

Report of the Mission Task Force to the 220th Diocesan Convention of the Diocese of Rhode Island

Introduction

We are the Episcopal Church in Rhode Island. We are heirs to an extraordinary history of faith and witness, stretching back through our own time and experience to Colonial times and the beginning of the diocese, from the Church of England to the medieval church, from the Celtic saints and Augustine to the Apostles themselves. We gather week by week, even day by day, to be fed – by the Word, by one another, by worship and praise, by service to others, and above all, by our Lord who gives us his very Body and Blood. We know what it means to be hungry, and we know what it means to be filled. Out of our own hunger, and by the grace of the One who feeds us, we are called to share our bread with others.

In the fall of 2009 a group of clergy gathered with our bishop and leaders from the Congregational Development Commission for a conversation on the “State of the diocese.” We heard about our declining numbers and resources, and we discussed our collective purpose as a church. Following this meeting several clergy proposed a resolution to the 219th convention of the Diocese of Rhode Island suggesting that a Mission Task Force spend a year listening to members of the diocese, discerning our future mission, and reporting our findings and recommendations to our 220th Diocesan Convention. (The original resolution is Appendix A.)

It was our hope in submitting this resolution that we can all take ownership for the health of our diocese, recognizing that all parishes and all RI Episcopalians *are* in fact “The diocese.” Too often we think of the diocese as existing only at 275 North Main in Providence.

Our Task Force began with 12 members, including lay people, priests and deacons from each of the six deaneries as well as representatives from the Standing Committee, Diocesan Council, two past Vice Presidents of Diocesan Council, the Program and Budget Committee, the Finance Commission, and members of the Hispanic Ministry Committee. (Appendix B)

The listening done by the Mission Task Force revealed that there is a rich life of feeding and being fed throughout our diocese. We also found a deep hunger for new ways to feed and be fed together, statewide. Read on to see what we did, how we did it, what we believe we have learned, and what we propose for our future mission focus as RI Episcopalians.

What we have learned from the Mission Task Force Process

The Good News

RI Episcopalians are interested in the future mission of our diocese.

There are resources and energy for mission. We heard wonderful stories of passionate engagement in mission from those who attended the listening sessions as well as from members of diocesan staff. Members of the Task force were impressed by the energy people have for discussing mission and some of the hopes we heard for the future mission of our diocese. We heard that **how** we go about our mission and **how** we are led in mission, may be as important as the specific mission focus upon which we decide.

Many people are ready and willing to participate in something that brings us together as a diocese and gives us an opportunity to have an impact as a Church. Among our membership as a diocese we have many passionate ministers of Christ. Collectively we also have significant resources for mission including gifted leaders, faithful followers, money, time, buildings, and experience. We have been reminded throughout our process that the small size of our diocese and state can be a great asset as we renew our commitment to mission. We are small enough to mobilize our resources, including the people. While our state is geographically small, the population is relatively large. The potential for impact is great.

Another very positive finding throughout our listening process is that members of the diocese are looking for leadership in terms of diocesan mission. We heard, “If we are led, we will follow.”

RI Episcopalians are called to Celebrate.

We have a very strong desire to CELEBRATE our common life in Christ and to offer ministry together. This was a consistent theme we heard throughout our process. We deeply value and want to share worship, fellowship, service and new life together as a diocese. This feeds us. Here are some of the key areas we would like to grow in celebration.

- As Episcopalians our liturgy is one of the great gifts we receive and share with others. We have heard again and again how important it is that we gather for worship which is the very best we can offer and experience. Many hope for greater planning, preparation, and commitment to diocesan worship. When we worship as a diocese, we would like to have all orders represented and serving in their respective roles, whether deacons, priests, the laity, or bishop. We hope that we will include lectors, acolytes, ushers and musicians from around the diocese. We want our children and youth to worship with us.
- We heard that we want to serve together in “hands on” mission opportunities.
- We heard that many parishes have mission successes to share and celebrate within the diocese, and are looking for opportunities to do so. We would like to be resources for one another. We also want to share how we are doing in our parishes. We want more connection among parishes, and between parishes and the diocesan structure with regard to mission.
- We benefit from the times we are learning, working and eating together as a diocese. Gathering for work and play, especially meals, is GOOD! Feeding and being fed brings us together. We would like to do more of this.
- We appreciate the ways in which our full time Communications Officer, Ruth Meter is highlighting and communicating the thriving ministries in our parishes and

around our diocese. Recent issues of RISEN have made important connections among people and ministries that are inspiring and encouraging us to celebrate.

