

Report on the 158th Convention of the Diocese of Easton

Adapted from a report written by delegate Diana Kunkel

The 158th Annual Convention of the Diocese of Easton was held at the Princess Royale Hotel and Conference Center in Ocean City, MD, February 27-28, 2026.

The following is a report on what happened during this two-day event. Some parts will be of interest to almost everyone. Some parts may be boring. That's what a convention is: simultaneously stimulating and stupefying, as anyone who has ever attended one anywhere knows.

This year's convention was attended by around 40 clergy and 80 lay delegates, three bishops, and several guests.

Friday morning was dedicated to administrative topics: election of officers to various committees; electing representatives to the Provincial Synod and to next year's General Convention. The election results are available on the [diocesan website](#).

An important item was the review and approval of the Diocesan Budget. It should be noted that about 55% of the budget goes to administrative expenses, leaving 45% for outreach and mission. This is a sign that our diocese may be holding steady — however, it is not growing.

Now that Bishop San has left, we are in a period of Transition. The Standing Committee is the ecclesiastical authority for the diocese, much as a vestry leads while a rector is on extended leave.

At last year's convention, the delegates approved the creation of a Discernment Committee to collect information and listen to Episcopalians on the Eastern Shore and provide suggestions to the Standing Committee about how we should move forward. The committee is working to compile a Profile, as well as other analysis relevant to our mission.

However, our ability to actually **listen** to our fellow Episcopalians has been limited. You may have heard that last year's convention was a bit contentious, to the point that many clergy left early, depriving the meeting of a quorum.

As we reviewed feedback from last year's convention delegates, the Discernment committee realized that there were wounds in the diocese that needed to be addressed before a true conversation could begin. This led to the recommendation to the Standing Committee that we address this communal need for reconciliation.

The Standing Committee, under its President Darcy Williams, engaged a facilitator, Bishop Mary Gray-Reeves. (Her services are provided by the Presiding Bishop's Office, at no cost to the Diocese of Easton.) Her team is called the Steering Committee for Healing and Reconciliation. There are nine diocesan members on this team, clergy and lay, representing all three convocations. Members worked with Bishop Mary to develop and conduct three day-long Gather-Listen-Connect sessions throughout the diocese.

The Convention session on Friday afternoon was spent hearing updates from the two Transition teams, engaging delegates in the methods developed by the Steering Committee and providing feedback from delegates so we can move forward. An initial review of this feedback is hopeful.

- Delegates perceive a shift from last year's tensions to a more collegial environment.
- Delegates emphasized the need for improved communications.
- They welcome more active involvement of laity, perhaps having monthly or quarterly gatherings, modeled on the regular meetings clergy now attend.
- Delegates seem ready both to continue the work of reconciliation and to begin the listening sessions and surveys needed for Discernment.

Following Friday's sessions, delegates had two opportunities to hear from former Presiding Bishop Michael Curry who gave two rousing homilies – a [keynote address](#) Friday night and a [sermon at Saturday morning's Eucharist](#).

Friday night's theme was the choice between Chaos and Community. He quoted the Reverend Doctor Martin Luther King Jr:

- “We will either learn to live together as brothers and sisters or perish together as fools. The choice is ours: chaos or community.”

Bishop Curry stressed that Jesus came to show us the way to live together, not as individual collections of self-interest but as the human family of God.

He reminded us that in reality we are already a family, united through DNA links to a common ancestor about 130,000 years ago. Barack Obama, Brad Pitt and George Bush are DNA cousins as are Hillary Rodham Clinton and John McCain. Even Strom Thurmond and the Reverend Al Sharpton are cousins. We are all kinfolk. We must choose to be who we truly are, created in the image and likeness of God; then change the world into a place where there is room for all of God’s children.

At Saturday’s Eucharist, Bishop Curry shared a quote:

- “When the power of love overcomes the love of power, then the world will know peace.”

He noted that the statement had been credited to British Prime Minister Disraeli and the Mahatma Gandhi. But he first heard it at a Jimi Hendrix concert, so he’s partial to that attribution.

He sprinkled his remarks in both sessions with humorous and moving anecdotes of his family, especially his grandmother. The summary is simple: Love God. Love Your Neighbor. Love Your Self.

He concluded with the following:

“There is love in this room...love in the laughter. Love in the work that you’ve done with Bishop Mary.

“Let that love lead you forward; let that love lift you up.

“Where true love is found, God himself is there.”

The rest of Saturday was taken up with the final business sessions of the convention. Several committees presented reports, including a film on Green Hill Church and another about the work of the Rising Generations initiative.

There were Six resolutions approved by the delegates. Each resolution can be found in its entirety on the [diocesan website](#).

Resolution 1 covers modifications to Title VII, Canon 801 regarding Clergy Discipline. Changes were needed to bring our rules in alignment with those approved at the last General Convention held in 2024

Resolution 2 addresses the Format and Location of Conventions. COVID had forced us into a period of Zoom-based gatherings, followed by hybrid conventions (half Zoom, half in-person). The convention agreed to return to two-day in-person events going forward.

Resolution 3 thanks John Dragone for his service as Canon of the Ordinary.

Resolution 4 is “A Call for Lasting Peace in Gaza”. It is the only resolution which is required to be shared with all congregants.

Resolution 5 asks that the Reverend Samuel Shoemaker be restored to the list of Lesser Feasts and Fasts in honor of his work encouraging lay ministry and with Alcoholics Anonymous.

Resolution 6 creates a Personnel & Compensation Committee to review compensation and benefits packages and report recommendations to convention each year.

In addition to the six approved resolutions **Resolution 7** was offered from the floor. It was a proposal to go directly to a search for a new bishop. The author requested that Convention waive the required 30-day filing period for resolutions which allows delegates time to consider a proposal before convention. By a large margin, the convention delegates did not agree to waive the Canonical rule and did not debate this resolution.

Soon after, the Convention ended – an hour and a half ahead of schedule!

This convention was enlightening and energizing. It is a wonderful way to connect with others in the diocese and learn about what’s happening in the Church beyond the boundaries of individual parishes and convocations.