



St. Augustine Episcopal Church

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August, 2024

Hello St. Augustine's family;

It's been more than a month since I returned from General Convention, yet I still have so much to share about General Convention. So, I'm dedicating this space to giving you a few highlights.

I've already talked about the approval of the reunification of The Dioceses of Wisconsin. But we are not the only diocese to take steps in this direction. Approved at Convention was the yoking of two dioceses in Michigan. Yoking is when two dioceses that were not part of each other come together. The Dioceses of Eastern and Western Michigan are now the Diocese of the Great Lakes. There are also dioceses in Pennsylvania having conversations about coming together.

This represents a possible trend within The Episcopal Church – recognizing that the previous structures are not effective in this era. As many churches shrink in size, their resources, not just in finances, but in people, also decline. It is more effective to think about combining churches in order to share resources. I am thinking about people, although for some areas, financial strength is a key factor.

Other significant actions or resolutions approved at Convention by both the House of Deputies, and the House of Bishops are:

- Very, very exciting was that this Convention was the first time that the Diocese of Cuba had seat, voice and vote. Cuba had been represented at previous General Conventions but was not allowed to vote.

- 29 deputies to General Convention were not able to come because they were not able to get visas into the US.
- The Navajoland dioceses became a funded mission in The Episcopal Church. It covers 27,000 square miles in Arizona, New Mexico, and Utah, which are contiguous with the Navajo Nation.
- A resolution to allocate \$200,000 to the Association for Episcopal Deacons (AED) was approved, on a one-time basis. The additional funding would allow the AED to improve its infrastructure in supporting the more than 3,400 deacons active in The Episcopal Church.
- The addition of a Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage II in the Book of Common Prayer, to reflect gender neutral language, was approved. The current Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage I, will not change.
- Following lengthy debate in both houses at the Convention regarding the use of apartheid in reference to Israel's relations with Palestinians, and genocide regarding Israel's prosecution of the war against Hamas in Gaza, a multi-part resolution was passed which included:
 - **That the 81st General Convention of The Episcopal Church affirm our hope for all the people of Israel and Palestine to enjoy freedom, peace, justice, and national self-determination, and affirm our hope for the creation of a Palestinian State, coexisting with the Jewish State of Israel;**
 - **That the General Convention acknowledges that the language it uses to name and describe this horrific conflict divides the Church and many of God's people even where we have strived otherwise, for all of which we pray for forgiveness and guidance to find language that unites us in the effort to bring peace and justice to Palestine;**
 - **That the 81st General Convention call on the Office of Government Relations to continue its work on human rights, justice, and other issues affecting the region while redoubling our church's advocacy of the two-state solution, especially by lobbying for linkage between military aid for Israel and the degree of its participation in the peace process as well as lobbying for sanctions against nations that support Hamas, Hezbollah, and other extremist anti-Israel groups;**
 - **That the Office of Government Relations also promote The Episcopal Church's view that rebuilding Gaza, continuing to build up the economy of the West Bank, and promoting security for both Palestinians and Israelis are the responsibility of the United Nations, Israel, the U.S., Israel's other allies, and Israel's Arab neighbors, all of whom should be prepared to join in historic levels of aid and investment.**
- There was a large presence of youth at the Convention. Youth representatives from each of the provinces in The Episcopal Church numbered more than 20. The young people, all 18 or

under, were given voice (meaning they could address the group), but were not able to vote. Many of the youth spoke; and they did well sharing and expressing the views of younger people.

- A very touching moment was witnessed when current Presiding Bishop Michael Curry told about the prayer beads he was given from the members of Navajoland nine years ago. He said they were given to protect him during his time as presiding bishop. He tenderly passed them on to Presiding Bishop-elect Sean Rowe.
- A deputy from the Diocese of North Carolina was introduced because she served as a body model in some artistic ventures.
- More than 100 individuals who were members of the House of Deputies contracted Covid at the Convention. Although two members of the Diocese of Fond du Lac came down with Covid after they came home, Mother Meredyth was not one of them.
- Father Lester McKenzie, a delightful and entertaining chaplain for the House of Deputies, ended most of his services, litanies, and prayers with the words, “Because we know you love it when we pray.”

Volunteers invited for Food Pantry opportunities

A training session will be held August 24 from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. for those interested in volunteering at the Rhinelander Area Food Pantry. St. Augustine’s members volunteer the third Saturday of each month. Judy Beyer, Debbie Roeser, Mary Fritz and Steve and Barb Hagen are regulars. Come join us! It is a fun way to get to know each other better and to make a difference in the lives of those in our community.

ECW August meeting

ECW will meet Monday, August 12 at noon in the Guild Hall. This will be a potluck, so bring a dish to pass. The ECW will have a bake/craft sale at the Farmer’s Market on Saturday, September 7. Baked goods donations are welcome; as are shoppers! The Farmer’s Market is held at Pioneer Park and begins at 8 a.m., winding up around noon; earlier if all of our delectable treats sell out.

Get to know St. Augustine

Our church is named after him, but how much do you really know about St. Augustine? You can find out on Wednesday, August 28 – his day. We will begin at 5:30 p.m. with Prayer on the Porch, (a shortened Eucharist), followed by a picnic-style meal, and some fun learning about Augustine. There may even be some prizes.

Planning ahead

Some folks are trying to figure out their lives, for the remainder of the year. So here is information on a couple of things I know about now.

Saturday, November 2: All Souls Day. We will have a service at 9 a.m., at which time the names of the deceased we would like to remember will be read. The service will include Eucharist.

Those who would like to, are then invited to stay and we can watch the consecration/installation of Presiding Bishop Sean Rowe online together. The service is being live-streamed.

Sunday, November 10: Ecumenical Music Festival. This now annual event will be held at 3 p.m. at Nativity Catholic Church. Free will donations, and proceeds from a chili supper will benefit NAMI, Tri-County Council on Domestic Violence, and The Boys and Girls Club.

Wednesday, November 27: Thanksgiving Eve. Service details not yet available.

Tuesday, December 24: Christmas Eve. Hymn sing at 6:30 p.m., followed by a Christmas Eve service at 7 p.m.

Wednesday, December 25: Christmas Day. We will have a service at 9 a.m.

SUNDAY: Worship 9 a.m.

The Meeting ID: 812 8610 0297. Passcode: 94205

To connect through video:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84626513503?pwd=TTVoVWxmbExJMGZVUnhCYWNCSnhxQT09>

To connect by telephone: 1-312-626-6799.

Office Hours

Office hours are generally 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday.

Mother Meredyth is in the office during the office hours, as well as additional times. If you are planning to stop in to see her, please call first.