

Report of the Membership and Promotions Committee
Historical Society of the Episcopal Church Board
June 18, 2022

The committee gathered on the evening June 17th in preparation for the board meeting of the following day. Present were committee chair Musser, President Neville, 1st Vice President Utzinger, 2nd Vice President Runkle, Treasurer DeFilippi, and board members Fischer, Kujawa-Holbrook, Payne, Randle, Squires, and Stafford.

Committee chair Musser opened the meeting in prayer and then reviewed the work of the committee over the last calendar year. First, he began by noting four past initiatives over the last two years (constitutional changes to board membership requirements and committee member makeup, the joint mailing initiative with HSEC/NEHA/EWHP and the Living Church, the complimentary membership pilot program to seminarians, and out physical presence at various meetings) that are now, more-or-less, completed work. Second, the chair noted four current initiatives, which are either ongoing or already committed to as future endeavors. These include: 1) targeted mailing to key leaders of underrepresented groups within the Episcopal Church; 2) further discernment on the issue of expanded membership of the committee to include non-board members; 3) discernment of a joint membership option for the interconnected historical organizations (HSEC/NEHA/EWHP) and other societies; and 4) continued work on developing both formal and informal digital resources on the website and the effort to promote such resources. The conversation on these topics generated a robust discussion and segued into the second half of the meeting, which was structured as a general brain storming session around the question of what more we can be doing to promote the society and grow its membership.

The brain storming session was very productive and fairly wide ranging. Recognizing the reality that hybridized physical/digital connectivity is now – and presumably will remain – the new standard, the committee discussed ways to develop promotional programming that will cover both of these bases. The concept that generated the greatest amount conversation was the idea of developing a podcast, which might even be structured alongside the publication schedule of the journal in order to interview and highlight scholarship being published by the society. While no specific motion was generated within the committee meeting this year, there was unanimous agreement that the idea of developing a podcast and creating an ad hoc committee to pursue this initiative should be brought to the full board for further discernment. Other ideas discussed included offering a greater number of online programs in a given year (similar to EWHP’s Lenten series), offering a greater number of in-person gatherings possibly at the more local/regional level, developing greater connectivity to the provincial structures of the national church, and developing closer relationships to organizations and societies with similar missions.

As is mentioned in President Neville’s president’s report, the membership of the society is the highest it has been in many years, and the future of the society’s work and mission is bright. The overwhelming sense of the committee is that the society’s current efforts to promote itself and grow its membership remain strong but that there are several avenues through which it can grow even stronger. The chair thanks everyone who participated in the committee meeting and looks forward to the continued work of the society in the future.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the committee,
The Rev. Jonathan David Musser
Chair, Membership and Promotions Committee