

PRESIDENT'S REPORT TO THE 2023 GEMN ANNUAL MEETING

Ms. Ayda Patricia Martin

May 2023

Let me start with some points about service on the GEMN Board. Service on the GEMN Board of Directors is an experience that brings us closer, nourishes us, motivates us and sends us out to carry out the Great Commission, which is an essential part of the Baptismal Covenant, especially in that we commit to “seek and serve Christ in all persons” and “strive for justice and peace among peoples, and respect the dignity of every human being.”

Service at GEMN binds us together in multiculturalism: each member of the Board comes from a distinctive region of our common home, the earth. This diversity helps nurture and strengthen our lives, and we undertake the mission with a sense of local and global community. Each member brings to the board their wealth of knowledge, experiences, dreams and enthusiasm to share. We learn from each other, engage in active listening, help each other, express solidarity, and strengthen our friendship.

I make this point in light how Jesus values friendship in mission in the Gospel of John: “I no longer call you servants . . . but I have called you friends. . . . You are my friends if you do what I command you. You did not choose me, but I chose you and commissioned you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last.”

I would like now to report to you that the 2022 Conference held online with the theme “Women in the Mission” closed successfully, with very positive evaluations from participants. We counted 159 participants, with representation from 18 countries outside the United States.

Board of Directors and Staff

The Board of Directors kicked off its 2022 work by welcoming new members on board: the Rev. Paul Rajan of the Diocese of Newark and InterChristian Initiatives; the Right Rev. Alan Scarfe, with extensive experience as a missionary activist from his role as bishop in Iowa; and the Rev. Canon Helen Van Koevinger of the Diocese of Lexington, with long mission experience in Mozambique. Planning was strengthened by the invaluable experience of the current members Ms. Martha Alexander, Rev. Meredith Crigler, vice president Ms. Molly O'Brien, secretary the Rev. Grace Burton-Edwards, Ms. Jenny Grant, the Rev. Jaime Briceño, the Rev. Maurice Dyer, and the Rev. Jean Beniste. Board meetings were held monthly via Zoom.

The board endorsed the core values of humility, inclusion, and companionship and revised GEMN's purpose statement: The purpose of the Global Episcopal Mission Network is to gather, inspire, and equip people to participate in God's mission. The various board committees were updated: Conference Planning, Mission Formation Program, Mission Thursdays, Bylaws, Communications, and Endowment.

We are very grateful for the Rev. Canon Dr. Titus Presler. When we considered asking him to be the executive director, the Board of Directors recognized his passion for the mission, his

experience, academic expertise and extensive knowledge of the Church. He has been an invaluable support for each member of the Board.

Ms. Martha Alexander of the Bylaws Committee offered an great service in bringing the revised proposal of the GEMN Bylaws to be submitted for approval at this Annual Meeting.

Joint Actions with Partners in Mission

Through Mission Thursdays, the Mission Formation Program, the Global Partnerships Networking Calls and Promotions for Young Adult Service Corps, GEMN has continued to support the efforts our mission partners are making.

The 2022 General Convention called for Global Mission Advocates to be appointed in dioceses, seminaries, and diocesan schools for ministry. We have been in constant communication with the Office of Global Partnerships (OGP) and with the Standing Commission on World Mission (SCWM) to collaborate in implementing Resolution A016. We are grateful to the Ms. Martha Gardner of SCWM and the staff of OGP: Rev. David Copley, Ms. Jenny Grant and Ms. Elizabeth Boe.

Finance

The Rev. Elizabeth Frank, an outstanding mission activist in the Diocese of Ohio, passed away in January 2022 and left a generous bequest to GEMN to support the network's longterm viability. The Board has established an endowment through the Episcopal Church Foundation. GEMN's Endowment Committee is chaired by the Rev. David Kendall-Sperry and includes Board members the Rev. Meredith Crigler and Bishop Scarfe.

The 2022 General Convention offered moral and financial support to GEMN through Resolution A028, which was introduced by the Standing Commission on World Mission (SCWM). Convention celebrated 25 years of GEMN promoting global mission, and praised GEMN's collaboration with SCWM and OGP in developing the Global Mission Digital Toolkit. Convention encouraged all church entities to support GEMN through participation, membership and funding. Convention also designated \$50,000 for GEMN for the current biennium.

Finally, I remind you that, according to the Catechism, the Church's mission is "to restore all people to unity with God and each another in Christ." The Church carries out its mission through the ministry of all its members – that is, through the work of each of us.

The Pandemic and other global crises remind us of how it is crucial for GEMN members to remain active in mission wherever we are. I invite you to check the regular updates of the GEMN web page; you will find very useful resources and suggestions for actions in your mission work, as well as tools to promote mission in your congregations, in your dioceses, in seminaries and in mission organizations.

Thank you for being present in person or virtually. Thank you for being part of GEMN. We truly value your efforts and cooperation. May God continue to bless you.