The Challenges and Opportunities we Face in Mission

Jesus said to them, "They need not go away; you give them something to eat." -- Matthew 14:16

1) We need to clarify the difference between programs and mission. As a Diocese, we are confused about the distinction between our diocesan *mission* and diocesan *programs*. This time of reflection and re-visioning is an opportunity for us to clarify the difference. The stated mission of our diocese should be an expression of our deepest purpose and calling. Our diocesan mission statement should be something that gives us a sense of our guiding principles and identity as Rhode Island Episcopalians. It should inspire and encourage us in our common life and ministry. Programs, on the other hand, should *support and promote* the stated mission of the diocese, while not being identified as that *mission itself*.

This situation is analogous to the ministry or program of ushers in a parish. Ushering at worship may support the stated mission of a parish, but would not likely be described as its guiding mission or principles. Our current mission priorities are neither our guiding mission nor our principles, but are instead a list of programs: ECC, Congregational Development, Christian Formation, and Hispanic Ministry. These are the programs currently receiving significant funding in our diocesan budget, yet there are other programs that are funded or *could be* funded.

Our listening revealed that we have a need to broaden and focus our mission priorities beyond a list of programs. There is much we are doing, as individuals and as parishes, that doesn't fit within the confines of our current mission priorities: feeding and clothing people, celebrating rich liturgy, caring pastorally for those both within and beyond our congregations. As a diocese, we need to have a mission focus that can encompass programs, but is not limited by them. Then and only then can we evaluate whether the programs which we support as a diocese are part of our mission focus or are outside of it.

2) We need to redefine our Mission. In order to have more clarity about the programming that supports our stated mission, we need to get a better sense of our *mission* in terms of our purpose, our core values and our identity. Through our listening, the Mission Task Force has been able to define a new diocesan mission focus and we hope the Convention will support this.

3) We need a more coherent Mission Strategy. Once we define our mission focus we need to improve our strategy, or the way in which we plan, execute and evaluate our programs, and the ministry we share as a diocese. Currently, the MTF cannot determine any criteria for deciding what current programs are most important in supporting our stated mission or which are effectively promoting the stated mission of our diocese. This was especially apparent in the evaluation reports from Diocesan Council on current Mission Priorities programs. These reports are available upon request from the current Vice President of Diocesan Council, The Rev'd Scott Gunn. The reports revealed that there are:

- No clear planning mechanisms for many of our diocesan programs. There appeared to be an absence of strategy, vision and goals in the programs Diocesan Council evaluated. Accountability for program planning is not clearly defined.
- Most programs do not seem to have been evaluated in the recent past; and there do not appear to be current evaluation mechanisms. Three members of the MTF serve on the

Hispanic Ministry Committee and reflected that they have not ever been asked to evaluate their ministry against set goals, and that even though they believe they are experiencing success, they might be more successful if they had more planning and review.

- Since there are no metrics or measurable objectives, we are not able to notice or celebrate successes, nor are we able to address failures or identify the need for improvement in diocesan programming. We regularly continue to fund programs, regardless of their outcomes.
- There appears to be a lack of follow through on past investments in mission planning, strategic planning, and in program development. An example of this is the planning process for ECC, which began nearly a decade ago and has not accomplished key goals such as basic accreditation as a Camp through the American Camping Association.

4) We need to improve our budgeting process. The current budgeting process needs revision if it is to be effective in promoting the stated mission of the diocese as we move forward. Many people experience confusion or unclear connections between the budget, mission, and programs. We find the budget itself difficult to understand. It would be helpful to see the sources of income, program and administrative expenses reported more clearly. We considered many questions about the sources of restricted income, projections for future apportionment income, and how decisions are made about which programs receive funding.

