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**JOINT MEETING OF  
DIOCESAN COUNCIL and STANDING COMMITTEE  
AGENDA  
September 12, 2024  
2:30 p.m. Diocesan House**

**Council Only** 2:30 p.m.

Consent Agenda: 2:30 p.m.

- May Council Minutes
- August Special Meeting minutes

Resolution from Budget & Financial Planning Subcommittee 2:35 p.m.  
Additional draw for Creation Care (Mark Rogers)

Follow-up to August meeting: Status of Southwick 2:45 p.m.

**Joint Meeting with Standing Committee**

Gathering Time and Opening Prayer 3:30 p.m.

Presentation of facts: Trinity/Ware 3:40 p.m.

Vote – Trinity/Ware (Standing Committee only) 4:00 p.m.

Bishop's items 4:15 p.m.

Council adjourns 4:30 p.m.

**COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP**

Officers and Appointed Members:

The Rt. Rev. Douglas Fisher, President

The Rev. Nathaniel Anderson, Vice President

Ms. Wende Wheeler, Secretary

The Rev. Dr. Richard Simpson, Assistant Secretary

Mr. Mark Rogers, Treasurer

Mr. Frank Minasian, Trustee Representative

**Term of Office Expires:**

Convention of 2024 - Eliot Moss, Rick Gore, Pat O'Connell, Kurt Hultgren

Convention of 2025 – Mary Rosendale, Michael Tuck, vacancy

Convention of 2026 - Holly Dolan, Roland Holstead, Martha Sipe

**Minutes of the Diocesan Council of  
the Diocese of Western Massachusetts**

May 23, 2024 3:30 p.m.

Joint Meeting with Standing Committee, Diocesan House

**Present**

The Rt. Rev. Doug Fisher, President  
The Rev. Nathaniel Anderson, Vice President  
Richard Gore  
Roland Holstead  
Kurt Hultgren  
The Rev. Eliot Moss  
The Rev. Dcn. Pat O'Connell  
Mark Rogers, Treasurer  
The Rev. Mary Rosendale  
The Rev. Dr. Rich Simpson, Ass't. Sec'y  
The Rev. Martha Sipe  
The Rev. Michael Tuck  
Wende Wheeler, Secretary

Guests from Southwick Community Episcopal Church

Mary Curran, Senior Warden  
The Rev. George Porter, Rector  
Sue Porter, Junior Warden

**Absent**

Holly Dolan  
Frank Minasian

***Note:** With an absence of agenda items pertaining solely to Diocesan Council, this meeting was held entirely in conjunction with the Standing Committee.*

**Call to Order**

The joint meeting was called to order at 3:30 p.m. and was opened with reflection led by the Bishop.

**Consent Agenda**

The Consent Agenda was moved, seconded, and passed unanimously by members of Diocesan Council.

**Presentation from Southwick Community Episcopal Church**

The rector and wardens from SCEC joined the joint meeting for a conversation about the current situation at SCEC, and the parish's intention for its building. Mary outlined that the parish has been working with deficit budgets for at least eight years. The challenges have been magnified over the last three to four years, with declining membership, COVID, and the fact that the new rector called early in the pandemic was stuck in Canada for three years. Their current deficit is \$60,000 for the year. They anticipate that their funds will run out by the end of 2024. And yet, a core group of the parish feels that it is not done as a parish community. They are asking permission to sell the building and explore how they might continue their ministry in another form. The building still carries a mortgage of \$100,000.

The estimated possible price range for the building is between \$690,000-\$770,000. The building is in good shape and is saleable. The SCEC vestry is working with a Park Square Realty, and does have potential buyers.

There was conversation to clarify how, if permission is granted by Standing Committee, the process would move forward for SCEC. First, SCEC would be merged into Episcopal Missions of Western Massachusetts (EMWM) so that, at the time of the sale, this would *not* constitute the sale of all the assets of the parish (which would trigger the need to involve the Massachusetts Attorney General's office). The proceeds following the sale, after the mortgage is paid off, would be invested with the Trustees. Then, it would be incumbent upon Diocesan Council/EMWM to restrict the proceeds in such a way as to best support SCEC's continued mission and ministry.

During this conversation, the Standing Committee voted to permit the Southwick Community Episcopal Church or its successor to sell their church property for a price not less than \$680,000, valid until November 1, 2024.

### **Bishop's Time**

During the Bishop's time, he noted the following:

- Based on the good work started by Margaret Bullitt-Jonas, Harvey Hill would be interested in working with others to investigate the feasibility of installing EV chargers at a minimum of three churches around the Diocese.
- The Diocese of Massachusetts is on board with An Episcopal Path to Creation Justice. The Rev. Rachel Field is working on the development of this program; DioWMA is already a participant.
- He was recently at Nativity/Northborough to ordain Meghan Mantler. Meghan, the vestry and the parish is doing a great job in rebounding from their recent fire.
- There are immigrant ministries popping up in a variety of places around the Diocese.
- He is looking forward to working with the newly elected Bishop of Massachusetts, the Rev. Julia Whitworth, who will be ordained in October. She is committed to the continued close collaboration between the eastern and western dioceses.

