

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

November 17, 2025

The Council of Trustees of the Episcopal Diocese of Kansas, Inc., met at Upton Hall in Topeka for the annual retreat which included a COT meeting. The Rt. Rev. Cathleen Chittenden Bascom, Bishop and Chair, called the meeting to order at 3:56 p.m.

Members of the Council of Trustees present were:

- Bishop Cathleen Chittenden Bascom
- The Ven. Jim Cummins, President
- The Rev. Helen Hoch, Clerk
- The Rev. Canon Jody Carroll
- The Rev. Carl Edwards
- Mr. Tim Flynn
- Ms. Melanie Laster
- The Very Rev. Laurie Lewis
- The Rev. Margaret McGhee
- Mr. Ron Olson
- The Rev. Daryl Stanford
- Ms. Martha Stone
- Mr. Mason Weber

Members absent:

- Ms. Teresa Ryther

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
- The Rev. Patrick Funston, Canon to the Ordinary
- The Rev. Karen Schlabach, Youth, Young Adult & Campus Missioner
- The Rev. Caroline Howard, Curate for Creation Care

Minutes

Bishop Bascom presented minutes from the October 25, 2025, meeting. A motion to approve the minutes as presented was made by Ms. Melanie Laster, seconded and approved unanimously.

Treasurer's Report

Mr. Brian Geary, Treasurer, reported that the Finance Committee is working to find a replacement for Comptroller, Jay Currie. Nominations will end on December 1. They are putting some information together for possible applicants in the Topeka and Kansas City areas. Jay is finalizing information for the auditors and end-of-year reports. A review committee is being assembled to look at existing debt. They are also looking for someone from the southeast to be an addition to the Finance Committee.

During the comptroller's report, a delegation from St. Margaret's, Lawrence, Mr. Steve Knoll, senior warden, and priest the Rev. Tom Baker came to hand-deliver the final loan check (\$83,370.57). While the Rev. Marco Serrano was at St. Margaret's, the vestry, along with a consultant, implemented a very successful campaign to pay off the loan from the diocese. It took 2 ½ years to raise all of the necessary funds. They also reported that there were 110 people in attendance on the feast day for St. Margaret.

Assistant Treasurer and Comptroller's Report

Mr. Jay Currie, Assistant Treasurer and Comptroller, presented the financial reports. At this time, apportionments are running a bit behind. That situation should be taken care of by the end of the year. Almost all of the endowment draw has been taken for the year. Fees are also a bit behind.

Expenses are almost \$10,000 below the budgeted amount. The diocese is pretty much on track for the end of October.

In reply to the bishop's question, Jay responded that the convention expenses are not shown in this report. The hotel expenses will be quite large. There have also been several expenses for travel this year.

Looking at the October investment statement, Jay pointed out that 35% is in large cap, 12% in small/med cap, 30% in global and international funds, 1% in real estate, and the rest in fixed income. The comparison is 70/30 equity to stocks. Investment performance is at 7.6% with a benchmark of 7.4%. There was a brief break for a special visitor as noted in the treasurer's report.

As with Bishops Smalley and Wolfe, the diocese offered Bishop Bascom \$100,000 to help purchase her residence when her family moved here. Cost for the home was \$200,000 with the diocese owning 50%. When Bishops Smalley and Wolfe's homes were sold, the diocesan portion was reimbursed. As the Bascoms do not plan to leave Topeka, the shared equity agreement now shows that the current tax appraised value is \$280,000 with the diocese owning 25.47%. In 2022 and 2023, the diocese did not reimburse the Bascoms for property tax and insurance, and that amount was credited to the equity in the house. In 2024, Bishop Bascom had funds withheld from her paycheck to be credited towards equity in the home. In 2025, Bishop Bascom took a salary reduction to be credited toward equity in the home. The Bascoms are now refinancing to cover approximately \$71,415 that is still due to the diocese and is scheduled to be paid by the end of the year.

