



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF VIRGINIA

Dear friends,

We're writing today to update you regarding the status of commissions in the Diocese of Virginia. In 2012, the diocesan committee and commission structure underwent a re-visioning process, with the goal to promote collaboration between like-minded groups. Committees were organized under umbrella commissions, which would be responsible for providing general administrative and visioning oversight to their respective committees.

Since this programmatic shift, we have identified some strengths of this new structure, but also some noticeable weaknesses. For some groups, finding the time to meet was difficult, particularly on top of existing committee duties. And for some of the commissions, identifying common ground in ministry presented a challenge – there wasn't always a natural extension or overlap in the commission groups as they were designed. Moreover, the original intent for the commissions to have budget oversight was not logistically feasible.

With these challenges in mind, we undertook a review of the structure and determined that it might be best to consider disbanding the commissions and refocusing and recommitting our energies to the existing committees and ministry teams of the Diocese of Virginia.

At its March 2014 meeting, the Executive Board of the Diocese of Virginia adopted a resolution empowering staff to take the appropriate steps to disband the Commission on Mission and Outreach, the Commission on Strengthening Our Congregations, the Commission on Christian Formation and the Commission on Human Dignity and Justice. Please note that this change does not affect the Commission on Ministry.

We have not taken the decision to disband the commissions lightly. The overall goal has always been to increase collaboration and opportunities for involvement diocesan-wide. While this particular structure did not work out, that goal remains. Most importantly, we remain mindful and grateful of the time and effort that folks across the Diocese have dedicated to this effort. We've learned a great deal in the process, and know that we can apply those lessons as we move forward in the work of our committees and ministry teams.

Please review the FAQs below for some logistical details regarding this transition, and feel free to contact us with any questions you may have.

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FOR CHRIST. FOR THIS TIME. FOR ALL TIME.



FAQs

1. What does this mean regarding my membership in the commission to which I was appointed?

If you are a member of the Commission on Mission and Outreach, the Commission on Strengthening Our Congregations, the Commission on Christian Formation or the Commission on Human Dignity and Justice, your appointment to that group will end effective May 1, 2014.

Members of the Commission on Christian Formation will reform as the Committee on Christian Formation. Staff liaison Paris Ball will continue to work with this group.

Other former commission members will continue their work in their respective committees.

2. What if I was a member of a commission, but not a member of a committee?

Please review the list of [committees](#) and [ministry teams](#) and consider membership in one of those groups.

3. What will the structure look like going forward?

Nominations

We will continue to receive nominations for any group or committee from any member of the Diocese, and would continue to encourage nominations and new membership as much as possible. Nominations should be submitted via this [online form](#).

Staff Liaisons and Term Limits

The diocesan staff liaison for each committee will be clearly identified, and will be responsible for enforcing term limits of three years. Two back-to-back terms may be served, followed by a one-year break. Members may also be appointed to serve one-year terms.

Appointments

The committee chair and staff liaison are responsible for vetting members of their committees. The bishop will send a letter of appointment to each committee member after vetting by the chair and liaison.

Role of the Executive Board

All committees will be required to submit annual reports, including member information, to the Executive Board. The staff liaisons will ensure that these reports are submitted. The program group will review the membership reports, with the intent to (1) Ensure that the committees have sufficient membership; (2) Ensure that the committees have sufficient diversity in their makeup; (3) Inform the Executive Board of any membership needs so that the board can take a proactive role in seeking out new membership and ensuring the healthy growth of these groups; and (4) Stay informed of the programmatic goals and actions of the committees, and provide feedback as needed. Your staff liaison will distribute a form template to complete in the fall of each year. This will also suffice as your group's official report to the Annual Council of the Diocese, and will be included in the Council journal.

Budget

The committee chair and staff liaison are responsible for ensuring that budget requests are completed and submitted to the Budget Committee every fall.

4. What about the original goal of the commissions: How will we work to promote ongoing collaboration between groups?

It will be incumbent on staff liaisons and committee chairs to proactively seek out those opportunities for collaboration. We'll explore new ways of raising the visibility of committee work, in addition to considering holding in-person or online gatherings for brainstorming and sharing between like-minded groups.