

Diocese of Easton
Leadership Retreat Notes
Tuesday, July 29, 2025

The Rt. Rev. Santosh Marray invited leaders of the Diocese of Easton, Bishop XI to join their colleagues in order to share their various ministries with other leaders on July 29, 2025, from 9:45 am to 12:30 pm at Bray House.

Leaders in attendance at Bray House included: Lynn Anstatt-Administrative Assistant to the Bishop; Granville Blades, Esq., Vice President-Diocesan Council; Ernie Cornbrooks, Esq.-Chancellor Emeritus/President-Disciplinary Board; Rev. Andrew Cropper-Property Committee; Beth Devenney-Communications Assistant; John Dragone-Lay Canon to the Ordinary; Rev. Dr. Daniel Dunlap-Dean, IONA Eastern Shore; Ven. Laura Harbaugh-Archdeacon/Secretary to Convention/Vicar, St. Paul's Episcopal Center/Associate Director-Bishop's Institute; Chris Maxwell,-Vice Chair-Board of Managers; Lynn McClain, Esq.-Intake Officer for the Disciplinary Board; Very Rev. Susan Leight-Dean, Middle Convocation; Rt. Rev. Santosh Marray-Bishop; Very Rev. David Michaud-Dean, Southern Convocation; Jefferson Moak, Diocesan Archivist; Rev. Canon Charlie Osberger-Chair, Commission on Ministry; Rev. Jessica Stehle, (incoming) Chair-Rising Generations Committee; Fred Welsh-Chair, Department of Finance/Chair-Listening Committee; Rev. Dr. Darcy Williams-President, Standing Committee.

Leaders joining on Zoom included: Chrissy Aull-Secretary, Diocesan Council/Assistant Secretary to Convention; Ned Aull-Chair, Compensation & Personnel Committee; Rev. Joanne Fisher, (outgoing) Youth Missioner and Communications Director; Dr. Mark Hanson-Hispanic/Latino Missioner; Tom Hylden-Chair, Constitutions and Canons Committee; Rev. Dr. Nicholas Sichangi-Acting Dean, Northern Convocation; and, Rev. Dr. Lynn Wiljanen-Director, Bishop's Institute.

Prayer/Reflection (Bishop)

The meeting started at 10:00 am with welcome from Bishop Marray followed by prayer and the reading of a personal reflection (included with these notes). The purpose of the meeting was to listen to the voice of the Diocesan family as represented by the leaders present. The theme of the retreat was to reflect/review/re-imagine/respond (Proverbs 3:18 and John 3:30).

SESSION I

Brief Report on Ministry from Chair or Designee

Camp Wright: Camp Director Julia Connelly was unable to attend the meeting. Bishop Marray noted the Camp's 95th anniversary celebration was this past weekend and mentioned that Rev. Alan Spicer presented a wonderful source document of information from his 77 years of service with the Camp. The Bishop asked Rev. Spicer to forward his remarks so they could be shared with the Diocese and placed in the archives. The Bishop asked Lay Canon John Dragone to share with this gathering what the Bishop announced on Sunday regarding Camp Wright. Mr. Dragone reported that the Diocese of Easton has approved the funding cost of Camp Wright's Shoreline Bulkhead Redevelopment Project at the cost of \$350,000. Likewise, the Diocese is pleased to announce that the Children's Home Foundation has donated \$100,000 toward the total cost. Assistance from many generous benefactors from in and beyond the Diocese will also help offset the costs for the project. The contract was signed on Tuesday, July 25th, and work is expected to start in Fall 2025. In addition, Bishop Marray has directed the Finance Committee and Finance Administrator to forward \$8,000, the balance remaining from his Alabama Mission Fund. Additionally, a personal donation of \$2,000 from Bishop and Lynn Marray will go toward refurbishing the Sunset Cabin. The Bishop noted this is a major project for Camp Wright as not much has been done to the shoreline over the years.

