

THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESES OF EASTERN & WESTERN MICHIGAN

Building Bridges

Constitution and Canons DRAFT Recommendations Feedback Sessions - January 2024

In their movement toward “reunification” (which is like juncture but is the language used when the dioceses coming together had previously been one), the committee leading the Episcopal Dialogue in Wisconsin said in a statement, “If our conventions vote this Spring to reunify, our new diocese will allow us to free up money and human capacity so that we have the space to experiment with new ways of doing ministry, learn from our successes and failures, and try again. The proposal to reunify] gives us a place to begin experimenting and innovating—not a final goal or ideal vision of our new diocese.”

It is in this spirit that we propose the draft Constitution and Canons for a new diocese. They are a framework from which we can begin as a new diocese, not a final goal or ideal vision. We realized early on that “ideal” was beyond our reach but look forward to the ways in which we can grow from this starting place.. We expect that these canons will be adapted as we learn more fully what is needed to ensure that Episcopal identity, room for innovation, and accountabilities to one another and the larger church are woven deeply into our common life and ministries.

In the process of drafting these canons, we studied Eastern’s and Western’s current canons and talked to leaders within both dioceses regarding how current structures were working well and where they needed improvement. We listened to what we might learn from one another too as we considered how to structure our leadership bodies and we reached beyond ourselves and studied the canons of other dioceses to glean best practices. We looked at the canons of dioceses in processes like ours and those of other healthy, vibrant dioceses whose size and make-up resemble the diocese we would become if juncture is approved.

The draft canons proposed for the new diocese will be a part of the *Agreement of Union* presented at the Joint Convention in March. The canons themselves will not be voted on for adoption until the first diocesan convention in October 2024, should juncture be approved. The goal now is to settle on the contents of the draft constitution and canons to be included in the Agreement of Union. And we need your feedback in order to take these next steps. The online and in-person sessions scheduled through January and early February are for that purpose.

What follows is an outline of the draft Constitution and Canons. It is followed by a summary of the proposed canons including comparison to the current canons of Eastern and Western Michigan and reasons behind the proposals being made.

Outline of Constitution

The Constitution will contain what is required by The Episcopal Church. That which is optional, will be placed in the canons since those can be more easily amended. This will be especially important as the new diocese grows into its way of functioning and needs to be able to integrate learnings.

ARTICLE I: ACCESSION TO PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH

ARTICLE II: TERRITORY OF THE DIOCESE

ARTICLE III: ECCLESIASTICAL AUTHORITY

ARTICLE IV: CONVENTIONS

ARTICLE V: ELECTION OF A BISHOP

ARTICLE VI: AUTHENTICATION AND PRESERVATION OF CONSTITUTION AND CANONS.

ARTICLE VI: AMENDMENT OF CONSTITUTION

Outline of the Canons

Title I Communities of Faith

- Congregation
- Emergent Community
- Companion Ministry
- Programmatic Organization
- Seasonal Chapel
- Congregational Vitality & Congregations Under Review

Title II Communities of Faith in Relationship

- Local Covenants
 - Cluster
 - Cooperative
- Regional Bodies
 - At least four Regions made up of 20-23 communities of faith

Title III The Diocese of _____

- Diocesan Convention
 - Officers
 - Delegates
 - Committees of Convention
- Election of a Bishop
- Standing Committee
- Diocesan Council

- Finances
 - Budget Process
 - Apportionment
 - Endowment Committee
- Commission on Ministry
- Ecclesiastical Discipline, Disciplinary Board

IV The Diocese as Member of the Episcopal Church

- Deputies to General Convention
- Provincial Synod
 - Participation & Representation
- Apportionment to TEC

Canonical Recommendations

Title I Communities of Faith

Current: Both Eastern and Western have canons pertaining to congregations. Western Michigan also has a canon for “Cooperating Ministries” and one for addressing situations of distressed congregations. Eastern also has a canon pertaining to the Board of Camp Chick.

Recommended: We recommend that a new diocese allows for and expects and encourages the presence of not only congregations, but several types of faith communities: congregations, emergent communities, companion ministries, and programmatic organizations. Similar to an individual seeking ordination, the canon would frame becoming a diocesan recognized community of faith as a calling, to be discerned in the greater community with various diocesan bodies involved. This canon would provide those designations and include that a discernment process is involved in establishing such a designation.

