
VOX SCHOLARIUM

NEWSLETTER OF THE GUILD OF SCHOLARS OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH

in tempore pestilentiae



Pieter Bruegel the Elder, *Triumph of the Black Death* (c.1562), Madrid, Museo del Prado

First Virtual Conference to Take Place on February 19 and 20, 2021

One of the important outcomes of our virtual annual meeting in October 2020 was the discovery that Zoom technology gives us a way to meet and keep in touch between our regular in-person meetings. The Executive Committee therefore decided to sponsor a virtual conference this year to take advantage of interactive video. This meeting will have limited but important content: one paper presentation, a worship service, a social gathering, and a short business meeting.

All the information needed for this meeting is contained in this issue of the *Vox Scholarium* and will only be supplemented next month by reminder e-mails.

NEWSLETTER OF THE GUILD OF SCHOLARS OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Zoom Instructions

Simple instructions for joining the several online sessions of the Virtual Conference will be sent to members by e-mail prior to the meeting. Our President, Ed Hansen, who is an experienced user of Zoom technology, will be the host of the sessions, as he was in October.

• **As with the Virtual Annual Meeting, the Virtual Conference will consist of a series of online events, scheduled so that members in the several continental time zones will be able to participate within reasonable day-time hours.** The schedule of events can be seen below. All times are listed in Standard Time from each of the four USA zones.

Friday, February 19, 2021 - Social Gathering and Meet-and-Greet for new members

8:30-10PM EST; 7:30-9:00PM CST; 6:30-8:00PM MST; 5:30-7PM PST

Meeting Link: <https://zoom.us/j/98635018337?pwd=dEVJNVUvb3FtWndjMnQ2Mm5pcGxBdz09>

Meeting ID: 986 3501 8337

Passcode: 034828

Saturday, February 20, 2021 - Mini-Conference

2:00 to 6:00 PM EST, 1:00 – 5:00 PM CST, 12:00 – 4:00 PM MST, 11:00 AM – 3:00 PM PST

Meeting Link: <https://zoom.us/j/99618086890?pwd=ZGZVV0tvUVBrUkhtcG1yOUZnTUQydz09>

Meeting ID: 996 1808 6890

Passcode: 332639

1. Gathering and Greetings: 2-2:30PM EST (1-5:00PM CST; 12-4:00PM MST; 11-3:00PM PST)
2. Prayer from the daily office: 2:30-3:00PM EST (1:30-2:00PM CST; 12:30-1:00PM MST; 11:30AM-12:00PM PST)
3. Paper: Peter Williams: "Mythic Archetypes in American Right-Wing Discourse"
3:00-4:15PM EST (2-3:15PM CST; 1-2:15PM MST; 12-1:15PM PST)
4. Brief Business Meeting: 4:15-4:45PM EST (3:15-3:45PM CST; 2:15-2:45PM MST; 1:15-1:45PM PST)
5. Reception for new members: 4:45-6:00PM EST (3:45-5:00PM CST; 2:45-4:00PM MST; 1:15-3:00PM PST)

NEWSLETTER OF THE GUILD OF SCHOLARS OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Mission Statement Discussion Group

The original purpose of the Guild of Scholars of the Episcopal Church was put forward in the document “The Guild of Scholars in the Episcopal Church: A Statement of its Organization History, Purpose and Activities.” which can be found at:

https://www.guildofscholars.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Guild_of_Scholars_Basic-Objectives.pdf

This document came out of the organizing meeting of the Guild held in 1940. We have not been able to find any other document that sets forth the purpose and goals of our organization. We revisited this document in a discussion during our 2018 annual meeting. As part of our preparation for incorporation we decided during our 2019 annual meeting to begin a process to draft a mission statement for the Guild. The first part of this process will be discussions over the internet in which all interested members can take part. This process will culminate with a draft of a mission statement which can be discussed, modified and possibly approved during our 2021 annual meeting.

As a first step the executive committee has set up an email discussion group on which our members can share their thoughts about the mission of the Guild of Scholars. There are currently fifteen members subscribing to this group. The discussions so far have centered on the relevance of the “Statement of Organization, History, Purpose and Activities” for our current situation and our requirements for membership. If you are interested in taking part in this conversation, but not currently enrolled in this group, you can subscribe at GSECmission+subscribe@groups.io. If for some reason this does not work send an email to Ed Hansen (hansen@hope.edu) and he will work on enrolling you manually.

