

THE Harvest

December 2025 | The Episcopal Diocese of Kansas

Prairiewood Documentary

New film tells the story of the fight to preserve the tallgrass prairie in Manhattan, Kansas

Grace Cathedral Commemorates 1975 Fire / St. Margaret's Settles Debt

Traveling through Suffering: The Road to Emmaus



IN MY FINAL six months as bishop of Kansas, it's been very meaningful to "walk-about" the diocese, motivated by love for our people and the land we share. Such a joy to meet with people in our convocation regions who are coming forth to be confirmed and received into the Episcopal Church.

I've ambled prairie-scape and a labyrinth in the Southwest and an old forest glen in the Southeast; scrambled up a glacial erratic rock in the Northeast; I bought a gorgeous

Douglas fir Christmas Tree and put a foot into Prairie Village, Overland Park and Mission all at the corner of 67th and Nall in KC.

I want to give my deep thanks to the clergy and people of St. Andrew's in Emporia; St. Peter's in Pittsburg; St. Paul's in Manhattan; and St. Paul's in Kansas City for the exquisite and memorable worship services that enfolded people from each region.

Visiting and conversing, people have asked about the timing of my retirement which seems too soon to some: after thirty-five years of very full ordained ministry I must confess some fatigue, I simply need to slow down and also to devote more time to my family.

While challenges remain and were named, I was so grateful to read that the survey behind the search profile for the 11th Bishop of Kansas interprets our diocese as "highly vitalized!" It is a good time for the next bishop to bring new vision, energy, and skills to move the Diocese of Kansas forward in mission.

I experience the opportunity to accept a part-time role cultivating Eco-Region Networks across the Episcopal Church (including the Grasslands) that can have a real impact on sustaining beloved plants and animals and our water sources; transforming our food growing systems; and caring for the atmosphere by sequestering carbon as a holy calling.

There is a lot going on in our nation and in the world right now; it is the most tumultuous period I have witnessed in my lifetime. It has led me to reflect upon and to preach this

year at Christ Mass and at these regional visits on the Emmaus story in the Gospel of Luke. I offer the sermon as my farewell message to all in the Diocese of Kansas, the place and people I treasure.

Emmaus Sermon

A lot of things were happening on the road to Emmaus. The **power dynamics** were extraordinary – even for 1st-century Palestine!

The two disciples in today's gospel – Cleopas and his unnamed companion (perhaps his wife?) had seen their religious leaders in the temple give Jesus to the Romans; (the text uses the very intimate word "Our" – "our chief priests".) They'd watched Herod & Pontius Pilate toss Jesus back and forth like a hot potato. Power dynamics!

The **suffering** was excruciating. These two had witnessed their beloved rabbi -- who had led them into God's Way of Love as no rabbi before – betrayed by Peter and brutally executed by authorities. Suffering abounded: physical, emotional and spiritual.

St. Augustine writes that these disciples were scandalized – which means "violence was being done to their values."

A lot was happening. And **their response was to flee**. For Cleopas & his companion enough was enough. They literally "hit the road," got out of town, headed west out of Jerusalem to the village of Emmaus. (toward Gaza.)

With their bodies moving, out of the turmoil in Jerusalem, they started to talk. Three different verbs

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THE Harvest

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The Episcopal Church is a community of 2 million members in 111 dioceses in 17 countries in the Americas and abroad. The Most Rev. Sean Rowe, *Presiding Bishop*

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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Congregations Share Memories, Gratitude, and Prayers for Bishop Cathleen Bascom



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Bishop Cathleen Bascom visits ranch owned by members of St. Luke's, Wamego during a parish visitation.

Trinity, Atchison gives thanks for Bishop Cathleen's steady, compassionate leadership and the way her ministry has helped the church walk more deeply in the Way of Love. Her teaching, preaching, baptizing, confirming, and encouraging among has left a lasting mark on the parish. May the Spirit continue to guide her and her family with joy and peace in the journey ahead.

St. Paul's, Clay Center thanks Bishop Cathleen for her help during the church's transition following Fr.

Rex Matney's illness. Her time spent with the Vestry was helpful and appreciated very much. The church wishes blessings for her and Tim as they embark on their new chapter.

Grace, Chanute sends its love and thankfulness to Bishop Cathleen on her retirement. The church is very thankful for her Minster vision. Her dedication to equipping small congregations for sustainability and growth has been a blessing.

St. Andrew's, Derby appreciates Bishop Cathleen's long standing support of the parish and its ministries. Her presence and leadership at the Rogation Procession and Land Blessing is a cherished memory. Her witness to God's deep love for all of creation has been an inspiration and challenge for all. The parish will miss her creativity, energy, and joy!

St. Martin in the Fields, Edwardsville thanks Bishop Cathleen for seeing the potential in the

church and all that it has to offer. The community feels gratitude for her ministry, especially during the loss of Father Laird. She was a pastor to the whole church, ensuring the congregation was supported in that difficult time. The parish also remembers her consecrating the new sanctuary space, and her leadership which led to the Rev. Mary Lynn Coulson's appointment as Vicar.

