

157th Convention of the Diocese of Easton
Discernment Questions

Q 1 What do we need to do in order to move forward as a unified and healthy diocese?

- More conversations-less assumptions
- More fun together
- Acknowledge family system
- Encourage diversity of opinions
- Encourage healing
- Benefit of the doubt
- Enthusiasm around a common goal
- Follow up on ideas presented
- We need a model
- Individual parishes must grow- how do the parishes get new members- need more young families
- If the Diocese's values are healthy, then the diocese will be healthy, but not necessarily unified
- Jesus is love. We can't show dissension.
- Stephen Ministry is important – model of Stephen Ministry could be a model for the diocese
- Bible Study – study Jesus's teachings
- Alpha Program
- Evangelism is the key to sharing Jesus's teachings
- Need a quorum
- Need communications
- People were in other places in the building and did not hear announcements
- If people have to leave early they need to check with someone
- Couldn't read the screen
- Definition of certain words (make sure understand terms). What is Standing Committee?
- Would like to see background data from discernment committee to explain the recommendations.
- Work on strength we have and continue as a diocese of Easton. A unique community.
- Work with smaller parishes to help with their needs. Merging parishes? Share resources? More cooperation.
- Figure out how to save churches that are "aging out"
- We need a leader
- What are the issues that make us divided
- How can we resolve these issues

- We need an open and honest discussion about the problems facing this diocese
- What made the Bishop decide to leave a year earlier.
- We believe that the various Dioceses are unique and that that uniqueness should be celebrated and preserved.
- We are concerned that merging with another diocese will dilute and/or potentially destroy that uniqueness. For example, the culture of the Eastern Shore is VERY different from the culture on the other side of the Chesapeake Bay, and also different from the culture in Delaware, except maybe Lower Delaware
- Re: unified and healthy diocese, we think that more opportunities for inclusionary events (all Diocese's churches) would help to improve the overall health of the diocese. "Clusters" are good, but clusters don't interact very much with each other. More events with all (or most) churches and parishioners in the Diocese would help.
- Take a look at options.
- Talk with Maryland and Delaware – what are the processes?
- Provisional Bishop during the process?
- A reasoned analysis, systematically and structurally of the current arrangements and alliances among clergy, lay, bishops staff and congregational leaders. Should include a "power analysis" of significant influences and influencers in the diocese.
- Open mind
- All parishes and units of the diocese need to feel engaged in the discernment process. Feel that they are invited to participate
- Need healing
- Discernment committee members visiting parishes on a "listening tour"
- 3 convocations – include lay info liaison in their meetings – liaison from discernment
 - Intentional healing – people are hurt. How to help them feel honored.
 - We need greater communication in order to form unity within the diocese
 - Gaining Vitality. Need volunteers at the diocesan level throughout the year
- I don't know – involve all ages (youth)
- New worship forms new ways of praising God
- Honest conversations
- Mover forward – the past is the past – in balance with where we have been
- Identify steps by which the various divisions can listen (and hear) to one another and their different perspectives. Starting with clergy.
- The Diocese can listen and hear one another and their different perspectives starting with clergy/shepherds.
- What are the divisions: 1.pro-Bishop & not pro-Bishop; 2. Clergy – seminary trained and non-seminary trained (this is NOT a division but rather a new development that needs some conversations between the groups). 3. Those who feel loyalty to the Bishops

shamed and feel he has been thrashed by the current bishop as part of a personal narrative.

- We need to be fully cognizant at the demographic and financial challenges we face and listen to each other.
- We need to clearly distill what our mission is.
- Let go of fear and conflict about change
- More Latino participation at convention altar – at least some liturgy in Spanish from the Latino community – a Latino presenting, not an Anglo.
- In a smaller diocese, your voice is heard here. In a smaller diocese your voice is heard.
- In a larger diocese where will the attention and effort of the Bishop be?
- Have parishes collaborate more together
- Provide Spanish in/on website
- A census of apportionment issue – so many as small
- We need to be financially viable
- More unity between churches doing things together – shared resources. More activities together.
- Work on our health so we can remain intact and protect diocesan level jobs
- We need more kids and families
- We need to heal and focus on the future
- More worker-bees involved
- Transparency and openness at the parish and diocesan level
- Embrace conflict as an opportunity to hear. We may be missing something
- Growth can come from ideas other than our own
- Ok to disagree but with respect and civility. i.e. Respect the dignity of every human being
- Seek guidance from scripture
- Use electronic communication (and especially AI) effectively to help us cast wider net and reach more age groups
- Better communication within the county and diocese
- Encourage Convocation attendance and understanding of one another
- Align churches within counties with each other
- Clericus – encourage attendance
- What does the Diocese do for our parish churches?
- This might effect apportionment payment
- Have conversations, open and free to speak, back and forth
- Discussion is vital and safe spaces to talk are essential to that work
- Town Halls are helpful
- Seek immediate feedback – survey what we want to see and also places to express concerns, potentially anonymous for the quiet voices