News of Members

We continue to look for news of members to publish in the *Vox Scholarium*. Since our members are productive scholars or artists, there must be much to publicize. Please forward any such information along with images (jpeg, gif, or png format) to the editor: Bob Benson by e-mail at bensonra@miamioh.edu or by snail mail at 6090 Contreras Road, Oxford OH 45056.

NEWSLETTER OF THE GUILD OF SCHOLARS OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Recommending and Accepting New Members

Traditionally scholars nominated for membership in the Guild have been vetted by the New Members Committee and, when appropriate, invited to the Annual Meeting, so that, having read information on their scholarship, we can meet them before their membership is voted on at the Business Meeting. Rather than delay receiving new members, the EC decided to invite nominees to the 2020 Virtual Meeting and then arranged a remote “meet and greet” in December as well as a virtual mini-meeting scheduled for February. These events give a chance for nominees and members to become acquainted and we will recognize our new members at the end of our February mini-meeting.

Nominees who could not join any of our virtual events will, like nominees in other years who could not attend the annual meeting, be invited to attend the 2021 Annual Meeting and be voted on then. In addition to nominees from previous years, we will consider new nominations for membership in the Guild during our 2021 Annual Meeting.

Do you know someone with intellectual or artistic interests who also identifies with the Episcopal Church? If so, they are potential members of the Guild. In order to nominate a person you should enumerate some of their accomplishments (for example significant publications, creative works, awards, recognitions, offices in professional societies or consultative bodies and so on) and evidence of their identification with the Episcopal Church. You should **send this information to Bob Benson** (bensonra@miamioh.edu) who will forward it to the New Members Committee.

The New Members Committee will also consider self-nominations. If you wish to encourage someone to nominate themselves for membership to the Guild, ask them to send an e-mail to the president of the guild (Ed Hansen, hansen@hope.edu) who will answer their questions and guide them through the process.

The 2021 New Members Committee is Marsha Dutton, John Gatta, Peter Williams, and William Polik. Ed Hansen is a non-voting member ex officio.

NEWSLETTER OF THE GUILD OF SCHOLARS OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH

**Minutes of the Annual Business Meeting of the Guild of Scholars of the Episcopal Church,
Zoom, October 25, 2020, to be approved at the 2021 Annual Meeting**

In attendance for all or part of the meeting: Robert Benson, Nicholas Birns, Mary Ellen Bowden, Bennett Brabson, David Burton, Mary Callaway, Marsha Dutton, Rozanne Elder, Karen Evans-Romaine, Kitty Ferguson, Yale Ferguson, Don Ferree, Edward Hansen, Charles Huttar, Norman Jones, Jameela Lares, Rowena McClinton, Frederick Smith, Warren Smith, Thomas Willard, and Peter Williams, as well as non-members Mark Brown, Claire Francomano and Chris Kaiser.

Ed Hansen called the meeting to **order** with a prayer at 3:30 p.m. EDT

Ed Hansen reminded us that the **minutes** of the 2019 business meeting had been distributed by e-mail, and he asked if there were any corrections to those minutes. Peter Williams moved that the minutes be approved, and Nicholas Birns seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