5) We noticed an absence of children and youth in diocesan life. Any mission we have as a diocese needs to include those of all ages. There are some simple ways we can begin to address this. We would like to include qualified children as acolytes, lectors and ushers in diocesan liturgies. At diocesan functions such as conventions and convocations, it would be wise to include childcare or age appropriate programming.

6) We seek greater leadership development. In order to have the energy and enthusiasm necessary to address our mission whole-heartedly, we need continued attention to wellness and leadership development for our clergy and lay leaders. Leaders would like to participate in the planning and evaluation of leadership development events and programs. The strength of our leaders has an impact on our mission and the health of our diocese. We suggest that we begin to think of leadership more broadly, giving greater consideration to the wealth of human resources that exist throughout our diocese.

7) Our energy and identity needs a focus – building on strengths is a place to begin. During the listening process, we heard many specific outreach and ministry areas of interest/passion identified as important to individuals and parishes. (See Appendix C) Though we appear to have many disparate strengths and gifts, we are in need of a “brand” that helps to focus and collect our mission. A revitalized mission statement could give the Episcopal Church in Rhode Island greater name recognition beyond our current membership. It could also help us to have a stronger identity and sense of purpose within our membership. We believe that we can literally cross bridges, work together and have a greater impact with a unified mission focus. Focusing on our identity together *as the Diocese of Rhode Island, rather than as individual parishes*, and coming together under that umbrella in action and outreach may be as significant as the impact of what we actually choose to act upon. We do not have recent experience with sustained attention on a mission focus. We hope that we grow in outreach and service to a point where the impact is significant beyond our diocese, but we realize this will take some time. There will be value in changing our culture as RI Episcopalians along the way.

8) Episcopal Charities (EC) could become a greater resource for mission. This question came up in nearly every listening gathering: “How can Episcopal Charities better promote diocesan mission?” We believe that there may be an opportunity to do this. This could revitalize EC, and be a way to engage and promote the mission focus. We heard many times that people hope we might focus the resources of Episcopal Charities to give larger grants to fewer organizations, thereby having a larger impact. Could EC fund agencies and organizations that promote our mission focus? Could supporting the mission focus of the diocese, broadly defined, become criteria for grant approval? We believe these are important questions for consideration.

9) Diocesan Strategic Planning impacts mission or lack thereof. We do not currently have a vision for where the Diocese of RI will be or what it will look like in five years. We keep hearing and saying that it is critical to have a strategy in this time of change/apparent decline. This strategy should apply to the number of parishes, the location of parishes, and the mission and structure of the diocese in the future. More importantly, we need greater strategic planning for the sake of building the kingdom and spreading the Good News.

We cannot afford to ignore these significant issues,

- Not financially
- Not pastorally
- Not spiritually

10) We seek greater FREEDOM to engage in our mission as parishes and together as the Diocese. We are not currently free because we experience our life together bound by financial burdens and concerns for our buildings, whether as parishes or as a diocese. This is distracting us from engaging in ministry and outreach. As some of us have found in our parishes, if we place a higher priority on our mission focuses, the temporal matters either become easier to resolve or become less confining.

11) We have learned these things about ourselves as a diocese before. Five years ago we had a report to the convention called the Bridgebuilder Action Planning Report, stating that we had a great need for, among other things, “strong Clergy Leadership Development, Mission Creation and Implementation, and Diocesan Strategic Execution.” This report also contained numerous “Specific Action Strategies” for mission, strategic execution, and Clergy development. The MTF is committed to a goal, that five years from now we can be having a new and different conversation as a diocese and we hope that others will share this goal. We believe that transformation is possible if the bishop, diocesan leaders on commissions and committees, diocesan staff, and members of our diocese can begin to share a common vision and commitment to the new mission focus of the diocese. We need to develop a culture where we expect success and can be honest about the need for improvement. We know we can learn to hold one another accountable and experience deeper trust at all levels.