When a discernment process results in a community of faith being affirmed, an Agreement would be developed (from an existing, adaptable template) whose purpose would be to clarify expectations and define the relationship between a given faith community and the diocese. The Agreement would need to be approved by the community of faith, the bishop, Diocesan Council, and Standing Committee.

Reasoning: We want to provide structure and accountability for congregations and also encourage “new plants,” innovative ministries, and ministry partnerships as we recognize that not all communities of faith will (or should) become traditional congregations. A new diocese will need a process for discernment and a means by which to clarify the relationships and expectations that exist between emergent communities, companion ministries, and programmatic organizations and the diocese.

If Juncture is Approved: Leadership will develop a process for discernment and a template for Agreements within each category (emergent community, companion ministry, programmatic organizational) and require the details of each situation (any financial support from the diocesan operating budget, the pattern of reporting, communications support, staff accountability etc.)

1. Canon on Congregations

This canon would remain relatively traditional, reflective of current canons, and include detail on the following categories:

- Governance
- Vestries, and Wardens of Parishes
- Legal Powers of a Parish Vestry
- Filling Vacant Cures
- Congregational Vitality and Congregations in Review
- Definitions, Registers, and Reports
- Authority of Rectors & Priests in Charge
- Lutheran and Episcopal Congregations

2. Canons on Emergent Faith Community

Examples: Ausable Center for Inclusion, Naucratius, (new plants would fall under this canon)

An *emergent faith community* is “a plant,” a new community that begins as a ministry of the diocese or of a congregation of the diocese and is in a period of initial formation and “incubation.” An emergent faith community might grow into a congregation, launch as an independent organization, establish its own 501(c)(3) and become a *cooperative ministry*, or have been a great experiment that didn’t catch on.

Following a period of discernment, an *Emergent Faith Community Agreement* including detail regarding any financial support from the diocesan operating budget, pattern of reporting, staff accountability, timeframe of the Agreement and renewal process is developed by representatives of and approved by the Bishop, Diocesan Council, and Standing Committee to establish and define the emergent faith community relationship. An emergent faith community would have one seat with voice and vote at diocesan convention.

To Do if Juncture is Approved: Establish discernment process, template for Agreement, qualifications, leadership requirements, by-laws, etc.

3. Companion Ministry

Current Examples: Plainsong Farm, St Gregory’s Abbey

A *companion ministry* is an organization that is a separate 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that provides a ministry within the diocese and is in alignment with the overall vision and mission purposes of the diocese. By its designation as a companion ministry of the diocese, these organizations receive tangible and intangible benefits from the diocese, while the diocese benefits from mission and ministry possibilities offered by these organizations.

Following a period of discernment, a *Companion Ministry Agreement* including detail regarding any financial support from the diocesan operating budget, pattern of reporting, leadership relationship to diocese, staff accountability, timeframe of the Agreement and renewal process, is developed by representatives of and approved by the the Bishop, Diocesan Council, and Standing Committee to establish and define the companion

ministry relationship. A companion ministry would have one seat with voice and vote at diocesan convention.

4. Programmatic Organization of the Diocese

Current Examples: Camp Chick, The Academy for Vocational Leadership

Programmatic Organizations are established ministries of the diocese that are accountable to and run by diocesan leadership or a specific appointee, but are significant enough to function as their own “subset” of the diocesan budget and staffing structure.

As a program of the diocese evolves into a Programmatic Organization, a *Programmatic Organization Agreement* is developed and approved by the Bishop, Diocesan Council, and the programmatic director (or lead staff person) of the programmatic organization, detailing its financial, administrative, accountability, and management detail.

5. Canon on Seasonal Chapels

Current: Neither diocese has a canon faith communities that are not considered parishes but meet seasonally for weekly worship and shared ministries. There are several seasonal chapels in Western and two seasonal chapels in Eastern.

Recommended: That Seasonal Chapel be a designation for a faith community that does not gather year round, is under the authority of the bishop, and has a bishop’s committee instead of a vestry. Seasonal Chapels would have one seat with voice and vote at convention. The apportionment canon would apply to Seasonal Chapels.

Title II Communities of Faith in Relationship

1. Local Covenants

Current: Neither diocese has a developed canon for communities of faith in local covenants or any canonical model for separate congregations structurally collaborating in ministry. There are currently communities of faith in both dioceses engaged in such collaborations.

