when the fire season starts. How will we meet that as the diocese of California? The diocesan disaster preparedness team, chaired by Jane McDougall, has been working hard to help every congregation have a disaster preparedness plan. This crisis shows how important it is to plan ahead and be ready.

4:54 PM Key Initiatives Update (DioCal Staff)

- Ministry in the time of pandemic

Davey Gerhard describes the response from the diocese, including making a growing list of coronavirus resources available: information on food pantries, shelters, resources for mental health, senior care, and recovery can be found here <https://diocal.org/covid-19-advisories>

Funds are being raised to support diocesan institutions and staff; these funds are not being solicited from congregations but from the list of Expanding Horizons donors.

Davey notes that all congregations can use Tithely at a discounted rate to set up a virtual offering plate: <https://www.tens.org/resources/tithe-ly/>

- Staff updates

The executive director of the Episcopal Impact Fund, Kathleen Piraino, discusses the work that EIF has been doing, including sending \$1000 to every congregation and responding to requests for emergency funds from non-profits. EIF has reached out to foundations in the Bay Area to see if their grants can be matched and are hopeful that will lead to extra funds. If there is a program you know of that is experiencing extra costs or declines in fundraising, email Kathleen at kpiraino@episcopalimpact.org.

The Bishop describes how the communication team is pushing out a lot of information to members, congregations, institutions, and partners of the diocese. If you have information to share or you are not receiving the information you need, please contact Stephanie Martin Taylor.

Funds from Expanding Horizons will be available this year and Davey Gerhard, Tom Ferguson, and others are working to see how these funds might be nimbly used to alleviate emergencies, especially with institutions with whom we have memorandums of understandings with regard to the funds, such as Episcopal Impact Fund, St Dorothy's Rest, and Bishop's Ranch. No decisions have been made as yet.

5:09 PM Financial Reports (Tom Ferguson/Brad Barber)

Brad discusses the financial impact of COVID-19 for congregations and the diocese as it is unfolding. Every congregation and institution should have made a study of how to weather declines in revenues; those that have not yet should do so now.

Much is unknown but it is relatively clear that the SBA loan could be enormously beneficial as it would cover 2.5 months of payroll in a forgivable loan, equaling about 20% of the yearly revenue. This would have a far greater impact than anything the diocese could do single-handedly. All congregations and institutions should apply.

Congregational assessment processes are being discussed, such as possible changes to the assessment formula, the timing of assessment payments, and the process of assessment relief. No formal proposals have yet been made. In absence of reliable information about how the diocese and individual congregations will be impacted, and the extent to which they may be successful in receiving relief from SBA, it is prudent to not rush this decision. A complicating factor is the differing situations of our congregations and institutions and the need for relief measures to be equitable across the diocese. The Executive Council has the authority to make many of the changes, but may not change the assessment formula itself, as that is beholden to convention. The Finance Committee can consider these proposals and report back to the Council at the April 21st meeting.

Congregations should apply for government assistance through the available programs before asking for assessment relief. Canon Bailey highlights how the working group is working with mission congregations and acting as a resource for congregations that require help to apply for these programs.

It is hard to get a sense of the additional resources that will be needed, as some congregations may have lost the majority of their revenue (space rentals having stopped) while others may have prepaid pledges they can draw on or are still receiving pledges. The SBA loan may very well carry congregations through the pandemic period as personnel costs are the majority of church budgets. It is important to note that laying off staff or reducing salaries makes one ineligible for the SBA loan forgiveness.

It will be difficult for the diocese to build up a reserve in the hope of addressing the situation further down the road, as the diocese operates on a very tight budget. We would need to take money away from already-stressed organizations. The focus is instead of raising additional funds.

5:50 PM Matters before Council

- Kay Bishop

When Kay Bishop left a gift to Bishop Ranch she technically made the diocese a trustee of the funds and the Executive Council approved a proposal by the Ranch to use the gift for essential staff housing. The Ranch has come back to the Council, as COVID-19 drastically changed their financial situation. They are very dependent on earned revenues (rental fees) that have now all come to a halt. A letter with a new proposal was circulated prior to the meeting, requesting that the purpose of the gift be modified and the Ranch be allowed to use it to alleviate the greatest need in response to the pandemic.

Brother Richard Edward Helmer moved that the following resolution be adopted. All voted in favor.

Resolved, that resolution adopted at the meeting of February 18, 2020, approving the use by the Bishop's Ranch of the legacy gift by Kay Bishop on specified terms, be modified to permit the Bishop's Ranch to use those funds for the areas of greatest need to respond to the COVID-19 crisis, as determined in the discretion of the Acting Executive Director of Bishop's Ranch in consultation with its Board of Directors.

5:55 PM Chancellor's Time

Executive session entered at 5:55 PM and exited at 5:59 PM.

The Council begins to discuss an item related to St. Dorothy's Rest and enters executive session at 6:01 PM, exiting at 6:20 PM.

Two motions are made stemming from the discussion in executive session:

Tom Matthews moves that the council approves Tom Ferguson's communication with St Dorothy's Rest, with the inclusion of the information about the federal loan. Approved unanimously.

Tom F. will convey this to SDR.

Robyn Amos moves that we accept the proposition for Ohlhoff House encouraging them to pay interest.

Clarification: this is through the end of the year.

All vote in favor.

6:23 PM Standing Committee Time (A. Larsen)

The Standing Committee does not have anything to report.

6:24 PM Deanery Reports

Many meetings have been postponed, others are taking place over Zoom.

Other business:

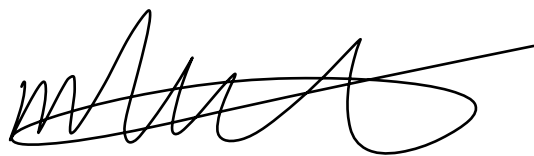
Brother Richard Edward Helmer, Bishop Marc, Canon Abbott and Ginger Strickland (with the help of Dave Franquist) have met to start planning the convention, keeping in mind the possibility of a virtual convention.

Bishop Marc wishes the council a happy Easter, welcoming everyone to Grace Cathedral's Easter services.

Canon Abbott tells the council that Bishop Marc's dissertation defense was held at the end of March. Members of the council congratulate the Rt. Rev. Dr. Marc Andrus.

6:27 PM Closing Prayer (Thomas LaFrance)

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Mees Tielens', written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Mees Tielens
Secretary of Executive Council