

Minutes of Convocation
September 14–15, 2022

Missionary Diocese of the South and Ozarks
United Episcopal Church

Held at All Saints Anglican Church, Boaz, Alabama

OPENING

1. Bishop Daniel Sparks called the meeting to order.
2. The Rev. Bill Adams was elected secretary.
3. Bishop Sparks noted that the Canons for the Diocese, adopted in 2010, were found. He stated that we need to follow them.
4. Dean Jim McTaggart, called the roll of delegates. 4 of 6 parishes were represented by clergy and lay delegates. Bishop Sparks declared a quorum.

Bishop Sparks noted that there are some inactive clergymen. He corrected the list of active clergy to include the Rev. Lawrence Jones.

5. On behalf of convocation host All Saints Anglican Church, the Rev. Rodney Jackson welcomed delegates.

REPORTS

1. The Rev. Adams read minutes from the 2021 Convocation as amended. It was moved and seconded that the minutes, as amended, be approved. The motion carried.

2. Bishop Sparks gave the Bishop's Report.

It was moved and seconded that the Bishop's Report be made an addendum to the minutes. The motion carried.

3. The Rev. Hiter gave the report of the Council of Advice. He noted that the Council has been communicating by email but no significant actions have been undertaken because the Council is still organizing.

It was moved and seconded that the report be received. The motion carried.

4. The Rev. Hiter gave the report of the Examining Chaplains. He noted their only action over the past year had been the review of Tony Cirilla for ordination to the diaconate. The Chaplains favorably recommended his ordination.

It was moved and seconded that the report be received. The motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Bishop Sparks noted last year's election of a bishop for the diocese, and for consent for Paul Sligh to serve as assistant bishop for the Diocese of the Great Lakes. Both were consecrated in March.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Election of Standing Committee. Bishop Sparks noted that, before discovering the canons of the diocese, he had appointed a Council of Advice. He pointed out that the canons require election of a minimum of six members to a Standing Committee, with at least four lay and two clergy representatives. He highlighted duties of the Committee.

A question was raised about the staggering of terms on the Committee. Bishop Sparks pointed out that diocesan canons do not provide for staggered terms. Members will be elected for three-year terms. If a vacancy occurs, the remaining members of the Committee will provide for filling the vacancy until the next election.

The following were nominated to serve on the Standing Committee: The Rev. Kenyon Bunch, Tom Hiter, Mr. Walter Alexander, Mr. Don Holland, Mr. George Leever, Mr. Wayne McKenzie. There were no other nominations.

It was moved and seconded that the nominees be elected as a slate. The motion carried. The slate was elected.

2. Bishop Sparks noted that the canons require the election of a diocesan treasurer. He highlighted the duties of the treasurer.

A question was raised about the term of office. Bishop Sparks noted that the canons do not specify a term. It was moved and seconded that the treasurer shall serve a term of three years, to coincide with the terms of the Standing Committee members. The motion carried.

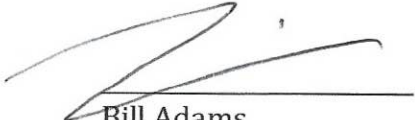
Mr. Wayne McKenzie was nominated to serve as treasurer. There were no other nominations. Mr. McKenzie was elected.

3. Bishop Sparks introduced Resolution 1 (attached) regarding incorporation of the diocese and establishing a financial account. There was discussion about methods of accountability for finances. The resolution provides for the Standing Committee to administer funds.

It was moved and seconded that Resolution 1 be adopted. The motion carried.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the body, Convocation was adjourned.



Bill Adams
Convocation Secretary

United Episcopal Church *of North America*

▪ Missionary Diocese of the South and Ozarks ▪

Bishop's Report – 2022 Convocation **The Rt. Rev. Daniel J. Sparks**

Upon my election as your bishop at last year's convocation, I began undertaking some work in the diocese under the guidance of the presiding bishop, Bishop Peter Robinson. This included identifying people to serve on the Council of Advice and as Examining Chaplains. I began regularly calling clergy, sending monthly email updates to clergy, and developed a diocesan website.

Last October, I relocated from Columbia, Missouri to Birmingham, Alabama. As many of you may know, I made this move so I could be closer to my father, who turned 80 in June. I am grateful I have been able to spend more time with him and other family members. Having lived in Birmingham before, some things are familiar, but I am still getting used to the changes that come with a metropolitan area of 1.1 million people over 15 years.

