

**MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE
COUNCIL OF TRUSTEES
OF THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF KANSAS, INC.
May 21, 2025**

The Council of Trustees of the Episcopal Diocese of Kansas, Inc., met via Zoom on May 21, 2025. The Rt. Rev. Cathleen Chittenden Bascom, Bishop and Chair, read a part of scripture from the Book of Isaiah and offered prayers for children. Bishop Bascom called the meeting to order at 10:04 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
The Rev. Doreen Rice Daab
Ms. Teresa Ryther
The Rev. Daryl Stanford
Mr. Mason Weber

Member absent:

Mr. John Smittle

Also present as advisors to the Council of Trustees:

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

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
The Rev. Caroline Howard, Curate for Creation Care
Mrs. Michele Moss, Director of Operations
The Rev. Karen Schlabach, Youth, Young Adult & Campus Missioner
Mr. Chad Senuta, Director of Communications
The Rev. Canon Lisa Senuta, Canon for Spiritual Life & Clergy Care

Minutes

Bishop Bascom presented the April 9, 2025, meeting minutes which were accepted as corrected.

The Very Rev. Laurie Lewis made a motion to, at the Bishop's request, suspend the operation of the Episcopal Diocese of Kansas Canon II.7, Section 2, with respect to Mason Weber, council member, for the purpose of allowing him to act as St. Simon's Summer Intern on diocesan staff for a period of May 21, 2025, through August 15, 2025. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously. Mason Weber abstained.

Bishop Bascom spoke about sabbatical and staff coverage for the time Michael Funston, Executive Assistant to the Bishop, will be away this summer. The Bishop commended Mrs. Funston's work.

Assistant Treasurer and Comptroller's Report

Mr. Jay Currie gave his report on the financials for the diocese. He noted that the diocese is a bit behind where it needs to be at the end of April. Several parishes sent in their apportionment after the end of the month. Those are noted at the end of the income report. Some parishes pay their apportionment in lump sums rather than monthly. Mr. Currie predicts that the expenses on utilities and maintenance will be more than budgeted due to the hard winter and older buildings.

Finance Committee Report

Mr. Geary gave his report from the Finance Committee. He began by talking about the proposed 2026 Mission Plan. Mr. Geary said the pie chart on page 5 of the mission plan is a great visual of the income sources for the Diocesan budget. The Historic Apportionment line graph shows that the apportionment rate will increase this year but is lower than it has been over the last ten years. The rest of the narrative breaks down the mission plan by ministry area. There are some one-time expenses in 2026 due to the search and election of the 11th Bishop for the Diocese of Kansas.

Bishop Bascom noted the largest change for this 2026 year was the decision to fund a curate for Campus Ministry. The plan is to have two clergy focused on the Canterbury Houses at K-State and at KU. The Bishop would like to see more worship and Eucharist at the Canterbury houses. Clare Stern-Burbano, candidate for transitional diaconate, will be placed half time with Canterbury House at K-State for her curacy. She will be ordained on June 21, 2025. Since there is no parish to fund the curacy position, the College Work Fund will support \$30,000 of the curacy. This is noted on the income section of the mission plan under the different funds. This will not change the Rev. Karen Schlabach's work. This is not an assistant position to Mother Schlabach but rather the two will be colleagues in Campus Ministry in the Diocese of Kansas. There is also a change in Seminarian and Curate Support. Bishop Alan Scarfe will end his work as New Clergy Coach at the end of 2025. The Canon to the Ordinary will

receive a merit increase in 2026 in recognition of his fine and foundational ministry to the diocese.

Mr. Currie noted that the Office of the Bishop section will look different for 2026. Bishop Bascom will only be in office for one month in 2026. The new bishop will most likely be in office in September 2026. The budget shows 5 months of salary. Bishop Bascom's compensation package was used to estimate the salary for the new bishop. The consultant from the Presiding Bishop's Office, Sarah Stonesifer Boylan, helped with the estimated costs for the bishop search and transition.

Mr. Geary reminded the council of the work for the summer. This mission plan proposal will be shared with the diocese for their summer convocation meetings with the expectation that feedback will be brought to the council at their June and August meetings.

Dean Lewis commended Canon Funston for getting this mission plan document out to the council quickly.

