

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

**February 19, 2025**

The Council of Trustees of the Episcopal Diocese of Kansas, Inc., met via Zoom on February 19, 2025. Prior to the start of the meeting, the council members introduced themselves to new member, Mr. Tim Flynn, Southwest Convocation lay member. The Rt. Rev. Cathleen Chittenden Bascom, Bishop and Chair, offered the collect for guidance from the Book of Common Prayer and the prayer of St. Francis. Bishop Bascom called the meeting to order at 10:13 a.m.

Members of the Council of Trustees present were:

Bishop Cathleen Chittenden Bascom  
Dr. Elizabeth Fitz Gibbon, President  
The Rev. Helen Hoch, Clerk  
The Ven. Jim Cummins  
The Rev. Carl Edwards  
Mr. Tim Flynn  
Ms. Melanie Laster  
The Very Rev. Laurie Lewis  
The Rev. Margaret McGhee  
Mr. Ron Olson  
Ms. Teresa Ryther  
Mr. John Smittle  
The Rev. Daryl Stanford  
Mr. Mason Weber

Member absent:

The Rev. Doreen Rice Daab

Also present as advisor to the Council of Trustees:

Mr. Hurst Coffman, Vice-Chancellor  
Mr. Brian Geary, Treasurer

Also present:

Mr. Jay Currie, Assistant Treasurer and Comptroller  
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, Young Adult & Campus Missioner

Mr. Chad Senuta, Director of Communications

### **Minutes**

Bishop Bascom presented the January 15, 2025, meeting minutes which were accepted as presented. Bishop Bascom would like more explanation of the financial statement to be included in the minutes of the council meeting. She will talk to the diocesan staff about this.

### **Assistant Treasurer and Comptroller's Report**

Mr. Jay Currie gave the report on the financials for the diocese. Apportionment received for 2024 was under budget as reported on January 1, 2025; however, \$34,744.00 was collected after the 1<sup>st</sup> of January. The \$45,085.83 amount in Endowment income should have been drawn in January but wasn't. The fees for January of \$3,755.25 were for Miqra. The expenses for January were high due to front loading through the computer contract and insurance payments. The bottom line shows expenses over income by \$115,760.29. That looks bad but really isn't. The apportionment collected after January 31 and the fact that an endowment draw was not taken would considerably change the bottom line. By the end of 2024 all but 1 parish had paid their apportionment.

Mr. Curry then went over the year-end report from State Street Global Advisors. These investments show what the endowment is and how the portfolio is set-up. The investments for the Diocese of Kansas are currently set-up using a 70/30 equity/fixed income design. Next, Mr. Curry addressed portfolio performance which compares reality to a benchmark.

After Mr. Curry's presentation, Deacon Carl Edwards asked about the different investments and if they match the social justice issues important to the Episcopal Church. President Beth Fitz Gibbon said that she receives a regular update from the Episcopal Church about the investments of the Church. Mother Margaret McGhee said there is a report that states what social issues are addressed through the Episcopal Church investment. Bishop Bascom asked Treasurer Geary if he would like to start a subcommittee to look at investments through the diocese. Mr. Geary said he would like to look at the various reports already mentioned by members before forming a subcommittee.

### **Finance Committee Report**

Mr. Geary reported on the Finance Committee and their work on the current apportionment calculation. Mr. Geary thinks there should be a group outside of the Finance Committee to listen and research the apportionment calculation currently used as well as how other dioceses do theirs. Canon Patrick Funston said the last time the apportionment calculation was updated was in 2019 and that it was done outside of Council of Trustees and the Finance Committee. Mr. Tim Flynn suggested going to the convocations since they are asked for input on the budget and see if there is interest

there. There are usually a couple of parishes within the convocation that have something to say about apportionment each year. Mother Margaret McGhee said there seems to be two tasks here: research on what other dioceses are doing, and the other task is listening to members of the Diocese of Kansas and deciding the new calculation. Bishop Bascom asked if Mother McGhee would lead the work on this and asked Mr. Currie to give the report he receives from finance administrators around the Episcopal Church on how they do their apportionment to this committee. Mr. Geary will meet with Mother McGhee about this work and reach out to the convocations for interest.

