



The Sheaf

April 2020

Latest Report on the Work of the Diocesan Discernment Task Force

By John Baird

The Diocesan Discernment Task Force (DDTF) is moving forward with our work. We have almost concluded our conversations with every congregation, meeting with the clergy, receiving an excellent report about what other dioceses are doing, receiving Bp. Whitmore's comments about his congregational meetings and looking at the information gathered early on with the Standing Committee, Diocesan Council and Diocesan Convention. We are now ready to enter the 2nd stage of our work with you, the diocese.

Our next steps are to:

1. Get clear information regarding the financial situation of the diocese.
2. Finalize a document we are calling *Major Issues and*

Minor Issues which is summarizing all the data we collected, as noted above. This will give us all a general sense of what we are facing and what hopes we have for the future.

3. Create a survey format that will invite all members of the diocese to "go deeper" with what we are facing and hope for the future. This will include targeted conversations with the COM, NDCIM and the Standing Committee.

4. Administer the survey from Sunday, April 19th (Doubting Thomas Sunday) for 3 Sundays

through May 10th. The survey format is still being decided, but might include SurveyMonkey, paper surveys available to each congregation, phone surveys, FaceBook surveys, Zoom Meeting formats, etc. We are trying to be creative!

Finally, we want you to know the rough outline and timetable for our work as we move forward. Here is the plan:

- April 1 Work on *Major/Minor Findings* document and Survey

In Person Gatherings Cancelled

* The Diocesan Leadership is extending the cancelation of public worship in our congregations through April 30.

* Clergy/congregations are encouraged to make use of virtual worship services via Facebook or other electronic means.

* Make reasonable plans that are safe and theologically responsible.

We don't know of a way to distribute communion to groups of people and continue to advise against the practice.

* The parameters of our direction follow the advice of the CDC as well as State and Tribal Authorities.

* *We aren't looking for creative ways of getting around the guidelines that have been established for our community's safety. We are interested to learn of creative solutions to be the church in worship and ministry in this time of necessary social distancing.*

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Diocesan Council Meets on Standing Rock

The Accounting Firm of Haga Kommer has been contracted by the Diocese of North Dakota to do its financial accounting. This includes making payroll, keeping track of all of the uses of the Reserve Accounts, preparing payments from invoices and reimbursement requests. Together with the Treasurer's Office they help prepare for audits and reports to the Council and for Grants Received by the Diocese.

Dianne, Haga Kommer's Staff Person works out of the Diocesan Office in Fargo on a weekly basis. Finance is contacted through their email address:

Finance@ndepiscopal.org

Diocesan Convention Dates & Venue Set

The Annual Meeting of the Diocese of North Dakota in 2020 will take place at the Radisson in Bismarck on October 23-24. A back up date is made for the following weekend at Gethsemane Cathedral in Fargo.

The Annual Meeting of the Diocese of North Dakota in 2021 will be held at the Radisson in Bismarck on October 8-9. The following weekend (15-16) is the backup at Gethsemane Cathedral in Fargo.

Cancellations & Postponements Due to Covid-19

April 4: Ordination to the Diaconate of John Anderson at St. Stephen's in Fargo

April 5 - 11: Holy Week Services in various places of the Diocese with Bishop Keith Whitmore

May 1 - 2: The Agile Church Conference with Dr. Dwight Zscheile - it was to be hosted at Gethsemane Cathedral in Fargo

Possible Changes or Cancellations

May 13 - 21: Dayton University Work Trip to Standing Rock

June 6 - 12: Disciples of Christ Justice Journey on Standing Rock

June 9 - 15: St. Matthew's Episcopal Church, Austin, Texas Work Trip to Standing Rock

June 13: Consecration of St. Sylvan's in Dunseith.