Our greatest fear is that nothing will come of this work, and that our report might be pushed aside and forgotten. At this very point in our history we have a growing body of clergy and lay leaders who are willing and eager to share in the leadership of our diocese and its renewed mission. That can make all the difference. Our recommendations seek to leverage this leadership and energy for renewal. We hope that this report will allow us all to grow and change as a diocese.

Mission Task Force Recommendations

He said to him the third time, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter felt hurt because he said to him the third time, "Do you love me?" And he said to him, "Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep." John 21:17

We suggest a new diocesan mission focus, one that is broad enough to build on our current strengths and compelling enough to engage us in new initiatives in the next year and over time. We hope this new mission focus will address some of the current opportunities for transformation, namely to come together in celebration of our common life in Christ, to engage in "hands on mission" together, to align diocesan programs with the guiding principles of the stated mission of the diocese, and to address some of the strategic challenges we currently face related to mission.

We recommend a New Mission Focus: Feeding the Hungry

We understand our new mission focus to encompass various kinds of feeding: physical, spiritual, intellectual and others. One of the central themes of Jesus' ministry is feeding. He repeatedly shared table fellowship with both friends and outcasts, transformed scant resources into a feast for a great crowd, and offered his followers a way to remember and experience him through a sacred meal. As a result, Christians have long connected their discipleship with the act of feeding. This theme addresses the centrality of our own nourishment as Christians, which strengthens us for a mission in feeding others. We want our mission to promote feeding within our diocesan membership as well as reaching out to feed those who are in need beyond our membership. The resolution to adopt this new mission focus is at the end of this report.

From the start this mission focus allows us to build on our strengths. As we heard in the listening process, every parish in the diocese is already engaged in some type of feeding ministry, even if this is simply offering a weekly Eucharist. Many have more developed ministries that feed in various ways within the parish and beyond. Diocesan programs are already feeding people.

We propose this new mission focus for the next five years, at a minimum.

We will begin to promote this new mission focus in 2011. This first year will serve as a "bridge year" of beginning and strategizing for the new mission focus. In the first year our attention will be given to exploring the hungers within our diocese and among our leaders and parishes. We will also find ways to highlight and celebrate the feeding that is already taking place. Over the five years, the mission focus will deepen and the priorities will be defined as we seek opportunities to feed God's people with greater intention in our state and beyond. By the third year we will have become more aware of the systemic issues that cause hunger, whether physical or spiritual. We hope that as RI Episcopalians we may share a greater "hunger and thirst for righteousness."

We want our mission statement to convey a sense of being RI Episcopalians rather than a disparate organization of independent parishes and missions. We also want it to be clear that celebration and feeding the hungry, in the many ways that we are called to do so, are central to our identity, our purpose, and our mission priorities.

We recommend a reconstituted Mission Task force (MTF) whose role is to engage with diocesan leaders and staff until the 2015 Convention, in implementing the new mission focus. This task force would address the challenges and opportunities above, particularly those that are focused on strategy for strengthening our diocese, strengthening our mission, and underneath that mission strengthening our diocesan programs, celebrations, leadership development, clergy wellness, and our commitment to include children and youth in our diocesan life. The resolution to reconstitute the

MTF follows at the end of this report. We suggest the following goals, should Convention vote to accept the proposed mission focus and a reconstituted MTF.