Mr. Geary said that the other work the Finance Committee is working on is audit reports throughout the diocese. The committee is getting groups together to help parishes get their audit items together for their reports. This is the first year of this new audit policy so it will take a little time, but this will greatly improve audits throughout the diocese.

The meeting was recessed for a short break and resumed at 11:07 a.m.

## **Bishop's Report**

### **Creation Care Initiatives**

- BHG
  - Welcoming retired priest, returned to Kansas, the Rev. Betty Glover as St. Simon's Chaplain and Bethany House and Garden Mission Consultant.
- Grasslands Gathering
  - Close efforts with the Rev. Maddy Bishop and the Rev. Caroline Howard
  - Two zoom meetings with representatives from Nebraska, South Dakota, Northwest Texas, Colorado, Navajo Land and Idaho
  - Email communication with Wyoming, Rio Grande, Western Kansas and Montana
- Other Eco-Regions
  - Presentations to Province IV and V Creation Care Network
  - Presentations to the Green Caucus
  - Two zooms with Presiding Bishop's office regarding network support

### **Congregational Vitality**

- Using penned sermon & parish presentations on Holy Currencies for this round of parish visitations. Bring vestries our strategic goals and mission plan.
- Full Saturday and Sunday Visitations (\*plus creation trustees):
  - St. Paul's, Leavenworth
  - St. Paul's, Kansas City (for Annual Meeting)
  - Grace, Chanute; Calvary, Yates Center (plus Agape Minster meeting in Iola)
  - Epiphany, Sedan
  - St. John's, Abilene
- Parish Transitions
  - Met with finalists and work with search and vestry, Trinity, Lawrence

- Correspondence and meetings with Senior Seminararians
- Church of the Covenant, Junction City
  - Much has been accomplished but a central question remains:
    - What actions will continue to empower the clergy and vestry leadership, per Episcopal polity and Diocese of Kansas canons, in light of an Endowment Committee (its own corporation) that continues to desire to act as a supra-vestry and control some of the decision-making and expenditures and give approval (or not) to active parish clergy.
  - Exec. Committee and Chancellors, esp. Vice-Chancellor Hurst, are working closely with the bishop on guidance
  - Newly elected Vestry full of great leaders – Melanie Laster being one! We want their wisdom on the best way forward. Have sent them some of the options I can imagine. They meet tomorrow/Thursday night.
  - We may want to turn to Diocesan Canon IV.7 “Of Restoring Congregational Health”. More on that possibility next Council meeting

### **Welcome, Justice and Inclusion**

- Actions related to Executive Orders on Immigration, informed by Episcopal Migration Ministries and PB’s Office:
  - First, please know that clergy from other countries who minister alongside us with legal status, and their families, will have special care and attention from me and diocesan leaders at this time. Retreat afternoon and evening next Monday to listen to them and offer information we have.
  - The newly formed diocesan Task Force on Welcome, Justice, and Inclusion will also provide a source of wisdom, communication, and careful action.
  - In the Episcopal Church, all are welcome to be part of our worship, our ministries, our outreach, and our common life. This has not changed. It is not important for any of us to know the details of anyone else’s immigration status or their documentation. I recommend that the documentation or immigration status of any individual not be discussed at any level of any Episcopal church.
  - It is a crime to “harbor” someone in this country who is undocumented. To “harbor” requires two things: knowing that the person is undocumented and intentionally hiding the person.
  - ICE or other law enforcement does not have the authority to enter private areas in churches or other buildings without permission unless they have a judicial warrant signed by a judge or a federal magistrate. Marking rectories and offices as “Private” is well advised.
  - Public areas in churches include spaces such as the sanctuary at times when the general public is invited to enter, such as during a public worship service. Public areas do not include offices, meeting rooms, or

other areas which the general public is not invited to enter. Even areas that are public at some times of the week are not necessarily public at all times. It may be helpful to clarify which areas of your facility are public and which are private with signage so that everyone has the same information.

