

THE Harvest

April 2025 | The Episcopal Diocese of Kansas

Bishop Bascom Calls for Election

Bishop Cathleen Bascom announces resignation and calls for election of the 11th Bishop of Kansas.

Folklorico Dance at St. Paul's, KC / St. Michael's Celebrates Dr. Ken Walker

On Our Journey of Transition, Jesus Goes With Us



IN THIS TIME of discerning my January 31 resignation and calling for the election of the 11th Bishop of Kansas in 2026, the biblical story of the Road to Emmaus speaks to me.

Life is a journey, and journeys are central to our Christian tradition. As two of Jesus' early followers walked from Jerusalem to Emmaus, trying to navigate their physical and emotional way after Jesus' crucifixion, Jesus himself came near and went with them. (Luke 24:15)

On the road they were *Discussing What Had Recently Come To Pass:*

I want to share again the central reasons that I prayerfully believe the time is ripe to hand off the episcopal baton: a call to focus more fully on a ministry of creation care; a desire after 35-years of ordained life to slow down a bit and spend time with my family; confidence in the current health of the Diocese of Kansas; and gifted up-and-coming clergy leaders whom God might move to assume leadership.

The Road We Are On: During these final months of my episcopacy, the normal rounds of weekend bishop visitations will be replaced by regional confirmations and what I am calling the Emmaus Farewell Walkabout.

Similar to the extended visits I did in the first year of my episcopacy, called Walkabout II, I'll spend days in every Convocation connecting with each parish (just not necessarily on Sundays). An Emmaus Walkabout Plan is being sent to all the clergy.

I do have a vacation from July 13 – 27 but will otherwise be in the office and available while Canon Patrick Funston and Michael Funston, Executive Assistant to the Bishop, are on sabbatical this summer.

Our stellar Council of Trustees, Diocesan Staff, and I will continue to make headway on our priorities of Congregational Vitality; Justice, Welcome & Inclusion; Youth and Young Adult Nurture and Leadership; and Leadership Capacity.

We will take action steps as mapped out at our 2024 Diocesan

Convention. At the same time, the Council of Trustees, acting in their role as the Standing Committee, will begin to form a Bishop Search Committee and make related decisions.

Dr. Sarah Stonesifer Boylan of the Presiding Bishop's office met with the Council of Trustees on April 9 to advise them on the requirements for the search process, recommend a timeline for the search, and clarify the Council's responsibilities to conduct the search.

They Came Near the Village Where They Were Going: My new ministry is an opportunity to help bishops and dioceses build networks of Nature-Food & Faith sites in their unique eco-regions.

When 22 Bishops gathered with me at the House of Bishops, and the possibilities of 8 Networks emerged, I was deeply moved to imagine all the watercourses, plant and animal species, and healthy food... Episcopal networks might support!

Our Grasslands Network is the pilot and will receive my special attention. With the Presiding Bishop's blessing, I can continue to support Bethany House and Garden and other Kansas creation sites for now. When the new bishop is in place, I will honor their wishes.

Director of Communications Chad Senuta will work closely with the Council of Trustees, Staff, and the Search Committee (when formed) to provide a solid communication plan to keep everyone apprised of developments. Above all, we remember that the Risen Jesus himself draws near and walks with us on this journey! ☉

In This Issue

2-3

Around the diocese

Learn what's happening in churches around the diocese.

4-6

Clergy news

Clergy updates, January ordinations, and Bishop Kemper School for Ministry calls new Dean.

7

St. Paul's, Leavenworth restores organ

St. Paul's, Leavenworth is raising funds to restore the church's historic organ.

8

St. Michael's honors Dr. Ken Walker

St. Michael's, Mission celebrates Dr. Ken Walker's 35 years of ministry with the parish.

10

Folklórico dance at St. Paul's, KC

Local dance group helps St. Paul's, Kansas City, connect with community.

12

Three rules for youth ministry

The Rev. Kelly Demo shares the basics for Youth and Young Adult Ministry.

13

College students attend Bishop's Bowl

College students from around the diocese gather for the annual Bishop's Bowl to compete for the coveted Bishop's Miter Award.

14

Bethany House & Garden in bloom

The Rev. Caroline Howard shares what's new in the garden.

15

Our Monastery is here and now

Canon Lisa Senuta invites the diocese to "Taste and See" the Bethany Community of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus.

ON THE COVER: Bishop Cathleen Bascom in the "Bishop's Garden" outside her office.

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The Anglican Communion is a global community of 70 million Anglicans in 41 member churches/provinces in more than 160 countries.

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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



PHOTO BY VICKIE MOSS / IOLA REGISTER

St. Timothy's, Iola partnered with local organizations to provide Kitchen Kits for victims of domestic violence. Pictured from left to right: Jo Bunker, the Rev. Daryl Stanford, Marsha M. Burris, Molly Shaughnessy of Hope Unlimited, Cheri Walrod of KSU Research and Extension, and Candy Sifers.

St. John's, Abilene partners with eight local churches to feed 350 people for a weekly community dinner. St. John's, First Presbyterian, and First Southern Baptist take turns preparing the meals. Bishop Cathleen Bascom confirmed four members of St. John's on February 16: two young adults who are lifetime members of the parish and two adults, one of whom was recently baptized at the church.

Trinity, Arkansas City, hosted its annual Shrove Tuesday Pancake feed on March 4, and parishioners brought nonperishable food items to

donate to the church's Blessing Box Ministry.

Trinity, Atchison helped to launch a new ministry in conjunction with The Hunger Task Force (a coalition of members from the Atchison Ministerial Alliance and area service organization) working to provide housing assistance for the unhoused in Atchison.