June 16 - 18: St. Gabriel's Camp on Standing Rock (to be determined by the end of May)

June 25 - 28: Niobrara Convocation on Standing Rock hosted by NDCIM (to be determined by the middle of May)

Diocesan Council Approves Sale of Rectory in Williston

The Standing Committee requested through a motion made by John Floberg (second by Donna Pettit) to sell the Rectory in Williston. Fr. Michael Paul resigned his position in the Diocese in the summer of 2019 and the way forward for the congregations in Williston and Cartwright is likely to not need the Rectory, whatever their plan will be for the future. Rationale for selling the property is that the housing market in Williston is different now that when the house was purchased. A house or apartment would be available for purchase or rent in the community now. When the house was purchased it was difficult to locate housing for a priest moving into the community.

With the sharp downturn in the oil industry, the Standing Committee has the ability to lease the house if selling at this time would be deemed to costly for the investment that has been made.

The Rev. Mary Johnson has been serving as supply for several months.

Congregational Discernments

Not only is this a time for Diocesan Discernment for Reorganization and Structure. This is the work of each of our congregations and ministries as well. The whole of the Episcopal Church in North Dakota is invited to consider its Life, Mission and Ministry.

Of the twenty congregations that make up the Diocese of North Dakota, there are some that have become difficult to maintain. Not so much the building, but the membership is difficult to continue in its present configuration.

In the past the conversation of closing any congregation in North Dakota has been left to the remaining members of those places and not initiated by a Bishop or Diocesan Council. There are finite resources for the way that people “expect” the church to be organized. Some may discern to enter into what has been termed Total or Mutual Ministry organized congregations where everything necessary to be the church in that place is already there to be the church. Others, when doing a sober evaluation may consider another way that being a congregation of the diocese.

The term that gets used in the Church for deciding these matters is “viability.” Viability isn’t simply an equation that is arrived at as a one size fits all matrix. Jesus himself spoke of 2 or 3 gathering together in his name constituted his presence.

No action was taken in the Diocesan Council concerning any congregation of the Diocese. It was noted that the Diocese should not simply expect that there will be no change to congregational status in this time of Transition and Discernment.



Bishop Fairfield’s Memorial Service

The Diocesan Council has approved funding for a delegation of three members of the diocese to attend a Memorial Service in Massachusetts for Bishop Andrew H. Fairfield. It is presently being planned to be held at the time of his birthday in May.

The Council also approved to make a \$500 donation to charity that Bishop Andy volunteered at in Massachusetts.

A tree will be purchased and planted each at Gethsemane Cathedral and St. Stephen’s in Bishop Andy and Sally’s honor. Sally was a member of St. Stephen’s during Bishop Fairfield tenure in North Dakota.

Viability is about:

- + realistic evaluation of purpose/mission
 - + time of prayerful discernment
 - + evaluation of the adequacy of resources to fulfill the purpose
- = Viability

(Gatherings Cancelled -
continued from Page 1)

The Cathedral, St. Paul's in Grand Forks, St. Stephen's in Fargo, St. George's in Bismarck and Standing Rock through St. Luke's Facebook page have been posting livestream/recorded video worship services. There are scores of others outside of the diocese doing this as well. Hundreds of people are viewing each of these offerings. Our prayers were offered for you and all of the diocese. We are doing our best and we remain open to the Spirit's creativity to continue to constitute the church in this place and in this time.

Please be sure to have your congregation send in their Our Fair Share reports. The Finance Committee is closely watching the financial well-being of our congregations in this crisis. They can only respond based on reports that are shared. God's blessing and protective hand be with us all.
Faithfully,



President of the Standing
Committee

Major SBA Press Release on the Payroll Protection Loan Program for Churches

This afternoon, the [Small Business Administration \(SBA\)](#) made its [first major press release](#) (click link to view) on the [Payroll Protection Loan Program](#) (click link to view). This press release provides the first actual guidance issued by SBA and clears up many of the questions you may have been asking as you are discerning if a forgivable Payroll Protection Loan is right for your church or non-profit.

The new loan program will be available retroactive from February 15, 2020, so employers can rehire their recently laid-off employees through June 30, 2020.

