

**MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE  
COUNCIL OF TRUSTEES  
OF THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF KANSAS, INC.**

**June 12, 2024**

The Council of Trustees of the Episcopal Diocese of Kansas, Inc., met on Zoom on June 12, 2024. Prior to the start of the meeting, the Rt. Rev. Cathleen Chittenden Bascom, Bishop and Chair, offered a prayer for the meeting; then she called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m.

Members of the Council of Trustees present were:

Bishop Cathleen Chittenden Bascom  
Dr. Elizabeth Fitz Gibbon, President  
The Rev. Helen Hoch, Clerk  
Ms. Melanie Laster  
The Very Rev. Laurie Lewis  
The Rev. Margaret McGhee  
Mr. Mike Morrow  
Mr. Ron Olson  
The Rev. Doreen Rice Daab  
The Very Rev. Casey Rohleder  
Ms. Teresa Ryther  
Mr. John Smittle  
The Rev. Daryl Stanford  
Mr. Mason Weber

Members absent:

The Ven. Jim Cummins

Also present as advisors to the Council of Trustees:

Mr. Frank Taylor, Chancellor  
Mr. Brian Geary, Treasurer

Also present:

Mr. Jay Currie, Assistant Treasurer and Comptroller  
The Rev. Caroline Howard, Curate for Creation Care  
Ms. Michael Funston, Executive Assistant to the Bishop  
The Rev. Canon Patrick Funston, Canon to the Ordinary  
Mrs. Michele Moss, Director of Operations  
The Rev. Karen Schlabach, Youth, Campus & Digital Missioner  
Mr. Chad Senuta, Director of Communications & Young Adult Ministries

Bishop Bascom presented the May 8, 2024, meeting minutes. The bishop requested that more notes be taken on the work of the priority goal groups for future minutes. The minutes were accepted as presented.

### **Treasurer's Report**

Jay Currie, Comptroller, highlighted items on the financial statements as of the end of May. Apportionment is ahead of schedule as there are a few parishes who have already paid their full apportionment for the year. St. Paul's, Kansas City is struggling. Mr. Currie will be meeting with leaders at St. Paul's to help them set up a plan for the future. The fees are lagging a bit but not as badly as it seems because the draw on the endowment has only been partially taken. There are no outstanding expenses at this point in the year. The balance of the camp fees and General Convention expenses in this next month will have some impact but not anything for which the diocese is not prepared. Overall, the diocese is in pretty good shape for the year. Parishes seem to be on track. The treasurer's report was accepted by the bishop.

The bishop led a discussion on the document "A Path Forward", especially the financial information concerning how the 2025 proposed Mission Plan will allocate funds to the Diocese of Kansas Strategic Objectives announced at the 2024 Diocesan Convention. The document shows each objective: Congregational Vitality, Mission and Diversity, Youth and Young Adult Leaders and Build Leadership Capacity. It shows new income and expense sides for each objective within the proposed 2025 Mission Plan. A narrative will be created for the proposed 2025 Mission Plan and this table will help to inform this narrative. Canon Funston asked the Council for suggestions on how to communicate this information best in the narrative for the budget. There was considerable discussion on this document. There was also conversation relating to the planning and process for developing an endowment for camp scholarships.

### **Finance Committee Report**

Mr. Brian Geary, Treasurer, along with Mr. Jay Currie, Comptroller, presented the proposed 2025 Mission Plan. Mr. Geary began by looking at the income side of the budget. Overall, it is slightly higher than last year. This increase is coming from income sources other than apportionment. On the expense side, the staff will receive a COLA percentage increase which will also affect pension and benefits. The bishop asked that the paying off of the St. Margaret's loan be highlighted in the narrative. Mr. Geary asked for feedback from the council on the proposed budget. Ms. Ryther would like to add to Youth & Young Adult Leaders to start the process to develop an endowment for camp scholarships. The bishop suggested there be further discussion on this at the August council meeting. This proposed Mission Plan once approved as the proposal can be used at convocation meetings for discussion ahead of the August council meeting with adjustments as needed.

The Rev. Margaret McGhee moved to approve the proposed 2025 Mission Plan knowing that changes will be made. The motion was seconded and was approved unanimously.

Mr. Geary gave an update on the loan with St. Margaret's and the amortization schedule for the new note on the loan. Mr. Geary presented a promissory note and terms between St. Margaret's, Lawrence and the Diocese of Kansas. Canon Patrick Funston added technical details.