Bishop's Institute: The Rev. Dr. Lynn Wiljanen noted the Bishop's Institute was created in 2000 as one of the 10 prerogatives in the Parousia document. Since its inception, 250 lay leaders, representative of 95% of parishes in the diocese, have received Eucharist Minister, Eucharist Visitor, and/or Worship Leader training. The next round of training will be held this Fall with a notice going out to the Diocese soon.

St. Paul's Episcopal Center: The Venerable Laura Harbaugh reported she is the second Vicar overseeing the activities of SPEC which includes the home of the Bishop's Institute, the home of the Food Pantry at St. Paul's, operating twice monthly, and hosts a Korean Praise Church of God congregation. Proceeds from interest in invested funds provides for operating expenses. The food pantry in Hebron serves approximately 50 families each time it is open. Bishop Marray pointed out that the food pantry at St. Andrew's in Hurlock serves approximately 100 families per week. They also conduct weekly health screenings as well as other services.

Property Committee: The Rev. Andrew Cropper spoke on behalf of Chair Sean Fahey who was unable to attend. Rev. Cropper reported that the property in Hillsboro sold to St. Thekla Orthodox Church. The Property Committee has also overseen upgrades to Bray House over the past budget season. Additionally, they oversee all the orphaned cemeteries in the Diocese. This is under Rev. Cropper's oversight as he is a licensed mortician. Another church that has been

repurposed is Grace Church in Mt Vernon which was sold to Open Door Ministries several years ago.

Clergy Formation-Commission on Ministry: The Rev. Canon Charlie Osberger, Chair of the Commission on Ministry reported that the Commission is open, mindful, and committed to a vision for raising the next ordained leadership of the diocese as well as for the equipping of laity to licensed ministries through the Bishop's Institute. In the past several years, 10¹ people have been ordained to sacred ministries which is an exceptional number for a diocese our size. The COM ensures that all people seeking ordination receive the appropriate formation while ensuring compliance with the Canons of The Episcopal Church and the steps/processes developed within the Diocese of Easton.

Academic Dean of IONA Collaborative: The Rev. Dr. Daniel Dunlap has been the Dean of two successful ministry formation programs in the Diocese. The first was the School for Diaconal Formation from 2017 through 2020 which led to the ordination of seven vocational deacons (two people later discerned a call to the priesthood). The IONA-Eastern Shore collaborative, a constituent program of the IONA Collaborative of the Seminary of the Southwest, began in 2021 and concluded in 2024 with seven people pursuing the priest track [including the two noted above] and one person following the diaconal track. At least three members of those two programs were present in the room or on the Zoom call. Like the Rev. Canon Osberger, he looks forward to seeing the fruits of the two locally trained formation programs. The Bishop added that Rev. Dr. Dunlap had asked to be relieved of the title "Canon Theologian"; however, he will continue with the formation process. Bishop Marray also stated there are a number of people coming into the pipeline.

Rising Generations: The Rev. Joanne Fisher noted the Committee for Rising Generations ministry focusses on youth and young adults up to their 30s and is new to the Diocese of Easton. There is a committee comprised of eight members of clergy and lay people. They meet monthly via a Zoom and recently held an annual retreat. They have developed a job description, mission, and goals/objectives for the future. Some members participated in FORMA this past year. Rev. Jessica Stehle and Rev. Susannah Southern are working with those in their 20s & 30s. Sadly, Rev. Joanne will be leaving the Diocese soon to pursue a call elsewhere, but the Rev. Jessica Stehle has agreed to be the new chair of Rising Generations. Rev. Stehle reported she is excited to take on the role of Chair. She is passionate about this ministry and has a background in it with the formation of the Third Place model at Trinity Cathedral. She hopes to share that model with the rest of the Diocese.

¹ The Rev. Canon Charlie Osberger reported 10 ordinations; however, the actual number is 17 which included those ordained through the School of Diaconal Formation and the IONA Eastern Shore Collaborative plus four others who attended traditional seminaries.