- Every church and Diocesan Ministry in the diocese should designate a single person who has the authority to grant permission to ICE or other law enforcement to enter the building. This should be the person in charge: the Rector, the Priest-in-Charge, the Senior Warden. Everyone else needs to understand who is authorized to grant permission and how to reach that person if they are not physically present.
- Judicial warrants are clearly labelled as such and are different from other warrants. Before allowing access, the person authorized to grant permission needs to be sure to check the warrant to verify that it is what the agent claims. This person should have local legal counsel available to advise them, at least by phone, if they have questions.
- If the person authorized to grant permission to enter is not on the premises when ICE or other law enforcement requests entry, whoever is in the building needs to be able to contact the authorized person by phone. A phone camera may make it possible for the authorized person to view any warrant as needed.
- Every context is different, resources on EMM

The Council went into Executive Session and resumed at 11:55 am.

- The new Bishop of Nakuru, Kenya and his wife will, hopefully, be able to visit at the Kansas Convention in 2025
- Are there any COT members who want to help with this visit?
- Also, young adult clergy leader is coming too, involved in Communion Forest tree planting (30,000 trees!)

#### Build Leadership Capacity

- Senior Seminarians and their placements (more typed up from slides)
- Met with Seminarian Suzan Olson about possible future ministry
- Met with Seminarian Clare Stern-Burbano about possible future ministry
- Met with Seminarian Lynne Powell about possible future ministry
- Met with Seminarian Deacon Diane Kruger on site in Sedan
- GOE results just in. Under review. Will work with our Board of Examining Chaplains
- Staff sabbaticals this summer: Canon Patrick Funston & Executive Assistant Michael Funston

- Canon Lisa Senuta & Communications Director Chad Senuta to take on some of the work done by the Conon to the Ordinary and the Executive Assistant
- Young Adult Leaders to help in reception area
- Collaborate with Cathedral Staff to help during summer sabbaticals

#### Youth and Young Adult Leaders

- Attended Canterbury House K-State for Program and Eucharist

Canon Patrick Funston led the council in Noonday Prayer celebrating Agnes Tsao Kou Ying, 1856, Agatha Lin Zhao, 1858, Lucy Yi Zhenmei, 1862; Catechists and Martyrs. The council recessed for a lunch break and resumed at 12:50 pm.

### **President's Report**

President Beth Fitz Gibbon reintroduced the Topeka United Mosaic Partner Pairs. They gave a presentation last November 2024 to the Council. They have done this work throughout the country, but Topeka has worked to have it spread throughout Kansas. Mother Doreen Rice Daab, rector of St. David's, Topeka, has agreed to do this program but they need financial help to do it. President Fitz Gibbon requests that the Council of Trustees approve \$5,000 to give to St. David's for this program. Canon Patrick Funston asked if the \$5,000 can be used beyond St. David's and if this is something that will be done throughout the diocese. President Fitz Gibbon said that this program would be used with St. David's initially and then used throughout the diocese. Bishop Bascom said that St. David's, Topeka, would be a pilot program for the diocese and that the \$5,000 would be given to Mosaic Partner Pairs to be used in the diocese. Mother McGhee asked if the \$5,000 was a one-time fee to use the program or would we need to pay for each use in each parish. The bishop said that the \$5,000 is a donation to help fund the program. President Fitz Gibbon reported that this money would be used from the Welcome, Justice and Inclusion Task Force which has not asked for money yet. Dean Lewis, co-chair of the Congregational Vitality Task Force, reported that the money is not there and there are other resources to be used. President Fitz Gibbon said that this program hits at the heart of the Welcome, Justice and Inclusion Task Force work and that we won't know unless we try if this program works and if this council does not approve this money, then President Fitz Gibbon will work with the bishop and the comptroller to find another way. Mr. Tim Flynn asked how much money St. David's is putting forward for this program and how much do we know about this program. President Fitz Gibbon said that St. David's is not putting forward any money but putting forward their time and talent to do the program. Bishop Bascom said that this is a Topeka Civic program that has been used through Topeka City Council, but it is also a program that is used throughout the country. Mr. Ron Olson asked where would this \$5,000 come from in the budget and why \$5,000. President Fitz Gibbon said that they asked for \$10,000 but the diocese does not have that to give. Bishop Bascom said that the diocese has tended to go to the Millspaugh-Wise Fund for this kind of work in the budget. Ms. Teresa Ryther said she would like to