After the business of the Council of Trustees as Standing Committee, the comptroller returned with a listing of the endowment funds.

He reported that realized and unrealized gains in relation to investments is the difference between book value and market value. Book value is what is used as the valuation. When you see a purchase or sale, realized gain/(loss) is the capturing of the unrealized gains. The last page of the report has a record of how the portfolio has been performing since its inception. The investments are not doing great but are acceptable at this time.

Ms. Melanie Laster asked about the creation of a committee to look at the investments to make sure the diocese is making socially conscious decisions when it comes to investing. Jay responded that this is done through the Episcopal Church Foundation which tries to adhere closely to the recommendations from General Convention. Treasurer Brian Geary said that by paying a fee the diocese could be in a more socially conscious investment account. Jay also informed council members that there is a list on the national church's website of stocks they recommend and those they say to avoid as well as those that might be considered to be questionable or in a gray area.

The financial reports were accepted and will be included with other audit information.

Standing Committee Business

President Jim Cummins explained the function of the Standing Committee. There are always 90 days between the election of a bishop and the consecration. During this time a majority of dioceses and bishops in the Episcopal Church must approve the election. The president presented requests for consent to episcopal elections.

The Rev. Daryl Stanford moved that the Council of Trustees, acting as the Standing Committee of the Diocese, consent to the election of the Rev. Gregory Kimura as Bishop Diocesan of the Diocese of San Joaquin. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

The Very Rev. Laurie Lewis moved that the Council of Trustees, acting as the Standing Committee of the Diocese, consent to the election of the Very Rev. Shay Craig as Bishop Diocesan in the Diocese of North Dakota. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

President Cummins reported that a sub-committee from the Standing Committee (the Very Rev. Laurie Lewis, Mr. Ron Olson, the Rev. Daryl Stanford, and Ms. Melanie Laster) met with Gene Hart during Diocesan Convention in order to give a recommendation to Bishop Bascom for his ordination. The Very Rev. Laurie Lewis moved that A. Gene Hart be approved as a candidate for Ordination to the Priesthood. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

At this time, the meeting went back to the comptroller's financial report (see the Comptroller's report given above).

St. James, Wichita Update

Bishop Bascom gave an update on St. James Episcopal Church in Wichita. The Rev. Dawn Frankfurt, rector, resigned as rector of St. James, Wichita, effective November 1, due to health reasons. She remains canonically resident in the Diocese of Kansas. The bishop instituted Canon IV.7 earlier this year. Canon Patrick is working with Mtr. Dawn and her family to help her get on disability. Bishop Bascom has a couple of people of mind to act as an interim rector. In the meantime, St. James is covered on Sundays by the Rev. Andrew O'Connor and others through Christmas.

Possible Gift from Judy Scherff, a long-time member of St. David's

Judy was an environmental studies professor at Washburn. She inherited her mother and father's farm near Lake Shawnee. She would like to donate the almost seven acres as a preserve for a quiet space. She would like to see the diocese take it over. The property is almost completely wooded. There are no buildings except for her home which is not part of the gift. Bishop Bascom, Chancellor Taylor, and Vice-Chancellor Coffman have visited the property. There was considerable discussion about this possibility.

President Jim advised that there are several questions which the council would need answers to especially concerning upkeep, taxes, insurance, improvements that could or could not be made, and others. His suggestion was that we return to this issue after we have answers to some or all those concerns.

There was a short break.

St. Paul's, Kansas City

Conversation with Bishop Bascom and the Venerable Jim Cummins showed areas of concern for St. Paul's. Dean Gar Demo has been asked to work with clergy and the vestry as a consultant and coach. Council members were reminded that the multi-lingual programs in Kansas City and Emporia are experimental. This is a new way of trying to be church and it is hard work trying to figure it out. There is a desire to be in the Kansas City community and neighborhood. The building is large and requires a lot of upkeep. It's a small congregation. Most Hispanics in the area are Roman Catholic. Bishop Bascom said that there is no action necessary on the council's part. This is just information. She is hoping the Rev. Canon Lisa Senuta, Canon for Spiritual Life and Clergy Care, will also be able to help

Covenant-St. John's Church, Junction City Update

Things are getting better, but there is still work to be done. The bishop reported that the Church of the Covenant Endowment is its own non-profit organization which was set-up in 1969. While this is not something that would be suggested today, for St. John's it means that there are two bases of power and authority: the parish and the endowment. The annual meeting has been scheduled for January 18 following the

endowment payment which is due to be distributed on the 10th. There is work that needs to be done before the annual meeting.