Latino/Hispanic Ministry: Dr. Mark Hansen is Diocesan Missioner for Latino/Hispanic ministries but will be leaving the role as the Missioner. He has been in this role about three years working with two Latino congregations in Kent County. Moving forward he hopes there will be more collaboration between St. Clements in Massey and in Shrewsbury in Kennedyville. There are about six regular families in each of the parishes. Two years ago he conducted lay leader training. At St. Clements, they offer English as a second language classes and those have been expanding. This year they offered a beginner conversational class. Andy Diaz in Ocean City is doing a great job of bringing people in the door; the challenge is to get them grounded/rooted in the Episcopal Church. Dr. Hansen encourages the Diocese to find ways for Mr. Diaz to continue his formation and ministry.

Diocesan Archivist: Jefferson Moak began serving in this role after the 2020 convention. The role of the archivist is to preserve records but also make them available upon request. Since he began he has completely reorganized the files, is working on a “finding aid”, and is indexing the records. In the process he has found documents that he didn’t know were missing. Mr. Moak noted he is missing the Bishop’s Confirmation records from 1970-1990 and needs the help from the parishes in finding those records. He has visited some parishes to look at their records to get information but has many more to go. He recently retrieved records from St. Paul’s in Vienna and St. Paul’s in Hillsboro.

Constitution and Canons: Tom Hylden, Esq., Chair of the committee reported that four new members have joined the committee since the Constitutions and Canons were revised (clergy-Rev. Margaret Brack and Rev. Stephanie Clayville and laity-Jefferson Moak and Ernie Cornbrooks, Esq.). Mr. Hylden is optimistic about the committee’s work and thanked the Bishop for his vision in requesting a complete review and revision. He also thanked the work of the task force which paved the way for the revision. The work of the Committee lately has been reviewing parish bylaw revisions (e.g.: due to vestries having to change their vestry numbers as parish attendance has declined). Bishop Marray reminded the group that the “Canons serve the Church, not the Church serving the Canons” and that the Bible and Book of Common Prayer are the primary sources of our church life, the Canons serve as the guard-rail or undergirds the two primary sources. “Grace always supersedes law.”

Review of Title VIII (Disciplinary Canon for Clergy): Dr. Lynn McLain spoke on behalf of the committee for the Chair, Rev. Dr. Darcy Williams. The Diocese’s Title VIII is complementary to The Episcopal Church’s Title IV. It wasn’t looked during the recent major revision because the General Convention was addressing Title IV. There was one Title VIII matter in Diocese of Easton that needed to be addressed. She, John Dragone, and Sandy Bjork, Esq. attended Title IV training. They learned that some of the Diocese’s practices were not in line with The Episcopal Church. The Committee then revised/updated its Title VIII Canon in order to comply with The Episcopal Church’s Canon especially as it related to timely pastoral

responses to all parties. The revised Canon has been reviewed by Chancellor Regan Smith and is now in the hands of the Constitutions and Canons Committee for review. Bishop Marray commended the work of the Committee.

Deans' Report: Rev. Dr. Nicholas Sichangi is serving as the Acting Dean of the Northern Convocation while the Very Rev. Claire Nevin-Fields is on medical leave. Their clergy meet on the second Tuesday of the month at rotating locations. During that time they pray, engage in fellowship, and provide encouragement and support. They are currently on summer break but when they return the Very Rev. David Michaud will be their guest. The Very Rev. Susie Leight is the Dean of the Middle Convocation. They also rotate locations to build relationship, and they have a combination of long-term and short-term clergy. The Very Rev. David Michaud is the Dean of the Southern Convocation. He pointed out that thanks to the Bishop, all parishes have some kind of clergy leadership. The Southern Convocation also meet on the first Tuesdays (except the summer) and alternate locations as well as alternating noon Eucharist with Evening Prayer. The Southern Convocation looks forward to hosting the Diocese's Convention March 2026.