(The model being recommended here is adapted from the Diocese of North Carolina.)

Recommend

We recommend a model that includes communities of faith in covenant relationships that are called *clusters* or *cooperatives*. Clusters remain independent in terms of governance and could share clergy or not. Cooperatives share governance and clergy. Both communities retain individual representation at the convention of the diocese.

a. Cluster

A *cluster* consists of two or more communities of faith organized under the constitution and canons of this diocese, which have entered into a covenant to work together in ministry for a period of at least three years. Each participating community retains its own identity, vestry or other governing body, budget, property, and representation in the convention of the diocese. The participating

communities may share clergy or not. The process of becoming a cluster requires approval by two thirds of the vestry of each participating community, bishop, and Standing Committee. Support in discerning this relationship and a template for the covenant would be provided by the diocese.

b. Cooperative

A *cooperative* is two or more congregations who choose to enter into a formal covenant to work together and share clergy and governance for a period of at least three years. Each participating community of faith retains its own identity and representation in the convention of the diocese. Approval by the annual meeting of each participating community, bishop, and Standing Committee are required. Support in discerning this relationship and the template for the covenant would be provided by the diocese.

Reasoning: We have listened to congregations that are faithfully seeking and discovering collaborative ways forward and want to provide support for these movements. These canons provide structure and integrate diocesan awareness and support.

Should Juncture be Approved: The canons will outline governance and leadership of clusters and cooperatives. Diocesan leadership will create an adaptable template for a covenant between/among communities of faith and a basic discernment process and steps into covenant relationship.

2. Regions

Current: Canonically, Western Michigan has three regions (North, Central, South) with governance functions assigned. Eastern Michigan has regional convocations in their canons but eliminated the governing functions of those regional groupings in 2013. Bishop Singh initiated three bi-diocesan Season of Practice Collaboratives in Spring 2023 while maintaining Western Michigan's existing regions within them for election purposes.

Recommend: We recommend aligning language to "regions" rather than "collaboratives." We recommend (at least) four Regions, each with 15-25 communities of faith within them and no assigned governance function. With the governance function removed from Regions, the Nominating Committee of Convention will need to be attentive (as charged) with recruiting for geographic diversity on various leadership bodies. We recommend that after an initial phase of being a new diocese (perhaps two years), the Standing Committee consider recommending that elections for Diocesan Council shift from Convention to the Regions.

Reasons: We believe (and have received a significant amount of input indicating) that the current three collaboratives are too large to serve the purposes of effectively connecting local communities of faith with each other while also ensuring active connections in all parts of the diocese with the bishop and bishop's staff. *(We borrowed here from the Wisconsin Trialogue process and other dioceses.)*

Transition Plan: We recommend that if juncture is approved, a team with representatives from Standing Committee, Diocesan Council, Building Bridges, and diocesan staff design

the regional configuration which would be integrated following the first convention of the new diocese.

We also acknowledge that this canon intersects with questions around staffing and want to note that the canons as proposed, release the regional structure from connection to the current diocesan staffing model. This creates space for reimagining how best to provide connection to the diocese, pastoral support (including when a congregation is in transition), and resources for the congregations and other communities of faith in each region. There are good models from other dioceses for us to explore, adapt and integrate.

Title III The Diocese

1. Diocesan Convention

a. Appointed and Elected Officers

b. Delegates

Current: Eastern's canons say "as many as four lay delegates" per congregation and all canonically resident clergy are eligible with voice and vote. Western's canons have a graduated number of lay delegates based on Average Sunday Attendance (ASA) and a similar requirement as Eastern's for clergy.

Recommend: We recommend a compromise on this canon. Each congregation has representation with up to two lay delegates per congregations with up to 75 ASA and up to three lay delegates per congregations with greater than 75 ASA. This approach ensures that a large majority of delegates at Convention represent smaller congregations but that the ratio of delegates to members in any congregation remains a factor. All canonically resident Episcopal clergy who live in the state of Michigan and clergy in full communion with The Episcopal Church with cures in the diocese are eligible to be delegates. Emergent and Companion Communities of Faith and Seasonal Chapels would each have one seat with voice and vote.

There will be 6 Youth Delegates appointed by the bishop. Nominations can come from communities of faith, clergy or lay members of the diocese, diocesan ministries, diocesan staff, or by self-nomination.