Along the trip from Missouri to Alabama, I made a detour to visit our retired bishop, Glen Hartley, in Ava, Missouri. We spent a few hours together talking about St. Francis Anglican Church and the diocese.

In December, I visited St. Barnabas Anglican Church in Heber Springs, Arkansas. I had a wonderful visit with Tom Bradshaw, rector of St. Barnabas, and his wife Donna. I also met with Lay Reader George Leever and his wife Barbara. We discussed the future of St. Barnabas and the pastor's health. With Tom and George's input and Bishop Robinson's approval, I organized a rotation of clergy to visit St. Barnabas once each month. Unfortunately, due to various scheduling difficulties, a minister was not able to be there every month, but several of our clergymen visited, and the people in Heber Springs have expressed their gratitude.

Also in December, I enjoyed dinner with Rodney Jackson, rector of All Saints Anglican Church, where we are today, and his wife Pam. In February, I visited Christ Chapel in Fairdealing, Kentucky, at the invitation of the rector, Tom Hiter. I preached there and enjoyed time with Tom and the congregation.

On Saturday, March 26th, I was consecrated bishop at Sts. Andrew and Mathias Anglican Church in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Paul Slish was also consecrated as the Assistant Bishop for the Diocese of the Great Lakes. Though the timing and the location made it difficult for folks from our diocese to attend, I am grateful that both clergy and lay representatives from the diocese were present.

In March, I reappointed the dean, Jim McTaggart, and I appointed Examining Chaplains. In May, I appointed members of the Council of Advice. I must note that, when I appointed the

Council, I was not aware of the existence of diocesan canons that provide for the election of those members. Absent such knowledge, I acted in accord with the UEC Canons, which are ambiguous as to the selection of Council members. Now that we have rediscovered the diocesan canons, we need to comply, and more will be said about that later.

In April, I enjoyed a short but wonderful visit with the Rev. Jerry Ellington in Rogers, Arkansas. That same weekend, I ordained Tony Cirilla as a deacon in a service at St. Joseph Anglican Church in Branson, Missouri. Tony is the first person I ordained in my ministry as bishop. The following day, I made my first episcopal visit, also at St. Joseph, where I confirmed one.

In May, I made an episcopal visit to All Saints, followed in June by an episcopal visit to St. Stephen's Anglican Church in Fort Payne, Alabama. In early July, I enjoyed another visit with Tom and Donna Bradshaw in Arkansas. The following day, I made an episcopal visit to St. Barnabas, where I baptized the great-granddaughter of the lay reader. During that service, I also announced the retirement of Tom Bradshaw, and he was named Rector Emeritus of the parish. In August, I made an episcopal visit to St. Francis in Ava. During that visit, Bishop Hartley handed off to me some diocesan records, which have been helpful for expanding my knowledge of our diocesan history.

In May, the Rev. Keith Bernarducci and St. Michael Anglican Church in Milton, Florida transferred to the Anglican Catholic Church's Diocese of New Orleans. In July, I received the Rev. Bill Adams into the diocese from the Anglican Orthodox Church's Diocese of the Midwest. In August, I received the Rev. Lawrence Jones and his wife Deaconess Nancy Jones into the diocese from the Reformed Episcopal Church's Diocese of Mid-America. Also last month, the Rt. Rev. Presly Hutchens was received into the diocese. He is the retired bishop of the Anglican Catholic Church's Diocese of New Orleans.

In addition to the ministry to our diocesan congregations, I preached at the Church of the Living God in Moulton, Alabama. I celebrated Holy Communion at St. Matthew's Anglican Church in Birmingham. I also led two services of Holy Communion at St. Michael's Anglican Church in Andalusia, Alabama. I preached at Grace Church in Birmingham. The latter two churches are without pastors and called upon my support as they discern the way ahead.

I have also engaged in furthering my own ministerial development. I audited the Latimer Theological Institute course in Anglican polity, taught by Bishop Robinson. Four weeks ago, I began a Doctor of Ministry program, with a concentration in Ministry Leadership. This program, while demanding, will help me in assessing and guiding the ministry of our diocese. I ask for your prayers in this endeavor, which will take two to three years to complete. I may also call upon your support in carrying out some of the practical projects required for the program, but I can assure you those projects will benefit the work of our diocese.