Recommended goals of the MTF in 2011

1. **Develop a strategy for re-branding the diocese.** This would include developing a new mission statement as well as mission priorities.
2. **Offer a leadership retreat to feed diocesan leaders.** We would invite any RI Episcopalian who self identifies as a leader to participate in a weekend retreat on the theme of hunger, including the many kinds of hungers human beings have: physical, spiritual, intellectual, for justice, righteousness, and beauty. We hope to have clergy and lay leaders in parishes, leaders of diocesan bodies, and staff participating together.
3. **Link the Mission Focus to Convocation.** Our 2011 Convocation speaker is Dianna Butler Bass. We envision a diocesan-wide book study based on the book, *Christianity for the Rest of Us*. We would promote the book study 2-3 months prior to convocation, encouraging parish and diocesan leaders to read the book and engage in conversation groups before the convocation. We would encourage Butler Bass to speak to us as we embark on our new mission focus of feeding the hungry. We would provide questions for round table discussions at Convocation to help us all become more aware of how we can apply Butler Bass' ideas in our personal, parish and diocesan lives. The mission focus of feeding the hungry may be integrated into worship and prayer opportunities at the convocation.
4. **Continue communication and listening on the mission focus.** We plan to use this year to begin exploring the issue of hunger and feeding ministries and opportunities by inviting more conversation throughout the diocese.
5. **Organize RI Episcopalians to walk in the Crop Hunger Walk.** We would promote this to all RI Episcopalians and envision parish groups walking together (with banners) coming from diverse parts of the city or state, converging on a central location where we will rejoice, share food and/or gather for prayer.
6. **Approach the 221st Convention as an opportunity for celebration of the renewed Mission Focus, New Mission Priorities and New Mission Statement.** We would help in planning the diocesan Eucharist and encourage a meal in the evening prior to convention. The mission focus theme would be supported throughout the Friday and Saturday events. The MTF could make a brief report to the convention.
7. **Engage members of the Diocese in planning, and evaluating major diocesan events** (convocation, convention, parties, confirmation/receptions) as well as the events we have identified as goals for the MTF.

We recommend a “2015 Task Force” to address strategic planning and needs over the next five years. The 2015 Task Force would focus on the opportunities and challenges we identified from our listening process such as revising the budgeting process and financial reporting, implementing a process for planning and evaluating diocesan structure and programs, and addressing the number and locations of parishes and missions. The 2015 Task Force would work for five years and would likely enlist the help of a consultant. The resolution to create a “2015 Task Force” follows at the end of this report. We suggest the following goals, should the Convention vote to accept the creation of a 2015 Task Force.

Recommended Goals for the 2015 Task Force

1. Revise the budgeting process and financial reporting. (2011)
2. Establish a process for planning, goal setting, and evaluating diocesan programs. (2011)

3. In concert with the Mission Task Force, establish a process for deciding which programs are funded in any given year, based on how they promote the diocesan mission focus and mission priorities. (2011)
4. Address the future diocesan structure and staff needs in order to best promote Diocesan administration and promote the mission focus and mission priorities.
5. Address the number and location of parishes and missions. Come up with a strategic plan suggesting how we might best use our resources to reach and serve the entire state of Rhode Island.

Mission Task Force Process

The MTF gathered as set forth in the resolution. Members were elected or appointed by November 30th and held a first meeting in December. In January we established our roles and reflected on our purpose and process. One hallmark of our task force has been our decision to include a Chaplain in our group. The Chaplain's role has been to keep us focused on God's presence, and attentive to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Our Chaplain has led us in worship, offered hospitality and invited us to reflect on any pastoral considerations as we have worked as a team or with others. Another deliberate decision we made was to have our process be as available and transparent to other members and leaders of the diocese as possible. All our agendas and minutes were emailed to the Bishop's office and all our minutes were posted on a MTF blog, linked to our diocesan website. We invited members of the diocese to engage in this mission conversation online through the blog or Facebook, and in person either in a "Listening Gathering" or by interview with a member of the MTF. As a task force we have met at least once a month as a committee of the whole between December and October. In addition to this we have had many meetings of subgroups for planning, strategy, and listening.

Goals

In February we established our goals and a timeline for our work. Our goals were to:

1. Design and implement a listening process to engage members of the diocese in expressing their hope for future diocesan mission priorities and programs.
2. Link with other diocesan bodies and leaders throughout the process, e.g., Program and Budget, Diocesan Council and Diocesan Staff and Bishop.
3. Report to the next convention an articulation of energy and commitment to new and/or renewed mission priorities and suggest next steps.

