

A photograph of a woman with short, light-colored hair, wearing a dark jacket, playing a black grand piano. The piano is open, and the woman is looking down at the keys. In the background, there is a stone wall and wooden chairs, suggesting a church or cathedral interior. A large, dark, diagonal beam of light or shadow crosses the upper part of the image.

THE Harvest

December 2023 | The Episcopal Diocese of Kansas

164th Diocesan Convention

Clergy and Lay Leaders of the diocese
gather for annual convention at Grace
Cathedral, Topeka.

Interfaith Service / St. James Lay Worship Leaders / Province VII Bishops

The face and fabric of the church today



I AM NOT USUALLY

one who quotes statistics. But during the fall House of Bishops meeting, leaders of The Episcopal Church shared carefully collected data about the state of our church that seems worthy of sharing. The data reveals the face and fabric of the Episcopal Church today, with a particular focus on clergy.

General View

Our membership and worship attendance numbers are in decline. But the graphs do somewhat mirror U.S. population graphs. One intriguing and positive note: financial giving in the Episcopal Church has

remained level. We are fewer per capita, but we are more generous!

Clergy Faces, Some Stats

Today, about half of Episcopal parishes are served by a solo Rector. Approximately 15% of parishes have more than one priest. Bishops make up 3% of all clergy. By race and ethnicity, deacons are our most diverse order: 29% are not White.

For those who identify as male and female, the orders are as follows: Priests – 60% male and 40% female; Deacons – 36% male and 64% female; Bishops – 70% male and 30% female. Two percent of all clergy identify as non-binary. The majority of all three clergy orders identify as heterosexual with 24% of priests, 14% of deacons, and 7% of bishops identifying as gay, lesbian, or bisexual.

The Current Fabric, A Weave of Traditional and Emerging Models

Most interesting to me, and most resonant with our current Diocese of Kansas realities, is information that describes how we are in a time of both traditional and emerging models of church and clergy life. While all of our parishes and contexts are dynamic and changing, some of us worship and enjoy fellowship in parishes with one full-time priest who has only one employer; who only works for The Episcopal Church; who will serve until a new call or retirement; and who usually earns more compensation with more experience and each new call. Others of us are served by priests who are part-time with our parish; they have another (non-church) vocation; or

they serve several parishes who share their attention; their compensation is more varied and less linear than with the traditional model. (Our newly launched “Shared Ministry Ministers” in the Agape, Little Church on The Prairie, and Missouri River Minister are prime examples of these Emerging Models.)

Early Christian Face and Fabric

It has struck me that the current-day face and fabric of the Church has some intriguing resemblance to the face and fabric of early Christianity. According to tradition and in the Biblical book of Acts chapter 15, the Apostle Paul and his missionary companion Barnabas come to meet with James the Just, Peter, and John in Jerusalem. In many ways, they are a picture of the interplay between the Traditional Model and the Emerging Model.

James and the others in Jerusalem live their Christianity in a form more traditionally aligned with their Jewish roots and structures. Paul and Barnabas and their new Gentile converts live their Christianity in an emerging model and structure.

A Call to Embrace Change

The face and the fabric of the Episcopal Church is changing. Our face looks more like the whole people of God. Our fabric is a new weave of traditional and emerging strands. As they did in the time of St. James and St. Paul, may we rejoice to behold how our ever-changing, ever-constant God brings the Way of Love to us! ☸

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ON THE COVER: Dr. Kristi Baker-Lampe plays the prelude for the Diocesan Convention Eucharist at Grace Cathedral, Topeka. Photo by Michele Moss.

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The Episcopal Church is a community of 2 million members in 111 dioceses in 17 countries in the Americas and abroad.

The Most Rev. Michael B. Curry,
Presiding Bishop

The Episcopal Diocese of Kansas is a community of 8,500 members in 44 congregations across eastern Kansas.
The Rt. Rev. Cathleen Chittenden Bascom, *Bishop*

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News and notes from congregations



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Community members attend Trunk or Treat event at St. David's, Topeka.

St. David's welcomes all ages

On October 28 St. David's, Topeka hosted its annual Trunk or Treat, featuring games, prizes, candy, a bouncy house, and burgers and hot dogs. The congregation was shocked when more than 700 children and adults attended the event. The church also recently started a monthly community Dementia Support Group for caregivers and relatives of those struggling with dementia. Each month, 20 or so people from the community and parish gather for mutual support and sharing.

St. John's, Abilene participated in the Abilene Heritage Homes for the Holidays Tour, welcoming members of the community to visit the church and experience its spaces.

Trinity, Arkansas City is partnering with Grace, Winfield to collect blankets for the Blankets of Love Ministry that provides blankets to those in need during winter months.

Trinity, Atchison helps residents of Senior Village who are celebrating birthdays by providing birthday cake once a month.

Grace Church, Chanute hosted the Southeast Convocation Service of Lessons and Carols. A reception was held following the service.

