



EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF THE GREAT LAKES

being & becoming: mission regions

the rev. molly bosscher, standing committee president:

Greetings, everyone. I'm the Reverend Molly Bosscher, and I am your President of your Standing Committee. And this is the Reverend Alan James and he is our executive officer, Interim Executive Officer, in this time in the Episcopal Diocese of the Great Lakes. And we are here today to talk about Mission Regions.

You know, one of the things that we love as Episcopalians is relating to churches that are nearby and churches that are far away. And one of the things that, that we've struggled with a bit in this interim time when we've come together is: how do we organize ourselves? How do we figure out which churches we are in close relationship with, which ones we have a little bit more distance from? How do we figure out, how we work together as a church?

And that's one of the things that we were called to do by our Constitution and Canons of our new of, of our of our new documents that we passed. We must have Mission Regions. And we've been talking about this for a long time. We've been talking about this, you know, with Building Bridges. We've been talking about this for some years. That's the way I would put it.

And, so your Standing Committee and with the help of Alan, has come up with a plan that will help organize us as we do the work of God together. In our regions.

the rev. alan james, interim executive officer:

So the Standing Committee re-formed the Transition Leadership Team, sort of a 2.0 version post, convention. And we took a look at a previously proposed draft from the mission regions, and made some adjustments, that Standing Committee then considered and adopted.

So a few basic things to it. First is, big fan of the title, right? Because it - this structure is not about governance. It's not about meetings. It is about mission. It's about: how do we create structures that enable and invite collaboration between congregations?

So as we talk about the structure itself, that's not the end. The end is doing mission and ministry.

And the other thing is it's about a region. It's not even just about, collection of particular congregations, summer chapels, companion ministries, and programmatic organizations. It's about how do we manifest the Episcopal presence in, in all parts of that region, including a number of counties that do not currently have an Episcopal presence in any way?

So we have divided, the diocese up to into ten mission regions, as opposed to the three collaboratives, and in doing so, we tried to balance out sort of as small a geographic footprint as possible, because distance becomes an obstacle to cooperation and collaboration. But also to maintain as much of a sort of a critical mass of, of congregations and people at the same time. So it's sort of a balancing act between those two values.

And one of the things I want to say is that, in the comment section, you'll see a link to the map and, and to some write up about the structure that Standing Committee approved. And the map is sort of the first step that you'll see in the structure document.

There is a way that congregations, as they look at the map and say, "We understand why it was drawn this way, but we actually have a relationship with this, congregation that's in the other mission area or cultural affinity it's just the way our local [contexts], look," that you are able to sort of make an appeal or request to Diocesan Council to, consider moving from one mission region to another. So, the map is the plan that we're going to work with, but it is, open for sort of conversation and change.

There are two structural pieces within each Mission Region.

There will be a Regional Council. It'll have a chair and a vice chair - one ordained, one not - and all of the congregations, summer chapels, companion ministries, programmatic organizations, Episcopal entities in the Mission Region will have representation at the Regional Council.

And that's really the vehicle for networking, for collaborating, and thinking about how initiatives might take place to be in conversation as, congregations perhaps, close or think about merging that as a body to say, "Here's what we might do in this region to, to strengthen or to keep going an Episcopal presence."

Then also, the Standing Committee - and eventually, Bishop when that day comes - will be appointing Deans. We will have Deans right away. And they will serve primarily a communication function, a communication between the, congregations, the mission regions, and myself right now or, and later, the Bishop or the Bishop's designee, about things going on both ways. So we can have good communication between diocesan staff and diocesan leadership and the congregations, and people in the Mission Regions.

They will also - the Deans will begin to be the convener for clericus as opposed to a diocesan staff member. And so with this structure, again, we really hope that it invites, greater networking and collaboration, between the congregations and good communication between diocesan staff and future Bishop, and the people of this diocese.