No individual can represent more than one community of faith at convention.

c. Committees of Convention: Resolutions Committee, Nominating Committee, Constitution and Canons Committee, Convention Planning Committee, Credentials Committee to be appointed by the bishop with approval by Diocesan Council.

Add: the Timeframe/Models of convention, co- chairs in the absence of a sitting bishop and consider a community of faith could lose their vote: failure to file parochial report, failure to meet apportionment, failure to complete an audit/financial review?

2. Bishop Diocesan

The *Agreement of Union* must include “the manner of determining the Bishop Diocesan and other Bishops (if any).”

Recommend for Agreement of Union: It will be critical for the new diocese to establish a process for conversation, learning, and discernment around the ministry of the episcopate including our recent and historic experience with this office and the mission and vision of the new diocese. We recommend these processes are structured to flow into the search and election of a new bishop diocesan and that the election happen in 2025 or 2026. The process and timeline for election will be established and overseen by the Standing Committee.

Until a bishop diocesan is elected, we recommend that the new diocese retain an assisting bishop to provide sacramental and pastoral episcopal ministry with support from neighboring bishops while the Standing Committee of the new diocese retains ecclesiastical authority.

Recommend for Diocesan Canons: Eastern’s and Western’s canons are very similar with regard to how the actual election of a bishop takes place and will be included in the canons of the new diocese. At the time when the new diocese is ready for search and election, the Standing Committee (or a committee appointed by them) will inquire with the Office of Pastoral Development and with dioceses who have recently held what they would consider a “successful and good experience of calling a new bishop” in order to find best practices and implement a process that will best fit this diocese.

3. Standing Committee

Roles and responsibilities (defined by TEC Canons): To act as the bishop’s council of advice; to act as the ecclesiastical authority in the absence of an active bishop diocesan; to consent to bishop election processes as provided for by canon; to make determinations on those in the ordination process as provided for by canon and diocesan ordination process.

Current SC: Eastern Michigan has six members (three lay, three clergy), Western Michigan has eight members (four lay, four clergy). All members of Standing Committee also serve on Diocesan Council in Eastern Michigan. There is no overlap between those leadership bodies in Western Michigan.

Recommend: The Standing Committee have ten members. Eight members are elected (four lay, four clergy) by Diocesan Convention. The Vice Chair of Diocesan Council and one other member of Council, appointed by Council, are also members of the Standing Committee. Standing Committee terms are three-year terms with two consecutive terms allowed. One year after the second term is required before an individual can run again. Standing Committee must meet within one month of Diocesan Convention to elect a President and Vice President.

Reason: We recommend the higher number of members because if juncture is approved, we will be a bigger diocese and this canon allows for more representation. We also included the strength of Eastern’s overlap of Standing Committee and Diocesan Council in this canon. The lack of communication and connection between those bodies is a weakness of Western’s. With two members of the Standing Committee on Diocesan Council and two members of Diocesan Council on the Standing Committee, we hope for good communication and collaboration between bodies while keeping the roles of these bodies clear and distinct.

Transition Proposal: Three members from Eastern Michigan’s Standing Committee and three members from Western Michigan’s Standing Committee remain for the first year, with two new members to be elected at the first convention of the new diocese. Current members of Standing Committee from each diocese decide who will continue. If someone is a current member, but not continuing, they would be eligible to run for election in 2024. Should juncture occur, a pattern of election would be established in 2025.

4. Diocesan Council

Recommended Roles & Responsibilities for Diocesan Council:

- Oversees diocesan business between annual diocesan conventions,
- Has oversight of the discernment and Agreement making processes for potential communities of faith and faith communities considering covenant relationships,
- Works collaboratively with other leadership bodies, ministries, and the bishop to develop strategy and policy in support of the mission and vision of the diocese,
- Prepares the annual budget of the diocese
- Receives, controls, and expends through the Treasurer, all monies of the General Fund, for purposes designated by the Budget adopted by Convention,
- Appoints members to the Endowment Committee which serves as advisory to Council
- Is accountable to Diocesan Convention.

Current DC: Eastern’s Council has six Council-specific members elected at convention (three lay, three clergy) plus six members of Standing Committee (total 12). Western has 12 Diocesan Council members with four elected from each region with “mixed representation of orders” and no overlap with Standing Committee membership. In Western, the bishop can appoint three additional members to one year terms each.