There was considerable discussion on the **item of new members**. Mark Brown had attended all meetings, Claire Francomano had only attended part of one talk, and Chris Kaiser—nominated five years earlier—attended what Ed Hansen characterized as a “fair portion” of the Zoom meetings to that point. Charles Huttar asked if we should reconsider non-attendees. Robert Benson mentioned that Mary Cayton did not get the e-mail about the meeting in time because it was sent to the wrong address. Ed Hansen suggested a meet and greet at a later date for those invitees who did not attend all of the Zoom meetings this time; it could go for two hours and include all invitees, after which the membership could meet to vote on their acceptance. Rozanne Elder thought this was a good idea and that Chris Kaiser could be included. Robert Benson said he would be happy to set up such a meeting and that he had others on a list who could be invited. Charles Huttar moved that we accept all five invitees as members, plus Chris Kaiser; there was no second. Marsha Dutton pointed out that there had been many people elected as members who have never come again. Rozanne Elder said that it would be more gracious to meet the invitees personally. Nicholas Birns **moved** that we hold a meet and greet to which non-attendees would be invited, with subsequent election. Tom Willard seconded. During discussion of this motion, Kitty Ferguson asked if Chris Kaiser could be included, but Marsha pointed out that he had only come to the social meeting, and Rozanne Elder explained that she had invited Chris. The motion for a meet and greet carried. Charles Huttar then moved that we elect Mark Brown as a member, and Nicholas Birns seconded. The motion carried with one abstention (Warren Smith). Mark Brown was invited into the Zoom meeting and welcomed. Claire Francomano was then invited in and told about the upcoming meet and greet; she agreed to stay a little while as a nonvoting observer.

Reports followed from those members of the Executive Committee whose information was most relevant to the meeting.

NEWSLETTER OF THE GUILD OF SCHOLARS OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH

President's Report: Ed Hansen summarized his written report, which noted a change in the Executive Committee and the move from a physical to a virtual meeting and also introduced two new items of business to be discussed later: possible incorporation of the Guild, which could proceed now, his having done the research on it, and a mission statement, which would be required if we incorporated. Ed Hansen additionally reported on the work of two further committees on which he serves as a nonvoting member. The New Member Committee (Marsha Dutton, Peter Williams, John Gatta, and Will Pollock) approved and sent invitation letters to 6 new candidates for membership and re-invitation letters to 3 additional candidates who were not able to attend the 2019 meeting. The nomination committee came up with a slate of the officers we need to elect: vice president, recording secretary, and treasurer. In addition, the nomination committee was asked to look at the workload issue for the vice president, who besides working on the executive committee has also been required to be the program chairman, which is a particularly work intensive position. The nominations committee proposes a new position of associate vice president, also to be discussed under new business.

Vice-President's Report: Rozanne Elder reminded us that our original plans to return to General Theological Seminary in New York had fallen through, so she searched for another venue. We were accepted at Virginia Theological Seminary and had wonderful plans made there, especially thanks to a member who lived in the area. But then, COVID came along and VTS cancelled all guests. They said that they would be delighted to have us next year, so Rozanne has passed along all the plans to our proposed VP and we are booked in for October 22-24, 2021. Rozanne has been there and says that it is very gracious and also very easy to get to by plane, train, car, and metro, so she thinks we will like it. She expressed her appreciation to the president, the corresponding secretary, and a number of other people who have lessened her workload.

Treasurer's Report: Due to a misunderstanding about the meeting time, the Treasurer was not present at the moment, but his report had been sent to everyone. Martha Dutton shared her copy on the screen. Ed Hansen pointed out that there was a very healthy cash balance, with an excess of about \$7,800, because there had been no physical annual meeting, but if we were to incorporate and get a tax exemption, we would need that money. Charles Huttar had two questions, one more serious than the other. The one he characterized as trivial was that he saw a disparity of perhaps \$100 between the checking account and PayPal balance with the cash balance reported at the bottom of the report. The more serious question was that dues-paying members appeared to be falling off, from a number in the upper 50s of dues paying members in good standing prior to 2018; in 2018 it was 45, and then in 2019 it was 39, and in 2020 so far it was only 20; he wondered what the executive committee intended to do to get people back. Marsha Dutton noted that many members had failed to pay dues without a meeting reminder, to which Charles replied that 2019 had already been lower. Ed Hansen agreed that expanding the membership of the Guild needs to be addressed, though the Executive Committee does not yet have a plan to do so. He noted that we had a tabled motion to look at the membership policy. Warren Smith suggested a personal contact with members we had not heard from in a while, such as a phone call. Ed called for a motion, and Don Ferree moved that we accept the Treasurer's Report, and Marsha Dutton seconded. The report was approved unanimously.

NEWSLETTER OF THE GUILD OF SCHOLARS OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH

The meeting then proceeded to the **election of officers** for three-year terms. The slate was as follows: Vice President: Warren Smith; Recording Secretary: Jameela Lares; Treasurer: Alec Valentine. Martha Dutton thanked all three for being willing to serve. She also noted that Ed had another year of his three-year term. Charles Huttar offer a motion that nominations be closed and that we pass a unanimous ballot for the three candidates, Robert Benson seconded Charles's motion. The motion passed.