St. Paul's, Coffeyville offers prayers for all through its Prayer Chain ministry. Those with prayer requests can contact any member of the prayer group listed in the parish newsletter.

St. Andrew's, Emporia hosted the Emporia High School Fine Arts Club at the Emporia First Friday Art Walk on April 4. EHS students' artwork was displayed at the church and volunteers welcomed patrons and offered tours of the church.

St. Mary's, Galena hosted a Lenten study each Sunday in Lent on *Holy Currencies* by Eric H.F. Law.

St. Timothy's, Iola partnered with Hope Unlimited and Southwind Extension District to provide kitchen kits for victims of domestic violence.

Epiphany, Independence welcomed Dr. A.J. Beu as a new musician for the parish. “Dr. B” is the Principal Tubist for the Bartlesville Symphony Orchestra, Director of Bands for Chanute Public Schools, and plays piano on Sundays for Holy Eucharist at the church.

Canterbury House of Lawrence students are building a strong community playing “Member Jeopardy,” hearing personal presentations, sharing meals, and worshipping together. Outside of the weekly gathering, students have gone sledding, supported a student member at her rugby tournament, and protested on campus and in Lawrence together.

St. Margaret’s, Lawrence invited members to sit close to the front of the sanctuary during Lent to be welcoming and leave room for visitors who might be coming to “check out” the church.

Trinity, Lawrence raised twice its original goal for the church’s capital campaign. The funds will be used for maintenance of the church property such as tuckpointing stone, repairing steps, replacing aging mechanical systems, refurbishing stained glass windows, and repairing the bell tower.

Canterbury House of Manhattan congratulates four of its faithful student leaders who will graduate



SUBMITTED PHOTO

St. John’s, Abilene parishioner Pattie Mayhew helps prepare meal for weekly community dinner which feeds 350 people.

this May and move on to full-time jobs and graduate school. Many thanks and blessings to Josh Avery, Suzanne Avery, Ragan Dutcher, and Brandon Kirmer.

St. Paul’s, Manhattan offered a Stations of the Cross service each Friday during Lent.

Church of the Ascension, Neodesha held a Shrove Tuesday Pancake supper, and proceeds were donated to the Neodesha Food Pantry.

Grace, Ottawa went out for a “Community Adventure” to see *A Nice Family Gathering*, by Phil Olson, at The Chamber Players Community Theatre, in Garnett to support parishioners AC and Kimberly Russell who starred in the show. Nine pa-



SUBMITTED PHOTO

The Rev. Kelley Lackey presides over the conflagration of palms on Ash Wednesday at St. John’s, Parsons.



Kimberly and AC Russell, members of Grace, Ottawa, starred in “A Nice Family Gathering,” at The Chamber Players Community Theatre, in Garnett.

risioners attended the dinner theater performance.

St. Thomas the Apostle, Overland Park offered a time of contemplative prayer on Tuesdays for six weeks exploring spiritual practices such as Lectio Divina, the Examen, Visio Divina, embodiment, and creativity.

St. John’s, Parsons sold Shrove Tuesday pancake supper tickets for the first time this year. The proceeds went towards scholarships sending youth to Mega Camp this summer. Members of the congregation also gathered outside for the conflagration of palms and worn-out altar linens to be used for Ash Wednesday.

Epiphany, Sedan offered a Lenten book study on forgiveness which sparked enlightening discussion. The church also participated in Ecumenical Lenten Lunches on Wednesdays, sharing fellowship with the churches of the community.

St. Luke’s, Shawnee started a Bible Study that meets on Sunday

mornings before service to create a relaxed environment to learn about the Word, share thoughts and ideas, and apply what is discovered to members’ lives. The group began with a study of the *Gospel of Matthew* by N.T. Wright.

Grace Cathedral, Topeka provides handmade scarves and hats to its neighbors in need through its “Sharing the Warmth” ministry. The knitting and crocheting group welcomes all and group members are available to teach others how to knit or crochet. The group meets twice monthly at the church.

St. David’s, Topeka has collected 512 pounds of plastic bags toward its 1000-pound goal through the church’s Green Team. The group also plans to plant pollinator-friendly flowers around the church property.

St. Luke’s, Wamego collected donations of canned goods, non-perishable food items, and hygiene products for Faith Market, a client-choice Food Pantry supported by the Wamego Council of Churches.

Good Shepherd, Wichita hosts “Den after Ten” after worship for spiritual fellowship with snacks and coffee, and to practice praying the Psalms. Together parishioners Pause, Rejoice/Reflect, Ask, and Yield to the ancient words of the Psalms.

St. James’, Wichita held its annual Shrove Tuesday Oyster Dinner to raise money to support local charitable organizations.

St. Johns, Wichita hosted the United Way’s free tax filing service VITA for two days a week at the church during tax season. The service is made available to the elderly, disabled, and those with low income.

St. Stephen’s, Wichita hosted a Camp Info Session for campers and parents to learn more about Episcopal Summer Mega Camp. The event was open to all and provided the opportunity to sing camp songs, see photos from camp, hear from previous campers, and ask questions.

Grace, Winfield established a Church Charitable Fund with the proceeds from the sale of Seabury Properties. Funds have been allocated to support Loyette Olson Outreach, House of Hope, and Eagle Nest. Trustees were also elected to administer the fund and establish the procedures for distributing awards for ministry through grants.

Calvary, Yates Center hosted an Agape Minster event for the parishes of the minster. Each church provided food and members enjoyed gathering for fellowship, conversation, and worship.

