



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS
37 Chestnut Street Springfield, MA 01103

To: Rectors, Wardens, and Vestries
From: Steve Abdow, Canon for Mission Resources
Subject: Annual Parish Audit
Date: January 2021

First, let me say thank you to all parish leadership for your stewardship of financial resources this past year. It has been intense and a lot has taken place, with grace breaking through in surprising places.

Our plan is to complete careful audits in 2020 as we always have in a safe way. As you know, an annual audit is required by canon, [see enclosed [Canonical Audit Requirements](#)] and we assured our state legislators of our goal of full financial transparency, with an annual audit being a cornerstone of that transparency.

Upon receipt of this memorandum, please make arrangements for the audit of the 2020 financial records. In our diocese, the audit can be performed by (1) a **three-person** parish audit committee, by (2) a Certified Public Accountant, or by (3) **Mr. Steve Hasbrouck**, who has is taking over the role from Bruce Rockwell. Steve has been authorized by Diocesan Council to perform audits for our congregations. Steve has done bookkeeping, consulting and auditing for Episcopal churches in both Eastern and Western MA for two decades. He will use the diocesan audit guidelines, and his work will be very thorough. He has a strategy to perform your audit thoroughly and safely. He will make a full report to the Vestry as required by canons. You can contact Steve at (413) 323-6226 or sbrouck@crocker.com. **You would be well advised to contact Steve immediately**, as his calendar is sure to fill quickly.

My recommendation and desire is that you contract with Steve to perform your audit. This is an affordable, efficient way to go, and bringing in a knowledgeable person from the outside to look at your finances is prudent, wise, and good stewardship. If you have been doing 3 person audits for a while now it is good to have Steve come in as another set of eyes.

This mailing includes a link to the materials your audit committee will need to do its work to audit the 2020 parish financial records. It has been our experience that a three-person committee of volunteers can do this work very well if one member has some familiarity with financial reports and can, using the suggested work papers, direct the work of the others.

The audit will be most valuable if it is done in a timely fashion. Please make sure that the Audit Committee gets appointed right away so the audit work can commence and be completed on time. Please return the **Auditor Appointment Form** to Diocesan House by **March 31**. The diocesan canons require that a copy of the completed **Certificate of Audit** be returned no later than **July 1**.

We also request that a copy of the completed Internal Controls Questionnaire and a copy of the financial section of your Annual Report be submitted with the completed certificate of audit, and a copy of the vestry minutes at which the audit was accepted.

If you have any questions about your parish audit you may contact Susan Olbon at 413-417-2429 or solbon@diocesewma.org.