Loan Terms & Conditions

- Eligible businesses: All small businesses, including non-profits, Veterans organizations, Tribal concerns, sole proprietorships, self-employed individuals, and independent contractors, with 500 or fewer employees, or no greater than the number of employees set by the SBA as the size standard for certain industries.
- Maximum loan amount up to \$10 million.
- Loan forgiveness if proceeds used for payroll costs and other designated business operating expenses in the 8 weeks following the date of loan origination (due to likely high subscription, it is anticipated that not more than 25% of the forgiven amount may be for non-payroll costs).
- All loans under this program will have the following identical features:
 - Interest rate of 0.5%
 - Maturity of 2 years
 - First payment deferred for six months
 - 100% guarantee by SBA
 - No collateral
 - No personal guarantees
 - No borrower or lender fees payable to SBA

Creating Meaningful Liturgy and Ritual in Your Home

By the Rev Dr John Floberg

With the creation of the 1979 Book of Common Prayer the Episcopal Church as a whole became a Eucharistically Centered Church in its worship. That created some considerable challenges to having priests serving in small and remote congregations - like many that are in North Dakota. Beginning with Bishop Hopkins the Diocese began to prepare local people to remain in their congregations and serve as priests. These clergy have served in Bismarck, Standing Rock, Oakes, the Cathedral, Cartwright, Williston, Dickinson, along with Jamestown/Valley City.

We know that we have challenges to revitalize the ministry of this kind of deployment of the priesthood for the sustainability of our congregations. But we have another pressing concern now. How do we create houses of worship in the midst of a pandemic? The Eucharist is provided through liturgy and ritual. They are the means that whatever sized community is able to gather and to break bread.

During the Covid-19 outbreak we aren't able to gather from our houses and come to our churches. Neither are we able to send our clergy out to our homes and further risk transmission of the virus. And yet, we are in the most holy of seasons with Holy Week and Easter upon us.

The Church marks time through the use of Ritual, and the actions of the Ritual are embodied in Liturgy. The word "liturgy" is a combination of words that literally means "the work of the people." Often the creation of a congregation is in response to the call of the priest to gather.

But many of us have that call to gather every day in our homes when someone calls out, "Supper!" and we all gather at a table to eat. Food is often included in our rituals.

And so it is for our family's celebrations of Easter that we will gather at our tables where a meal prayer is offered. Many of us would have just come from Church where there was a much more elaborate liturgy and we wouldn't need to replicate that at home. But in many traditions within the Church they do a more elaborate ritual in gathering for the Easter meal.

We won't be celebrating the Eucharist, but that does not mean that we can't celebrate the Mystery and the Resurrection! It is within the vocation of being a Parent or a Grandparent to give blessing to the children in your homes and families. This is a time that we can regain that greater sense of what it means to be in the Priesthood of all believers.

Please find here some links on the internet to making your Maundy Thursday or Easter Dinner. When Scripture is called for in the liturgies, use the Easter Readings assigned. Adapt the liturgy's wording to fit your circumstances.

Priesthood of All Believers
Fundamental doctrine which affirms that all baptized Christians share the eternal priesthood of Jesus. Christ's high priesthood is unique and his atoning sacrifice was offered once for all. The royal priesthood of the people of God consists in the offering of ourselves repeatedly in daily obedience in the world (1 Pt 2:5; Rom 12:1). The redemptive work of Christ makes it possible for the people of God to offer their priestly sacrifice of obedient living (Rv 1:6, 5:10). The recovery of this doctrine at the Reformation led to the recovering of the ministry of the laity. The whole church is described by the Catechism as "a royal priesthood" (BCP, p. 854).

Some Resources on the Internet

<https://www.ministrymatters.com/all/entry/6908/liturgy-in-house-churches>

<https://www.ofsusaecumenicalinterfaith.org/agape-celebration>
<http://www.katrinasmadream.org/wp-content/uploads/Liturgy-for-the-Love-Feast.pdf>

<https://thebillabong.info/lectionary/ideas-for-lent-and-easter/agape-for-easter/>

<https://www.osvnews.com/2020/03/27/how-to-make-the-most-of-holy-week-at-home/>

Check out the following Facebook Pages for liturgies on Sundays and other days:
St. Luke's Episcopal Church
Gethsemane Cathedral Fargo
St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Grand Forks ND
St. George's Episcopal Memorial Church