Evaluation of Current Diocesan Mission Priorities and Programs

We invited the Diocesan Council to identify and evaluate the current mission priorities and programs of the diocese. In February, the chair of the MTF sent a letter to the Diocesan Council President, Bishop Wolf, and the Vice President, The Rev'd Scott Gunn, asking them to engage the council in this work of evaluating current mission priorities and programs. (Appendix D) They accepted this assignment and submitted four written reports to the MTF in June. The Diocesan Council defined the current mission priorities and programs of the diocese as: ECC, Congregational Development, Christian Formation and Hispanic Ministries.

Listening Process

In March we finished our design for the "Listening Process." We decided to hold at least one gathering in each of the six deaneries, one gathering for Clergy, and individual interviews with leaders in our parishes. Each listening gathering had a facilitator and a recorder who compiled the notes.

The four questions we asked RI Episcopalians:

- 1) What were you doing when you felt most passionate and alive in the Spirit?
- 2) What is your congregation doing that you can celebrate and share with other parishes?
- 3) What could we do as RI Episcopalians that would bring us together and would make a difference in our community and the world?
- 4) Is there anything else you would like to tell us about Diocesan Mission as we go forward?

We communicated with the diocese through an article in RISEN and all clergy of the diocese received a letter from the Chair of the MTF inviting their participation and the participation of parishes in the listening process. Our listening process was also publicized in eRISEN and through Facebook.

Through April and May we did a lot of listening. The Listening Process included six deanery gatherings, one clergy gathering, two parish gatherings, and numerous interviews of individuals and small groups of parish leaders. We listened to at least 130 people, face to face. We “listened” to 116 members of the “Diocese of RI Mission Task Force Group” Facebook Group.

In May members of the MTF met with Diocesan Staff and the Committee on Program and Budget, including the Bishop.

Through the summer months the MTF met to reflect on what we heard in the many listening opportunities and to discern future mission, strategy and priorities for our diocese. In September we met with the Bishop, who supported our recommendations, and we presented a preliminary report to Diocesan Council and the Standing Committee. The feedback we received in these conversations helped us to refine and clarify our recommendations.

Conclusion

When Jesus invited his disciples to take responsibility for their ministry by feeding the crowd, “all ate and were filled; and they took up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full.” (Matthew 14:20) We love and serve a Lord of abundance who asks only that we let him work through us. In the midst of our current struggles, we are blessed – with faith, with resources of many kinds, with one another. Together, we can pray and plan and work and give. We claim a future of hope for our own parishes and missions, and for our Diocese. Let us, Rhode Island Episcopalians who share the Bread of Life, celebrate with joy our common life and faith and then, claiming our ministry as mature Christians, feed a hungry world.

Resolutions to the 220th Diocesan Convention

Resolution to Propose a New Diocesan Mission Focus and Strategy

Resolved, that the 220th Convention of the Diocese of Rhode Island adopts the Mission Focus, “Feeding the Hungry” to be developed and implemented over the next five years, at a minimum.

Explanation: The Listening Process carried out by the Mission Task Force suggested that the two most shared activities among congregations are our worship life and feeding ministries. It also revealed that we enjoy, and hunger for more opportunities to be together and celebrate our common life as a diocese. We gather at least weekly to celebrate the Eucharist and to be fed by Word and Sacrament. In so many ways – food pantries, soup kitchens, and community gardens – our parishes

and missions feed people. Neither our hunger nor our feeding is limited to physical food. We have and address hungers for meaning, transformation, faith, love, companionship, beauty, forgiveness, community, knowledge, justice, healing and more. We hunger for Christ who feeds us and assuages all hungers.

A mission focus of intentionally celebrating our shared faith and feeding a hungry world will unite us, gathering up what we already do in many ways in our own settings and challenging us to worship, grow and minister together as a diocese.