St. Andrew's, Emporia offers the following prayer, "Gracious and loving God, we give thanks for your servant Cathleen, for her wisdom, courage, and steadfast heart. Bless her as she steps into new paths of service and rest. May the same Spirit that guided her through the Flint Hills continue to walk beside her in quiet mornings, in new callings, and in every act of love. May she know our deep gratitude, and may her journey ahead be filled with peace, joy, and the boundless grace of your presence. Amen."

St. Mary's, Galena thanks Bishop Cathleen for her commitment to small churches in the diocese. Her efforts have made it possible for many parishes to have clergy leadership and to have the Eucharist. Her support has empowered churches to continue serving their communities.

St. Thomas, Holton sends its blessings to Bishop Cathleen as she begins the next phase of her life and ministry. The church deeply appreciates the care and concern she has shown for small, rural parishes in the Diocese of Kansas.

Church of the Covenant - St. John's Mission, Junction City recognizes and appreciates how Bishop

Cathleen has planted seeds, nurtured, and grown the strength of its vestry. The church will continue to grow with her legacy of leadership and wishes her strength, joy and love in the big adventures ahead.

Canterbury House, Lawrence extends gratitude to Bishop Cathleen for all that she has done for the diocese. The students enjoyed when she came to speak at programs during the school year and appreciated how she was willing to give her time to share her own discovery of the Canterbury House and how it helped deepen her faith and recognize her call when she was a student at KU. The students wish Bishop Cathleen blessings for her next chapter.

Trinity, Lawrence remembers Bishop Cathleen from her early days attending Trinity while in college at KU, watching her formation and the joy of her wedding to Tim. The church feels blessed to have had two visits from her in the past year; the first for confirmations, receptions, and reaffirmations, and the second for the installation of the Rev. Jenn Allen. The church is thankful for her leadership in creation care and creation spirituality. Bishop Cathleen is an important part of the Trinity church family.

St. Paul's, Leavenworth remembers a discussion with Bishop Cathleen during its search process about querying the Bishop for the Armed Forces for any retiring military chaplains. That question led to phone calls and emails which eventually identified Fr. Jere Hinson, a retiring U.S. Navy chaplain as a candidate. Once identified, the Search

Committee and Fr. Hinson met and quickly determined Fr. Hinson was a perfect fit. Bishop Cathleen was critical in making this happen and for this, St. Paul's, Leavenworth will always be grateful.

Canterbury House, Manhattan thanks Bishop Cathleen for her investment in Campus and Young Adult Ministry over the years. The students enjoyed her calming and thoughtful presence at programs including, joining them for hikes on the Konza, celebrating Eucharist, and teaching about Christianity, Episcopal identity, and mission.

St. Michael and All Angels, Mission offers this prayer for Bishop Cathleen, "God, our Holy Mother, has planted within you a great love for her creation. May she continue to nourish the soil of your holy vocation in service to this beautiful planet earth she has given us as our home. May the gentle whispers of the delicately dancing grasses of the plains continue to inspire you. May the stories in your heart find their way to paper. May our gracious and loving God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, one God and Mother of us all—bless each and every day of your life and your ministry in the next chapter of your story."

Church of the Ascension, Neodesha remembers how Bishop Cathleen's arrival in the diocese ushered in a feeling that the church is capable, strong, and could accomplish great things for the community. The church has benefitted tremendously from involvement with the Little Church on the Prairie Minister and is thankful for her guidance and passion.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Bishop Bascom during a visit to St. Thomas, Overland Park

Grace, Ottawa felt that every visit from Bishop Cathleen was special. The congregation felt lifted up by her and will continue to pray for her future work.

St. Thomas', Overland Park thanks Bishop Cathleen for her gentle spirit with the children and youth of the community. Her playful, welcoming and open demeanor always sets young people at ease when receiving the sacrament of confirmation. The church wishes her blessings on her next chapter!

St. Luke's, Shawnee remembers Bishop Cathleen's visit on a lovely June morning in 2021, bringing a sense of warmth and anticipation to the community. After the service, the bishop gathered everyone in the garden, where she read a moving excerpt from her new book. The peaceful setting made her words feel especially meaningful. The church would like to thank Bishop Cathleen for her grace and inspiration during her tenure.

Grace Cathedral, Topeka will always cherish having been neighbors and friends with Bishop Cathleen since 2019, as well as the privilege of having served as the seat of her episcopacy. Her accessibility and outlook have added so much to the positive relationship the cathedral enjoys with the diocese.

St. David's, Topeka thanks Bishop Cathleen for serving as bishop of the Diocese of Kansas and expresses gratitude for her friendship, vision, compassion, humor, leadership, and approachability.

Breakthrough, Wichita thanks Bishop Cathleen for her faithful leadership and for always making time to hear Breakthrough updates, support its mission, and honor the journeys of those who are served. Her compassion and encouragement have made a lasting impact through her prayerful leadership of the diocese. May God bless and keep her and her family in this next chapter, and may her heart be filled with joy knowing how deeply she is loved and respected.

Good Shepherd, Wichita found a trusted ally in Bishop Cathleen during the church's search for a new rector. She was a friend, an adviser, and a steady sounding board. Her guidance was an immense help throughout the transition. The church remains deeply thankful for her support and faithful leadership.