Recommended: The Diocesan Council have 14 members. Twelve to be elected by convention (six lay, six clergy). The Standing Committee President and a second member of Standing Committee appointed by Standing Committee to this role, are also members of Diocesan Council. Diocesan Council terms would be three-year terms with two consecutive allowed. One year is required after a second term before an individual can run again. DC must meet within one month of the diocesan convention to elect a Vice Chair. The bishop serves as Chair of Council. We recommend there be no bishop appointed positions on Diocesan Council.

Reasons: We want to include the strength of Eastern Michigan’s overlap of Standing Committee and Diocesan Council. The lack of communication between bodies is a weakness of Western’s. With two members of SC on DC and two members of DC on SC we hope for good communication and better collaboration between bodies while keeping the roles of those bodies clear and distinct.

Transition Proposal: Four from Eastern Michigan and four from Western Michigan’s current Diocesan Councils continue, with four new members to be elected at the first convention of the new diocese. The current Councils of the dioceses would decide who is continuing. If a current member is not continuing, they are eligible to run for election in 2024. The Nominating Committee is tasked with paying particular attention to representation from the Regions of the new diocese. In the second or third year of being a diocese, we recommend Convention consider election to Council include some or all elections taking place within the Regions.

This Canon will include a Conflict of Interest Statement for Standing Committee, Diocesan Council and other elected bodies.

5. Budget and Apportionment

a. Parish Apportionments

Current: Western has a graduated scale (10-16% of operating income minus previous year's apportionment). Eastern has a flat 10% of general operating income for every congregation. Western's operating budget depends more heavily on apportionment. Less than fifty percent (50%) of Eastern's budget is funded by apportionment income.

Recommend: We recommend that an apportionment percentage *not* be set in canon but that Diocesan Council be given the responsibility annually to determine the percentage (which could be either flat or graduated.) Diocesan convention then has to approve any percentage increase from a previous year and must also approve the operating budget. This canon will include a limitation within it so that no congregation could experience an increase of more than three percent (3%) in their percentage apportionment from a previous year. This canon will include a process for apportionment review. An apportionment review canon will be included.

Recommended for Transition: For the first year as a new diocese (2025), no congregation will have an increased apportionment over their 2024 amount. Diocesan Council will continue to develop a Transition Budget for 2025 that will be accountable to the proposed maximum two percent (2%) increase for any congregation.

See the Financial Summary Report for more detail.

b. Diocesan Budget

Current: Western Michigan's budget is adopted by Diocesan Council and approved by Diocesan Convention. Eastern's budget is approved by Diocesan Council after an opportunity for delegate feedback during pre-convention meetings, and is presented as final to Diocesan Convention.

Recommend: The budget of the diocese be funded, in part, by an annual apportionment of each congregation. The apportionment shall be a percentage of each congregation's net operating income to be determined by Diocesan Council. A balanced budget with the proposed apportionment percentage shall be adopted by Diocesan Council and submitted to diocesan convention for approval no less than 30 days before convention. Any proposed amendments to the budget during diocesan convention must be in balance. This means any increase or decrease in a line must be offset by an equal increase or decrease.

Transition Proposal: The Stewardship subteam is working on a transitional 2025 draft budget which will be updated prior to the first convention of the new diocese (if juncture is approved) and require acceptance by that convention (October 2024.) The first time that the new canonical process would be fully implemented would be in 2025 in preparation of the 2026 diocesan budget.

6. Endowment Oversight/Trustees

Current: Eastern Michigan has trustees with responsibilities for managing the investments, Western Michigan does not.

Recommend: Diocesan Council appoint an *Endowment Committee* serving as advisory to Diocesan Council and composed of five (5) members, plus a liaison from Diocesan Council, and the Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer of the Diocese, serving as ex officio members. The term of members is four years, two consecutive terms possible with at least one year following the second term for eligibility to serve again. The Endowment Committee would be charged with oversight of endowment distributions, meeting at least quarterly, reporting to DC at least quarterly, and making recommendations to Diocesan Council regarding the annual draw based on established guidelines and policy. (Episcopal Church Foundation has a template for policies and guidelines to adapt to fit a new diocese. That work can begin if juncture is approved.)