Mr. Ron Olson asked for clarification on the percentage drawn on the endowment and the income from the endowment. Mr. Currie said that the diocese is not gaining or losing on the endowment. When he calculates the draw, there are some funds that are not part of the draw. Mr. Olson said the basis of the concern is that what the diocese is drawing down off of the endowment is not more than what is being returned on the endowment. Bishop Bascom said that it is good to have those numbers in hand as this is a common question asked at the convocation meetings. The bishop's practice has been to draw more from the funds for mission and ministry in the diocese. Mr. Geary said that this question will be asked at convocations and at diocesan convention. The bishop did a deep dive of all of the funds several years ago and what the funds were intended to support in the mission and ministry of the diocese. Canon Funston asked if Mr. Olson's question would be helped with a line graph to show the endowment draw over the last ten years. The bishop noted that the diocese is drawing less than last year, and apportionment is up. Is the diocese funding too much? That may be a question or concern of the diocese. The plan will be to add that line graph for the final convention book, but it will not make it onto this proposed mission plan.

The Very Rev. Laurie Lewis moved to approve the proposed 2026 Mission Plan so that discussions can begin at the convocation and local level. The motion was seconded and was approved unanimously.

Bishop Bascom thanked Jay for his work on the proposed mission plan.

Canon's Report

The Rev. Canon Patrick Funston noted that the call for convention business has been published. There are 18 nominations for this convention. Resolutions and nominations are due August 8. Canon Funston and nominations chair Dean Lewis requested all council members reach out to people and encourage them to run for the boards, deputations and councils with elections this year.

Canon Funston has already had someone reach out to him about parish representation for the electing convention in Spring 2026 for the new bishop. Membership as reported on parochial reports needs to be authenticated. Mother McGhee is working with the Standing Committee about the electing convention and parish representation.

Bishop Bascom spoke to Canon Patrick Funston's sabbatical and staff coverage while he is out of the office. She also reported on possible guests from Kenya attending this year's convention.

Canon Patrick requested that the convention theme and logo be finalized.

The meeting recessed for a break and resumed at 11:32 a.m.

Bishop's Report

The bishop spoke to her report found at the end of these minutes. Bishop Bascom talked about the placement of the June ordinands and their Letters of Agreement being finalized for their ministries to begin this summer. Dean Lewis asked if Clare Stern-Burbano will be half time or full time. The bishop said that at this time she is only half time.

Bishop Bascom will begin her Emmaus Farewell Walkabouts and Visitations this summer. These will be her final visitations and confirmations before her retirement in January 2026.

Bishop Bascom talked about her time with St. John's Mission, Junction City, and called on Ms. Melanie Laster, council member and member of St. John's, to speak about how things are going.

The bishop mentioned the various parishes in transition and where they are in their process. Theresa Klimiuk, Transition Coach, and Michele Moss, Director of Operations, will be helping the bishop with those parish transitions throughout the summer.

Bishop Bascom called on the Rev. Caroline Howard, Curate for Creation Care, to talk about the weekly services happening in St. Simon's Chapel on Tuesday noon and Thursday at 5 p.m. The Rev. Betty Glover is helping the Bethany House & Garden team with these services. Caroline also reported that garden produce is being made available to service attendees.

Bishop Bascom talked about her conversation with President Beth Fitz Gibbon about this time of transition and her role as president of the Standing Committee.

The bishop called on the Venerable Jim Cummins about his work with St. Paul's, Kansas City, concerning their roof replacement and Church Insurance litigation.

Strategic Priority Updates

The Very Rev. Laurie Lewis gave an update on the Congregational Vitality strategic priority. She is meeting with the Dioceses of Texas, West Texas, and Oklahoma about College for Congregational Development. The hope is to build a regional college. The bishops from these dioceses are excited about this endeavor.

Dr. Beth Fitz Gibbon reported on the Task Force for Justice, Welcome and Inclusion. Their next meeting will be on Saturday, June 14, at Upton Hall in Topeka. The Bishop will host. They are working on organizing the scope of their work. There is a page on the diocesan website to host the work of this task force. Chad Senuta, Director of Communications, requested updates from other task forces for the website.

The Rev. Karen Schlabach gave an update on the Youth & Young Adult Task Force. Discussions were held relating to the implications of their camp endowment campaign amidst a bishop search.

Canon Funston gave an update on Clergy and Lay Leadership. Thresholds in Leadership is a part of this work and Canon Senuta met with the group in May for their final time before the summer. Canon Senuta will have several retreats over the summer to grow spiritual leadership in the diocese.

The Rev. Canon Patrick Funston led Noonday Prayer, celebrating Lydia of Thyatira, Coworker of the Apostle Paul.

The Rt. Rev. Cathleen Bascom excused herself from the rest of the meeting and offered a blessing.

The council resumed at 1:02 p.m. after lunch break.

Standing Committee Business

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

The Rev. Margaret McGhee moved that the Council of Trustees, acting as the Standing Committee of the Diocese, consent to the election of the Very Rev. Robert Price as Bishop Coadjutor in the Diocese of Dallas. It was seconded and approved unanimously.