St. James', Wichita gives thanks for the bishop's leadership and guidance of the parish during difficult times. The church's Creation Care Team appreciates her leadership, encouragement, guidance, and support. They experience her as

constantly learning, sharing, and advocating and wish to thank her for the reminder that as Christians it is part of our faith to take care of God's creation.

St. Stephen's, Wichita commends the bishop's leadership and support of the church during transition, leading to the hiring of the Very Rev. Laurie Lewis as rector. Also for being present to dedicate the Phillips-Thompson outdoor pavilion, and Susan's Playground, which have enabled the church to utilize more of its outdoor space and enjoy its expanded prairie grasses.

Clergy News

- The Rev. Mary Lynn Coulson was appointed Vicar of St. Martin in the Fields, Edwardsville
- The Rev. Dr. Wesley Smith was appointed Vicar of Covenant-St. John's Episcopal Mission, Junction City
- Deacon Jeanine Blessant was appointed to serve at St. Peter's, Pittsburg and St. Paul's, Coffeyville
- The Rev. Maddy Bishop Knoth was appointed Vicar of St. Andrew's, Derby
- The Rev. Mike Loyd was appointed Vicar of St. Matthew's, Newton
- The Rev. Carolyn Garwood was appointed Deacon Pastor of St. Paul's, Clay Center
- The Rev. Dawn Frankfurt died November 25
- The Rev. Suzi Drury retired from Ministry at St. Michael's, Mission, effective November 29

St. Margaret's Next Dream

by Chad Senuta

St. Margaret's, Lawrence recently settled a \$1.2 million debt with the Diocese of Kansas.

The church was founded in 1990 on the west side of Lawrence and experienced the joys of successfully planting a new parish, as well as the excitement of watching it grow and flourish over the years.

In 2006, the church built a new Parish Center with the intention of providing much needed gathering space to better serve parishioners and the community. However, the debt incurred to build the Parish Center eventually became a threat to the church's long-term viability. Following the departure of St. Margaret's rector in 2007, the church faced significant budgetary shortfalls and declining attendance. In 2012, the parish signed a note with the Episcopal Diocese of Kansas, transferring its debt obligations from a bank to the diocese, enabling it to keep its doors open.

While the debt from the Parish Center presented a financial challenge, the Parish Center remained a blessing to St. Margaret's ministry. The Parish Center empowered the church to serve its neighbors in love, as it has been used to host families navigating the difficulties of housing insecurity. The building serves as a gathering place for the parish community as well as a resource to be shared with the wider community.

The Rev. Marco Serrano was called as Rector of St. Margaret's in 2019. Current leaders credit his leadership for bringing new life to the church and for having insight that the loan agreement with the diocese was at a point where escalating payments would become too much for the parish to cover. From 2013-2023 the parish hadn't reduced any principal on the loan.

In November of 2022, Fr. Marco wrote to Bishop Cathleen Bascom requesting that the diocese consider offering a "matching grant" of loan forgiveness for every dollar that St. Margaret's could raise through a capital campaign. After subsequent meetings with the bishop and the Finance Committee of the Council of Trustees, the Finance Committee recommended that the Council should agree to "match" the money received by St. Margaret's during its three-year capital campaign.

The church began its "Next Dream" campaign in 2023.



PHOTO BY THE REV. KAREN SCHLABACH

Steve Knoll (left), Sr. Warden of St. Margaret's presents final check fulfilling St. Margaret's debt to Brian Geary, Diocesan Treasurer (right) and Jay Currie, Diocesan Comptroller (center).

The Pre-Campaign Survey Report stated, "We simply won't be able to consider any vision for our future while we still hold this level of indebtedness. There is no limit to the dreaming we could do if we were to put this debt behind us, once and for all."

With a goal of raising half the \$1.2 million in principal, members of St. Margaret's pledged \$714,000. In February of 2024, the church made a payment of \$335,000 to the diocese. And at the November 2025 meeting of the Council of Trustees, Sr. Warden Steve Knoll brought a check to Finance Committee members satisfying the final payment from the church.

Mr. Knoll said, "St. Margaret's was created to bring the unchurched in west Lawrence back to worship and Christian community. This monumental effort gives St. Margaret's the opportunity to go from maintenance to mission."

The Rev. Tom Baker, current Rector of St. Margaret's said, "Thank you to member Marty Fairchild for leading this remarkable effort, and to our former rector, Fr. Marco Serrano, for his vision and creativity in making this achievement possible. We also thank Bishop Bascom and the Diocese of Kansas for their generous matching support, which contributed to the success of the Next Dream campaign. Thank you to everyone who helped turn this dream into reality."

Where Heavenly Witnesses Inspire Earthly Joy

by the Very Rev. Laurie Lewis

On September 28th, at her final episcopal visitation, Bishop Cathleen Bascom blessed and dedicated Susan's Playground as part of the growing outdoor campus of St. Stephens, Wichita. Mother Laurie Lewis, rector of St. Stephens and co-chair of the diocesan Congregational Vitality Task Force, thanked the Bishop for her inspiration to take the church's ministry to the neighborhood, noting that "The vitality of a parish is more than what happens inside its walls."