Clergy News

- The Rev. Dr. Steven Rottgers appointed Priest-in-charge at St. Aidan’s, Olathe.
- The Rev. Craig Chandler Sweeney, passed away January 12, 2025.
- The Rev. Daryl Stanford appointed Minster Shepherd of the Agape Minster.
- The Rev. Eli Montes appointed Vicar of St. Bartholomew’s, Wichita.
- The Rev. Jenn Allen called as Rector of Trinity, Lawrence.
- The Rev. Dennis Gilhousen passed away March 13, 2025.

Three Priests Ordained in January



PHOTO BY MICHELE MOSS

Left to right: the Rev. Ryan Bloyd-Wiseman, the Rt. Rev. Cathleen Bascom, the Rev. Sarah Shipman, and the Rev. Maddy Bishop-Knoth.

by Chad Senuta

The diocese gathered at Grace Cathedral on Saturday, January 11, to participate in the ordination of the Rev. Maddy Bishop-Knoth, the Rev. Ryan Bloyd-Wiseman, and the Rev. Sarah Shipman to the priesthood. The ordination was recorded and can be viewed on the diocesan YouTube Page.

Bishop Cathleen Bascom presided and preached for the service. The bishop's sermon drew on the theme of procession in the day's readings. Sharing her experiences throughout her ministry, she told of different processions and their power to help people understand how God dwells with us. Whether a large gathering like the Lambeth Conference, where it took two hours for all the Anglican bishops from around the world to process, or a small church in Iowa where a young boy found solace from a troubled life in joining the procession each Sunday, people find that they can enter God's presence.

Bishop Cathleen also emphasized how the "wellbeing of priests and people are intricately woven together" and that "being called as a companion to God's people is a privilege of the priesthood."

The Rev. Maddy Bishop-Knoth attended Princeton Theological Seminary. The Rev. Ryan Bloyd-Wiseman and the Rev. Sarah Shipman attended the Bishop Kemper School for Ministry.

The Rev. Bishop-Knoth was sponsored by St. James, Wichita, and serves as Curate of St. Andrew's, Derby, and as the new Creation Fellow for Bethany House & Garden. The Rev. Bloyd-Wiseman was sponsored by St. Michael and All Angels, Mission, and serves as Curate at St. Paul's, Leavenworth. The Rev. Shipman was sponsored by Grace Cathedral, Topeka, and serves as Curate for both Grace Cathedral and Diocesan Youth Ministry. ☉

Bishop Kemper School for Ministry Calls New Dean

from BKSM Press Release

The Board of Directors of the Bishop Kemper School for Ministry announced in March that Dr. Lynne Moss Bahr will be the seminary's third Dean, beginning July 1, 2025.

Dr. Bahr brings a wealth of experience in teaching and administration. She has held appointments at Rockhurst University, Fordham University, St. John's University, and Manhattan College and taught a range of courses in early Christianity and the history of Christianity. She received the Elizabeth A. Johnson Endowed Distinguished Fellowship in 2016-2017, and a Postdoctoral Teaching Fellowship at Fordham University in 2019-2020.

She came to the Department of Theology and Religious Studies at Rockhurst University in 2020. In 2021-2022, students nominated her for the Faculty Member of the Year Award. In 2023, Dr. Bahr was appointed Director of the Thomas More Center for Catholic Thought and Culture at Rockhurst. She developed



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Dr. Lynne Moss Bahr called as next Dean of Bishop Kemper School for Ministry.

a series of panel discussions on social justice issues, such as prison education, Catholic ministries to the LGBTQ+ community, AI and ethics, and abolishing the death penalty. She also facilitated a faculty seminar on Ignatian pedagogy and spirituality and served on many university committees.

Dr. Bahr has remained active in her scholarship with multiple paper presentations at the Society of Biblical Literature annual conference, as well as peer-reviewed articles, book reviews, and encyclopedia entries. A lifelong Episcopalian, Dr. Bahr grew up in the Diocese of Kansas and received her M.Div. in New Testament studies from Union Theological Seminary in 2011 and earned her Ph.D. in Historical Theology (Judaism and Christianity in Antiquity) from Fordham University in 2017. Her doctoral studies focused on Second Temple Judaism, the Gospels, and early traditions of Jesus. Dr. Bahr's book, *The Time is Fulfilled: Jesus's Apocalypticism in the Context of Continental Philosophy*, was published in 2018.

Bishop Cathleen Bascom said, "The Bishop Kemper School for Ministry is a vital component of mission and ministry for the Diocese of Kansas and our entire region. I am delighted to welcome Dr. Bahr as the new Dean. Her rich theological background, passion for social justice issues, and leadership skills will be a blessing to the school, helping to advance its mission."

The Rev. Donna Stanford ('14), BKSM board chair, said "We look forward to welcoming Dr. Bahr to the BKSM community when she begins her service this summer. She shares our vision for BKSM's future and has the qualities and skills to meet the challenges inherent in theological education in the 21st century."

The Board expresses its gratitude to the Rev. Charles Everson ('16), chair, and the dedicated six-member search committee that led the eight-month search process.

The BKSM community looks forward to all that BKSM will achieve under Dr. Bahr's leadership as it continues its focus on quality education, deep spiritual formation, and meaningful community.

St. Paul's, Leavenworth Prepares to Sing a New Song

by Beth Fitz Gibbon

St. Paul's, Leavenworth holds the distinction of being the first Episcopal church in Kansas. From 1837 to 1856, a mission served Ft. Leavenworth and its small city. On December 10, 1856, three Episcopal communicants organized a parish with the Rev. Hiram Stone as pastor. The Church was consecrated as St. Paul's due to support provided by St. Paul's in New Haven, Connecticut, founded in 1830.

