



# TRIALOGUE PLANS FOR PARTICIPATION

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When the Diocese of Wisconsin was formed in 1847, Bishop Jackson Kemper lived out the missionary spirit of the Church. He did so while working in a field rife with possibility and being God's witness "in the wilderness."

There is a type of wilderness today, and not one of geography. The world has changed, but will the church in this place? Can we form ourselves to be relevant? Can we use the resources God has provided to support the work of the Episcopal Church through local congregations?

The three Episcopal dioceses determined to pursue reunion as one diocese in Wisconsin to come together with a blank slate to create a new culture. Leaders from the Milwaukee, Fond du Lac and Eau Claire met in December to continue talks about reunification – to dream about what God wants us to do and take the steps to do it. This second meeting looked at ways to best involve people in the trialogue so we can begin to crystallize a direction and some action.

Delegates from each diocesan convention had provided thoughts, comments, and responses to the idea of reunion. There were a lot of questions about things we don't yet know. Many comments reflected a general desire to move towards a combined diocese. The responses noted the potential of one diocese to equip churches to better share the Gospel. But there is a lack of clarity evident as to what that means. The trialogue has just started, so this was to be expected. The need for information is great to generate specific ideas or proposals as well as to have more informed questions and discussion.

Reflecting on many responses, the leaders at this second meeting recognized the pursuit will not be easy and is to be undergirded by prayer. Seeking to come together and do things in a different way will be a challenge in a variety of ways.

The purpose of the trialogue is to enable members of the three Episcopal dioceses in Wisconsin to explore how reunification into one diocese can better equip us to be the church God is calling us to be in these times. Work is beginning to shape how we can get to know each other better. There will be opportunities to learn more about each diocese and its people. These will help in building relationships and informing the discussion. As with any change, there will be more questions than answers to start.

The leaders, who were selected by each diocesan governing body, serve as the trialogue Steering Committee going forward. Its purpose is to take collaborative action to build connections and relationships exploring reunification.

The Steering Committee will establish task forces to examine various components of trialogue. These are: Prayer; Parish and Regional Engagement; Culture; Location, Place, and Staffing; Finances; Constitution and Canons; and Communication. Members of each diocese with experience, knowledge, or passion in each area are being called to participate. These task forces will establish ways to involve more voices as ideas and proposals are developed. This may involve in-person connections as well as technological ones.

Communication will be essential. To involve over 10,000 persons is an immense task. An interactive website as centralized source of information is being designed. There will be ways to interact with others, provide answers to frequently asked questions, and share your thoughts and ideas with the task forces. Stay tuned to diocesan communication channels to learn ways to be a part to better equip us to be the church God is calling us to be in these times.

The trialogue Steering Committee members are the Rev. Canon Kathleen Charles, Tim Donahue, the Rt. Rev. Matthew Gunter, the Rev. Canon Aaron Zook (Diocese of Eau Claire), the Rt. Rev. Matthew Gunter, Matthew Payne, Pat Pfeifer, the Rev. Canon Wilson Roane (Diocese of Fond du Lac), The Rev. Canon Scott Leannah, the Rt. Rev. Jeffrey Lee, the Rev. Jana Troutman-Miller, John Vogel (Diocese of Milwaukee).