The Council was adjourned at 4:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Wende T. Wheeler, Secretary

**Minutes of Episcopal Missions of Western Massachusetts  
the Diocese of Western Massachusetts**

August 28, 2024

Special meeting via Zoom, 8 a.m.

**Present**

The Rt. Rev. Doug Fisher, President  
Donald J. Allison, Esq., Chancellor  
The Rev. Nathaniel Anderson, Vice President  
Richard Gore  
Roland Holstead  
Kurt Hultgren  
The Rev. Eliot Moss  
The Rev. Dcn. Pat O'Connell  
Mark Rogers, Treasurer  
The Rev. Dr. Rich Simpson, Ass't. Sec'y  
The Rev. Martha Sipe  
Wende Wheeler, Secretary

**Absent**

Holly Dolan  
Frank Minasian  
The Rev. Mary Rosendale  
The Rev. Michael Tuck

***Note:** With an absence of agenda items pertaining solely to Diocesan Council, this meeting was held entirely in conjunction with the Standing Committee.*

**Call to Order**

The meeting of EMWM was called to order at 8:02 a.m.

**Vote to merge Southwick Community Episcopal Church into EMWM**

Following the May meeting of Council and the Standing Committee when it was granted permission by the Standing Committee to sell its property on College Highway, SCEC entered into a Purchase and Sale Agreement. The deal will close on September 16. In order to avoid the process of getting approval from the Charities Division of the Massachusetts Attorney General's Office which would be triggered by SCEC's sale of all of its assets, SCEC needs to be merged into EMWM prior to the closing. Then, the transaction will represent the sale of only part of EMWM's assets.

To this end, after a prayer of thanks and blessing for Southwick Community Episcopal Church and its ministry, the following motions were presented:

EMWM Board of Directors

**Resolved:** To approve, endorse and adopt the Agreement of Merger by and between Southwick Community Episcopal Church and Episcopal Missions of Western Massachusetts in the form attached to the original minutes of this meeting.

Moved, seconded and passed unanimously.  
EMWM Vote of the Sole Member

**Resolved:** To approve, endorse and adopt the Agreement for the Merger of Southwick Community Episcopal Church with Episcopal Missions of Western Massachusetts, dated August 28, 2024.

Moved, seconded and passed unanimously

EMWM Board of Directors

**Resolved:** To approve the sale of the property located at 660 College Highway, Southwick, Massachusetts, known as Southwick Community Episcopal Church, for a gross sales price of \$750,000;

To authorize the President, or the Treasurer, or any one of them acting alone, to execute such deeds, agreements, assignments and other documents which, in their sole judgment, are necessary or appropriate to carry out these votes.

Moved, seconded and passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:33 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Wende T. Wheeler, Secretary

## **REVISED PROPOSAL: EPISCOPAL PATH TO CREATION JUSTICE**

***From:*** Rachel Field and Martha Gardner

***To:*** Budget & Financial Planning Committee / Diocesan Council

***RE:*** Revised Proposal-An Episcopal Path to Creation Justice

***Date:*** August 7, 2024

***After a successful pilot (Oct. 2023-April 2024) of An Episcopal Path to Creation Justice in the Dioceses of MA and Western MA, for the past four months we have been establishing partnerships with the other Episcopal dioceses in Province One. The Diocese of MA has signed on as a founding partner for 2025 with \$20,000 of support for the Path in Province One.***

***We are still actively pursuing a commitment from the Episcopal Church in Connecticut. However, the timeline for approval of this request will stretch much farther into the fall, and we need to be able to move forward with the program in order to ensure staff availability. To that end, we have created a modified budget (see below) that removes some elements of the Path and would be manageable with the support of two founding dioceses. This budget focuses on maintaining staff time with a Project Manager at 1/3 time. We are asking the Diocese of Western Massachusetts to be one of two founding partners in the amount of \$20,000 for the year 2025.***

***We know the Path is a success given the number of inquiries we've had for participation from parishes across Province One and Church wide. This church-wide interest has necessitated the formation of an online network of leaders from other provinces and dioceses for support and training on sharing the Path more broadly.***

***I am grateful for your prayerful consideration of this request. I would be glad to address any questions or concerns that you may have about the modifications to this proposal.***

***~Rachel Field***

### **OPEN ENROLLMENT BUDGET: 2025**

**\*\$42,183**

#### **Project Manager (1/3 time) – 1/2025 – 12/2025**

1/3 Stipend	\$28,500
1/3 of health cost	\$ 5,130
Pension payment	\$ 6,053
Gathering to mark beginning of Open Enrollment period; expenses for website maintenance, subscriptions, and materials for operations	\$ 2,500

**\* Funding sources include \$2,500 carry over from 2024 budget and two founding partners contributing \$20,000 each.**

## **Motion Made & Carried by B&FP Committee, Tuesday, Aug 20th, 2024:**

The Committee unanimously agreed to recommend to Council an additional draw in the amount of **\$20,000** from Creation Care Fund for the purpose of partnering with the Diocese of MA as one of two founding partners in support of “An Episcopal Path to Creation Justice” in 2025. The draw schedule is as follows:

- |    |               |          |
|----|---------------|----------|
| 1. | January, 2025 | \$10,000 |
| 2. | July, 2025    | \$10,000 |