The church was built in 1864, becoming the site of the first church consecration, the first confirmation of a child, and the first ordination of a priest for the Episcopal Church in Kansas.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

The St. Paul's, Leavenworth pipe organ was built and installed in 1883, and is still in use today.

The church's pipe organ was built and installed in 1883 by the Hooks & Hastings Company of Massachusetts. For over 140 years this historic organ has helped celebrate the Eucharist, baptisms, weddings, funerals, Christmas pageants, Easter celebrations, confirmations, and Holy Days.

In the 1940s the organ was electrified to make it easier for the organist to play. However, that dated technology includes cloth-covered wires, a fire hazard that's not up to code. For the past 85 years, no major improvements have been made beyond occasional tuning. The organ's ivory keys are still beautiful, but the console's electro-pneumatic parts are worn out. Many of the original features no longer work, and the blower does not produce enough wind for the pipes. Many pipes need tuning to reach their full potential.

Restoration will include repairing wooden pedal pipes and repacking stoppers and smaller wooden flutes, replacing tuning slides on metal pipes, revoicing pipework, and cleaning all pipes of 140 years of dirt,

Thanks to the expertise and talent of St. Paul's Organ Master, Dr. Mark Stotler, the organ still makes beautiful music, but only because he has been able to work around its deficiencies until now. The organ could suffer failure at any time.

The full cost of the restoration will be \$175,000. St. Paul's parishioners are undertaking a capital campaign to raise the money and seeking grants to help with the cost.

Quimby Pipe Organ Co. has been selected to restore the organ. They have 55 years of expertise, craftsmanship, and experience in restoring historic pipe organs. Hook & Hastings organs are highly prized to this day for their smooth, elegant sound. St. Paul's historic organ is a superb musical instrument worth restoring and maintaining for future generations.

Those interested in donating to the restoration can contact Beth Fitz Gibbon at pathfox820@gmail.com.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Musically themed cookies were served during celebration for church's Organist and Choir Master.

St. Michael's, Mission Honors Dr. Ken Walker's 35 Years of Ministry

by Chad Senuta

On Sunday, Feb 2, St. Michael and All Angels, Mission surprised its Organist and Choir Master, Dr. Ken Walker, with a celebration to mark his 35th anniversary with the parish.

Church staff and parishioners packed into the church's parish hall to enjoy a special buffet, complete with cookies in the shape of music notes, and parish leaders made presentations about Ken's gifts, his ministry, and his contributions to the life of the parish over the years he has served so far. The presenters highlighted various aspects of his ministry.

Diana Mullin began singing with the choir in 1998 and noted Ken's flexibility as a leader, pointing out the changes in the church's worship services over time and his ability to comfortably lead both contemporary and traditional music even in the same service. On a personal note, Diana shared that Ken had become a dear friend after sharing in ministry together for so many years.

Nancy Stankiewicz spoke about the history of Ken's leadership and major projects he'd been involved with such as the restoration of the church's organ, the 75th anniversary of St. Michael, and starting the Horizons Art Ministry which has hosted nearly 100 major events

during his tenure. She closed her remarks by saying that Ken had "risen to the highest heights" quite literally in the way he beautifully decorates the sanctuary with cloth veils during the liturgical seasons.

Roxie Drautz volunteers with the church's Pastoral Care team. She shared that when the team makes pastoral visits to parishioners in need, they often find that Ken has already sent them a card or made a phone call to check on them.

Bill O'Neill presented Ken with a monetary gift on behalf of the church in gratitude for his leadership. When asked to give a quote for this article, Bill said, "If you have been a member of St. Michael's for any length of time, there is a Sunday, a Christmas, an easter, a wedding day, a funeral service or any of life's moments when Ken's majestic organ and hymn selection will yet resound in your memory. Ken elevates hearts, souls, and spirits, along with voices."

Debbie Kremers announced that St. Michael's had named its choir loft in his honor. She presented the plaque which now hangs in the loft with this inscription, "Since his arrival in the summer of 1989, Dr. Ken Walker has served the people of St. Michael and All Angels through his immense talent, gentle leadership, sincere friendship, and deep faith. With humble devotion, Dr. Walker nurtures meaningful encounters with

God through his direction of music in worship and his cultivation of the arts in our common life. We are blessed by Dr. Walker's ministry among us." 📍

Interview with Dr. Ken Walker

How did it feel to have your 35 years of ministry celebrated by the community of St. Michael's?

I was overwhelmed but deeply touched by this appreciative community. I was surprised at how big they had made this event. It was way over the top!

What is a memorable moment from your ministry?

I like to recount a time when we were ending a service on a hymn where everyone was singing out, and I pulled out all the stops on the organ. At the end, Deacon Monte Giddings said in bold voice, "Let us go in peace to LOVE and SERVE the Lord." Before we could respond, a little child yelled out, "Yeah!"

How do you keep worship feeling fresh and vital after 35 years?

I heard the Julliard String Quartet say that they liked to play old things as if they were very new and new things as if they were very old. I have tried to listen and stay imaginative with whatever we have do in worship. Services have ranged from worship in the park to Taizé prayer services, services with distinguished guests like the presiding bishop or recently the retired dean of Canterbury, services gathered around a few instruments, guest musicians leading worship like the Winds of Harmony, and we have even done a couple of evensongs totally in French! I just hope to keep a learning edge.

What advice do you have for someone beginning a career in the church?

Give space for your own spiritual and artistic growth. Quality draws quality, so look for the best and find inspiration from others. Look for the right measure of challenge because achieving something together is a vital bonding experience. Be grateful and communicate often with those you work with. Be flexible when something doesn't turn out as hoped.