The Very Rev. Laurie Lewis moved to affirm the details of the agreement and proceed to meeting with the vestry. The motion was seconded and was approved unanimously.

### **Chancellor's Report**

Mr. Frank Taylor, Chancellor for the Diocese of Kansas, presented an amendment to the Bishop's Letter of Agreement concerning the car payment on her new vehicle bought in May 2024. The bishop found a new car using Carvana and they would not sell to a nonprofit corporation; therefore, the bishop had to buy the car personally. The amendment clarifies how the bishop using a personal vehicle for her professional use impacts the budget and her agreement with the diocese. The bishop's original car will be passed on to Rev. Mafla at St. Paul's in KCK. Canon Funston asked questions relating to insurance and taxes. Those issues were addressed by Mr. Currie and Mr. Taylor. Mr. Taylor took questions from the Council around this agreement.

Mr. Mike Morrow moved that the amendment to Bishop Bascom's Letter of Agreement include an amendment to include the taxes and insurance for the vehicle. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Mr. Jay Currie reported that St. Paul's, Kansas City has a lawsuit against Church Insurance for their adjustment on their church building's roof repair. St. Paul's, Kansas City, had an outside adjuster look at the roof and that person recommended a complete roof repair instead of the partial roof repair that Church Insurance recommended. Mother Rice Daab asked if a parish is allowed to bring a lawsuit against Church Insurance. Chancellor Taylor responded that that is what he is looking into on behalf of the diocese since St. Paul's, Kansas City, did not ask permission from their rector, Bishop Bascom. The bishop has assigned the Ven. Jim Cummins to St. Paul's.

The Council took a break and reconvened at 12:00 p.m.

### **Standing Committee Business**

President Fitz Gibbon, presented requests for consent to an episcopal election:

Mr. Morrow moved that the Council of Trustees, acting as the Standing Committee of the Diocese, consent to the election of the Rev. Philip N. LaBelle as Bishop Diocesan in the Diocese of Olympia. It was seconded and approved unanimously.

Mr. Morrow moved that the Council of Trustees, acting as the Standing Committee of the Diocese, consent to the election of the Rev. Julia E. Whitworth as Bishop Diocesan in the Diocese of Massachusetts. It was seconded and approved unanimously.

Canon Patrick Funston officiated Noonday Prayer celebrating Enmegahbowh. The council recessed for lunch, returning at 12:49 p.m.

### **Bishop's Report**

In her report, Bishop Bascom touched on the curacy for Maddy Bishop with St. Bartholomew's, Wichita, and St. Andrew's, Derby. The bishop has decided to wait until 2025 or 2026 to hire a Transition and Congregational Vitality Missioner. Bishop Bascom will work with current staff, Canon Funston and Mrs. Moss on transition ministry. More members may be added as deemed necessary. The bishop is working with the Diocese of Texas and the Diocese of Oklahoma on a College for Congregational Development in this region. The bishop asked for feedback from the council on the Tocher Event with Sam Wells. The bishop appreciated the choir being there to show the theology that Sam Wells was lecturing about. The hope is that another event which brings the BKSM dioceses together will happen in the future. Bishop Bascom reminded the council that there will be four ordinations on Saturday. The bishop said that Maddy Bishop will be at St. Bartholomew's, Wichita, and St. Andrew's, Derby. Jeanine Blessant will be at St. Peter's, Pittsburg, and St. John's, Parsons. Ryan Bloyd-Wiseman will be at St. Michael and All Angels, Mission, and St. Paul's, Leavenworth. Sarah Shipman will be with Grace Cathedral, Topeka; St. Francis, Overland Park and the Youth, Young Adult and Campus Ministries of the diocese. The bishop met with a committee she has formed with St. Paul's, Kansas City, for the leadership transition after the announcement that Mother Dixie Junk is retiring and Father Mafla will be the priest in charge. Bishop Genovesi was elected rector of St. Andrew's, Emporia. In addition to his work as rector, he will be working with diocesan staff as the Multi-Cultural Consultant for the diocese.