St. Paul's, Clay Center provides seniors in need with a box of mostly non-perishable food, on the last Wednesday of each month.

St. Paul's, Coffeyville accepts donations to the parish's Thrift Shop weekly. Proceeds from the store go to support the church's community outreach.

St. Andrew's, Derby held its second Trunk or Treat event for the Derby community. In spite of the weather and being inside, several hundred children and families attended the event. St. Andrew's also provided refreshments for the Derby Community Veterans Day observance.

St. Martin's, Edwardsville celebrated the rededication and naming of the parish's former worship space, which will now be known as Milan Hall, in honor and memory of the Rev. Deacon Jesse Milan, his wife Alversa, and the Milan family. In addition to their service to St. Martin's, the diocese, and the wider church, the Milans were instrumental in the civil rights movement in northeast Kansas.

St. Andrew's, Emporia welcomes young adults on Sunday evenings for a meal, games, and meaningful conversation about faith. The intergenerational group includes students from ESU, young adults from the parish and community, as well as older parishioners.

Trinity, El Dorado hosted a pet blessing service, collected school supplies, and provided pet food through Priscilla's Pantry to those in need. The church also completed a peanut butter and food drive, collecting 453 food items that were donated to the Salvation Army Food Pantry.

St. Mary's, Galena held a chili supper for the community to raise funds for the church's monthly mission of providing a meal at Watered Gardens homeless shelter in Joplin, Missouri. The church invited the public and 50 people attended.

St. Timothy's, Iola received Campus Ministry Parish Partner Grants from the diocese to support its ministry with students at Neosho County Community College and Allen Community College.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

The Very Rev. Sharon Billman blessed a camel on St. Francis day.

St. John's, Parsons hosts animal blessing

Mother Sharon Billman made some new friends when Kramer's Livestock and Petting Zoo of Arcadia brought some of their animals to the St. Francis Animal Blessing at St. John's. Like many parishes in the diocese, the church hosts an animal blessing service each year to celebrate the feast day of St. Francis of Assisi.

Church of the Epiphany, Independence hosted a Holiday Craft Fair and Cookie Market with proceeds going to support community outreach.

Church of the Covenant, Junction City offered a Sunday evening service during Advent, hoping to add meaning to the season and help in anticipation of the arrival of the newborn Christ into the world.

St. Paul's, Kansas City provides a hot breakfast, fresh produce, baked goods, and non-perishable foods to 250 of its neighbors each Saturday.

St. Anselm's Canterbury, Lawrence held a fall work day where students, alumni, and staff gathered at the house to do yardwork, cleaning, decorating, and repairs.

St. Margaret's, Lawrence presented four different families with gift cards for each member as well as a grocery card for their Christmas meal through Angel Tree in Douglas County.

Trinity, Lawrence prays for the community through their Prayer Chain. Members pray daily for those who are ill, suffering or troubled; who have died; or who wish to offer praise and thanksgivings. Members find that their own prayer life deepens though this daily practice.

St. Francis Canterbury, Manhattan initiated a Student Peer Ministry Council that has planned and coordinated the ministry for the fall semester with the support of diocesan staff and local clergy.

St. Paul's, Manhattan provided finals care packages with snacks and goodies for the students of St. Francis Canterbury House.

St. Michael's, Mission gathered money to purchase socks and other vital clothing for the unhoused through its Socks Sunday collection. The donations are made to Uplift and will include over 3000 pairs of socks.

Church of the Ascension, Neodesha hosted a Halloween Trunk or Treat for the community in the church's parking lot.

St. Matthew's, Newton explored the spirituality of fly fishing with guest speakers, Anthony Surage and Mike Aleckson, who shared about their fishing adventures from their new book *Life and Death in the Middle: Reflections from the Seam Line*.

St. Aidan's, Olathe participated in Thanksgiving in Action, and col-



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Scandinavian band plays for Eucharist at Grace, Ottawa.

Grace, Ottawa worships with Scandinavian band

When it comes to music, Grace, Ottawa enjoys variety. Most recently the parish welcomed the Lawrence based Scandinavian folk band Ingevalds Spelman to lead the parish in songs during the Eucharist. The band played traditional hymnody in Scandinavian folk style.

lected 36 boxes of food which were donated to those in need in Olathe.

St. Thomas', Overland Park expanded its immigration ministry and will welcome a new refugee family from Iraq.

St. Peter's, Pittsburg received a Campus Ministry Parish Partner Grant from the diocese to help support its College Chorus Ministry with Pittsburg State University.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

St. Nicholas visits with children at Grace Cathedral.

Grace Cathedral, Topeka celebrates Feast of St. Nicholas, welcomes refugees

On Sunday, December 3, Grace Cathedral welcomed 21 Ukrainian families for worship and a potluck lunch following the service. The Hospitality Committee provided fried chicken and rolls for the lunch and parishioners brought side dishes. Activities included a visit from St. Nicholas, a hot cocoa and cider bar, and a holiday market where families could choose from Christmas items donated by parishioners such as Christmas trees and decorations. Cathedral youth were on hand to sell baked treats, handmade prayer beads, and other items to raise money for the group's upcoming trip to England in 2025. The fun and festive event was enjoyed by all.