What are some of the church's current challenges that you see?

Books like Robert Putnam's Bowling Alone, speak of isolation and social reluctance of people to commit to regular gatherings. It's not just a church problem. But it remains a proven fact that people feel better when they interact. We begin by believing in our own community. I have often thought, ok, we all believe in God but do we believe in our own church? We are better together: learning, worshiping, and serving.

Offering an engaging welcome and building a commitment to community are more challenging than ever. Think of the first-time visitor. Years ago we developed a parish arts ministry to engage more with the community and gain another means of welcome. Among its offerings are exhibits on the walls in the social hall—an introvert can walk into a coffee hour and go to the art without feeling awkward—and likewise a parishioner can strike up a side conversation with a visitor.

What is the importance of worship and what does it do for the community?

In the biggest picture, I think of Robert Webber who once said, "In the liturgy, we practice being the Children of God." I like practicing that vision and hope that every time we leave from worship together, we go into the world as slightly better servants to a world in need. 📍



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Dr. Ken Walker with parishioners Mary Wiggins (middle) and Roxie Drautz (right) during Feb. 2 celebration.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Members of Grupo Folklórico Alma Tapatía dance at St. Paul's, Kansas City, Kansas.

Local Dance Group Helps St. Paul's, Kansas City, Connect to Community

by Debra Láinez

Alexa García Láinez is the Director of Grupo Folklórico Alma Tapatía, a Mexican Folkloric dance group in Kansas City that seeks to showcase Mexican culture through dance and music. She has been dancing Mexican folkloric dance since she was 3 years old.

Folklorico dance is a traditional dance form of the states and regions of Mexico. Different states in Mexico have different types of music, dance, and dress according to the unique mixtures of indigenous and immigrant populations that settled in the various regions. Veracruz, for example, is characterized by marimba and guitar music with flowing white dresses, whereas Jalisco tends to feature the guitar and trumpet sounds of the mariachi with brightly colored dresses that many people associate with Mexico. Each region is unique, and folklorico dancers learn about them to represent the different styles of music, dance, and clothing.

Grupo Folklórico recently performed at a reception at the Lyric Opera in Kansas City after a performance of *Cruzar la Cara de la Luna*, the first Mariachi Opera. The group also performs around the community at events like Pride Fest in Kansas City, Missouri, and for celebrations like Cinco de Mayo and Hispanic Heritage Month.

The dance group offers classes to anyone interested in learning more about folklorico, and Alma Tapatía has

dancers from age 4 to adults. But it is centered on preserving the traditions and customs of the Mexican people for younger generations.

Alexa grew up in the neighborhood near St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Kansas City. When she decided to launch her folkloric group, she approached the Rev. Dixie Junk, who was the Vicar of St. Paul's at the time. She and Mother Dixie negotiated an arrangement where Alexa could perform some tasks to help the church in exchange for using space at the church for Grupo Folklórico to rehearse. Alexa completed projects to clean and organize spaces in the church, helped with church communications, and assisted in organizing a health fair as part of a grant that the church received to provide COVID-19 vaccines and information to the community.

Although the neighborhood surrounding St. Paul's is mainly Hispanic, the church's membership has not traditionally reflected this. St. Paul's knew it needed to connect with the surrounding neighborhood and believes Grupo Folklórico has been a great way to start.

In the summer of 2024, St. Paul's participated in a community event called Third Friday Art Walk, sponsored by Community Housing of Wyandotte County. Grupo Folklórico performed multiple times, which strengthened the connection between parish members and the dance group. The event was also an opportunity for the church's new Vicar, the Rev. Daniel Mafla, to be

introduced to the community.

Perhaps one of the biggest benefits to St. Paul's has been the renovation of one of its basement spaces. Grupo Folklórico invested their funds into renovating a space in the basement to become their dance studio. Previously, the group used the church's Parish Hall. The new space allows them to have a space of their own, designed for dancing, with mirrors and a new floor, while it provides the church with a fresh, renovated space. The initial financial investment covered some of the usage costs. Going forward, the group will pay a usage fee to the church for the ongoing use of the space.

This provides the church with much-needed income to help maintain its large, historic property. The space is also available to use for meetings or events when not in use by the dance group. Because the church and Grupo Folklórico were able to work out mutually agreeable terms, it has enabled Alexa to invest in the group and increase its revenue. In just over a year Grupo Folklórico has increased from 20 dancers to 35.

Grupo Folklórico also participates in St. Paul's liturgies and events. When Bishop Cathleen Bascom recently visited the parish, the group processed in and sat in the pews in their traditional dresses. The group performed following the service. When the renovations to the church's rectory were completed, they performed after the liturgy of house blessing to welcome Father Daniel



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Dancer performs at St. Paul's Blessing of the Rectory.

and his family. Both St. Paul's and Grupo Folklórico are glad to support each other. ☉



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Grupo Folklórico dancers rehearse in their new studio space at St. Paul's, Kansas City.

The Three Rules of Youth and Young Adult Ministry

by the Rev. Kelly Demo

My uncle once told me that the three rules of real estate are location, location, location. If that is the case then I would argue that the three rules of ministry are relationships, relationships, relationships! And this is especially true for ministry with children, youth, and young adults. Because the church feels a mandate to teach its youngest members about the faith and our Episcopal expression of Christianity, this truth about relationships often gets overlooked in favor of the quest for the perfect curriculum or the latest program.