In 2009, St. Stephens built a timber play structure that neighbor and parish children thoroughly enjoyed. It was repaired and reinforced multiple times across 16 years of hard play, and it lasted longer than anyone expected. In September 2024, when our beloved long-time member, Susan Gaskill, neared the end of her journey with brain cancer, she expressed her desire that any funds donated in her memory be used to build a new commercial grade playground, that would serve the neighborhood and parish for decades to come. Her husband, Dr. Rick Gaskill, EdD, LCPC, spent his career in the field of Play Therapy and related research. The international professional "family" of Play Therapy



PHOTO BY BRIAN MUTERO

Susan Gaskill's husband, Rick [top left], with children, Trevor (& wife Shelly) [bottom right], Brianna [next to Rick], and Jarred (& wife Emily) [top right], and their six grandchildren, at the dedication of Susan's Playground.

spread the word about Susan's Playground around the world, pouring in donations for the project. Inspired by Susan's vision, families of three more saints of St. Stephens, who joined the great cloud of witnesses, agreed that donations made in their memories would help to make this playground a reality.

Jane Mossman was the Junior Warden in 2009, who spearheaded purchasing and installing the 2009 timber playground. Her active involvement in the lives of grandchildren and great grandchildren is one way to know her love of play for little ones. The "music panel" portion of this installation is given to the glory of God in Jane's name.

John Myers was known in Wichita primarily by his 1970's & 80's radio personality "Hooter" Myers. John devoted much of his retirement years volunteering with the Commemorative Air Force announcing airshows and reenacting General MacArthur. Given to the glory of God and in John's memory, a two-seated spring airplane "rider" is a kid-favorite part of our playground.

Bill Whitaker may have been a graphic designer by education and trade, but he was well known in the Diocese of Kansas for his huge smile and participation in the councils of the church. He was a strong ally for the full inclusion of LGBT siblings in the church. Mother Laurie, said, "I picture Bill now, as part of the heavenly witnesses, sitting on the sidelines but encouraging us to keep up the work." The new park benches, that watch over the playground, are dedicated to the glory of God and in Bill's memory."

Susan Gaskill was an active member of Saint Stephens. Over the years, she taught Sunday school, was a vestry member and was instrumental in founding the annual Ice Cream Social, which took the church outside to fellowship with its neighbors. She had a radiant personality that always made everyone feel seen and loved.

Susan's vision began this project and inspired donations from around the world. Dedicated to the glory of God and in her memory, Susan's Playground provides a safe, developmentally staged play area for kids from the neighborhood, as well as the parish, to gather, explore, and play. 🕊

St. Bartholomew's Closes after 62 Years of Ministry and Service

by Gary Charter

After 62 years of ministry in Southwest Wichita, St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church will close as a parish on December 31, with its final service on December 28 followed by a reception. The closing marks the end of a long history of resilience, community service, and deep fellowship.

St. Bartholomew's began in 1962, when 44 adults petitioned Bishop Edward Turner to establish an Episcopal church in the area. Rev. Edward L. Barnett of St. James Wichita was assigned to form the mission, which first met on April 3, 1963, at the National Guard Armory. For two years, the congregation worshiped in the IBEW Hall, thanks to its air conditioning and a connection to founding member Bill Seaton.

In 1964, the mission purchased land on Jewel Street and soon built its first church, dedicated in May 1965. A bell tower followed in 1966 and an annex in 1986. By the late 1980s, the congregation had outgrown the building and sought greater visibility. Under Father Bob Layne, the church moved to the former Midway Baptist Church on South Broadway, holding its first service there on May 29, 1988. It was during this period that St. Bartholomew's developed its defining ministries: a Food Ministry, a Clothing Ministry, and weekly breakfasts shared before worship.

In 1992, the church entered a regional partnership with St. Andrew's, Derby, and St. Jude's, Wellington, but the arrangement struggled. Declining membership and building debt forced the closure of the Broadway facility in 1996. The congregation then moved into a leased former auto parts store on South Meridian. Despite its grim condition, the space was transformed by parishioners and proved ideal for the expanded Clothing Ministry, which served neighbors with dignity and no questions asked.

After losing its lease in 2019, St. Bartholomew's was welcomed by St. John's Episcopal Church. Under Mother Liz Gomes, the congregation restarted worship and relaunched the Clothing Ministry in early 2020, though

the COVID-19 pandemic soon required online and Zoom services.

In 2021, the church returned to Southwest Wichita, sharing space with Southwest Presbyterian Church until that congregation closed in 2023. With growing personal demands on members and fewer hands for ministry, St. Bartholomew's chose to conclude its independent parish life. They will merge with St. Andrew's in Derby, trusting that together they can continue the work grounded in Matthew 25:35-36: feeding the hungry, welcoming the stranger, and clothing those in need. ☉



SUBMITTED PHOTO

St. Bartholomew's parishioners and clergy gathered for a photo after a service on November 9. The "We Believe" banner has been with the church for many years and parishioners felt it provided the perfect message for the church's journey..



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Topeka firefighters battle the fire at Grace Cathedral on November 26, 1975.