DDTF Report (continued from page 1)

- April 12th Survey completed on the **Day of the Resurrection**
- **April 14th DDTF Zoom Meeting** Major/Minor Findings document and Survey
- April 19th Survey distributed on **Doubting Thomas Day**; in-person interviews start with targeted folk: COM, NDCIM, Standing Committee..
- **May 5th DDTF Zoom Meeting**
- May 10th Deadline for receiving Survey and completing in-person interviews.
- **May 26th DDTF Zoom Meeting**
- June DDTF in-person meeting if possible to write Beta version of Report
- July 25 DDTF/Standing Committee meeting - Final Draft of report
- August 21-22 Joint DDTF, Standing Committee and Diocesan Council meeting. Present DDTF Final Report. SC/DC start to draft resolutions for
- October 23-24 Diocesan Convention

Commission on Ministry Report—Mary Johnson

Members of the COM met Friday before our Council meeting. They are working deliberately through the list of tasks that the Standing Committee gave them.

- The survey distributed after the February Ministry Conference at Richardton asked about licensed lay ministries, listing each of them that are provided by the Canons, seeking to determine which ministries are active in each congregation, how ministers exercising those ministries are trained, and how many lay people are doing those ministries. It became apparent that none of those ministries had been formally licensed by the Bishop in several years, and clergy and lay leaders who responded did not know much about licensed lay ministries beyond (perhaps) Lay Eucharistic Ministers.
- COM is working to get a list of all people formally in the process to Holy Orders who are not yet ordained. It has proved more difficult than we thought to get a complete list.
- COM is hoping that (as published in the *Sheaf*) people of the Diocese will help us Beta test a program called “Dimensions of the Faith,” a series of audio lectures offered online at no charge by Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. While these lectures come from an Evangelical Protestant viewpoint, COM is exploring offering ZOOM meetings to supplement and offer an Anglican viewpoint.
- ~~On May 1-2 COM is sponsoring a Special Diocesan Gathering at Gethsemane Cathedral in Fargo with the Rev. Dr. Dwight Zscheile as keynote speaker. Prof. Zscheile will focus on helping congregations navigate with agility the challenging transitions that they must make to offer the Gospel in times of rapid cultural change. The registration fee will be \$25 ahead of time and \$30 at the door. There was discussion of making Bakken Ministry funding available to defray travel costs for attendees from the western part of the diocese, and of making NDCIM funds available for members of indigenous communities.~~

The Rectory on Standing Rock

The Rectory that serves Selfridge, Cannon Ball and Ft. Yates has been going through a major transformation. Through a Sustainability Grant provided from the Episcopal Church the house is getting a new roof as well as completely remodeling the interior of the main the floor.

The load bearing walls that divided the dining room from the kitchen and the living room have been removed to create an open floor plan. The three bedrooms and bathroom on the main floor have been redesigned to create a more equally sized bedrooms along with a master bath. Closet and storage space on the main floor have also been significantly improved.

Due to the Corona Virus the work on the house has slowed down considerably to avoid spreading the virus through contact of construction workers and painters.

[Pictures by: John Floberg]



The Sheaf Publication Dates & Deadlines

The Sheaf is working on developing a printing/ mailing schedule for hard copies. If you wish to receive a printed copy of the Sheaf please follow the directions in the right hand column of this page. Ten copies of this Sheaf will be mailed to each congregation.

Publication of The Sheaf is expected to be every 6 weeks.

May 13 - deadline April 29
June 24 - deadline June 10
August 5 - deadline July 22
September 16 - deadline September 2
October 28 - deadline October 14
December 9 - deadline November 25

Congregations:

Please send the following to
admin@ndepiscopal.org

&

jffloberg@gmail.com

Or mail to: 3600 25th St S
Fargo, ND 58104

+ Your congregational mailing lists (electronic and otherwise)
+ Your Vestry Members names and contact information, including designation of your Wardens, Treasurer and if you have a Priest in Charge/Rector



The Sheaf

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