

**Global Episcopal Mission Network  
Minutes of the 2021 Annual Meeting  
Friday, April 23, 2021 at 11:45 Eastern  
Meeting on Zoom**

Due to issues with the Zoom link, the meeting began at noon with GEMN President Titus Presler introducing all present. The President declared a quorum present and invited all GEMN members and conferees to participate. He announced that the meeting would be recorded. After offering a prayer for the gathering, Titus invited a vote to affirm the decision of the GEMN Board to hold the Annual Meeting online, in light of pandemic circumstances preventing travel and in-person gathering. The vote passed unanimously.

GEMN Vice President Grace Burton-Edwards reviewed the minutes of the 2019 meeting. An Annual Meeting was not held in 2020 because of the cancellation of the 2020 Global Mission Conference due to the pandemic.

**President's Report – Titus Presler**

Titus began the President's Report with thanks for GEMN members. He spoke of how the Covid-19 pandemic affected the global mission efforts of all mission organizations. Restrictions on travel challenged mission efforts, but we adapted. Mission companions continued in communication and collaboration. He reflected on how different the effects of this pandemic were when compared to the 1918 flu pandemic, when no contact or communication was available. Nevertheless, the church flourished even then.

Titus reminded those gathered that our commitment is to mission as relationship. A good question to ask is "Are we truly friends?" The pandemic brought these questions to the fore. It also called forth questions of equity. People living in poverty and People of Color around the world have borne the brunt of the pandemic, and many have limited access to vaccines. Those in Christian mission need to be concerned with vaccine equity and justice.

Titus reported on GEMN activities in 2020. GEMN adapted by offering Mission Thursdays in September of 2020 and will do so again in 2021. The Mission Formation Program successfully moved online. A Global Mission Prayer Cycle was completed and is on the GEMN website. *Questing: The Way of Love in Global Mission* was published on Amazon formats. GEMN collaborated with the Standing Commission on World Mission and the Office of Global Partnerships to produce the Global Mission Digital Toolkit, funded by a Constable Grant.

Titus thanked the GEMN Board of Directors for their efforts of the past year. He invited special thanks for Holly Hartman who completed her second 3-year term. He thanked Pam Boston, Treasurer, and David Kendall-Sperry, Assistant Treasurer. He thanked Karen Hotte, who stepped down in 2020 after many years of faithful service as GEMN Executive Director. Titus welcomed and thanked Molly O'Brien, now serving as Interim Coordinator of GEMN.

Titus closed by reminding those gathered that the Mission questions we need to ask in the pandemic era are the same as always: What is God up to? Where do we see God working? What

is this era teaching us about church and mission that we must continue beyond the pandemic?  
“May the Holy Spirit guide us as we offer ourselves into that mission of God.”

### **Interim Coordinator’s Report – Molly O’Brien**

Molly reported on how GEMN changed during this pandemic season, as most organizations did. These changes included blessings as well as challenges. GEMN members remained faithful throughout. GEMN members understood the need to cancel the 2020 conference and then responded with a record 153 registrations for the 2021 conference. At this conference, we are hearing from speakers from many countries, but no one had to get on a plane. Existing members renewed their support in 2020 and are invited to do so again in 2021. Membership materials will be mailed after the conference. Molly thanked Karen Hotte for her help and members for their support in the leadership transition. She reported that the GEMN board has taken a more active leadership role. A staffing committee will review the type of staffing needed. Bylaws are in the process of revision. The document “Desired Future State of GEMN in 2021” continues to guide the work of the board. “GEMN *is* because all of you *are*.”