As chair of the Task Force for Youth and Young Adults, I get to work with people from around the

diocese who are committed to strengthening and growing our ministry with young people. As stated in the Diocesan Strategic Plan, our goal is to help “develop direct connections to loving communities where youth and young adults can feel safe, experience God’s grace, and create lifelong spiritual curiosity.” Our tactics for achieving this goal include ensuring the fiscal health of the programs, helping youth discern their God-given gifts, developing Episcopal and ecumenical partners to foster growth, and creating relationship-building opportunities.

One of the ideas the task force wants to communicate is this idea of relational (not programmatic) ministry to youth and young adults. As I talk with church leaders around the diocese, I cannot tell you how many times I have heard, “We just don’t have any young people in our church.”

When I start to dig a little there are usually grandkids of parishioners, a school that is near the church, or a community college in the town. All of these are opportunities for parishioners to build relationships with youth and young adults. We just need to get away from the old conception that youth and young adult ministry involves meeting on Sunday night for pizza and games.

What if a church invited the local middle school choir to perform in their sanctuary? What if church members started to do tutoring and mentoring programs in the local school? If there is a youth in the parish who is in a play, the whole church can go see that play and cheer them on! If a grandchild of a parishioner is running track this spring, show up for those meets!

St. Timothy’s, Iola has a beautiful ministry where they feed student athletes from Allen County Community College. All of these are opportunities for relationship building with young people. Young people want to be seen, listened to, and valued.

The Episcopal Church can offer a safe and loving space that can be an anchor in a volatile world. We just need to be intentional about building relationships with the youth and young adults in our communities. 🕊



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Deacon Oliver Bunker of St. Timothy’s, Iola greets students and hands out snacks at the Allen County Community College Block Party.



PHOTO BY THE REV. KAREN SCHLABACH

Students from KU, KSU, ESU, and WSU attend the annual Bishop's Bowl held at Upton Hall in Topeka

College Students Gather for Annual "Bishop's Bowl"

by the Rev. Karen Schlabach

College students gathered in Topeka on March 2 for the annual "Bishop's Bowl." The day started with worship together at Grace Cathedral. We then spent some time getting to know each other and enjoying lunch. Following lunch, the Peer Ministers from KU led us in a formation program on the Apostles' Creed. We split into several small groups for discussion and everyone wrote their own personal creed.

Then, it was time to compete for the coveted Bishop's Miter. Peer Ministers from K-State planned a series of games to determine this year's winner. We started with three rounds of speed cup flipping and stacking. The K-State team won this game. Then we played a Telephone-Pictionary-style game that ended in a draw after two rounds. The final game was three rounds of Can Jam, a game where one player throws a frisbee toward a large trash can, and two other players try to slap the frisbee into the can. The KU team won this competition, meaning we had a tie! We did one more round of Telephone Pictionary, which resulted in another draw.

With only five minutes left in our day, we resorted to a tie-breaker round of rock-paper-scissors, best two out of three. Alex Buck represented K-State and Alex White represented KU – it was the clash of the Alexes! K-State won the first round, and KU won the second round. As

tensions rose, we counted down the final round of the final game of the day, "Three, two, one, shoot!" It was a draw...then a second draw...and finally, K-State was victorious, taking the Bishop's Miter for the third time in a row in a real nail-biter.

"During the program my group had a great conversation about what it means to forgive somebody, which was helpful in developing and writing down my personal creed. It was an amazing opportunity to see other people and talk about our faith!" said Kyla Cisneros, Peer Minister and sophomore at the University of Kansas.

There were eight students from K-State, eight students from KU, one student from Wichita State, one student from Emporia State, and one student from Washburn University in attendance.

"It was really nice to connect with other Canterbury groups by creating our own personal creeds and having some friendly competition. I can't wait to do it again next year!" Alex Buck, Peer Minister and junior at Kansas State University.

This event began in the 1980s and has seen several iterations over the years. It started as a flag football game between the KU and K-State Canterbury Houses on the same day as the KU vs. K-State football game. Since then, the competition has varied from bowling, to cornhole, to giant Jenga, and the date has varied due to the scheduling needs of the current students. ①

Bethany House & Garden in bloom

by the Rev. Caroline Howard

Spring has arrived in its usual slow, but stunning fashion in Bethany Garden.

In February, an almost indiscernible green blush appeared on some of the early risers of the season: buds on the service berry, daffodils poking up through the snow, a haze of tiny new leaves on the prairie rose.

A few more signs of spring arrived in March: the Lenten rose had beautiful pink and pale green blooms just in time for its namesake church season, the yarrow, sage, and penstemon in the prairie garden spread out new green leaves under the grey and brown of last year's

growth, and the sand cherry planted last fall proved that it survived the winter with a stunning show of purple leaves and pale pink blossoms. Asparagus and rhubarb popped up in the culinary garden and trays of vegetables were set out to harden off on mild days.

Now that we're nearly halfway into April, spring is undeniably present. Old growth left for wintering insects and as winter food for birds has been cleared away and over a hundred little plants moved from their basement seed trays to the rows plowed for this year's donation crops. Green has finally edged out brown as the dominant color in the garden again and everywhere you look new splashes of pink, yellow, and white are being added to the palette.

In the Northern Hemisphere, the alignment of spring with the seasons of Lent and Easter supplies a beautiful illustration of life following death.

This spring in particular, I've been reminded of the lives that this garden has lived before – a square patch of the vast tallgrass prairie, the grounds of Bethany College, a jewel of the young capital city, the front lawn and flower beds of previous Bishops.

Last spring, we relocated a few plants from the old formal gardens, and apparently the disturbance was just what was needed to awaken a whole host of gorgeous tulips and daffodils this year. Beautiful purple, red, yellow, white and pink flowers proclaimed the loving labor of past gardeners.