Resolution to Reconstitute a Mission Task Force

RESOLVED, That this 220th Convention of the Diocese of Rhode Island, having adopted a new Mission focus, reconstitutes a Mission Task Force (MTF) to lead, with the Bishop, the implementation of the Mission focus over the next five years. This MTF shall be composed of one priest or one lay person elected by the Standing Committee from its membership; one cleric or one lay person elected by Diocesan Council from its membership, and two people appointed by the Bishop. The MTF shall be constituted by November 30, 2010, and be it further

RESOLVED, That the President of the Standing Committee shall set the time and place of the first meeting of the MTF to be held before December 31, 2010. At this first meeting, the MTF shall elect a chairperson from its membership and will recruit additional members, so that its membership represents a balance of clergy and laity and at least one member from each Deanery of the Diocese, and be it further

RESOLVED, That the MTF shall engage and coordinate with diocesan staff and request reasonable staff support, and be it further

RESOLVED, That the MTF shall report to the 221st Convention of the Diocese of Rhode Island its progress in the first year and its goals for the next year. The MTF is encouraged to be in regular communication with the appropriate people and groups for the budgeting process.

Resolution to Create the 2015 Task Force for Strategic Needs and Planning

Resolved, that the 220th Convention of the Diocese of Rhode Island invites a five-year process of strategic planning including an initial review of our existing resources and structures and a recommendation address the needs for future mission and ministry of the Diocese to be implemented by the 2015 Convention; and be it further

Resolved, That a 2015 Task Force be created to facilitate this process.

The 2015 Task Force shall be composed of one member from Diocesan Council, one member from the Standing Committee, one member from Congregational Development Commission, one member from the Finance Commission, and one Bishop's appointee. The 2015 Task Force shall be constituted by November 30, 2010; and be it further

Resolved, That the 2015 Task Force be convened by the Vice-President of Diocesan Council and schedule its first meeting to occur no later than December 31, 2010. At this first meeting, the 2015 Task Force shall elect a chairperson and may recruit additional members, so that its membership

represents a balance of clergy and laity and at least one member from each Deanery of the Diocese. The members of the 2015 Task Force may not be diocesan staff members; and be it further

Resolved, That the 2015 Task Force may elect replacements for any members who resign or who become ineligible when their terms on qualifying bodies ends, provided that the named qualifying bodies in the second Resolved continue to be represented on the 2015 Task Force; and be it further

Resolved, That the work of the 2015 Task Force will include, but not be limited to, a review and revision of the budgeting process, evaluation of the viability and vitality of the missions and parishes of the Diocese, and the strategic planning noted in the first Resolved; and be it further

Resolved, That the 2015 Task Force make an interim report of its work to Diocesan Council at least twice each year and annually to Diocesan Convention in each year of its existence.

Appendix A The Resolution to the 219th Diocesan Convention

Diocesan Convention 2009 – Mission Task Force Resolution

RESOLVED, That this 219th Convention of the Diocese of Rhode Island invites a review of our diocesan mission priorities, and be it further

RESOLVED, That a Mission Task Force be created to facilitate this process. This Task Force shall be composed of one priest and one lay person elected by the Standing Committee from its membership; one cleric and one lay person elected by Diocesan Council from its membership, and two people appointed by the Bishop. The Bishop's appointees shall not be employees of the Diocese. The Task Force shall be constituted by November 29, 2009, and be it further

RESOLVED, That the President of the Standing Committee shall set the time and place of the first meeting of the Task Force to be held before December 31, 2009. At this first meeting, the Task Force shall elect a chairperson from its membership and shall recruit at least six members, one from each deanery of the diocese, in addition to its original membership; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Task Force shall devise a process in which the lay and clerical members of the Diocese may express their hopes and ideas regarding the future mission of the Diocese. The Task Force may request reasonable staff support from diocesan staff (e.g. mailings, electronic communication); and be it further

RESOLVED. That the Task Force shall report to the 220th Convention of the Diocese of Rhode Island with its findings, including a recommendation for mission priorities to be adopted or affirmed by the Diocese. The Task Force is encouraged to be in regular communication with the appropriate people and groups for the budgeting process, in the event that a revised budget is to be presented to the 220th Convention of the Diocese to match modified mission priorities.