The first item under **new business** was **the report on incorporation**. Ed Hansen pointed out both the two main advantages (it limits the liability of officers who are currently personally liable and it allows us to apply for tax-free status as a nonprofit organization) and two disadvantages (the greater burden of reporting and the initial cost despite fairly low ongoing costs). We might already be covered as an organization associated with The Episcopal Church, and we need to check that possibility first. This item of incorporation occasioned considerable discussion which can be grouped into the following subtopics:

Further issues on cost: In answer to Bennett Brabson's question, Ed explained that the cost would be \$500 to start plus \$300/year if we retained a law firm as an ongoing agent, but we could avoid paying the \$300 per year if we appointed as agent a member who is a state resident; that agent need not be an officer of the executive committee. All contact (e.g., IRS) would be to that agent, but we have to have an in-state address. Ed thought that the yearly filing fee was \$10, but Mark Brown, who has a similar LLC, said there is no fee and the Short-Form 99N tax form takes only 5-10 minutes to complete.

Bylaws: Rozanne Elder reminded us that we needed to set up bylaws. Ed Hansen reminded us that we had a document on the responsibilities of officers in the Executive Committee that is already the basis of bylaws.

Tax-deductible donations: Don Ferree reminded us to make sure we incorporate under the right section of code 501(c)(3) to ensure that donations were tax-deductible. Huttar moved that the executive committee be empowered to incorporate and receive tax deductible donations.

Karen Evans-Romain seconded the motion, and Ed Hansen asked for discussion. Marsha Dutton asked for further clarification on the advantages of incorporation, since the Guild has always accepted donations. Ed explained that those donations could not be tax deductible. There was some discussion about whether we had ever solicited donations or in fact had anything to spend them on. Nicholas Birns reminded us that at one time we took up donations for General Theological Seminary when we met there, though that tie has now been dissolved. Other suggestions included: meeting places can donate part of the cost and write it off (Brabson); we could pay a concert provider an honorarium (W. Smith); we could get discounted rates (Elder); we could have a travel fund for younger members and use resources to expand membership (Bowden); and we could encourage estate planning (Jones).

The motion to empower the executive committee to incorporate and receive tax deductible donations was carried by 21 yes votes with 1 abstention.

The second item under **new business** was the following proposal regarding **the mission statement** included in the president's report: "The executive committee proposes that we start a process in which interested Guild members study the original statement of purpose and take part in discussions held over Zoom. The ability to record these discussions means that they could be made available to members who

NEWSLETTER OF THE GUILD OF SCHOLARS OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH

cannot attend them personally. Based on these discussions, a smaller group would draft mission statement which would be presented at the 2021 meeting for discussion, modification, and approval.” After initial discussion, Ed Hansen asked for a motion to proceed with the executive Committee’s plan. Nicholas Birns moved, and Robert Benson seconded. The various concerns and discussion on the mission statement included the following:

- Opportunities to solicit opinions from those not attending the Zoom meetings (Williams); the meeting would be recorded (Hansen).
- Would this document replace the seven-page statement (Kitty Ferguson)? Replacing it was never the intent, and mission statements change over time (Robert Benson). We should link the historical somewhere (Williams, Y. Ferguson). Charles Huttar noted that the original 1940 statement was already linked on our website under History, that interestingly the original statement was presented in 1940 to the General Convention of the Church, and that we are addressing ourselves now to a larger spectrum of people.
- Changes needed to include some nuancing from the old language, since the meaning and or sense of “man” and “doctrine” have changed since 1940 (Mary Callaway); Williams agreed.
- What is the purpose of the mission statement (Brown)? Answers included it would help us define and sharpen our sense of purpose (Hansen), give us a vision for what more we might be accomplishing than what we are doing now and give us more recognition (Huttar), recognize post-1940 movements like civil rights and women’s rights; include more than publications in definition of a scholar (F. Smith, Hansen, Willard). Marsha Dutton noted a long concern with what it means to be a scholar, including a long description of scholarship in the original draft of the membership policy proposal. Robert Benson would like to publish more varied descriptions of what members are doing in the newsletter as a way of expanding our vision of what scholarship means. Several mentioned how differently various disciplines view scholarship (Hansen, Willard, Williams, Brown).
- What about a longer vision statement (Brabson). We were thinking of a paragraph (Lares).
- What about our relationship with the national church? Do we want a relationship (Y. Ferguson)? We need to ask them what they think we are, and what about other churches to which we are in full communion (Elder)? We have discussed this issue extensively in the past (Birns). This is why we need to set up a process.