It's my belief that the land retains all that past care. All its rich history—from a small piece of endless grasslands to the faithful stewardship of so many others—is carried forward into the present iteration. The history of care is palpable and now magnified by everyone who comes to this place.

In their newest life, the gardens are growing into a more public space than in prior lives, but they are simply doing on a broader scale what they have always done: welcoming people to experience the peace and nourishment of time spent in nature, and the gift of awareness of ourselves as deeply connected, interdependent members of God's vast creation. ☉

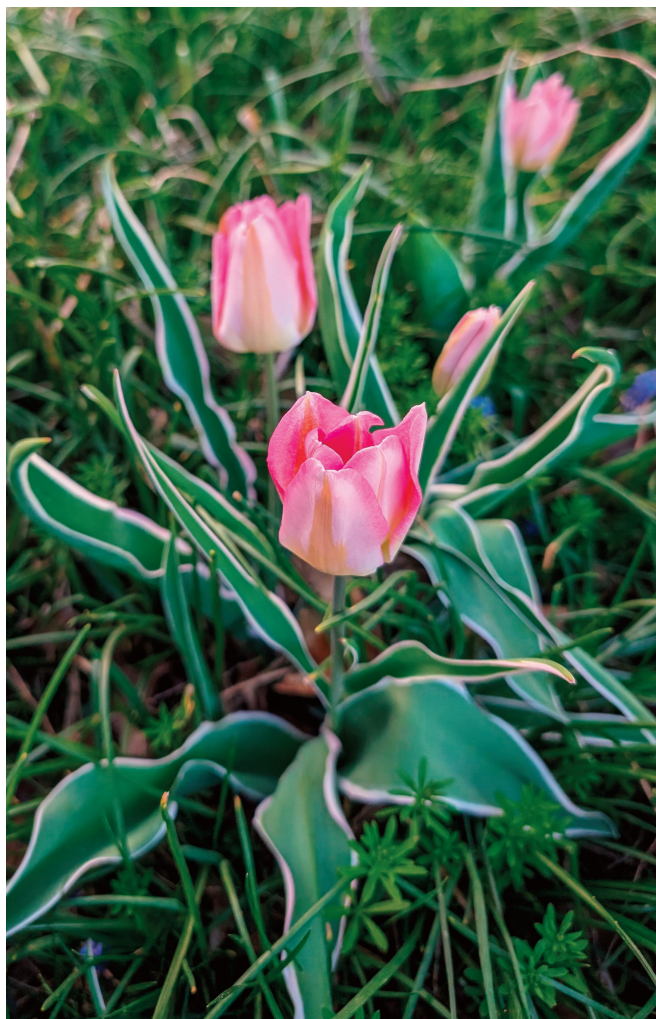


PHOTO BY THE REV. CAROLINE HOWARD

Tulips bloom at Bethany House & Garden.

Our Monastery is Here and Now

by Canon Lisa Senuta

Christian communities have been so beautifully diverse throughout history. House churches in the first century, monks living in caves in the desert, cloistered nuns, mendicant preachers, communities that work and pray, parishes big and small, all intentional communities with Jesus Christ as the head of their communion.

The variety of commitments, vows, and dedications to Christ over the centuries is remarkable. It seems as if every generation were asking, “How do we make a home for Christ now?”

The Bethany Community of Saints Mary, Martha, and Lazarus is an emerging community in the diocese. It began about six months after I started my ministry with the diocese when I realized I needed a group of people to pray with. I could have looked outside the Episcopal Church and found Centering Prayer groups or gone online. Instead, I gathered Episcopalians who were yearning for the same thing as me, silent prayer nurturing our hearts for God in meditation with others. About ten of us began meeting monthly for prayer and spiritual conversation. Slowly it has evolved into a community, blessed by the bishop, and growing.

The elevator speech goes like this: the Bethany Community is a group dedicated to spiritual growth. We nurture our commitment to God and each other through prayer and study together. We are a dispersed group across Kansas that meets twice a month, one time in person and the other online. When together we have a unique way of meeting. We always practice silent prayer for 30 minutes, share our experiences of spiritual growth, and study spiritual and mystical teachings by authors like Richard Rohr, Cynthia Bourgeault, Teresa of Avila, and St Augustine.

We are each responding to a call within ourselves to form a monastery in our hearts. The words from Brother Roger in the Taizé community in France have been part of our inspiration:

*Our monastery is here and now
Where you are today
The person you are speaking with*

*The room you are sitting in
The street where you are walking
The action you are doing now
This is your monastery
This is your prayer
The city is our monastery.
Eternity is now.*

We have been drawn together from our variety of contexts in a shared longing: to live more simply, slower, and gently with others and with self, yearning for more space and solitude, for greater recognition of God in all things, and to rediscover peace at the center of all we do. In short, we commit to growing in the values we desire to see manifest in the world.

If you are compelled by these ideas, we offer ‘Taste and See’ opportunities across the diocese. These gatherings are meant for discernment and mimic what we do at regular meetings but with commentary and teaching. Contact Canon Lisa Senuta lsenuta@episcopal-ks.org if you would like to schedule a Taste and See gathering in your congregation. ☺



Vital Resources for Ministry

The **Diocesan Strategic Plan** features four key objectives, with congregation vitality being central. As one method to “Strengthen congregational vitality amid a changing world,” the diocese has purchased the Invite Welcome Connect curriculum, which is now available to all parishes and ministries of the diocese.

