

Diocese of Easton
Diocesan Leadership Virtual Retreat
June 2, 2022, from & 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

“...because if this plan or this undertaking is of human origin, it will fail; but if is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them- in that case you may even be found fighting against God”
(Acts 5:33-39)

The Gamaliel Principle

- I wish to first thank everyone for your patience and understanding in living into the change in date, time and format of this Diocesan Leadership Retreat originally scheduled for Saturday, June 4 in-person at St. Paul’s Episcopal Center (SPEC). The rising cases in Covid 19 in our local counties and among our membership was instrumental in informing the diocese for this abridged version and virtual format.
- The office has forwarded the [agenda](#) and [zoom link](#) to participants. The primary focus is to do a brief review of [PAROUSIA \(Diocesan vision document\)](#) and ascertain learnings, thoughts, and ideas. These will help shape and inform the way forward on Parousia's ten focus points for the next five years.
- As most of us will recall, Parousia was presented at the 151st Diocesan Convention 2019 and has informed and inspired diocesan life, witness, ministry hopes and expectations for the past three (3) years (2019-2022). It was undergirded and supported by two (2) years of preparatory work (2017-2019) during which a Diocesan Identity (**Prayer Centered Church + Mission-Shaped Diocese**) and Diocesan Vocation or Purpose (**Welcome All. Share Jesus’ Love. Serve the World.**) were crafted at a similar diocesan leadership retreat, on April 1, 2017 - commonly referred to as the Wye Parish Accord. From there we held up [ten specific Ministry Imperatives](#) that should ultimately define our work as a Prayer Centered + Mission-Shaped Diocese. These ministry imperatives collectively embody the [Episcopal Church’s Five Marks of Mission](#), the Ten [Discernment Resolutions](#) as presented from previous years of Diocesan self-reflection, [the Jesus Movement](#) as defined by Presiding Bishop Curry at the 2015 General Convention, and our biblical mandate and responsibility as enunciated in 1 Corinthians 12 & 14, Ephesians 4, Romans 12, 1 Peter 4, Matthew 22: 37 (the Great Commandment), Matthew 28:19 (the Great Commission), and our Baptismal Covenant. It is my sincere confession that the period of testing and trial in terms of its viability and impact is over. As a diocese it is my conviction that we are moving into the second phase of this God inspired vision. A significant part of the first phase was shaped and informed by a global pandemic – COVID 19, its health and safety protocols and associated variants.
- Our time together in this gathering of Diocesan leadership is to review how far the diocese has progressed in the ensuing years of Parousia’s implementation and help discern next steps. This

isn't a time for fault-finding or unhelpful prognostication, but rather a time for building on the achievements and embracing the future. Let us move with enthusiasm and courage in the knowledge that God, who gave the vision, is guiding and sustaining its implementation.

- I am asking our presenting leadership to use just a few minutes (2-4 minutes) during the first half of the meeting to share what has happened in the past several years as it pertains to their area of focus. What is there to celebrate? What steps have been taken or are in the works to pursue the vision? This will set the stage for the break-out session in the 2nd half of the meeting.
- The break-out sessions are designed to serve as both a think-tank for ideas as well as a forum for questions. I ask that you try your best to listen impartially and encourage ideas, even if an idea may not seem viable. Encourage the same of those in your group – to remain positive and not label any ideas as unworkable. Perhaps by exploring together we will discover new adjacent possibilities! (Note: Parousia is a “working document” so the wording is not set in stone – focus points may need to be updated as a result of this gathering.)
- My beloved of God's Church, let us move with enthusiasm and courage in the knowledge that God, who gave the vision, is guiding and sustaining its implementation. God has brought us together to prayerfully pursue this vision with vigor and vitality, optimistic of its ultimate purpose to renew and transform the diocese into a healthy, viable and resurrected church for the present and future.
- As we are aware there is still much more to do, and by God's grace and with dedicated engagement of the diocesan family we commit to faithfully pursue God's will for the Church on the Eastern Shore of Maryland.
- The hope is that this gathering will bear proactive fruit for God's mission in the diocese. We encourage participants to come with an open mind, to bring their ideas, and to make space for Christ's inspiration through the Spirit.

Once again, I am deeply honored to labor with each and everyone of you in God's mission and I wish to sincerely thank you for your love for God's church and willingness to engage this work with fortitude and grace. Believe me when I say how humbled I am by your faithful leadership and willingness of time and wisdom to the kingdom of God.

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