Reasons: Eastern Michigan currently has trouble filling the trustee positions. Good management of funds requires qualified individuals to fill those roles. Management of the funds can be done by ECF or whomever serves as the holder of the accounts. We do, however, need a committee charged with oversight and making recommendations regarding the fund. Diocesan Council maintains authority and responsibility for decision making between diocesan conventions..

7. Commission on Ministry

Roles and Responsibilities: (Canon III.2-8 of the Episcopal Church)

Current: Western Michigan has nine appointed members, Eastern Michigan has 10 appointed members both with a mix of clergy and lay members. Bishop Singh also appointed a group of four Western Michigan clergy to consider the background/experience/life situation/desire of each individual at the beginning of the ordination process and make recommendations to the bishop and COM regarding their program of formation: residential seminary, hybrid, Academy for Vocational Leadership, or some combination.

Recommend: At least ten members, with at least four laity, four priests, and two deacons. Appointment is by the bishop with confirmation by Diocesan Convention. Terms of COM members are three years, with two terms maximum and one year required after the second term before one can be re-appointed. The COM has the authority to appoint sub-teams that include non-COM members which serve as advisory to or supportive of the work of the COM.

Transition Plan: Have joint meetings of the COMs facilitated by a non-member of the COM to develop a transition plan including a more detailed structure and teams of the COM. Consult with other dioceses for models of ordination processes which include a range of formation paths. Set a goal of implementing the ordination processes of the new diocese sometime in 2025(?) while being sure to "grandfather in" those who are currently in process so as not to significantly disrupt their formation experience.

To do: Integrate licensed ministries into the COM responsibilities (?)

8. Ecclesiastical Discipline

a. Reference to Title IV

b. Disciplinary Board

Current: The Dioceses of Eastern, Western, and Michigan all share a Disciplinary Board.

Recommend: As a new diocese we would provide half of the members of the board and those would remain positions elected by Diocesan Convention..

If Juncture is Approved: Develop a transition plan with input from the Diocese of Michigan to be implemented in 2025.

IV The Diocese of _____ as Member of the Episcopal Church

1. Deputies to General Convention

Current: Eastern and Western Michigan both elect deputies and alternates at Diocesan Convention. Current practice in both dioceses is that deputies and alternates are ordered by number of votes received.

Recommended: Same as current practice with the added requirement that deputies and alternate deputies are elected at least one year before the General Convention is to convene. A majority vote is needed for election.

2. Deputies to Provincial Synod

Province V has proposed a new canon they are asking that all dioceses align with. When we have that canon and we will include aligning detail in the proposal.

3. Assessment to TEC

4. Assessment to Provincial Synod?

The Juncture Decision Making Process

March Special Convention, Delegates will Vote on the Agreement of Union (Canon 1.10.1) to be submitted by the Standing Committees and Ecclesiastical Authorities of both dioceses. (In our situation, the Standing Committees are also the Ecclesiastical Authority) and presented by the Joint Standing Committee and per their charge, the Building Bridges Committee.

The Agreement of Union (The Agreement) is canonically required by The Constitution and Canons of The Episcopal Church and contains within it: "the manner of determining the Bishop Diocesan...,the provisions of the Constitution and Canons of the new Diocese, and such other matters as may be necessary or proper." **The action at the Joint Convention in March will be for both Dioceses to vote (separately and possibly by orders) on approving The Agreement.**

If The Agreement is approved by both Conventions, it goes to the ecclesiastical authority of both Dioceses for approval (the Joint Standing Committee) followed by their submission to The General Convention for ratification.

(Article V of the Constitution)

We BECOME a new Diocese at our first Diocesan Convention (Canon 1.10.1)

Note: The Convention will *not* Vote on: The Full Proposal/All Recommendations related to Juncture

The proposal is the BBSC's best effort to compile what it has learned, heard and discerned in collaboration with other leadership bodies so that the new diocese has a place to start, next steps to take, and a vision to pursue. The new diocese will be governed by the governing bodies established in its Constitution and Canons, and any aspect of the proposal or the way the new diocese is structured will be able to be adjusted by the new Diocesan Convention and executive bodies.

Note: If the Agreement is not approved we are separate dioceses.

While we could still collaborate in many ministry areas, operating as deeply integrated as we are in this moment isn't sustainable long term without structural alignment on the horizon. Leadership Bodies of both dioceses would have to determine how best to address next steps around members of our shared staff and our bi-diocesan task groups and ministries.