There is currently a problem with the boiler. A bid has been submitted for replacement. This is an issue that will need more discussion at a later time.

Bethany House & Gardens and Grasslands Committee

Rev. Carolyn Howard reported that the last meeting was good, and plans are being made to have meetings every other month. Work is continuing in three areas:

maintaining the gardens

ministry and programs

Creation Trustees and Grasslands

Youth, Young Adult, and Campus Ministries

Rev. Karen Schlabach asked members to look at the written reports from her and from the Rev. Clare Stern-Burbano, Curate for Campus Ministry.

Canon to the Ordinary, the Rev. Canon Patrick Funston reminded that the council will need to fill the vacancy left by the death of member-at-large Beth Fitz Gibbon.

The Rev. Helen Hoch offered a blessing for the upcoming meal.

President and Archdeacon, the Ven. Jim Cummins, gave the dismissal, and the meeting was adjourned at 6:16 p.m.

The Rev. Helen Hoch
Clerk

Addendum to November 18, 2025, Council of Trustees Minutes

Standing Committee notes, November 12, 2025

President Jim Cummins called the meeting to order at 8:33 a.m. He started with a discussion of the OTM (Office of Transition Ministries) report related to the Bishop election process.

Consultant Anne Schmidt said that the diocesan profile has been disseminated and is being well received. Anne said that the OTM report is a database for parishes/dioceses to post vacant positions and also for clergy to post their resumes that. This database program is obsolete and is being redesigned. It is used mostly to see what compensation is for a particular position.

The current bishop compensation is \$138,000. The average compensation for the area is around \$130,000. President Cummins recommended that we be above average. Rev. Margaret McGhee had questions relating to Social Security. She came from Florida and assumed SECA reimbursement would be included and it wasn't. The Very Rev. Laurie Lewis reported that in the middle of the country it is not customary to reimburse this amount. Consultant Anne Schmidt said that this can come up in negotiations. At the discernment retreat in February, the chancellor will go over the agreement with the candidates. President Cummins reported that the salary could be increased to account for SECA without changing our policy. There was more discussion.

The Very Rev. Laurie Lewis moved to make the compensation amount \$140,000 which can be negotiable. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Other concerns include the following:

- 1) continuing education
- 2) auto
- 3) equity sharing for private residence

President Jim Cummins adjourned the meeting at 9:14 a.m.

Standing Committee notes, November 18, 2025

After a service of morning prayer led by Canon Patrick Funston, President Jim Cummins opened the meeting at 9:14. President Cummins thanked the staff for their work during this time of transition and for this retreat.

Canon Patrick shared a PowerPoint presentation on what the Council of Trustees involves and then a presentation on Ecclesiastical Authority. He informed the committee that the bishop leads the Council of Trustees but not the Standing Committee.

A Sub-Committee was developed to review the roles of Ecclesiastical Authority. It includes Ms. Michael Funston who will be the chair for this committee. Members will include President Cummins, the Very Rev. Laurie Lewis, Mr. Tim Flynn, the Rev. Canon Jody Carroll, and the Rev. Canon Patrick Funston. Rev. Helen Hoch will attend as Clerk. Ms. Teresa Rhyther (who joined the Standing Committee via Zoom) asked as

to the purpose of this group. President Cummins responded that it would be to fill in the blanks of the Ecclesiastical Authority Roles spreadsheet and then bring it back to the Standing Committee at the next meeting.