St. Luke's, Shawnee collected donations for the Shawnee Mayor's Christmas Tree Fund which benefits Shawnee Community Services, providing dinners to those in need, and Sunflower House which works to provide child abuse intervention and prevention services.

St. Luke's, Wamego hosted Desert and Discussion on Wednesday nights in Advent on the topics of Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love.

Good Shepherd, Wichita supported the ministry of Breakthrough Clubhouse by providing gifts for the Christmas Gift Exchange for clients. Parishioners selected cards with gift requests and returned the gifts to the church for the exchange. Breakthrough Clubhouse seeks to build resilience through community for those living with mental illness.

St. Bartholomew's, Wichita serves the community of southwest Wichita through its New-to-Me Clothing Ministry which provides clothing and underwear to those in need. The church averages 85 shoppers a month.

St. John's, Wichita held a Memorial Service for Wichita's Homeless who died in 2023. Donations of hats, gloves, and hand warmers were collected and donated to Breakthrough - Episcopal Social Services.

St. Stephen's, Wichita collected food items to provide breakfast bags for distribution at the winter shelter opened by the City of Wichita and HumanKind. The shelter will be open through March and will provide beds and meals for those in need.

Grace, Winfield celebrated Tie Dye Sunday in recognition of the Walnut Valley Festival. Parishioners

were invited to wear tie-dye clothing and sang tie-dye hymns. Koko Smith, the pianist at Grace, performed at the festival and played her hammer dulcimer at the church service.

Calvary, Yates Center parishioners worked together this fall to cleanup the church's memorial garden after new siding was installed and painting was completed.

Clergy News

- The Rev. Richard Osborne was appointed Minister Shepherd of the Heartland Minster starting September 1.
- The Very Rev. Gar Demo was appointed Dean of the Northeast Convocation starting September 10.
- The Rev. Matt Zimmerman was appointed Interim Rector of St. Andrew's, Emporia starting October 15.
- The Rev. Karen Schlabach returned from sabbatical October 16.
- The Rev. Richard McCandless died on October 28.
- The Rev. Oliver Bunker was appointed Minster Shepherd of the Agape Minster starting November 8.
- The Rev. Stevie Carter died on November 23.
- Mother Jenn Allen was appointed Priest-in-charge of Trinity, Lawrence starting December 1.
- The Rev. Marco Serrano accepted a call to St. Paul's Episcopal in Westfield, New Jersey. His last day at St. Margaret's, Lawrence was December 3.
- The Rev. Daniel Mafla will begin serving as an Assisting Priest at St. Paul's, Kansas City starting in January.

St. Thomas hosts interfaith service



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Christians, Muslims, and Jews hold hands in prayer at interfaith service held at St. Thomas, Overland Park.

by the Rev. Kelly Demo

For the past eight years St. Thomas the Apostle in Overland Park has had small groups of Christians, Muslims, and Jews who come together regularly to learn from one another. The goal of these Faith Clubs has been to help deepen one's faith while learning about the other Abrahamic faiths and making friends along the way.

When the current war in Israel and Palestine broke out it became quickly clear to the Faith Club leadership team that they were in a particular position to respond. The pain, fear, and sense of helplessness felt on all sides was evident so it was decided the team would put together a prayer service. The Rev. Kelly Demo, Associate Rector of St. Thomas as chair of the committee took the lead in putting the service together, but it took everyone to make it happen.

On the evening of October 18 about 170 Jews, Christians, and Muslims gathered at St. Thomas for a time of prayer. After opening remarks and prayer from Rev. Demo she welcomed St. Thomas's longtime friend and leader in the Kansas City faith community, Bill Tammeus. As a former writer for the religion section of the KC Star, and author of several books, Bill always offers articulate and balanced thoughts.

"We can be messengers... what we can say loudly and often is that there is not now nor has there ever been a military solution to the Israeli/Palestinian conflict which

is a part of the broader Arab/Israeli conflict," said Mr. Tammeus. He remembered a time when he was a child in 1957 when he was visiting the Holy Land and saw families living in makeshift tents. He noted that the descendants of the people he saw then, to this day, still do not have a home.

Next was welcomed Imam Herbert from the Islamic Center of Johnson County. He shared harrowing experiences of people from the Muslim community as they and their families fled Palestine. Steve Fleischaker is a member of the St. Thomas community who is Jewish, and he shared his thoughts and read a psalm in Hebrew.

A rabbi had not been secured to speak that evening but in a beautiful and holy moment, Rabbi Doctor Mark Levin, founder of Congregation Beth Torah, asked permission to get up and speak. He said that while we had heard much from the Muslim side of the conflict there were more stories to be told. And he primarily wanted to share two important messages. "When people ask me what to do about the conflict, I say this, find the peacemakers and support them... they exist, and they need our help. And second, do not help the export of this conflict to our community. Do not take sides... do not let them export to the United States or our community the conflict that exists there."