- Let people know all voices matter
- Prayer, time and true discernment as prerequisites for all of this
- Remember and celebrate our unique roll and identity as Eastern Shore Episcopalians
- Continue to innovate and to serve our communities
- What is the plan for leadership during this process
- What is the plan that was tasked by Standing Committee
- Specific communication milestones to congregations; to wait until complete to report to convention. A lot of time wasted.
- What effect does investigating mergers have on an ongoing bishop search
- What is the impetus to looking at mergers? We are in much better shape than 10 years ago.
- Policies & procedures
- Growth in congregations – meetings with other churches within diocese. What's working? What's not.
- Raising up clergy
- Grow. Younger clergy=younger congregations
- Liturgy / music – more contemporary and uplifting
- Remove contention – remove the politics
- Be open and honest about the issues people have in the church
- Open communication and list of options
 - Sense of entitlement – lose the ego
 - Transparency
 - Cards on the table
- Get the clergy to show up
- Carry out the Mission of the Church and omit all the discussion of the financials
- Share ideas on how successful churches are moving forward
- Money should not hinder the progress of carrying out our mission
- Acknowledge differences in culture. E.S is mostly rural
- Talk civilly to each other in discussions of change
- Open up communication between churches in diocese
- Convocation gatherings quarterly to share ministries
- Inclusive environment
- Sharing of clergy
- Use of Zoom to share services with other churches
- Commitment to integrity of Episcopal Church
- Create relationships at Convention (breakout groups)
- Many Eastern Shore Episcopalians come from faith traditions other than Episcopal. (In our parish, we estimate over half).

- Where and how do we truly become one, unified, and dynamic church?
- How does the Diocese become a viable dynamic presence on our parishes? Many of our parishes are (small “c”) congregations.
- We need a healing process
- Better Communication
- Focus Groups/mediator
- Look at ecumenical gatherings and share resources with other diocese while staying independent.
- Celebrate our DNA
- Healing, better communications, open conversations, listening to each other, better transparency
- Listening, Talking, Be kind to one another
- Don’t be afraid to ask questions
- Collaborate and investigate, and partner with other churches in our diocese, and with other dioceses
- Be open minded
- Stop the “in-fighting”
 - Focus on spirit of community
 - Learn the skill of compromise
- Create opportunities for more and effective comm throughout the diocese
 - More consistent education about what Diocese is doing; particularly at the Parish level
- Strategically plan to increase younger families, minority communities
- Write a Mission Statement! There is none. Discern, pray, reflect and craft a Mission Statement for what God calls the DOE to do.
- Insure that we have a quorum of Clergy at Convention
- Not in favor of new diocese. Bishop for Easton (more central to needs – specific of eastern shore)
- Can we afford own Bishop
- Bishop that reflects our needs
- Discernment committee perfect; also interim bishop good
- Reflect on past to go forward
- More inclusive interview process
- New leadership- sooner rather than later

Q 2 What questions, hopes and concerns do you have about the future of the Episcopal Church on the Eastern Shore?

- Sustaining Camp Wright – how do we support its mission and success
- Hopes for reaching and providing young families with spiritual nourishment
- Hopes for active children/youth programming
- Hope for more investment in Mission/Programs
- Hope is for churches to try new things, not what has always been done
- Be open-minded, try change one step at a time
- Let God be your guide and support, and follow what God is telling you to do.
- Don't be afraid of failure, or of experimenting
- Our hope for ALL churches that more young people and their families return to worship
- How to marshal our resources to be more responsive to parish needs
- Do we have the financial resources to continue to be independent.
- How can we implement the above suggestions?
- People/Membership
- Most of what we do is more characteristic of a club not a church. We speak to an inside group, not to the world around us. We must become intentional about evangelism and outreach.
- More family & youth
- Dying churches
- Lack vision / creativity
- Meet the needs of the community
- Be purposeful in welcoming
- Influx of new clergy (hope)
- Wealthy and poor churches stick together
- No mergers with other diocese
- Share resources with lesser funded churches
- Collaboration
- Sense of pride for the shore
- Hope to bring in younger families
- How do we attract more youth?
- Is there a stigma to being Christian and how do we combat that?
- How do we feed those who attend (spiritually)?
- Will we lose our identity
- Will we still have an Episcopal Church on the Eastern Shore in 10 years? 15 years?
- We hope to continue a personal and in person relationship with future Bishops
- We're too old
- Camp Wright – it's the future

