Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

We are looking forward to our 233rd Annual Convention of the Episcopal Church in Connecticut this November 19-20 at the Hartford Civic Center. The Convention will include a diocesan-wide Eucharist on Sunday, November 20. We are calling our time together on Sunday, both the Eucharist and programs highlighting select Ministry Networks, “Celebration of the Spirit.” This celebration marks both our common life and the many and diverse ways that the Spirit is leading us in God’s mission into our neighborhoods, our state, and our world. We are delighted that our Presiding Bishop, the Most Rev. Michael B. Curry, will be joining us on November 20 and preaching the sermon at our Eucharist.

Celebration of the Spirit on Sunday, November 20 is free and open to all in ECCT and beyond. It is our hope that there will be participants in this joyful celebration from every parish and worshipping community across ECCT. If every parish and worshipping community sends 12 people, we will quickly fill all two thousand available seats.

Some clergy and lay leaders across ECCT are inquiring how to handle services in their local congregations for those who will not be attending Celebration of the Spirit in Hartford. After discussing the matter with the Convention Planning Team, we suggest the following possibilities. It is up to you in your own contexts and congregations to decide the best way forward.

**Morning Prayer**

As many of us recall, previous to the 1979 Book of Common Prayer, Morning Prayer was the principal service in most congregations on Sunday mornings. If a clergy person will not be available to your parish because of attendance at Celebration of the Spirit, a layperson could lead Morning Prayer. To this end, Ian offered a workshop for laity at Spring Training on how to lead Morning Prayer. With a little preparation, a layperson or a team of laypeople are easily empowered to lead Morning Prayer, and deliver a sermon or homily for those gathered.
**Early Morning Eucharist**
For those of you within a one-hour drive of Hartford — which is more than half of our parishes — another option is to hold an early morning Eucharist for those who will not be joining us in Hartford. (We appreciate that many ECCT parishes hold an early morning Eucharist already so this would not be an additional service.) This option allows enough time, after worship, for clergy to drive to Hartford for the 10:30 a.m. Eucharist at the Convention Center.

**Live-Streamed Worship**
Our Convention Planning Team is working hard to produce a live video stream of the worship service at Celebration of the Spirit on Sunday morning. After holding a worship service (whether Morning Prayer or an early morning Eucharist), parishioners might gather together to watch the worship service as it unfolds in Hartford. Bishop Curry’s sermon is sure to inspire. While the distribution of communion in the local context is not a part of this viewing, it is an excellent opportunity to gather together with other parishes nearby to watch the service and share fellowship. The service bulletin will be made available for people to follow along and join in prayer. This is a great collaborative option and we recognize that not all churches or parish halls are technically equipped for projecting a live video stream. If you are able to live-stream the service, please provide Adam Yates with your contact information so that we are able to communicate this option to all of the people in ECCT. We encourage you to reach out to you others in your Region as well.

If you have questions about Convention and its Celebration of the Spirit on Sunday, November 20, please be in touch with the Convention Planning Team by contacting The Rev. Adam Yates, Secretary of Convention (ayates@episcopalct.org) or either of us.

We look forward to celebrating the Spirit with you in November!

Faithfully,

The Rt. Rev. Ian T. Douglas
Bishop Diocesan

The Rt. Rev. Laura J. Ahrens
Bishop Suffragan