The service closed with everyone in the room holding hands and standing in silence before Rev. Demo closed with prayer. After the service attendees stayed for fellowship and shared hugs and tears. ☉

St. James forms Lay Worship Leaders

by Chad Senuta

When a church experiences staff transition and changes in its leadership, it can leave gaps where those staff members once fulfilled certain responsibilities. The obvious solution is often to simply rehire for the position, but what if that's not possible?

That was the case for St. James, Wichita a little over a year ago when the Rev. Dillon Green, who served as Minister Curate for the Wichita Minster, accepted a call to a church in Alabama. Shortly after the church's deacon, the Rev. Jeff Roper, was appointed as the Archdeacon for the southern convocations of the diocese, which meant he would be traveling on Sundays. This left Mother Dawn Frankfurt, Rector of St. James, without two members of her team to help provide liturgies and pastoral care to the parish. But where many would look outside the parish to find help, she decided to look within.

Mother Dawn had noticed a few members of the congregation who desired deeper involvement and opportunities for leadership but seemed underutilized. The parishioners were younger, all in their thirties. Two men and two women with varied religious backgrounds all of whom had never performed an official role at St. James to that point. Mother Dawn was also aware that two of the four were discerning a potential call to ordained ministry. She began to wonder about forming a team of lay leaders to help with Sunday services. She invited the four members to discuss the possibility and simply said, "I need help." She found that all four were "totally into" the idea, and they began to formalize what their responsibilities would be. Mother Dawn found that the invitation to form this new leadership group gave each person a strong sense of investment in its success.

Throughout the process, Mother Dawn consulted with Bishop Bascom, both to gain approval of the idea and to discuss how it could be implemented. Bishop Cathleen suggested that Mother Dawn should preach a minimum of two times a month and that the four lay leaders could take turns preaching on the other Sundays



SUBMITTED PHOTO

From left to right: Paul Leeker, Elizabeth Wenger, Shannon Johnston, Chase Moore, Mother Dawn Frankfurt.

as well as helping in other ways appropriate for a lay person to assist with a Eucharistic liturgy.

The group is now called the St. James Lay Worship Leaders. Each lay leader is responsible for one weekend of worship each month. They serve as a point person arriving early, and making sure those with responsibilities in the service such as readers are present. If there are holes, they find volunteers to fill them, ensuring everyone is in place well before the service begins. During the service, they ring the bell, close the gate to the altar rail, and help Mother Dawn with whatever is coming next in the service. They are licensed to serve as lectors and ministers of the Eucharist.

Each Lay Worship Leader preaches once every two months, so the church hears two sermons each month from one of them. Mother Dawn meets with the team monthly to go over questions, discuss pastoral concerns, and prepare for upcoming services. This time is also used to discuss sermon preparation. Mother Dawn provides practical suggestions for the leaders on how to write, structure, and deliver their homilies.

When asked how this has impacted St. James, Mother Dawn shared, "It has been powerful for the congregation to hear other voices from the pulpit and connect with their experiences. It has also given the congregation a renewed sense of creativity. For the four lay leaders, it has deepened their formation and led two of their spouses to join the vestry." ①

Province VII bishops gather in the Diocese of Kansas for retreat

by Chad Senuta

The bishops of Province VII of The Episcopal Church gathered November 15-17 for a retreat hosted by the Episcopal Diocese of Kansas. Province VII includes the dioceses of Arkansas, Dallas, Fort Worth, Kansas, Northwest Texas, Oklahoma, Rio Grande, Texas, West Missouri, West Texas, Western Kansas, and Western Louisiana. Thirteen bishops and eight of their spouses attended for three days of fellowship, worship, education, and touring.

The retreat began with dinner at the renowned Majestic Restaurant and Jazz Club in Kansas City, Missouri where participants enjoyed some of the local flavors and sounds associated with the region. The bishops stayed at the Cyrus Hotel in Topeka.

The first full day of the retreat began at Grace Cathedral and Bethany House & Garden. The bishops arrived at 9 am for coffee and refreshments followed by a “progressive” Eucharist that moved throughout the Bethany Garden and ended in the cathedral. During her sermon, Bishop Bascom shared some of the unique ways that the Diocese of Kansas is spreading the gospel such as the Monarch Butterfly Project initiated by the Bethany House and Garden staff, which helped raise, tag, and release over 600 Monarch butterflies in partnership with a local elementary school.

Following the Eucharist, the bishops visited the Brown V. Board of Education National Historic Park. The site marks one of the most pivotal points in the Civil Rights movement and served as an important touchstone for the leaders to discuss what each of their dioceses is doing to reconcile with its past and work toward racial justice.