Compensation & Personnel Committee: Committee Chair, Ned Aull, noted this Committee had been on hiatus for 4-5 years until November 2024. The biggest issue pressing was a need for new salary guidelines for priests (the last update was in 2016). Over the past nine months, the Committee collected data from around the nation as well as from Delaware and Maryland dioceses to help inform their decisions. They have worked to provide internal equitability across the Diocese regardless of parish size or operating budget. New clergy salary guidelines were approved by the Diocesan Council in June. An article was included in Diocesan eNewsletter shortly after. They have been trying to push the information out as much as possible. The Committee also updated supply clergy rates as the Diocese was behind both the Diocese of Delaware and Maryland. This was problematic as our Diocese shares some clergy with Delaware and vice versa. The new salary guidelines and supply clergy rates are now on the Diocese's website. Mr. Aull offered that thanks to committee member Rev. Stephanie Clayville's realized experience, they were able to update/streamline the onboarding process and were able to create an onboarding step-by-step document for use by the parishes. This is also on website. Upcoming projects include: 1. new Letters of Agreement for Deacons; 2. a new health benefit design for the Diocese; 3. addressing housing allowances as there are multiple combinations to deal with; and 4. a new handbook. Mr. Aull noted they've had a busy first year of operation thanks to the Committee's enthusiastic clergy and lay members. They are currently on hiatus for the summer, but some members are working on projects.

Diocesan Finance: Mr. Fred Welsh, Chair of the Department of Finance spoke on this subject as Mr. Myron Richardson, Diocesan Treasurer was ill. Mr. Welsh shared that the bulkhead work on Camp Wright will begin with monies held in a reserve account of the Diocese. There will be

fundraising activities in the near future to replenish those funds. The Committee had sent out a Parochial Report Supplement in order to be able to estimate the apportionment. They received responses from 32 parishes. With that information, they calculated expected assessments of approximately \$1M using the approved calculations. Emails will go out soon with preliminary apportionment letters. The Diocese of Easton's 2024 audit was completed with an “*Unmodified Opinion*” rating. The diocese has received this financial rating for six consecutive years. Thanks to the faithful and diligent work of the Finance Committee. The budget process for 2026 has begun, which includes collecting data inputs from various organizations and individuals. The Listening Committee has been busy with three visits completed, one pending (to be rescheduled) and one to be scheduled. A Pastoral Consultation Committee has been set up for St. Andrew's in Hurlock. Their first meeting is early August. The bishop added that the Diocese is in a financially healthy state and for this we give thanks to God.

Board of Managers: Vice-Chairman, Chris Matthews reported that the Easton Episcopal Fund just turned 15 years old. The balance started at \$7M and has grown to \$45M consisting of parish and diocesan assets. Twenty-nine parishes currently participate in the Fund. Notably, there are no parishes who have left the Fund to move their money elsewhere. The Board of Managers tries to develop a program for the diocese and the parishes that would provide predictable, reasonable returns that grow with inflation and not risk the purchasing power of the endowment. To do that, they want to be better than the indexes (e.g., S&P 500 and others). They also aim to be in the top third among competitive fund managers who manage their portfolios in a similar manner. There are approximately 600 mutual funds that are balanced conservative funds. When they started the program in March 2013 the fund was in the bottom 15%. In the beginning there were outside members on the Board of Managers who didn't share the same view of “how the world works” as we did. As time moved on, those outside managers were phased out. By 2016 the Board was managed by DOE parishioners with outside consultant organizations giving their opinions; however, the Board members made the decisions. As of a couple months ago, the Fund is in the top 25%. Mr. Maxwell noted that input from parishes is very important and helpful for them to improve their processes. Part of the Listening Committee meetings yielded suggestions for trying different methods, which was done with positive results. All Board members are volunteer and are made of diocesan members from all three convocations. Additionally, there are very low operating expenses with fees at .25% versus up to a 2% fee realized by other managed funds.

