



EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF THE GREAT LAKES

being & becoming: staff & structure lessons

**the rev. molly bosscher,
standing committee president:**

I'm the Reverend Molly Bosscher. And I am the President of your Standing Committee.

**the rev. alan james,
interim executive officer:**

I'm Alan James, Interim Executive Officer for the diocesan staff.

molly

We greet you today from this beautiful spot here on the Grand River. And the reason we're here today is because we wanted to share some exciting and interesting news about some of the ways that structure is changing in our diocese.

And I'm sure all of you remember when we juncture - you know, that lovely Episcopal word "juncture" - when we came together as Episcopal Diocese of Western Michigan and Episcopal Diocese of Eastern Michigan. And since then, we have not actually figured out what that means in terms of our staff. We've changed a little bit about our position descriptions. We've changed little things, but we haven't figured out what that means about everything.

And so with the help of Alan and the Standing Committee and, and also Diocesan Council, (and we have spent a long time talking about this in Standing Committee), we are excited to tell you about some changes that we are making with our staff and especially with the structure of how we understand our staff in terms of the diocese.

Because we want to continue to serve you as well as we possibly can.

alan

So in this video, we're gonna talk a little bit of, share some of the details about the

review process we took and went through. So the Staffing and Structure Committee along with myself, was charged by Standing Committee to, to take a look at what was working, what was not working the way the staff was structured.

So we began with a series of interviews. The members of the Staffing and Structure Committee and I interviewed 48 diocesan and congregational leaders from across the diocese, to ask them what was working, what was not working, what was supporting them in their parish ministries, as a congregation and in those places where they were involved in diocesan ministry. And we learned a lot.

The first thing, which was true across the board was, that the staff is committed to doing their best. They have a lot of talent and experience. And everyone was sort of working, the best they could, towards our shared mission and ministry.

There were some sort of specific places, that needed some attention. First, the regional canons were, in principal, folks were very positive about sort of the possibility. In their experience both, going back into the pre-legacy dioceses about regional canons, and Canon to the Ordinary - about the possibility to have a support from diocesan staff in areas of congregation development.

But as we've evolved and, gone into juncture and went from four canons to three, they became stretched very thin, both because of the increased number of congregations and their expanded portfolios. And so the reality at this point in time is some folks felt very supported by who the regional canon was, and some did not. And there was everything sort of in between, both with the canons and with some of the other staff members.

Another one of our problems, was that there seemed to be sort of a systemic lack of timely responses and the queries from, leaders in the diocese - whether it be email or phone - that, that the diocese was not getting the response they needed, in an appropriate way from diocesan staff members. So that was another area where we're going to need to take a look at how we might address.

From a whole sort of staff perspective, because particularly we were bringing two sort of smaller staffs into one that if you tried to diagram the org chart in a lived reality, we had all of the program staff members reporting to the Bishop or to, to me, whoever was the senior executive at the time. And so there were too many people. That usually organization-development-wise, four or five people is about the most that you want reporting to any one person. And within that also was, it really was a full team of equals. There was no identified "Number Two." And so when again, the bishop was not present, trying to figure out how decisions were made became a little more complicated.

Then also in sort of portfolios, we had a number of responses, around a need for increased support in, adult spiritual formation, formation of licensed lay ministers, and additional sort of senior, sort of staff members, paid staff, to support our camp, Camp Chickagami, and the ministry program there.

So those were, some of the issues that were identified. And another one also was in the area of community engagement or social justice. While we have a canon for beloved community, Canon Nurya Love Parish, her sort of identified areas were in and around beloved community, dismantling of racism, and creation care. But there was no other staff point of contact for feeding ministries for End Gun Violence Michigan, or any other sort of social justice ministries that folks in the diocese wanted to participate in. So that was another area we needed to think about addressing.

So, these are the lessons learned from our interviews. And in the next, in our next video tape, we'll talk with you about, organizational chart that has been developed by Staffing and Structure and approved by Standing Committee.