The next stop on the tour brought the group to the scenic Flint Hills region with a visit to Prairiewood Retreat & Preserve, owned and operated by Kail and Becky Katzenmeier, long-time Episcopalians who have a heart for the land. Prairiewood is nestled amongst 500 private acres set aside specifically as a tallgrass prairie preserve and offers first-class accommodations, event space, and community programs. In this picturesque setting,

the bishops hiked on the prairie and then gathered for dinner and entertainment in the Blue Sage Barn on the property.

The bishops who attended the retreat agreed that the event was an important way to connect and share experiences through visiting a neighbor diocese. Bishop Bascom shared that “It was a great joy to welcome my fellow bishops, treat them to the trademark hospitality of our diocese, share the beauty of the prairies, and use our home as a backdrop to connect around the ways that we are meeting the challenges of being the Episcopal branch of the Jesus Movement in our various locations.” She went on to say, “I’m so grateful for these gatherings and how much it benefits our ministries to develop these relationships and learn from one another. I’m profoundly grateful to the diocesan staff for their work in planning and hosting us.” The next Province VII Bishop’s Retreat will be held in the Diocese of Oklahoma. ①



PHOTO BY CAROLINE HOWARD

Province VII bishops hike together at Prairiewood Retreat and Preserve in Manhattan, KS.

Leavenworth priest blesses hunt

by Dr. Beth Fitz Gibbon

On Saturday, November 4th Fr. Jere Hinson, Priest-in-charge at St. Paul's, Leavenworth blessed the hounds, horses, and riders of the Ft. Leavenworth Hunt (FLH) before they took off for this year's opening hunt. [A blessing is the traditional send-off for the safety of all since medieval times, and many riders wear a medal of St. Hubert, the patron saint of hunters.]

Fox hunting originated in Britain in the 15th century as an adjunct to stag and hare hunting, using the same hounds to chase each quarry. Fort Leavenworth's Hunt follows the deeply rooted traditions of foxhunting, but the goal is to chase, not to kill, and the quarry is coyotes, not foxes. While some members ride to hunt, others hunt to ride across the beautiful countryside.

The U.S. Army's Fort Leavenworth was established in 1827 and is the oldest active Army post west of Washington, DC. The Fort Leavenworth Hunt was organized in 1926 by Troopers including the 10th Cavalry Regiment, better known as the "Buffalo Soldiers." The 10th Cavalry was one of two all-Black cavalry regiments established at Fort Leavenworth in 1866. Its troopers acquired the nickname "buffalo soldiers" from Native Americans during the Army's extensive campaigns of westward expansion. Monuments on Fort Leavenworth dedicated to the Buffalo Soldiers by Gen. Colin Powell are testimony to their courageous and selfless service to our nation.

In the late 1920s and early 1930s, Fort Leavenworth gained a reputation as a "horsey" post. The indoor riding hall and stables were some of the Fort's most prominent buildings, and its Sunday polo matches against teams from Fort Riley and Fort Sill in Oklahoma often drew spectators from as far away as Chicago.

On Sundays and twice during the week, members rode with hounds that were initially procured from local farmers and ranchers. Through careful training and breeding of the hound pack, by 1937 the FLH had become preeminent in the region. Large gatherings of spectators followed the chase in mule-drawn wagons, automobiles, and even by air—with flights scheduled from the Army airfield to coincide with the hunt's published schedule of events.

Organized hunting with hounds is one of the oldest sports in recorded history and hunting holds special appeal for military personnel. It brings many military



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Fr. Jere Hinson with the hounds as he blesses the Fort Leavenworth Hunt.

principles into play—surprise, mobility, initiative, and determination; it also develops one's eye for terrain and the ability to negotiate difficult ground at a rapid pace. Countless military leaders, including Generals Patton, Wainwright, McNair, and Truscott, honed their riding skills as members of the Fort Leavenworth Hunt.

FLH was disbanded during World War II but reconstituted in 1964. It is registered with the national Masters of Foxhounds Association (MFA) and the hound pack was recognized by the MFA in 1966.

FLH is the last military-affiliated hunt in the U.S. with kennels located on the post. The hunting pack consists of fox hounds whose breeding and pedigree are carefully maintained by a professional huntsman. Primary hunt country is on land owned by farmers in Easton, KS. The hunt also has fixtures in Maryville, Missouri, and the rolling grasslands of the Flint Hills.

There are four levels for riders of varying skills, from running at speed, jumping obstacles, and fording streams, to those who prefer to walk or trot. Hunt membership is open to military personnel, their families, and civilians. ☉

St. Francis Ministries welcomes the Rev. Andrew O'Connor

by Shane Schneider

St. Francis Ministries understands the importance of spirituality for the children and families in their care and for those who serve them – which is why St. Francis Ministries hired Fr. Andrew last spring to serve as Executive Officer for Mission and Ministry.

“Part of the job description as I understand it,” he said, “is to be the bearer of our identity as a faith-based organization and to articulate the value that comes from both our Episcopal and wider Christian heritage.”