Discernment Committee: The Very Rev. David Michaud spoke on behalf of the Committee and the Co-Chair, Dr. Diana Kunkel. The Committee's responsibility is to determine the best way to be the Episcopal Church on the Eastern Shore of Maryland and to determine what the Holy Spirit is calling us to do. There are no pre-determined answers as they look into the future. This body is a committee of the Standing Committee with a mandate from the DOE Convention, and they work collaboratively with the Standing Committee. The Committee, in conversation with the Standing Committee, realized they needed to embark on multiple listening sessions throughout

the diocese in the Fall and then engage in discernment conversations. While they wait for the meetings to commence, they have stayed busy with other matters. They have organized and appointed members to various teams (i.e., communication, data gathering, diocesan comparison, prayer development, etc.). Rev. Michaud asks everyone in the Diocese to be in prayer throughout the process. There is a discernment page on the website which includes multiple prayers for different contexts. Rev. Michaud and Rev. Dr. Williams will be leading information sessions in each of the three convocations: South on September 2nd, Middle on September 4th, and North on September 9th.

Diocesan Council: Vice President, Granville Blades, Esq., noted the Diocesan Council serves as the Convention in recess. They meet every other month to go over finances and address any issues that come up between conventions. Chrissy Aull, Secretary for Council was also present but didn't have anything to add. Bishop Marray complimented Mr. Blades on his job as Vice President and noted he does a good job of keeping the meetings moving.

Canon to the Ordinary/Transition Officer – Lay Canon to the Ordinary, John Dragone, shared there are eight parishes in some form of transition: six parishes have interim rectors in place while they conduct their discernment/searches. A few are in the interviewing stage. St. Peter's, Salisbury and St. Philip's, Quantico will share the Ven. Laura Harbaugh. Rev. Bernie Schroeder recently retired so St. Luke's is now in transition. Rev. Henry Sabetti will provide pastoral coverage in the meantime. Emmanuel is being covered by supply while the Very Rev. Claire Nevins-Field is on leave. St. Paul's in Vienna is in transition to become a non-functioning parish and the Diocese is following Canon 607.7 to facilitate its closure.

Disciplinary Board: Chancellor Emeritus Ernie Cornbrooks serves as President of the Disciplinary Board. Bishop Marray noted that he has often asked Mr. Cornbrooks for advice and so asked Mr. Cornbrooks about his opinion on the state of the Diocese. Mr. Cornbrooks stated he felt better today than yesterday after hearing all the reports at this meeting. The Diocese is in good ministry and mission and financial position. He feels the Constitution and Canons Committee is a great bunch to work with. He feels really good about where we are with one possible exception (a faction within the diocese that is a problem that needs to be dealt with).

Break (10 minutes)

SESSION II

Standing Committee: The Rev. Dr. Darcy Williams, President, noted that Standing Committee serves as a council of advice and consent to the Bishop. The Committee is composed of three lay members and three clergy members elected by Convention. Its duties include consenting to ordinations and consenting to the election and ordination of bishops in other dioceses. When

there is a Bishop vacancy Standing Committee becomes the Ecclesiastical Authority. In preparation for the transition, Rev. Dr. Williams started attending Diocesan Council meetings in May and either she or another rep will be there each meeting. She also attends most staff meetings. She has been in consultation with The Episcopal Church about bringing on board an assisting bishop--he/she will carry out pastoral duties for clergy and parishes as well as conduct parish visitations and confirmations/receptions. She noted that an assisting bishop does not serve as the Ecclesiastical Authority. She has been in conversation with someone who will hopefully come on board in November. This person will be working approximately 2 to 2 1/2 days per week. Standing Committee agreed with the Discernment Committee to engage in a period of conversation and listening, working toward healing. The Episcopal Church has provided for us, at their cost, the expertise of the Rt. Rev. Mary Gray Reeves. Bishop Reeves is trained in conflict resolution, healing, and reconciliation ministries. Standing Committee is in the process of appointing clergy and laity to plan/steer the healing and reconciliation process. Those meetings will begin in November. Bishop Marray added that Rev. Dr. Williams has been a remarkable colleague in this process.

Update from Bishop Marray and Diocesan Staff: Bishop Marray stated that on August 14th at 6:00 pm there will be joint hybrid meeting of Diocesan Council and Standing Committee to work out details of the transition. Some of the items will need the Diocesan Council's. He also informed the group that Rev. Joanne Fisher is leaving the diocese for a full-time associate pastor position at St. James in Monkton, MD; her last day will be July 31st. The Bishop and John Dragone will work on how to distribute Rev. Fisher's responsibilities. They also need to figure out how to have a full-time clergy person available onsite.