Grace Cathedral Commemorates Anniversary of 1975 Fire

by Chad Senuta

Grace Cathedral, Topeka recently commemorated the 50th anniversary of the fire that ravaged the building in the early hours of November 26, 1975. The fire was the costliest in the city's history and one of the most devastating in the history of the state. Thankfully, no one was injured or killed, but the impact to both the building and the community has left an indelible imprint which has understandably become a central part of the church's identity.

On the night of the fire, Topeka firemen fought the blaze in near blizzard conditions until 5 am. In a letter from Fire Chief Ben Neill, Jr. after the event, he shared the magnitude of the fire through the resources necessary to contain it: 48 firemen, 5150 feet of fire hose, 6 fire trucks, 274 feet of ladders, and 659,620 gallons of water.

The overall damage to the building was estimated at 3 million dollars, which is equivalent to 15 million today. Although the church was insured, there were many items inside which were simply irreplaceable, such as valuable wood carvings, the pulpit, the pipe organ, and the church's beautiful stained-glass windows.

In a service commemorating the fire in 1995, Dea-

con Don Chubb said, "In just 5 hours, the beauty that generations of Episcopalians had sacrificed to build over 66 years had been destroyed."

The Very Rev. Leslie Olsen, Dean of Grace Cathedral in 1975, was asked in a TV interview what would need to be done for the church to rebuild and move forward. He said simply, "The first thing we have to do is stop crying, I guess, and start getting it cleaned up as much as we can so we can start rebuilding."

News of the fire touched the entire country and Hollywood celebrities Bob Hope and Oscar winning costume designer Edith Head came to Topeka for a charity benefit on December 14, 1976. Bob Hope performed his legendary comedy and Edith Head put on a fashion show celebrating the golden age of cinema, featuring well-known costumes from popular films modeled by local women from Topeka.

The Very Rev. Torey Lightcap, current Dean of Grace Cathedral, shared why he felt it was important to commemorate the event 50 years later, "To know who you are, you have to look back, remembering healthfully so you have a basis to move forward. This community has been inspired by these events as tragic as they were. The primary reason for us wanting to do this is not to wallow in the past but to celebrate how far we've come with God's help and all that is left to do."

On November 23, 2025 the church hosted a series of events to reflect and draw inspiration for the church's mission moving forward. Dean Lightcap interviewed clergy leaders, local firefighters, and other witnesses for a time of story sharing.

During this time the church also unveiled an oil painting commissioned to commemorate the fire, painted by artist Lois VanLiew. The artwork beautifully blends imagery of the Cathedral and its stained-glass windows with the dramatic contrast of flames, capturing both the loss and the hope held in the church's collective memory

A guided tour of the Cathedral nave was offered to help visitors and parishioners learn more of the fire's impact and the restoration efforts over the years, including the stained-glass windows, some of which were only recently completed.

The church gathered for a special Choral Evensong and Recognition of Firefighters. The Grace Cathedral Choir was joined by vocalists from St. David's, Topeka, and St. Paul's, Kanas City, Missouri.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

The choirs of Grace Cathedral, St. David's, Topeka, and St. Paul's, Kansas City, Missouri, combined for a special Choral Evensong to honor local firefighters.

The combined choir debuted a new hymn written by acclaimed composer Tony Silvestri:

*We gather all in solemn space,
Here in these halls of polished stone
To honor God in heart's embrace,
And grateful for our faith's true home.*

*In Grace we stand, to grace aspire,
Our spirits filled with holy fire!*

*A single spark, or mighty storm
Can in an instant cast away
A century of craft and form;
And yet we are resolved to stay.*

*In Grace we stand, to grace aspire,
Our spirits filled with holy fire!*

*For not in altar, nave, or tow'r,
Nor in the bronze of tolling bells
Contained is God's majestic pow'r;
But in our hearts the kingdom dwells.*

*In Grace we stand, to grace aspire,
Our spirits filled with holy fire!*



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Lois VanLiew's painting artfully conveys both the loss and hope experienced as a result of the fire.

Diocesan Convention Wrap Up

by Canon Patrick Funston

The 165th Diocesan Convention met October 24-25 at the Doubletree Hotel in Overland Park. A full summary of convention business along with the full details of the 2026 Mission Plan and Apportionment Schedule is available on the diocesan website at www.episcopal-ks.org/convention2025

CONVENTION BUSINESS

ELECTIONS

Council of Trustees

Convention elected two at-large members of the Council of Trustees.

- The Rev. Jody Carroll, Grace Cathedral, Topeka, clergy at-large member, first 3-year term
- Ms. Teresa Ryther, St. Stephen's, Wichita, lay at-large member, second 3-year term

Convention confirmed the various convocation boards' elections of lay members of the Council of Trustees.

- Ms. Martha Stone, St. John's, Parsons, southeast convocation lay member, first 3-year term
- Ms. Tim Flynn, St. John's, Wichita, southwest convocation lay member, first 3-year term
- Ms. Melanie Laster, Covenant, Junction City, northwest convocation lay member, second 3-year term
- Mr. Ron Olson, St. Thomas the Apostle, Overland Park, northeast convocation lay member, second 3-year term

Convention expressed gratitude to members who retired from the Council this year: Mike Morrow, John Smittle, the Rev. Doreen Rice Daab.