While discerning his call to ordained ministry after graduating from Boston College, Fr. Andrew spent a year in the Episcopal Urban Intern Program where he worked in the inner-city as a teacher’s aide at the Los Angeles Child Guidance Clinic, helping students who had been removed from public school for behavioral health issues.

He went on to study at Virginia Theological Seminary. By the time he and his wife Heather returned home to California, they’d started a family that would eventually include five children: Liam, 19; twins Lucian and Hannah, 17; Holly, 15; and Harper, 12. Fr. Andrew served two parishes in California. In 2009, he accepted a call to become Rector of Good Shepherd, Wichita, serving over 13 years.

He hadn’t actively been planning a change, but when a diocesan colleague mentioned a job posting by Saint Francis Ministries last fall, something about the position attracted him.

“I had no idea what the position was about,” he said. “I was aware of Saint Francis because Good Shepherd had participated in their Christmas for Kids program. So, I held it in high regard. Still, I thought, ‘Lord, I’m not sure I’m done at Good Shepherd.’ But then the Lord said, ‘Aren’t you cute? You’re not in charge of that.’”

His last Sunday at Good Shepherd was April 16, and he started his new position on May 30. He sees his role as three-fold: provide a pastoral presence on the executive leadership team and across the organization, build and expand relationships within the Episcopal Church and with church partners in other denominations; and work with those and other partners who want to put faith into action by funding St. Francis Ministries programs and services.

At some point, Fr. Andrew would like to offer weekly chapel services. He’s also trying to visit as many offices as he can and to be available to employees, clients, partners, and anyone else who might need spiritual attention.

“I feel like I’m coming back to a place where my vocation started, meeting people as beloved children of God, wherever they are on their journey, and expressing welcome to them and gladness for being part of their lives.”

Still an active presbyter of the diocese, O’Connor serves as the chair of the Commission on Ministry. When he’s not otherwise committed, he is available for Sunday supply.

Learn more about the mission and vision of Saint Francis Ministries at SaintFrancisMinistries.org. ©



The Rev. Andrew O'Connor with his family.

SUBMITTED PHOTO

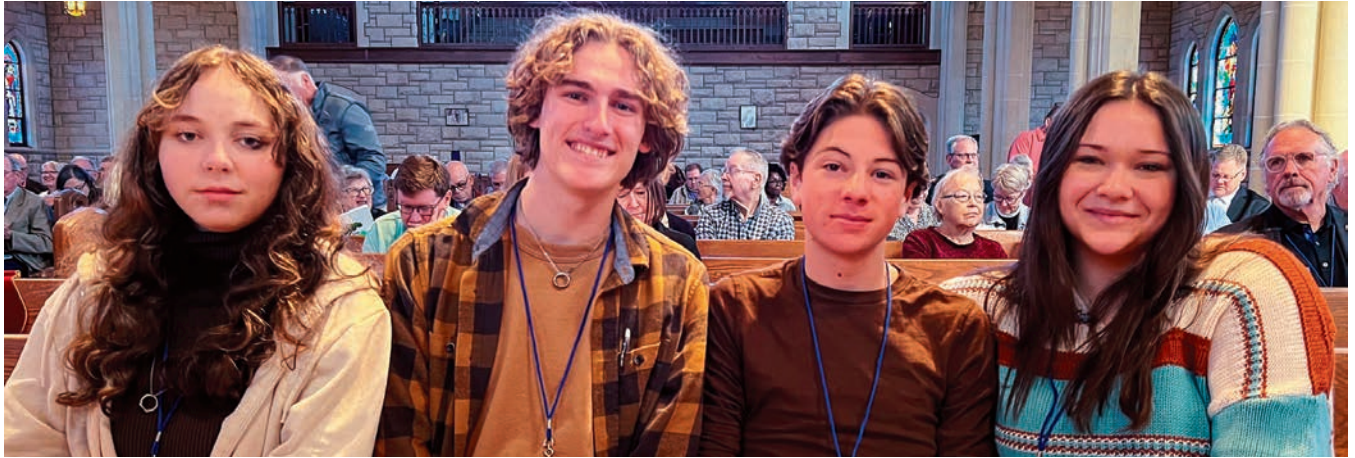


PHOTO BY ELIANA SEIDNER

Diocesan Youth Delegates attend a business session at the 164th Diocesan Convention at Grace Cathedral, Topeka.

Diocesan Convention wrap up

by Canon Patrick Funston

The 164th Diocesan Convention met October 20-21 at Grace Cathedral, Topeka. A full summary of convention business is available on the diocesan website at www.episcopal-ks.org.

CONVENTION BUSINESS ELECTIONS

Council of Trustees

Two people were elected to the Council of Trustees. Also confirmed were convocation board elections of four clergy and one lay members.