President Beth Fitz Gibbon noted that the Standing Committee scheduled the Leadership Retreat for the Search and Transition Committees on June 28, 2025. Consecration of the 11th Bishop of Kansas is set for October 10, 2026.

President Fitz Gibbon moved that the meeting go into executive session at 1:12 p.m.

The diocesan staff were excused from the meeting at this time. Chad Senuta stayed on the meeting as staff liaison.

Council members returned from executive session at 1:34 p.m. and Beth adjourned the meeting with a blessing.

The Rev. Helen Hoch
Clerk

Addendum to the May 21, 2025, Council of Trustees Minutes

The Council of Trustees, acting as the Standing Committee, met on April 9, April 23, May 7, and May 8 to discuss the Search for the 11th Bishop of Kansas, and the following actions were taken:

April 23

Approved the hiring of Anne Schmidt as Consultant for the search process.

May 7

Approved June 28 as the date for the Leadership Retreat for Search and Transition Committees.

Approved cover letter and application for the Search and Transition Committees.

Thursday, May 8 4:11 pm

The Rev. Margaret McGhee made this motion via email:

I move that the Council of Trustees (acting as the Standing Committee) approve the calendar as currently drafted (with an anticipated ordination date of October 10, 2026) and authorize the publication of the draft of the application for members of the Search and Transition Committees finalized by the Communications subcommittee of the Council of Trustees.

The Very Rev. Laurie Lewis seconded. As of 5:39 on Friday, May 9 all members had voted yes, and the motion passed unanimously.

Bishop's Report for the Council of Trustees - May 2025

ACTION NEEDED: I ask the Council's permission for the summer St. Simon's Justice Intern to offer assistance to the bishop in the office particularly for scheduling and answering of phones during Executive Assistant Michael Funston's sabbatical, as well as duties in the Bethany Gardens and for the new justice-centered evening worship service in St. Simon's Chapel. (See attached LOA and resume.) I hope you will move and approve:

"suspend at the Bishop's request the operation of Canon II.7, Section 2, with respect to Mason Weber for the purpose of allowing him to act as St. Simon's Summer Intern for the period between May 21 and August 15, 2025." (Chancellor Frank Taylor's language)

Leadership Development

- Placement for ordinand Suzan Olson: St. Thomas, Overland Park
- Pending placement for ordinand Lynne Powell: St. Mary's, Galena
- Celebration of New Ministry for Bishop Daniel Genovesi and St. Andrew's, Emporia
- Celebrant BKSM Commencement Ceremonies/Eucharist

Youth and Young Adult Leadership

- Placement of ordinand Clare Stern-Burbano, College Work/K-State Curate (see attached LOA draft and resume etc.)
- Meetings with Youth and College Work/KU Missioner Karen Schlabach and with Chair of Youth and YA Task Force Kelly Demo about a sensitive and complex situation with one of our students and required decisions regarding Canterbury House residency

Congregational Vitality

- Worked with Communications Director Chad Senuta and Exec. Assistant Michael Funston to create Farewell Walk About plan and materials (see attached)
- Companion leaders of Covenant-St. John's in Junction City as they move forward in renewed mission. Celebrated 2x, met with vestry 2x, and advised Priest Search. They extended a call, and priest ready to accept, but then had to decline (at least for now) due to a cancer diagnosis of his spouse. Another candidate is interested and is sending application materials (½ time, stay in Rectory and JC @ 3 days a week.) Anticipate a renewed attempt to dissolve or amend Endowment structure before I resign. Autumn.
- Meetings with Canon Lisa Senuta to prepare for Canon Patrick Funston's sabbatical
- **Episcopal visitations and worship leadership (other than JC)**
 - St. David's, Topeka (Palm Sunday)
 - Grace Cathedral, Topeka (Easter)
 - St. Thomas, Overland Park
- **Transitions**
 - Meeting with Transition Team. Theresa Klimiuk and Michele Moss will assist
 - Parishes in process: St. Matthew's, Newton; Covenant-St. John's, Junction City
 - Early stages and on the horizon: St. John's, Wichita and St. Martin's, Edwardsville

Culture of Invitation and Mission

- Collaborating with Caroline+ Howard, Betty+ Glover, and David+ Jenkins to offer two new weekly services at St. Simon's Chapel (Tuesday Eucharist (12:15) and Thursday Order for Evening (5:30) focused on praying and centering ourselves in God amidst the week's news.
- Met with President Beth for updates on Justice, Welcome, and Inclusion Task Force and next steps, as well as about how we collaborate and communicate best during Bishop transition
- Arrangement with Mason Weber for St. Simon's Justice internship