The motion to set up the process passed with 18 yes and 3 abstain.

The third and final item under **new business** was the motion of the nominating committee to create the additional position of associate vice president on the executive committee to help the vice president with arranging the annual convention. At the end of their respective terms, the Associate Vice President would automatically become Vice President, and a new Associate VP would be elected. Because Rozanne Elder had already done so much work on setting up the conference at VTS, the position would not need to be filled until elections were held at the next meeting. Discussion of this proposal included Warren Smith’s concern that he still have a small group to talk things out with, to which such a person would be a helpful inclusion; Zoom meetings with the Executive Committee would probably suffice. Ed Hansen announced that the Executive Committee should expect a Zoom meeting in the next couple of weeks. Charles

NEWSLETTER OF THE GUILD OF SCHOLARS OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Huttar was concerned that we not create any automatic candidates, and Hansen agreed that a six year term was too long. Robert Benson thought that having overlapping terms would be helpful, especially given that Warren would already be one year into his three-year term when the new position started. Marsha Dutton agreed that such an overlap would be good for institutional memory. Charles Huttar noted that it was already [5:00 p.m.] with seemingly more to discuss about the position, but since there was no hurry to establish the position, he moved that the motion be tabled—except as Dutton pointed out, there was no motion to table yet and discussion of the proposal was what they had in mind. Discussion continued as to what arrangements entailed and how difficult it was to act without continuity (Elder), how the work could be divided, perhaps with a program person and a conference organizer (Brabson), the need for someone to be responsible for oversight (Brown), heavier arrangement workload now that we are no longer at GTS (Dutton), the value of having a member on the ground in the vicinity with local knowledge (Elder), needing to establish a closer relation with the local diocese (W. Smith), and the need to settle the issue at this meeting to have an election next year to retain an overlap (Hansen). Martha Dutton asked if there could be a straw vote as to whether the jobs should be split or go ahead with the associate position, which raised further commentary about how well either option would work, given personality styles, and also the difficulty of the proposed six-year term. Ed Hansen proposed that we vote on the position now, minus the automatic succession. Charles Huttar reminded us that if someone had only venue responsibility, we could conceivably make arrangements three years ahead. Peter Williams noted that it was [5:15 p.m.], and Ed Hansen agreed that we had reached a stopping point. The final decision was that the nominations committee could send out the proposal to the executive committee.

Ed Hansen asked if there was any other new business. Peter Williams proposed that we have a spring meeting via Zoom, and Ed Hansen said that it would be discussed at the meeting of the Executive Committee. Mary Ellen noted that the business meeting was being recorded and asked if the talks were being recorded. Ed said they were, as long as the speakers were agreed.

The meeting adjourned at 5:20 p.m. EDT.

Officers of the Guild

Ed Hansen, President (hansen@hope.edu)

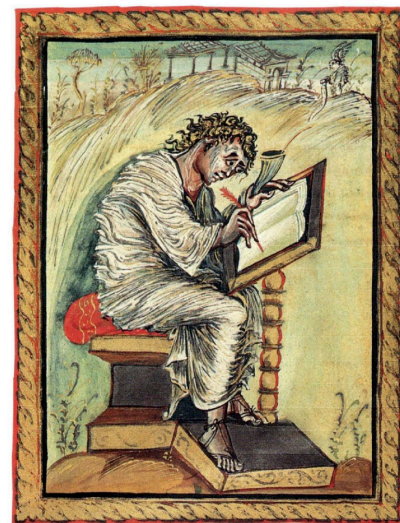
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An interpretation of a classical scholar as an evangelist in the Ebbo Gospels (816-835).