Guided by the gospel imperative to “Go and make disciples of all nations,” Invite Welcome Connect equips and empowers individuals and congregations to practice evangelism, hospitality, and connectedness.

Parishes and ministries interested in using the resources can contact the Very Rev. Casey Rohleder for information on how to log in. mothercasey@gmail.com



Invite • Welcome • Connect®



Education for Ministry (EfM) is a program offered by the University of the South, Sewanee, designed to deepen one’s understanding of faith, enhance theological reflection, and equip individuals for ministry. This initiative is for anyone seeking to enrich their spiritual journey and contribute to the life of the church and community.

EfM is a four-year distance learning program that provides participants with a comprehensive study of scripture, church history, and theology. The curriculum is structured to offer a robust foundation in Christian faith while encouraging critical reflection on readings and discussions. Each year of the program builds on the previous, creating a thorough and engaging exploration of Christian tradition and contemporary theological issues. Find out more about EfM on the diocesan website:

<https://episcopal-ks.org/education-for-ministry/>

Or contact Lynda Crowl at lcrowl7325@gmail.com.

Building Blocks of Vitality

“WE ARE Flintstones Kids, Ten Million Strong and Growing...” As an 80s kid, I hear the Flintstones Vitamins jingle whenever “Congregational Vitality” is discussed. A core objective of the diocese’s strategic plan and a buzzword around the Church as ubiquitous as an 80s commercial, “Congregational Vitality” is a nebulous concept, and its definitions are as numerous as the multivitamins available in supermarkets and drugstores. As I’ve been working to wrap my mind around the challenges the Church faces, this multivitamin framing has been helpful in learning what makes “vital” congregations.

Multivitamins are marketed at our anxiety: Unsure we get enough of what our body needs, we’re easy targets. “Does not replace a balanced diet,” the labels say, and since we feel our diets might be unbalanced, a multivitamin seems like a solution. As we grow and age our body’s needs shift, so we start taking the “40+” version or the “Menopause Formula.” A balanced diet feels like something we should be able to attain, but nutrition is complicated so it’s no wonder we seek ease.

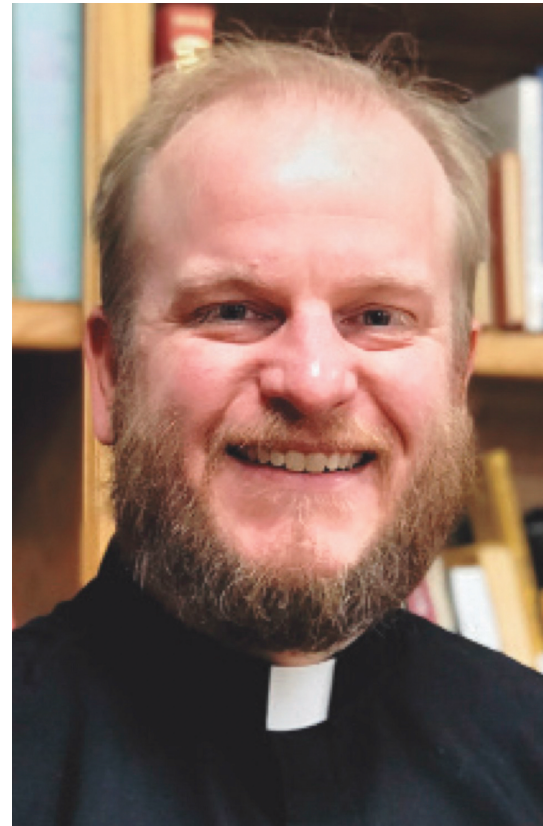
Similarly, we’re offered many solutions for congregational vitality: systems, books, tips, and tricks. Each is a multivitamin emphasizing the importance of some aspects of Vitality, but nothing replaces a balanced diet! Unfortunately, the “balanced diet” of Congregational Vitality is at least as complicated as a nutritionally “balanced diet,” especially if we are unfamiliar with the nutrients of congregational life.

The Bible offers various collections of nutrients: “Do justice, love mercy, walk humbly with your God,” Micah says. “Blessed are you who are poor . . . hungry . . . weeping,” says Jesus. “God in the sound of sheer silence,” Elijah observes. You may have personal favorites. Alas, though it “contains all things necessary for salvation,” the Bible is a collection of individual contextual documents wholly unconcerned with directly advising a modern congregation on matters of its particular vitality. The guidance is in there, of course, but we need help.

“Develop a shared understanding of what congregational vitality is,” the first goal of our Congregational Vitality strategic objective says. “Let’s do it!” we say to each other. But if what I’m saying is, “We need to be more financially sustainable,” and you’re saying, “We need a deeper, shared spiritual life,” it’s no wonder we get confused about what we should be doing. An “understanding” of Congregational Vitality is more than a definition, it must be a framework, gloriously complicated and multi-faceted.

I’ve been compelled by the framework articulated by the Church Vitality Assessment, a tool developed by The FaithX Project. It provides congregations with measurements of eleven aspects of congregational vitality along with perspectives on financial sustainability:

- Vision, Mission, and Discernment
- Lay Engagement and Empowerment
- Context Awareness and Inclusion
- Change Readiness



- Dealing with Differences and Conflict
- Worship
- Spiritual Life
- Formation, Education, and Training
- Outreach
- Leadership and Organization
- Stewardship

Entire libraries have been built around each of these aspects and an assessment tool provides a picture from which leadership can make intentional decisions unique to its context. The priorities of a congregation seeking to grow its outreach will look very different from a congregation needing to clarify its vision. Before we buy the next best “supplement,” we need to understand the “nutritional” context of our congregational Body of Christ. ◊



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