Canon Patrick reported that the vacancy on the Council of Trustees should be filled by appointment until the end of Beth Fitz Gibbons' term in 2027. The Council made suggestions and the Very Rev. Laurie Lewis agreed to reach out to potential appointees.

There was much discussion with Rev. Caroline Howard and other members of the Standing Committee about the role of Bishop Bascom in relation to Bethany House & Gardens and the Grasslands Eco-Region Network after her retirement as bishop. Rev. Margaret McGhee, Chancellor Hurst Coffman, and Rev. Caroline Howard are to gather tomorrow to confer about preparing a Memorandum of Understanding

More discussion was held about the timeline for Bishop Bascom's removal of items from her diocesan office.

Rev. Canon Jody Carroll closed the meeting with prayer and Rev. Carl Edward dismissed the committee at 11:37 a.m.

Sub-Committee Meetings

Sub-Committee on Calendaring, November 5, 2025

In attendance: Canon to the Ordinary, Rev. Patrick Funston; Ven. Jim Cummins, Council of Trustees President; Rev. Carl Edwards; Rev. Canon Jody Carroll; the Very Rev. Laurie Lewis; Rev. Helen Hoch; and Mrs. Michelle Moss, Director of Operations.

The Chrism Mass has been scheduled for Tuesday, March 31, 2026, at Grace Cathedral.

Confirmation: Looking at one in the spring and one in the fall.

Ordination: Discussion as to where and when. Decision to be made later.

Sub-Committee on Ecclesiastical Authority, November 19 and December 3, 2025

Ms. Michael Funston, Executive Assistant to the Bishop, is the chair for this committee. Members include the Very Rev. Laurie Lewis, the Rev. Canon Patrick Funston, Canon to the Ordinary; the Rev. Canon Jody Carroll, Mr. Tim Flynn, and the Rev. Helen Hoch, clerk.

Chair Michael Funston presented the Purpose and Goals for this sub-committee.

Purpose: To make a recommendation to the Council of Trustees acting as the Standing Committee on who or what governing bodies will take on the roles of the Ecclesiastical Authority of the Diocese of Kansas while the diocese is without a bishop.

Goals: (1) Understand the different roles of the Ecclesiastical Authority;
(2) Make recommendations for each role of the Ecclesiastical Authority.

After the prayer offered by Ms. Funston, committee members went over each point in the listing of Ecclesiastical Authority Roles. President Jim Cummins suggested that

perhaps a few more sub-committees may be needed such as one for Care and Relationship to Clergy as well as a sub-committee on transitions.

Bishop's Report to the Council of Trustees
November 2025

- I. **Up-date on St. James, Wichita** – see letter sent last week
- II. **Judy Scherff property gift** – see letter with details of intentions
- III. **Up-date on St. Paul's, KCK** – see letter sent to leaders yesterday
- IV. **Up-date on Covenant-St. John's, Junction City** – after meeting with CoT Executive Committee and then with Fr. Wesley Smith and the Vestry on Saturday, this course of action is proposed:
 - A. The priest and vestry leaders:
 1. Focus on further growing and healing the parish
 2. Make an accounting of:
 - a. Communicant members
 - b. Communicant members in good standing
 - B. Diocesan Executive Leaders including Chancellors and President Jim Cummins, Mother Doreen Rice, Mother Margaret McGhee and Canon Patrick Funston will read carefully all Articles of Incorporation, associated documents and emails, and make very careful plans and preparations for the next steps regarding the Endowment.
 - C. At the annual parish meeting, with diocesan leaders present (who exactly *tbd*) a vote will likely be taken to amend or dissolve the Church of the Covenant Endowment.
- V. **Up-date on Bethany House & Garden/Grasslands (BHG & G) Committee** – On Thursday, November 6th, we gathered the new support committee. Leaders chose the garden itself; ministries and programs; or the wider Kansas trustees and grasslands as their areas of focus and expertise. It is a group of strong leaders with good ideas and commitment. The Committee will meet every other month.