As you know, I work full-time as a chaplain at the VA medical center in Birmingham. I have been with the VA for about five years now. This ministry is both rewarding and challenging, as you can imagine. I appreciate your prayers as I carry on this work. On average, I make about 5,000 pastoral visits per year with patients, family members, and staff. There is no shortage of need for pastoral care and support.

In February, I made a trip to Brevard, North Carolina for a week-long chaplain conference. This was required by the Associated Gospel Churches, which was the ecclesiastical endorsing agency for my work as a federal chaplain. The AGC has been very gracious to pick up my endorsement during a time when the UEC was unable to provide this support. However, recently, the Rev. John Brantley, from the Missionary Diocese of the East, has been named the VA endorser, and I am again endorsed by the UEC. Our own Rev. Tom Hiter has also been made the UEC endorser for the military.

I have also been building connections with other Anglicans and evangelicals. In March, I participated in a virtual seminar on evangelism, which was hosted by the Anglican Connection. The presentation was about the "Word 121" tool, and I commend this to you as helpful for one-to-one evangelism with people you already know. In April, I attended an alumni cookout at Beeson Divinity School in Birmingham. It was nice to reconnect with some of my old professors. The staff there has been gracious to offer to help me connect with seminary students. I will continue to develop relationships there, and I hope we may attract some church planters from among those students.

In June, I attended a conference hosted by the Evangelical Fellowship in the Anglican Communion (EFAC). This is an inter-denominational gathering of Anglican evangelicals. Though we have important differences in our denominational allegiances, the Anglicans present at that conference share a great deal in our doctrinal affirmations. It was a tremendously encouraging opportunity to fellowship with ministers and laymen who are committed to the biblical gospel.

In the months that remain this year, I will be continuing some of the diocesan work that I will detail to you in later sessions at this convocation. I'll also attend another event at Beeson Divinity School and travel to Atlanta for a conference of the Reformation Fellowship.

I am seeking for our diocese to grow strong, to shore up the good things about us, to mature in our faith and ministry. Some of this comes through the building and strengthening of our relationships with our sister churches in the diocese. Some of this comes from careful, respectful, and warm relationships with those outside the UEC, with whom we have essentials in common. I will share more on those topics in some of our other sessions.

In summarizing my ministry over the past year—initially as your bishop-elect, and then as your bishop:

- I have made in-person visits with clergy, in addition to regular phone calls and emails;
- I have visited our six congregations;
- I ordained one, confirmed one, and baptized one;
- I have been firming up our diocesan organization and collaborating with the other bishops of the UEC;
- I have traveled 6,738 miles for episcopal ministry in our diocese;
- I have traveled 886 miles for my ministry as a chaplain;
- And I have traveled 1,501 miles for other ministry for the benefit of relationships with fellow Anglicans and other believers;
- If you're keeping up with the numbers, that is 9,125 total miles traveled for ministry over the past year.

Please pray for my safe travel as I continue in the year ahead. I will try to reduce travel through the end of the year so I can spend a little more time with family, work on my doctoral studies, and perform the day-to-day work of supporting our diocese. I ask for your continued prayers for wisdom and humility.

Note that I have no staff, no salary, and no funds. Thank you for your patience as I learn the practical aspects of diocesan administration and as I exhort you in faithfulness to the Lord. There is much work to be done. I pledge to continue. I pray for your success in the Lord, and I look forward to continuing in the fields of harvest with you.

This concludes my report.

Resolution

Missionary Diocese of the South and Ozarks
United Episcopal Church of North America

Whereas, the 2022 Convocation of the Missionary Diocese of the South and Ozarks, assembled in Boaz, Alabama, acting in accordance with diocesan canons, desires to further the organization of the diocese;

Now, it is therefore Resolved, that the Standing Committee shall legally incorporate the diocese in the State of Alabama as a nonprofit organization;

Further Resolved, that the members of the Standing Committee shall serve as incorporators of the diocese, and the bishop shall serve as the registered agent;

Further Resolved, the Standing Committee shall establish bookkeeping accounts for the receipt of monetary donations to the diocese for special purposes;

Further Resolved, the Standing Committee shall establish a bank account at a financial institution of its choosing, for depositing monetary donations to the diocese;

Further Resolved, the Standing Committee shall handle such funds in accordance with the canons of this diocese and the canons of the United Episcopal Church of North America.

Adopted September 15, 2022