### **Priority Goals and Strategic Planning**

At this time, President Beth Fitz Gibbon focused the work of the Council on communications ahead of the Diocesan Convention in October. She will send an updated list of members for each of the working groups. Bishop Genovesi and Father Mafla will be added to Working Group 2 on Invitation and Mission. President Fitz Gibbon asked if there were any questions from the working groups. Bishop Bascom asked if there are conveners for each of the working groups so that these groups can meet before the August council meeting. The Very Rev. Casey Rohleder will convene working group one on Congregational Vitality. Ms. Ryther will convene working group three on Youth and Young Adult Leadership. The bishop said that this group will need to meet in July to work on who will be doing the fundraising for the endowment. Mr. Morrow will convene for working group four on Leadership Capacity. President Fitz Gibbon asked that the working groups meet before August. President Fitz Gibbon asked if the groups know what their work is for the summer.

***The summer plans for work as presented by President Fitz Gibbon***

Next steps for the working groups, task forces, and organization.

We need to update those in the convocation and start before Diocesan Convention. The president wants work groups to meet either in person or on Zoom before the August meeting to discuss plans going forward. The bishop suggested that each work group have an assigned convener. The Very Rev. Laurie Lewis and Very Rev. Casey Rohleder will be conveners for group one. President Beth Fitz Gibbon will convene group two. Ms. Teresa Ryther will be the convener for group three and Mr. Mike Morrow for group four. Canon Patrick Funston asked for specifics. President Fitz Gibbon would like to see plans to date for carrying out the tactics that are on each group's list as well as where each group is on meeting the goals that were on their objectives. Each group needs to list any financial item that hasn't come up yet—resources (money or talent). She would like to see communications on what members see happening at the road shows as well as any thoughts toward convention as to how to present and communicate the information. There was discussion with Mr. Chad Senuta about possibilities to help with communication for convocation meetings and convention. He might work with Canon Funston on that project. The president would like to see some pulling together from each group about what they have done and what is coming up with any suggestions for how members see their group's work moving forward. She would like to see this information in a presentable form for the council meeting in August. The bishop suggested starting with the document "A Path Forward". Possible questions to be answered include: What's missing, especially financing? How are we moving from a COT working group to a larger group? Are we doing that? How is this working? The president would like to see reinvigoration of the justice and racial reconciliation task force. How do we present this information as to what we are doing and want to do?

(Continued discussion) The bishop asked Mr. Chad Senuta, Director of Communications and Young Adult Ministries, to help with how best to communicate the information from the working groups ahead of convention for the roadshows. The bishop hopes that she and Mr. Senuta will have something to give the council members to have in hand for the road shows and during any kind of meetings leading up to diocesan convention. Bishop Bascom asked if the council feels that there needs to be a presentation at convention and what that looks like. Rev. Hoch said that she does not think that there needs to be as much time spent on it as there was at the last convention. She suggested something with music and videos that Canon Funston and Mr. Senuta could put together. Ms. Ryther suggested big posters that could go up around the convention hall keeping plans at the forefront and referring to them. President Fitz Gibbon agrees that a video is a good idea as it tells a story of the beautiful plan for the Diocese of Kansas. Mr. Senuta asked for points of clarification and what the working groups are being asked to do (see explanation given above). He asked for more specificity on what President Fitz Gibbon is asking from the groups. President Fitz Gibbon asked the groups to put together their work in presentable form.

This is to make sure that there are no holes in the working groups' tactics and goals that are not represented in the proposed mission plan. The bishop agreed with President Fitz Gibbon that this is an opportunity for the working groups to make sure nothing was missed in the mission plan.

The bishop emphasized that objective work is moving forward and if this work lies with Council, diocesan staff or other working bodies of the diocese like task forces. If there is not a current group to do the work proposed by the working groups, then is a new group needed? Mr. Senuta asked for more clarity around what was being asked by the bishop for the staff. The bishop would like to take the "Path Forward Together" document and figure out how to say that to the diocese. The bishop would like Mr. Senuta to look at the document before the August meeting and how he would see it for the website and other presentations to bring to the August meeting. The working groups can look at it at the August meeting and make sure the content is correct. The bishop wants Canon Funston to look at how this works into the diocesan convention planning overall. Ms. Laster said that she wants to make sure that there is consistency between the working groups on what is shared.

Bishop Bascom asked if there was anything for the good of the order. Rev. Hoch asked to give kudos to Mother Schlabach for summer camp this year. Council members took turns giving praise for the work of the Episcopal Summer Camp.

Bishop Bascom offered a blessing, and the meeting was adjourned at 1:51 p.m.

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The Rev. Helen Hoch  
Clerk