Deputation to the 82nd General Convention of the Episcopal Church

Lay deputies

- Ms. Michael Funston, St. Margaret's, Lawrence
- Mr. Stephan Mann, St. Luke's, Shawnee
- Mr. Mason Weber, St. Paul's, Manhattan
- Ms. Kirsten Lee, St. Michael & All Angels, Mission

Lay alternate deputies

- Ms. Julia Hart, St. Stephen's, Wichita
- Mr. Dakota Bennett, St. James', Wichita

- Ms. Carrie Roesner, St. Luke's, Shawnee
- Mr. Bryan Irvine, St. David's, Topeka

Clergy deputies

- The Very Rev. Torey Lightcap, Grace Cathedral, Topeka
- The Very Rev. Laurie Lewis, St. Stephen's, Wichita
- The Rev. Maddy Bishop Knoth, St. Andrew's, Derby
- The Rev. Andrew O'Connor, Saint Francis Ministries, Wichita

Clergy alternate deputies

- The Rev. Karen Schlabach, Diocese of Kansas
- The Rev. Margaret McGhee, St. Paul's, Manhattan
- The Rev. Jennifer Allen, Trinity, Lawrence
- The Rev. Tom Baker, St. Margaret's, Lawrence

OTHER BUSINESS

- The convention was provided notice of the 81st General Convention's proposed alterations to the Constitution of the Episcopal Church and its Book of Common Prayer.
- The bishop appointed (and, where necessary, the convention confirmed) various officers and members of committees and commissions.
- The convention sent greetings to ecumenical ministry partners, former bishops of Kansas, neighboring dioceses, and friends in the larger Anglican Communion.
- The convention designated its eucharist offertory to the Diocese of Nakuru, Anglican Church of Kenya, and to Kansas-to-Kenya.

MINISTRY RECOGNITIONS

Deacon's Cross: The Rev. Karen Deal, Trinity, Arkansas City, and Grace, Winfield

Canon's Cannon: The Very Rev. Laurie Lewis, St. Stephen's, Wichita

Bishop's Chair: Mr. Jay Currie, Comptroller, Diocese of Kansas

Convention next convenes to elect the XI Bishop of Kansas on June 13, 2026.

The 167th Convention of the Diocese of Kansas is scheduled for October 23-24, 2026, at Grace Cathedral, 701 SW 8th Avenue, Topeka, Kansas. ☉



Kansas 2 Kenya, now in its 20th year, invites members of the diocese to submit applications for the Community and Medical Teams going to Kenya this summer. The tentative dates for the trip are **June 7-22**.

The application is available to download at www.episcopal-ks.org/k2k2025. Please complete the application and email the application, consent, passport information and immunization record to the respective team leader. Send your deposit to the Episcopal Diocese of Kansas or to the leader noted below.

Medical Team - Nahirony Sanchez, topeka@kansas2kenya.com

Community Team - Joe Bob Lake, jlake10@kc.rr.com

Team members will be alerted to travel decisions as soon as possible with modest flight time changes likely and late cancellation possible. If cancellation is necessary, refunds will be offered based on funds returned to K2K.


Kenyan visas must be obtained in advance, on-line, and are no longer available at arrival. Links and a guide for obtaining a visa will be provided.

Medical providers are required to submit information for a temporary Kenyan license. A guide and associated documents will be provided to providers. Contact team leaders with questions.



PHOTO BY CHAD SENUITA

Bishop Antony Mambo addressed the 166th Diocesan Convention held in Overland Park October 24-25.

The Rt. Rev. Antony Mambo, Bishop of the Diocese of Nakuru, visited the Diocese of Kansas in October and attended the 166th Diocesan Convention. In his convention address he said, “Our partnership with the Episcopal Diocese of Kansas continues to inspire us. Your friendship, prayers, and shared vision for mission remind us that the Body of Christ is one — across nations, cultures, and continents. As we look ahead, our prayer is that God will continue to bless every parish, every family, and every hand that plants a seed of hope — whether it be a tree, a young disciple, or a dream for a better tomorrow. Together, we shall make the Diocese of Nakuru a green, vibrant, and thriving sanctuary for God’s glory.” Bishop Mambo’s complete address can be found on the diocesan website. 

www.episcopal-ks.org/bishopmambo



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Film crew captures sunset interview at Prairiewood in Manhattan, Kansas.

Prairiewood Documentary Tells Story of a Disappearing Landscape

by Chad Senuta

A new documentary titled *Prairiewood: A Last Stand of Tallgrass* is currently in production that will shine a spotlight on the heart of our diocese and the fight to protect one of the last stands of wild tallgrass prairie near Manhattan, Kansas. Once spanning from Texas to Canada, the Tallgrass Prairie is now one of the most endangered ecosystems on Earth, with less than 4% remaining.

Twenty-five years ago — led by their belief that experiencing the wonder of the natural world is vital — the proprietors of Prairiewood, Kail and Rebecca Katzenmeier, began strategically acquiring, preserving, managing, and sharing undeveloped land along the Wildcat Creek Valley just west of Manhattan, Kansas.