- The Rev. Daryl Stanford, Grace, Chanute, clergy at-large representative, 3 - year first term
- Diana Waddell-Gilbert, Good Shepherd, Wichita, lay at-large representative, 3-year second term
- Clergy convocation representatives, 3-year terms:
 - The Venerable Jim Cummins, Northeast Convocation, St. Francis of Assisi, Overland Park (second term)
 - The Rev. Margaret McGhee, Northwest Convocation, St. Paul's, Manhattan (first term)
 - The Rev. Helen Hoch, Southeast Convocation, Calvary, Yates Center (first term)
 - The Very Rev. Laurie Lewis, Southwest Convocation, St. Stephen's, Wichita (first term)
- Lay convocation representatives, 2-year unexpired term:

- Melanie Hoyle Laster, Northwest Convocation, Church of the Covenant, Junction City (first term)

The convention expressed thanks to members who retired from the Council: the Rev. Greg Doll (three-years Northwest Convocation clergy representative) and the Rev. Andrew O'Connor (seven-years Southwest Convocation clergy representative).

Disciplinary Board

One person was elected to fill a vacant lay seat on the diocesan Disciplinary Board.

- Darren Root, St. Margaret's, Lawrence

AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION AND CANONS

Canons of the Episcopal Diocese of Kansas

One canonical amendment was adopted.

- Canon II.2 was amended to reframe and give clarity to the method by which congregations determine how many convention delegates should be elected.

Constitution of the Episcopal Diocese of Kansas

The first reading of one constitutional amendment was adopted.

- Article VI: The amendment seeks to remove a constitutionally required majority election for deputies to General Convention vesting deputy election methodology under the authority of the Council of Trustees.

Changes to the diocesan constitution require adoption at two consecutive conventions via a vote by orders (clergy and lay delegates voting separately). Having been adopted on its first reading, this amendment will return for the 165th Convention.

OTHER BUSINESS

- The Bishop appointed (and, where necessary, the Convention confirmed) various officers and members of committees and commissions.
- The Convention sent greetings to ministry partners, former bishops of Kansas, neighboring dioceses, and friends in the larger Anglican Communion.
- The Convention designated its Eucharist Offertory for the American Friends of the Episcopal Diocese of Jerusalem. Please donate to support their humanitarian ministries. afedj.org
- The Convention was introduced to the nascent Bethany Community of Saints Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. (see page 12)

MINISTRY RECOGNITIONS AND GRANTS

ECW Distinguished Woman, 2022: Helen Hoch, Calvary, Yates Center

Custodian of Creation: Evan Ash, non-parochial

Alleluia Grants:

- Breakthrough – ESS, Clubhouse Community Retreat, \$1,523.38
- Church of the Ascension, Neodesha, Welcome Baskets — NHA, \$1,200.00 St. Aidan's, Olathe, Center of Grace, \$1,213.50
- St. Bartholomew's, Wichita, Sunday Undies, \$2,000.00
- St. David's, Topeka, Hygiene Bags — Rector's Pantry, \$3,000.00
- St. Matthew's, Newton, Railway Clubhouse Launch, \$3,000.00
- St. Paul's, Clay Center, Bridges of Hope, \$3,000.00
- St. Stephen's, Wichita, Open Doors to the Neighborhood, \$3,000.00
- St. Thomas the Apostle, Overland Park, Sensory Path — Comanche Elementary, \$869.91

Deacon's Cross: Carolyn Garwood, St. Paul's, Clay Center

Canon's Cannon: Andrew O'Connor, St. Francis Ministries, Wichita

Bishop's Chair: Ann Palmer, St. David's, Topeka

COUNCIL OF TRUSTEES STRATEGIC PLAN PRESENTATION

Members of the Council of Trustees presented an update on their ongoing planning work. Council working groups presented four strategic objectives:

- **Congregational Vitality:** "Strengthen congregational vitality in all its forms to respond to the needs of a changing church and world."
- **Invitation & Mission:** "Develop a culture of mission, invitation, and welcome in neighborhoods."
- **Youth & Young Adults:** "Demonstrate commitment to youth and young adults as part of current leadership of the Church."
- **Leadership Capacity:** "Diocesan and parish leaders will have the resources they need to be healthy and sustainable in their ministries and resources to recruit and train clergy and lay leaders equipping them to creatively meet the challenges in their parishes."

Members of convention were invited to participate in two discussion breakouts to dive more deeply into the topics and provide feedback.

The 165th Convention of the Diocese of Kansas is scheduled for October 18-19, 2024 at the Wichita Airport DoubleTree Hotel, 2098 S Airport Rd, Wichita, KS 67209. ①



PHOTO BY MICHELE MOSS

The Rt. Rev. Dean Wolfe, ninth bishop of Kansas, attended Diocesan Convention as an honored guest. He celebrated Eucharist and participated in Bishop Bascom's keynote address on congregational vitality.

Intentional community forms



By Canon Lisa Senuta

My yoga instructor opens each session with breathing and light stretching and then after two or three minutes she guides us to the same next step saying, “Now, form an intention for your practice. Breathe in and breathe out, sit up straight, hands to heart, and name your intention. As you find the poses challenging or awkward return to your intention throughout the practice.”