know more about other resources that are available like this in the diocese and the Episcopal Church, and she is also concerned about taking this much money from the budget. Ms. Ryther would also like to know more about the program and resources available before choosing this plan and questions the need for this particular program. Ms. Melanie Laster said that it is difficult to create a curriculum and that this seems like it is a program that works. Bishop Bascom proposed that she would give \$1,000 out of the bishop's discretionary fund and blessed St. David's as a pilot program if they still want to proceed with it, and then see how it goes and revisit this program next year. Canon Patrick Funston wondered if in addition to the rector there are parishioners at St. David's who have shown interest. There was no need for a council motion since the bishop will give from her discretionary fund the \$1,000 to Mosaic Partners.

President Fitz Gibbon then presented the ILRC Red Cards available for people to use to help with knowing immigration rights. These are available in the EMM toolkit. This is a resource available to all and they are free to order or print off for yourself.

President Fitz Gibbon then shared that she has been asked as president of the Council of Trustees to present at the Episcopal Parish Network Conference later this month on the council's work on Strategic Planning Goals. President Fitz Gibbon and the Rev. Kelly Demo will present at the conference. Mother Demo was asked as chair of the Youth and Young Adult Task Force and their endowment fund campaign for youth scholarships.

President Fitz Gibbon presented on the metrics for measuring the strategic goals. This process can be used by commissions and task forces to help measure the four areas of focus to help the Council of Trustees communicate the work around these strategic goals that is happening throughout the diocese. President Fitz Gibbon hopes these can be reported on at the June meeting. Bishop Bascom said that the Presiding Bishop has shared with the House of Bishops his hope for the Episcopal Church to do a better job measuring data throughout the Church.

### **Reports from Trustees and Staff**

Canon Patrick Funston presented the amendments to the Southeast Convocation Bylaws.

Ms. Teresa Ryther moved that the Council of Trustees approve the amendments to the Southeast Convocation Bylaws. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Ms. Melanie Laster asked if there were reports from the other Strategic Goal areas beyond Welcome, Justice and Inclusion. Bishop Bascom welcomed others from the council to report on their areas.

The group working on Leadership Capacity spoke about the questions relating to personal information on the clergy report which is part of the parochial report. Canon Lisa Senuta's work on and presentation of the February Zoom meetings addressing Transfiguration and Depression: Pastoral Education also relate to Leadership Capacity.

Ms. Teresa Ryther reported that the task force for Youth and Young Adults now includes a couple of youth participants. Ms. Teresa Ryther is working on a curriculum for vestries to use when working with the book *Holy Currencies*.

Congregational Vitality will be holding a couple of meetings. The Very Rev. Laurie Lewis and the Very Rev. Casey Rohleder will be attending the Episcopal Parish Network Conference in Kansas City. Dean Lewis is also a representative to the College for Congregation Development which is made up of representatives from the Dioceses of Kansas, Oklahoma, and West Texas. The Wichita minister is working on learning about sheep caring for sheep through Community of Hope International, a lay ministry formation program.

Bishop Bascom closed the meeting with a blessing and the meeting was adjourned at 1:41 pm.

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The Rev. Helen Hoch  
Clerk