### **Mission Formation Report – Holly Hartman**

Holly began by sharing that in the past, this program was held on the day before the in-person conference. Participants were expected to attend two of these sessions and carry out projects in between. In 2020, the program was offered online, and the number of participants increased to about 40, including many from outside the US. Year 1 participants learn about the history of Anglican/Episcopal mission, cultural sensitivity, best practices for short-term mission, and case studies in mission. Year 2 participants study mission leadership, biblical foundations for mission, theology of mission, how to develop mission teams, and ways to form and sustain mission relationships. Participants are mentored in small groups. Groups meet during the year to discuss projects and continue learning. On the final day of training, Year 2 participants present their projects to the whole group and receive a certificate as “GEMN Mission Agents”. In 2021, the program will be offered online in late May over 4 days with 2-hour sessions each day. The leadership team includes Holly Hartman; GEMN Board members Martha Alexander, Titus Presler, and Jean Beniste; and Jeff Bower from the Diocese of Indianapolis. Holly invited all present to participate.

### **Global Mission Digital Toolkit – Jenny Grant and Tatiana Hoecker**

Jenny Grant, Officer for Global Relations and Networking with the Office of Global Partnerships and GEMN Board member, introduced herself and shared the work of the Office of Global Partnerships. She introduced Tatiana Hoecker, Project Coordinator for the Global Mission Digital Toolkit. Tatiana described the collaboration between GEMN, OGP and the Standing Commission on World Mission, funded by a Constable Grant, to create digital resources for mission formation for use within the Episcopal Church and in Anglican Communion. She described the transition in mission understanding and thanked SCWM for their work in developing the Guiding Principles and the Message to the Church. Tatiana then showed the current resources available on the Global Mission Digital Toolkit website. English and Spanish versions are available, and it is hoped that resources will also be available in French. Additional resources will be released this summer, hopefully including creation care resources from this conference, an interactive way to engage with the Guiding Principles, and more information about the Episcopal Church’s ministry with the United Nations.

### **Financial Report – Grace Burton-Edwards**

Vice President Grace Burton-Edwards offered a financial update, since Treasurer Pam Boston was not available. GEMN has traditionally relied on the conference to generate memberships and donations, so the loss of the 2020 Conference had a negative effect on GEMN's finances. However, in the absence of the conference, GEMN diversified income streams in 2020. GEMN was awarded a Creation Care Grant to be used for the mission conference. GEMN collaborated on a Constable Grant which generated funds for mission resources. GEMN received a large gift from a member who understood how the loss of the conference affected finances in 2020. GEMN also received a gift from a member toward establishing an endowment. By reducing expenses in 2020, GEMN was able to end the year with a small surplus. GEMN ended 2020 with \$47,522.25 in checking and savings. Membership donations in 2020 totaled \$14,048, about \$5,000 below the \$19,325 projected. Total income in 2020 was \$36,015 (including \$7,500 designated for the 2021 conference and \$1,000 designated for an endowment). Total expenses in 2020 were \$25,630.23. Projected income in 2021 is \$28,783. Projected expenses in 2021 are \$37,283.

### **Election of Board members**

Titus shared that in light of the pandemic and the cancellation of the 2020 Conference and Annual Meeting, the Board members extend members' terms by one year. Holly Hartman was now completing her second 3-year term (plus one year), and was rotating off the board. She will continue to coordinate the Mission Formation Program team.

The nominees for new board terms were introduced, and each shared a brief word with the gathering.

- Jean Beniste – Diocese of Chicago – Jean has been completing the unexpired term of a board member who stepped down. He is nominated for his first 3-year term.
- Jaime Briceño – Diocese of Chicago – Jaime has completed his first 3-year term and is nominated for a second 3-year term.
- Grace Burton-Edwards – Diocese of Atlanta – Grace has completed her first 3-year term and is nominated for a second 3-year term.
- Meredith Crigler – Diocese of Texas – Meredith is nominated for a first 3-year term.

Voting was by show of hands. This slate was elected by unanimous vote.

The President announced that specific plans are not yet in place for a 2022 Annual Meeting. There will be a conference as well as an Annual Meeting, either online or in-person with an online component. Suggestions for themes for the conference are invited.

During a time of questions and discussions, Tim Skimina from the Diocese of Northern Indiana encouraged support for GEMN's endowment.

The meeting concluded at 12:50.

Submitted by Grace Burton-Edwards