Intention - an act or instance of determining mentally upon some action or result. The end or object intended; purpose. Synonyms include: aim, hope, motive, objective, plan, purpose, and point.

In my yoga practice, my intention does not vary much. It is either “peace” or “trust.” My need to commit to both is embarrassingly like my yoga ability, always and ever at a beginner level.

When it comes to the spiritual life our intention is key.

Jesus taught the disciples to pray, which we can see in the Lord’s Prayer is a set of intentions to remain connected to our Father/Mother in

Heaven. Monks and nuns have known and practiced this truth for centuries in what they call a “rule of life.” Our liturgy sets our intention each Sunday and that is why so many report that going to church “just starts the week out right.”

At the Convention in October along with Mary Becker, George Wiley, Jo Alford, Sharon Highbinger, Suzan Olson, David Jenkins, and Arcile Ridgeway, I committed to form an intentional community in the Diocese of Kansas. The bishop blessed us and named the community, The Bethany Community of Saints Mary, Martha, and Lazarus.

This community is similar to a monastic community in some ways and different in others. Like a monastic community, we have committed to a list of intentions that we believe will sustain us in our Christian lives. These include Silence, Service, Scriptures, Sacrament, Sabbath, Sharing, Simplicity, Surrender, Solitude, and Stability. We are different than a typical monastery in that we live dispersed across the diocese, we will take annual rather than (lifetime) vows, and we will meet sometimes in person and sometimes on video conferencing. Our purpose will not be to live together but to live within our present communities with deepening intention.

It is our sense as the founding members of the Bethany Community that even if we are small, our desire to live deeply rooted in the beginner principles of Christian transformation will not only benefit us in the community but benefit the diocese of Kansas as a whole.

This new intentional community in the Diocese of Kansas is just beginning. We have only recently framed our foundational documents, we are just figuring out how to best organize ourselves, and this is our first official year together. In our early stage of development, we ask for your prayer.

If you would like to know more about the principle and practices that form our intention, visit the diocesan website at www.episcopal-ks.org.

If you would like to consider joining the community, please reach out to any member of the community.

We intend soon to offer spaces to learn more and gain a “taste” of the community for people who are curious these opportunities will be made public through the diocesan e-newsletter, the DioLog. ☉

Living God’s Future: Being with Christ

A Tocher Funded Formation Event for Clergy, Parish Leaders, and Musicians will be held: **May 15-16 at St. Michael’s in Mission, Kansas.**

The keynote speaker will be the Rev. Sam Wells, Vicar of St. Martin in the Fields, London. Together with the St. Martin’s music director and choir members, he will guide two days of seminars, small group discussions, and musical presentations aimed to inspire a fresh engagement with Christ, drawing from his book, *Humbler Faith, Bigger God*. Registration information will be shared in the DioLog in the new year. ☉

Immediately



ADVENT'S RETURN

meant the beginning of a new lectionary year and a new Gospel-focus. Having spent most of the last year (Revised Common Lectionary Year A) in Matthew, we'll now find ourselves walking along with Jesus and his disciples at Mark's pace. The shortest of our gospels, it's also the quickest. The speed of Mark is epitomized in a single word: εὐθύς euthus, an adverb which means "immediately" as in Mark 1:12, "And the Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness."

Luke and John each use the word three times; Matthew, six. Mark is obsessed with the word using it forty-one times! It's no wonder then that Mark always puts me into a time-aware place. Mark's storytelling is quick, purposeful, and filled,

unsurprisingly, with immediacy. He marks ;-) time hastily.

Of course, it's not just a vocabulary choice, Mark is making a point. Like many of the earliest New Testament writings, including Paul's letters, Mark's gospel shows us the widespread belief that Christ's return was imminent. The gospel hurries along to rhetorically increase the urgency of the Christian community.

Two thousand years later, we're still waiting for Christ's return, yet I feel like I live in the Church that Mark inspired. Like many, I find myself succumbing to a "hurry up" mindset. We've got to rescue the Church, right now. This position needs to be filled, immediately. The vestry needs to make this decision, without delay. I'm easily sucked into haste, and I see the Church and its leaders right alongside me.

I think we've got it wrong. I love Mark and I love that his haste has a purpose. Our haste is much more of a symptom of our anxiety and our world. However, the power of the Church with seasons like Advent and practices of prayer, is its invitation to counter-program. We don't need to be in a hurry, if we aren't the ones to figure it out, it'll be okay. We can give ourselves another month before making the decision. We can rejoice that God is calling and equipping the next generation of leaders to join us in tackling our problems.

In his life, Christ moved quickly; he had a limited time. I'm giving myself a break; I don't need to move that fast. In the new year, I'll be re-committing myself to spaciousness. I'll be modeling trust that the decisions of today can wait a little longer. In faith, I'll start immediately. ☉





**The Episcopal
Diocese of Kansas**

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