Lynn Anstatt shared that she wanted to make sure everyone has the correct tools to do their work like having a current directory, convention journal, etc. Any changes (e.g.: membership, address, phone, etc.) should be communicated to the staff. Mrs. Anstatt asked participants to let her know about meetings at Bray House so she can put them on the DOE calendar. She also requested that she be copied on committee minutes so the office can be aware of what's going on in the Diocese and for there to be a record in the archives. Next year's convention will be held at the Princess Royale in Ocean City with the former Presiding Bishop Michael Curry as the keynote speaker. Please keep this in mind when preparing next year's budget as the costs will go up next year for those parishes that pay for registration, hotel, travel, etc., for the convention.

Very Rev. Michaud asked about scheduling visits with the visiting bishop. Mrs. Anstatt said that once that person is onsite she'll send a list of available dates to the rectors/priests-in-charge. There will be limited dates so preference will be given to those who have pending confirmations and/or receptions.

Beth Devenney will be moving to South Carolina but will telecommute. Parishes can still send eNewsletter articles to her and she will still send diocesan-wide notices. She also keeps the Realm database and Diocesan calendar updated.

John Dragone will keep everyone posted as they figure out who is going to do what. A decision hasn't been made if they hire someone to replace Joanne, but volunteers are appreciated!

Bishop Marray stated he has enjoyed being our bishop the last nine years. He and Mrs. Marray have truly enjoyed visiting the parishes.

Role of Bishop Marray in the Interregnum: Discussion, Reflection and Re-imagine from Gathered Leadership: Bishop noted he will continue making his visitations that are already scheduled. He will attend the September House of Bishop meeting via Zoom from his home in Florida (that will save the Diocese \$7-8K). A final diocesan-wide service will be held on Saturday, October 18th at Christ Church in Stevensville. His last Sunday's visitation will be on October 12th at Christ Church, Cambridge (incidentally Bishop Marray's very first Sunday in the diocese in October 2016 was also there).

Reflect on Diocese to Date:

- Granville Blades stated this has been a good session and he feels more confident than he felt before the meeting.
- Lynn McClain noted there are good people in place and expressed her appreciation for the work of everyone in the room.
- Rev. Joanne Fisher thanked the Diocese for the opportunity of almost 25 years of ministry. She was given an opportunity to attend a youth meeting early on, which was the starting point for her. She encouraged everyone to encourage people who look like they would be a good fit for diocesan-wide ministry/committee to join in.
- Lynn Anstatt said she felt very confident in the transition as there are so many good people in leadership roles and she is very grateful.
- Rev. Dr. Williams also expressed her gratitude noting there is a great degree of collegiality in the diocese among people who are willing to work together. She also expressed her gratitude to Rev. Fisher for her ministries.
- Beth Devenney noted that Rev. Fisher had brought her to the Diocese about eight years ago and she taught her everything she knew. She appreciates the mentoring she received and noted the Bishop has made sure to treat the staff as family. The Rev. Dr. Dan Dunlap stated that Rev. Fisher's leaving is the Diocese's loss, but he noted how proud the Diocese is of her and wished her the best. He also stated she was a wonderful student and some-time confidant. He thanked the Bishop for his gift of delegation noting the Bishop cast a vision and didn't micro-manager too much while acknowledging that the Diocese didn't make it easy for him.

- Rev. Dr. Lynn Wiljanen stated the Bishop pulled her out of the weeds and got her involved in diocesan-wide ministries. She recalled a time when the Bishop called her from the House of Bishops to say, “I haven’t heard from you, and I thought you might need some pastoral care” and she really appreciated his reaching out.

The gathering adjourned 12:30 pm with prayers of transition from the Very Rev. David Michaud and a prayer for the Bishop and Lynn Marray and the staff.

Respectfully submitted:

Ven. Laura J. Harbaugh