

*The Building Bridges Steering Committee asks our local congregations to help us spread the word about our work and our ongoing discernment process in these dioceses. The following content is suggested and adaptable for parish newsletters and social media.*

*[Click here for a similar series](#), based on the Listening Sessions key takeaways.*

*This series is ongoing and this document will be updated until it's final iteration.*

*Questions? Please contact Canon Katie Forsyth at [kforsyth@eastmich.org](mailto:kforsyth@eastmich.org) or [kforsyth@edwm.org](mailto:kforsyth@edwm.org).*

---

*Slightly modified from the September 28, 2023 issue of our newsletter.*



## ***Building Bridges: A Focus on our Mission and Vision, Internal Conversations Subteams***

***A series of reflections focused on the work of our sub-teams***

Over the last few years, the Building Bridges Steering Committee – the group charged with facilitating our discernment around our bi-diocesan relationship – has worked hard in several areas, listening to the leaders of our dioceses, researching conversations and ministries in other dioceses, documenting history, looking at our financial and other resources, and much more. Over the next several issues of The Feast Online, we will highlight our sub-teams' progress.

We invite faith communities to share this content in their local newsletters and social media, as part of our charge to communicate broadly with our members.

**The Mission and Vision Team** formed in early 2023 to draft new mission and vision statements to guide our dioceses through this season of practice, based on the emerging themes and lessons from the series of listening sessions and the August diocesan leadership retreat. We shared those statements with you in the [last issue of our newsletter](#)!



This group is actively preparing the Building Bridges report for diocesan convention. Members of the Mission-Vision Team include: the Rev. Jen Adams (Grace, Holland), Canon Katie Forsyth (Bi-Dio Staff), Gary Grinn (St. Paul's, Gladwin), the Rev. Beckett Leclaire (St. John's, Dryden), and Vicki Schroeder (St. Augustine's, Benton Harbor).

Over the past year, the **Intentional Internal Conversations Team** organized and facilitated the listening sessions, so that we could gather thoughts, concerns, and ideas from people across both dioceses about how juncture might impact our ministries. They analyzed the comments to identify common themes and priorities—which they shared in a [communication](#) in August. This group has posted regular communications over the summer about the Building Bridges process to keep members of both dioceses informed about this important work. Group members include: the Rev. Jan Gockerman (St. Mark's, Grand Rapids), Janet Huff-Worvie (St. John's, Otter Lake), the Rev. Beckett Leclaire (St. John's, Dryden), Ellen McVey (St. John's, Midland), Alicia Miller (Holy Family, Midland), and Canon Katie Forsyth (Bi-Dio Staff).

*Photo: Canon Forsyth and the Rev. Jen Adams (via Zoom) present the draft mission and vision statements to a joint diocesan leadership meeting earlier this year.*

---

*Slightly modified from the October 12, 2023 issue of our newsletter.*



## **Building Bridges: A Focus on our Stewardship of Resources Subteam**

*A series of reflections focused on the work of our sub-teams*

Over the last few years, the Building Bridges Steering Committee -- the group charged with facilitating our discernment around our bi-diocesan relationship -- has worked hard in several areas, listening to the leaders of our dioceses, researching conversations and ministries in other dioceses, documenting history, looking at our financial and other resources, and much more. Over the next several issues of The Feast Online, we will highlight our sub-teams' progress.

We invite faith communities to share this content in their local newsletters and social media, as part of our charge to communicate broadly with our members.

The Stewardship of Resources Team has been examining the financial aspects involved with a potential juncture (the churchy-word for merger), including whether there would be any restrictions related to our endowment funds and the oversight of those funds, the impact of a common apportionment model, and other issues related to the financial and property assets of the dioceses. A preliminary report from this team will be included in the BBSC report to the October convention in preparation of more detailed reporting and feedback in the months leading up to a Special Convention in March. The team members are: the Rev. Brian Chace (retired priest, EM Treasurer); the Rev. Jared Cramer, D. Min (St. John's, Grand Haven; WM Treasurer); Gary Grinn (St. Paul's, Gladwin); and Sara Philo (bi-diocesan CFO).



*Photo: The bi-diocesan College for Congregational Development is one example of a core ministry funded in part by endowment funds restricted for use in congregational development work.*

---

*Slightly modified from the October 25, 2023 issue of our newsletter.*



## **Building Bridges: A Focus on our Constitution and Canons Subteam**

*A series of reflections focused on the work of our sub-teams*

Over the last few years, the Building Bridges Steering Committee -- the group charged with facilitating our discernment around our bi-diocesan relationship -- has worked hard in several areas, listening to the leaders of our dioceses, researching conversations and ministries in other dioceses, documenting history, looking at our financial and other

resources, and much more. Over the next several issues of The Feast Online, we will highlight our sub-teams' progress.

We invite faith communities to share this content in their local newsletters and social media, as part of our charge to communicate broadly with our members.

The Constitution and Canons Team are drafting a new constitution and canons as what would govern a new diocese, should we vote for juncture this Spring at our special convention. The drafts would be part of our application for juncture to the 81st General Convention of The Episcopal Church.

Using the information gleaned from our bi-diocesan listening sessions, our new mission and vision statements, both dioceses' current canons, and researched best practices from other dioceses, the drafts will include specific recommendations to determine Diocesan Council, convention, Standing Committee, apportionment, budget processes, and more. They will present these drafts to a combined meeting of elected diocesan leaders in November. Following this meeting, those recommendations would be pushed to the wider dioceses with a series of review and feedback sessions to happen during the Season of Epiphany.

Members of this team include the Rev. Jen Adams (Grace, Holland), the Rev. Don Davidson (Resident, Eastern Michigan), and bi-diocesan Chancellor Bill Fleener, Jr. (St. David's, Lansing).

*Photo: Among the areas addressed in our diocesan canons is the composition of the diocesan convention, including deadlines, number of delegates, and processes for election.*

