

Diocesan Office Report to 2013 Convention

Janet Waggoner, Canon to the Ordinary and Transitional Ministry Officer

Demi Prentiss, Ministry Developer and Stewardship Officer

Eleanor Doty, Operations Manager

Adriana Cline, Assistant to the Treasurer / Bookkeeper

Amy Haynie, InReach Coordinator

October 18, 2013

In the year since the last diocesan convention, the diocesan staff has continued to dedicate itself to supporting the work of individuals, ministries, and congregations throughout the diocese, and to furthering the work of the office of the bishop.

At the 30th convention of the diocese in November, 2012, Wallis Ohl resigned as second provisional bishop and was succeeded by Rayford High. Since then, the operations manager (Christopher Thomas) and the assistant to the treasurer (Cindy Haddock) have resigned to take full-time positions in local congregations. The operations manager position was increased to full-time, and is now held by Eleanor Doty. Adriana Cline was hired as part-time assistant to the treasurer. Diocesan treasurer Robert Hicks, an unpaid staffer, ably filled the gap in the time between assistants.

In July the bishop called Janet Waggoner as his canon to the ordinary and transitional ministries officer, made possible by financial support from an anonymous donor. For 12 weeks in late summer and early fall, Kay Nilram filled a temporary position as office assistant, enabling the expansion of the diocesan data base nearly five-fold. Demi Prentiss, on staff since January 2010, continues as ministry developer and stewardship officer.

As the months passed following the October 2012 oral arguments before the Texas Supreme Court, diocesan staff prepared for a range of scenarios. With the release of the court's opinion on August 30, 2013 the staff collaborated with the diocesan legal and communication teams to assure that information was issued timely and that the diocese was informed.

The diocesan staff has also supported leaders in the Northern Deanery as they have planned and prepared for the 31st diocesan convention.

In support of the diocese's administrative functions, staff has

- expanded ACS as the diocesan data base for member and congregation records
- implemented a contractual relationship with a background check provider capable of interfacing with the ACS records system
- improved record-keeping for diocesan aspirants, postulants, and candidates for ordination, in collaboration with the Commission on Ministry (COM)
- trained and supported "office angels," volunteers who help serve as receptionists
- served as registrar for numerous diocesan events
- managed the bishop's calendar and communications to and from the bishop
- developed relationships with staffers in other dioceses to build skills and improve our functions
- created and maintained records for the bishop
- administered the denominational health plan

- received and disbursed funds in compliance with the diocesan budget and the *Manual of Business Methods in Church Affairs*
- organized and maintained diocesan financial, payroll, and personnel records
- worked to create a warm and welcoming atmosphere in the diocesan offices, modeling radical hospitality

In church and leadership development, staff has supported

- the executive council's strategic planning session in January
- the diocese's annual leadership conference in March
- implementation of a re-written Canon 10 shaping the work of the executive council
- InReach planning for congregational transitions following determinative settlement of issues currently wending their way through the courts (see InReach report for further details)
- the launch of a diocesan stewardship team
- church development workshops on church planting, culminating in a three-day series of on-site visits and conversations with Bob Schorr, Coordinator for Church Plants and Congregational Development from the Diocese of Texas
- building a closer relationship with the ELCA North Texas-North Louisiana Mission District, which gave rise to the launch of Common Grace, a Lutheran congregation worshipping at St. Luke's in Stephenville
- a Roanridge grant-funded relationship with Episcopal Church Building Fund (ECBF), serving six congregations in the Recasting Church Assets program
- development of the diocese's first Fresh Start cohort for new clergy
- Discernment Day activities and ongoing support of individuals in the discernment and ordination processes
- Clergy Days led by our bishop and Clergy Conference with the Diocese of Texas
- congregations calling new clergy staff
- transitions in diaconal ministries to support/enhance congregational ministries
- congregations experiencing changes due to increasing or decreasing attendance, new ministry opportunities, and/or changing worship locations
- development of partnerships with neighboring dioceses for clergy continuing education and refreshment

The diocesan-office-based staff looks forward to serving congregations and the diocesan bishop in the year to come.