Appendix B

Membership of the Mission Task Force

The Rev'd Deacon Ricky Brightman, Narragansett Deanery Representative

The Rev. Deacon Buck Close, Blackstone Deanery Representative
Mr. Brian Ehlers, Appointment of the Bishop
Ms. Fran Gammell-Roach, Standing Committee Representative
The Rev'd Bill Locke, Chaplain to the MTF
The Rev'd Pam Mott, Aquidneck Deanery Representative
Mr. Scott Nicholson, Appointment of the Bishop
The Rev. Jennifer Pedrick, Standing Committee Representative, Chair of MTF
Ms. Modesta Pellet, Diocesan Council Representative
Mr. James Segovis, Central Deanery Representative
Ms. Susan Wright, West Bay Deanery Representative, Secretary of the MTF

- Mr. David Isherwood, East Bay Deanery Representative was unable to serve due to personal obligations.
- The Rev'd Susan Carpenter, Diocesan Council Representative was unable to serve through the entire process, as she became a Diocesan Employee in 2010.

Appendix C

Ministry and Outreach Interests and Passions Identified in the Listening Process

- Offering a spiritual resource for individuals and for parishes, e.g. study, liturgy, music
- Serving beyond our Diocese, e.g. Haiti mission, New Orleans
- Developing ecumenical relationships
- Caring for the homeless and hungry and working to eliminate conditions that perpetuate homelessness and hunger
- Serving the imprisoned and helping those released from prison make a successful transition back into the community
- Addressing immigration issues, welcoming the stranger, defending families who are vulnerable due to their immigration status
- Promoting literacy
- Serving, supporting and empowering youth
- Raising awareness about the faces of racism and promoting the dignity of every human being regardless of gender or sexual orientation
- Feeding people through food pantries
- Feeding people through soup kitchens
- Reaching out to the homebound
- Promoting and working for justice in society and in promoting policies that support the marginalized
- Continuing to expand the racial/ethnic/cultural reach of the Episcopal Church in RI encouraging a more diverse body of Christ
- Leading parishes in a campaign for environmental stewardship
- Growing and distributing food through community gardens
- Supporting and educating parents

Appendix D

Letter to Diocesan Council Requesting Evaluation of Current Mission Priorities

February 20, 2010

Dear Bishop Wolf and Father Gunn,

As the chair of the Mission Task Force I am happy to say that our membership is complete and we have begun our work as set forth in the resolution passed at the most recent Diocesan Convention. I am writing to you as the President and Vice President of Diocesan Council. One of the early tasks we have identified as necessary in this process is an explanation and evaluation of the *current* mission priorities and programs of the diocese.

In these first months we are working to begin a listening process among clergy, laity, and diocesan leadership that is forward looking and hopeful. At the same time it is crucial that we, as a task force, and as a diocese, have more clarity about what is happening now. It seems logical to us that this task would be done most effectively by diocesan council.

We hope you will be willing to take on the task of identifying and evaluating the current mission priorities and programs of the diocese. We are interested in learning what the current mission priorities are and how they relate to the program areas of the diocesan logo. Taking a look back over the past two or three years, we would like to know the specific accomplishments and challenges of each program area. In each area, please describe the goals that have been set and indicate if they have been achieved. Descriptive information will be helpful, but we are very interested specific data and measurements wherever possible. Any data that show growth or decline would be important to include. We trust you can design the process for evaluation and for the collection and reporting of the information. We would also like to learn what the current goals are for 2010 if they have been set or if there are any other strategic plans in place.

If you are willing to take on this task, would you consider doing this work over the next three months and sending a final report to the Mission Task force by May 7, 2010? If that is too soon, could you set a deadline for yourselves soon after and no later than mid- June? This would be a great help to us as we are synthesizing information from the listening process, and beginning to look toward the future.

If there are other obvious ways that you think the diocesan council can be in conversation with us or we can be mutually supportive in our work this year, please let me know.

It would be helpful to hear from you at your earliest convenience. I hope you will be willing to lead this effort. I will call you on March 4th, to discuss your response to our request if I have not heard from you by then.

Sincerely,
Jennifer Pedrick