Kail and Rebecca are native Kansans who have long been associated with the Episcopal Church, going back to their college years when they attended the Canterbury ministry at K-State with Bishop Cathleen Bascom, who was then the Chaplain.

Today, their efforts stand as a beacon for private land conservation and have resulted in the ownership of 600 contiguous acres of tallgrass prairie.

Since their desire is not simply to protect the land from development but to create a structure that ensures its viability and preservation for generations, the Katzenmeiers created the Prairiewood Connect Foundation, a nonprofit entity that will protect and steward the land into the future. This work is ongoing, and the film seeks to help the Katzenmeiers secure support for their nonprofit transition and encourage others to rethink how we interact with the land.

Kail and Rebecca's passion, dedication, and perseverance to preserve Prairiewood as well as the beauty of the land itself are what drew the filmmakers to the project.

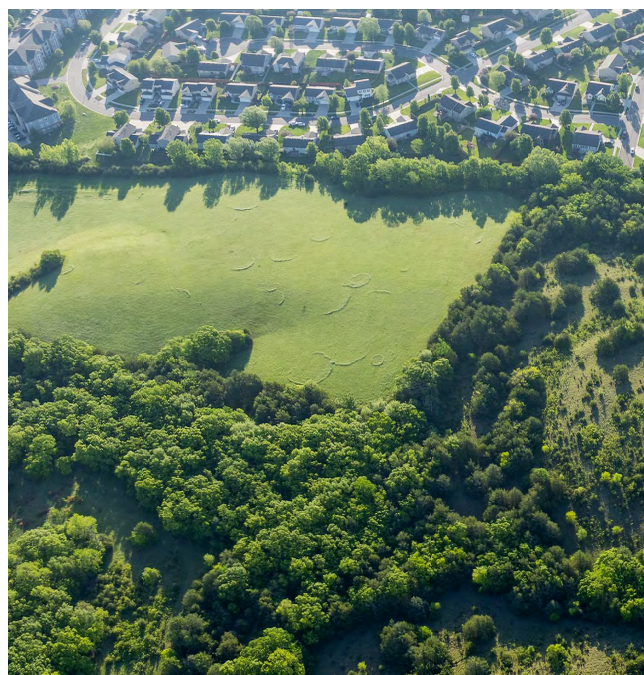
Nathaniel Wilder, an Alaska-based photographer, first encountered Prairiewood during a visit to Kansas. As someone accustomed to photographing remote and wild landscapes, he was immediately struck by the raw beauty and power of the Flint Hills.

After seeing the land firsthand, he was so moved that he reached out to friend and filmmaker Tom Attwater, urging him to collaborate on a film that could bring national attention to Prairiewood's story. Born and raised in Wichita, Tom grew up surrounded

by the vast, rolling prairies that make this landscape unique, fostering a lifelong appreciation for the tall-grass ecosystem. Having witnessed firsthand the slow disappearance of this irreplaceable terrain, Tom is committed to capturing its beauty and urgency on film before it's lost forever.

Initial filming began in the spring and the documentary is currently in production. The filmmakers plan to return this winter to capture winter's hold on the prairie, and then again in the spring to capture the prescribed controlled burning done at Prairiewood – a critical component to maintaining the health of tallgrass prairie ecology. In the fall of 2026, the team will complete editing and post production and begin submitting the documentary to film festivals.

By telling the story of Prairiewood, the filmmakers hope to shine a light on the power of private conservation efforts and the long-term thinking required to



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Aerial photo shows encroaching development at the eastern edge of Prairiewood property.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Kail and Rebecca Katzenmeier, proprietors of Prairiewood in Manhattan, Kansas.

protect ecosystems for future generations. The film will be screened at environmental film festivals, conservation conferences, and community events to spark dialogue and inspire tangible change.

When asked about the significance of the film to the mission of Prairiewood and efforts to preserve the tallgrass prairie, Kail Katzenmeier said, “Aside from its beautiful cinematography and excellent filmmaking, the documentary has been a message to us that this is worth it. This is a moment where if we tell the story right, it can actually help the cause. Nathaniel and Tom have amazing credentials. They’ve spent their lives telling important stories, and its affirming that this has caught their attention. Together, we hope this will raise awareness of the urgency of tallgrass prairie preservation and specifically the work that Prairiewood is doing. We’re an organization dedicated to connecting people with the land, because our efforts to preserve the native landscape would fall flat without also providing people access to the land in a way that increases their emotional connection to it.”

To learn more about Prairiewood’s conservation efforts, visit prairiewoodconnect.org. 

Saint Francis Gave Her Both a Career and a Faith

by Shane Schneider

Saint Francis Ministries announced in August that Holly Osborne has been named President of Kansas, Child Welfare, for the nonprofit child and family services organization. Based in Wichita, Holly brings 25 years of experience and a deep commitment to the mission that has shaped both her professional and spiritual journey.

Holly first joined Saint Francis as a Fort Hays State University social work student looking for a summer job. What began as a temporary position at the Ellsworth facility quickly became a lifelong vocation—one that brought her enduring friendships and introduced her to a faith tradition that would anchor her life.