- Modernize our image – 1982 hymnal, etc
- Diocese adopt an “all are welcome” communion regardless of baptism, etc.
- Maintain customary
- Continue investigating mission opportunities on the shore
- Why hasn’t the national church always funded this process?
- Invest the time to make the right decision
- Hope to maintain a Diocese of Easton – reflect that Eastern Shore identity. Healthy, vibrant diocese- working in and with communities – size is not important
- Concerns about losing connection or being overshadowed by those “over the bridge”
- If it ain’t broke...
- We don’t want to be overshadowed and pushed aside as small parts of a too-large diocese
- The lack of a clergy quorum this afternoon was unacceptable and disrespectful of the lay of this Diocese. Why? That is a huge problem. What does this indicate about where our Diocese is!
- We have great people! We can do great things!
- Explore new forms of worship, i.e. home based
- How to support small vanishing/diminishing parishes
- How partner with other faiths in rural areas to promote Jesus’ mission to help others
- Increase service to the underserved – homeless, hunger, those with disabilities
- We want to expand our spheres
- Demographic – popular place to retire
- Churches feel stable in 30-mile radius – use more non church places
- More events to get to know our neighbors
- ECW – no longer meeting. So sad. That could bring ideas together. What happened to the Diocesan ECW meetings?
- More programs to attract young Latinos and young anyone!
- Getting absorbed by a large-diocese we may lose voice and connection
- Some parishes who rely on endowments may “go away” when the money is spent
- You can use more modern liturgy to attract younger people – Book of Occasional Services and Enriching Our Worship are not always readily available
- MUSIC – more relatable and in SPANISH!!
- I hope that the Anglican tradition of worship and mission will continue in this area. I don’t care what organizational structure it takes.
- Worried about remote parishes not being served equally
- Growth in small parishes. How do we energize and get people into the Episcopal Church.
- How do we flip our mindset that we go to the people instead of focusing on them coming to us,
- Gaining vitality – need volunteers at the diocesan level throughout the year.

- My hope is that we will build upon and extend the work done thus far via “Parousic” document and its implementation which will require building a new vision for ministry and mission in Christ Jesus with the territory of the diocese as well as the larger church. My question is can we?
- Continue with Parousic Visions, build on it and continue with Iona initiative
- Loss of uniqueness
- Decrease in number of parishioners – many of us in the Easton Diocese are older and will be passing on (or already have). We need to come up with a way to increase the number of young people and families that come to our churches.
- Competition with Megachurches (aka “Entertainment Churches”. How do we compete with them without losing what the Episcopal Church stands for, our rituals and our traditions?
- Can we survive?
- What is the future.
- Self-propagating and sustaining church
- The declining membership
 - Youth ministry
 - Limited funds for outreach
- Lack of emphasis on evangelism
- The hope is to have a Christ-driven Church’ forgiveness, reconciliation and love above all.
- Church is in better shape for so many new deacons
- How to bring back congregations that disappeared after Covid?
- Has Discernment Committee already started conversations with Diocese of Delaware?
- How long is it going to take for the discernment committee to prepare a report. Is there a set timeline.
- Concerns about merging with Delaware or MD. Is there a benefit?
- Should small churches close? The community would suffer because the church closed. Sunday numbers may be down, but the community uses the church. Don’t be hung up on the ASA. Ensure churches are relevant to the community.
- Families? - Aging congregations, aging buildings, lack of volunteerism, shrinking clergy pool, tradition vs the future, grudges, less bullies and more dreamers.
- Hope – people, school, Camp Wright vision to fruition, rainy day funds, woman in charge
- Lack of young families
- Try to attract young people with praise bands
- Gospel brunch every Sunday – blues bands
- Youth events- funding needed
- DOE is isolated – perhaps we need to unify with Diocese of Delaware
- Have more of a relationship with the Diocese of Delaware

- Maintain own identity
- Explore all options
- Need acceptance of Deacons by Bishop
- Need for clergy and search for clergy to be expanded and multiple resources shared by Vestries
- Drop in Membership – especially no younger population
- Emphasis should be on worship, fellowship, outreach rather than emphasis on finance
- Programs to develop membership, community, pastoral programs, liturgical programs
- How to encourage inclusiveness