

Episcopal Church in Western Oregon
Report to the 136th Annual Meeting of Convention
October 26, 2024

HOUSING CRISIS WORKING GROUP

Contact:

Lay members: Carl Braginsky - St. Michael and All Angels, Portland; Jan Childs – St. John the Evangelist, Milwaukie; Cass Cole – St. David of Wales, Portland; Sara Jameson – St. Martin, Lebanon. Clergy Members: The Rev'd Jennifer Creswell – St. Andrew, Portland; The Rev'd Sara Fischer (first year only 2022–2023) – Sts Peter and Paul, Portland

Activities Report:

The Working Group completed its two-year charge in June 2024. At that time, we provided Bishop Diana a closing letter, a timeline of the work completed with some suggestions for next steps the Diocese could take and the discernment handout that congregations could use to help them consider ways they might move forward to discern how to live into their gospel values and answer the question “What would Jesus do?”

Expenditures

None

2024 Goals Progress

- Due to the departure of Ali Gannett, only one “housing success story” video was produced and distributed via the Diocesan Digest, a feature on the work underway at St. John the Divine in Springfield. The Zoom workshop to follow up on the video series did not occur.
- Completed the document “Ideas for How a Congregation Might Begin to Discern its Ministry to its Neighbors,”
- Completed the attached Summary of Work Completed and Next Steps

We offer our sincere thanks for the opportunity Bishop Diana provided us to explore, pray, consider and discern ways that the Episcopal Church in Western Oregon might further live into Jesus’s command to love our neighbors – especially those without stable housing.

Diocesan Housing Crisis Working Group
EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN WESTERN OREGON
June 2022 – June 2024
Summary of Work Completed and Next Steps

June 2022	Working Group formed, Charge from Bishop Diana Akiyama
September 2022	Interim Report to Bishop Diana Akiyama with attachment: Draft Housing Crisis Survey Questionnaire
October 2022	Working Group Prayer created and used
October 2022	Working Group Report to 2022 Diocesan Meeting with attachment Scriptural/Theological Framework and Call to Action
December 2022	Housing Crisis Survey Questionnaire featured in <i>Diocesan Digest</i> with link to survey; follow up emails; results tallied
February 2023	Progress Report sent to Bishop Diana Akiyama with attachments: 1. September 2022 Interim Report 2. Causes of Homeless in Oregon 3. Scriptural/Theological Framework
February 2023	Provided material on Housing Crisis Working Group for updated Housing Crisis Working Group page on Diocesan website
May 2023	Arranged for visit from Kevin Nye, author of <i>Grace Can Lead Us Home</i> , presented by Housing Crisis Working Group and Sponsored by the Episcopal Church in Western Oregon. May 6; Visits to St. Martins in Lebanon and evening meeting in Portland May 7: Visits to St. Andrews and Sts Peter and Paul in Portland
July 2023	Provided Working Group update report to Bishop Diana Akiyama with attachments A. Housing Crisis Survey results compiled and analyzed B. Summary of answers to the question “How might the Diocese of Oregon help your congregation address this crisis in your community?” C. Strategies for congregations in the categories of Advocacy, Financial Assistance and Ways to Look at Issue for Planning
August 2023	Zoom meeting with Bishop Diana Akiyama to discuss work to date and direction for the remaining year.

August 2023	Zoom meeting with Ali Gannett at the Diocese to discuss Video Project showcasing a variety of housing options being provided by churches within the Diocese
September 2023	1 st Video Shot at St. John the Divine, Springfield –Conestoga Huts provided in their parking lot in partnership with St. Vincent de Paul
October 2023	Working Group Report to 2023 Diocesan Meeting with attachment Map of Housing Projects in Progress
November 16, 2023	St. John the Divine Video completed. Information and link to video provided in Diocesan Digest
February 2024	Zoom meeting with Bishop Diana Akiyama and Housing Redevelopment Team
June 2024	Final letter to Bishop Akiyama, with attachments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discernment Resource for Congregations: “Ideas for How a Congregation Might Begin to Discern How to Use its Space” • This outline of work completed and next steps

SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS:

1. Continue to showcase housing success stories in the Diocesan Digest through video presentations and written articles. These stories can also highlight the work being done by the Diocesan Redevelopment Committee.
2. Periodically (3-5 years) update the Housing Crisis survey based on the questionnaire developed by the working group. The 2023 Housing Crisis survey provides a baseline of what parishes are doing, and it would be useful to gauge what progress is being made from time to time. Results can be distributed through the Diocesan Digest and website.
3. Commit to a formal liaison with organizations which work to end poverty and homelessness, such as Oregon Poor People’s Campaign, etc.
4. Consider highlighting National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week, Diocesan wide. It’s the week before Thanksgiving each year.