Report from Committee on Congregational Stewardship and Diocesan Support

Report to Diocesan Convention

The Rev. Jessica Hitchcock Chair

Work

- **Goals**
  - Facilitating a dialogue among congregations and others about how to support financially the Diocese
  - Proposing to Council resolution(s) for 2026 Diocesan Convention
- **Activity**
  - Nine meetings
  - Analysis of EDOW budget (canonical responsibilities) & congregational giving
  - Survey (230 responses from 74 congregations)
  - Review of practices of approximately half of US Dioceses

Financial Analysis

2024 EDOW Budget: $4.8 M

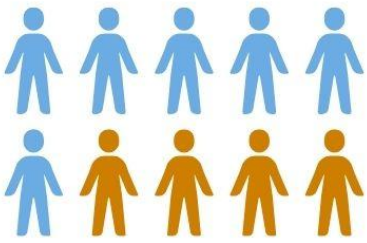


- Income largest sources:
  - Congregations: ~$2.25 M
  - Soper income: ~$1.6 M
- Canonically-required services cost: ~$2.6 M

Congregational Giving

- EDOW Canons, Section 5103, envisions tithe (10% of operating Income), but in practice voluntary
- Actual Giving: 3.6% of income, with wide variation

Survey Data



245 responses from 74 congregations



Over half have knowledge of/participation in Diocesan activities

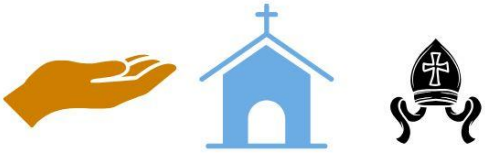


Congregations cut Diocesan pledge when financially stressed

Survey Data *(cont.)*

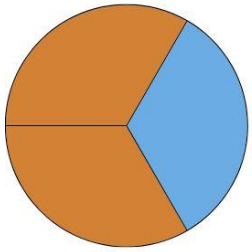


Over half are satisfied with their parish's level of giving to our Diocese



Reasons to support Diocese seem to be:

- Support to persons in need
- Supporting struggling congregations
- Bishop Mariann's ministry



Over two-thirds of responders seem comfortable with how the Diocese is spending its resources. A significant minority disagrees.

What have we learned from other dioceses?

- Based on responses from about half of Dioceses:
  - 70% of all dioceses mandate contributions, but mandatory vs voluntary does not appear to affect giving levels
- Income from congregations:
  - 18%-100% of Diocesan budgets, with an average of 70%
  - EDOW: 47%, the third lowest in the U.S.
- Consequences for failure to meet assessment:
  - Few dioceses (17% for U.S.) impose sanctions
  - Even with sanctions possibility, many offer assistance, rather than consequences

The Questions

- **Inspiration:** How can we inspire congregations to prioritize ('own") the work of our Diocese? What is our theology of giving?
- **Standard:**
  - Do we need a workable (as opposed to symbolic) giving standard based on financial vitality and EDOW needs?
  - We are **not** looking at how much we should be raising or seeking to increase that.
- **Accountability:**
  - Do we need a system to address failure to meet the giving standard?
  - If so, should it include consequences?

Committee's plan going forward:



- Data gathering:
  - More information on other dioceses' practices
  - Listening sessions:
    - Clergy, Wardens, & Delegates, by Region
    - Zoom sessions open to all members of diocese
- Council:
  - Early Summer: seek guidance on our tentative conclusions, recommendations, & draft resolution(s)
  - Fall: draft final report/resolution(s); finalize based on comments
- Regional Assemblies: final report & discussions on any resolution(s)
- 2026 Convention: report & present any resolution(s)

Please attend a listening session



Our research has given us more questions!

- What can we do to inspire congregations to “own” our Diocesan work, including those who disagree with some of it?
- If there was a giving standard, what should it be based on? Normal operating income? Plate and pledge? Total operating revenue? Normal operating expenses? Pledge, plate and investment income?
- What could be the consequences for not meeting a giving standard? Most of what we have seen are compassionate and relational, not punitive

Members of Committee on Congregational Stewardship and Diocesan Support

- Jessica Hitchcock, St. Luke’s, Bethesda
- Mary Frances Bruces, St. George’s, Glen Dale
- Caron Gwynn, Church of the Holy Communion
- Kate Heichler, Christ Church, La Plata/Wayside
- Timothy Cole, Christ Church, Georgetown
- Katherine Krile, St. John’s, Norwood
- Randy Marks, St. Mark’s, DC
- Thom Sinclair, St. Mark’s, DC
- Robert E. Smith, Church of the Atonement
- Rosann Stamper, Resurrection Parish
- Francisco Valle, Our Savior, Hillandale