When Holly arrived at Saint Francis, Fr. Ed Fellhauer served as president and CEO, alongside his wife, Mtr. Sheila Fellhauer, who also worked for the organization. Although baptized in the Methodist Church, Holly did not regularly attend church as a youth. “At Ellsworth, though, we held chapel every day with the boys,” she recalled. “That’s where I first encountered the Episcopal faith. One of the chaplains, Fr. Larry Steadman, mentioned his wife, and I remember thinking, ‘Wait—a priest can be married?’ I found that intriguing.”

“I also remember sitting in the chapel, fascinated by the beauty and rhythm of the Episcopal liturgy,” she said. “There was comfort in its tradition, reliability, and the prayers themselves.”

Three years later, Holly moved to Salina, where she got to know the Fellhauers and attended spiritual retreats at a Saint Francis cabin in Atchison. She often attended with Mtr. Linda English, a chaplain in Hutchinson. Recognizing that Holly was searching, Linda invited her to attend church. “She said, ‘Why don’t you come to church with us?’ That simple invitation meant so much,” Holly said. “We went to the Church of the Incarnation in Salina, where Fr. Ed and Mtr. Sheila were rectors. I immediately felt at home. That’s when my work life and my spiritual life came together.”

The Fellhauers later presented Holly for confirmation, officiated her wedding, and baptized her daughter—weaving a lasting bond between faith and vocation.

“I’m so grateful to have found a faith that mirrors the ethos of Saint Francis and social work—a belief in the dignity and worth of every human being,” Holly said. “Fr. Ed and Mtr. Sheila embodied everything I imagined priests should be—caring, selfless, and deeply compassionate.”

Fr. Ed shares that admiration. “When Holly came to Saint Francis, it was clear she possessed exceptional gifts that would unfold in ministry,” he said. “We came to value her joyful calm, her positive spirit, and the way she showed how a life rooted in Christian hope can transform the lives of those who are vulnerable.”



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Holly Osborne (right) with Fr. Ed Fellhauer (far left) and Mtr. Sheila Fellhauer

Bishop Bascom Emmaus

Walk-About Sermon

Contd. from inside cover page:

portray their words: 1. congenial conversation, 2. deliberating or debating 3. arguing – lobbing words, batting them at each other back and forth. That is how they were discussing all of the things going on.

And **Jesus himself came with them**. He listened to them. He spoke with them.

There are extraordinary **power dynamics** now too! As I've toured the corners of the diocese these months, I have informally listened as people reflect on things that are happening now. While pointing out the beauty and goodness of God's myriad blessings, sharing of deep concern has been a part of every visitation: concern about the use of power by our president including national guard sent to U.S. cities; attacks on institutions of higher learning; threats to public land protection; re-alignment of allies. Internationally. There is a lot of **suffering** too: everyone knows someone who has lost employment due to federal funding cuts; we know people who went hungry when the government shut-down; people voice deep concern over the treatment of immigrants and the unimaginable suffering stemming from the Russia-Ukraine and Israel-Gaza wars.

A lot of things are going on now too! Like Cleopas and his companion, do you find yourself angry and arguing with people? Or do you ever want to just flee?!

As he always did in his earthly ministry, in his new risen, mysterious form, Jesus walks with Cleopas and friend and draws out of them what is really going on, both around them and inside them.

Our "Collect for Purity" in the Book of Common Prayer, captures this this experience so well: to Jesus "all hearts are open, all desires known, and (from him) no secrets are hid."

He listens and then what does he do? Bible study! Right there on the road.

Jesus **opens the scriptures** to them, particularly passages about suffering. Jesus shows them that suffering – even for the Messiah – is to be expected. Yet, his very

presence with them proves that **suffering is not ultimate!** For, suffering does not separate us from the love of God. We may suffer many things but never the desolation of losing the love of our Creator! Today's words from the 8th chapter Romans are, for me, perhaps the best motto for Christian faith:

"Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will hardship, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? ...

No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of god in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Paul was able to pen these words because of his own experience and experiences like these two had in Emmaus. I sometimes wonder if Paul ever met Cleopas.

The Risen Jesus (whom they did not recognize in his new, mysterious way of being present) listened to them; opened the scriptures to them such that their heart burned with what was revealed there, and then what else did he do? He broke bread with them! They had Eucharist, the holy meal Christ offers his followers across all time and space.

Through both engaging the scripture and in the Eucharist, Cleopas and his companion are changed, transformed!

Remember, these two had been angry and terrified and they had fled

But what is their state at the end of our passage? Their hearts are strong! They have courage! They immediately leave Emmaus & return to their people in Jerusalem and to the mission of spreading Jesus' Way of Love. They join in spreading the news that nothing can separate us from that!

In a few moments we will participate in the holy mystery, the meal of Real Presence Jesus gives to us. May we also be so changed. 🕊

The Hero's Journey

by Canon Lisa Senuta

Frodo Baggins the small, unexpected hero of *The Lord of the Rings* hit a wall of fear in an epic scene. With tears streaming down his face he says, “I wish the ring had never come to me, I wish none of this had happened.”

This scene from Peter Jackson's *The Fellowship of the Ring* adapted from the book by J.R.R. Tolkien depicts one of the phases of the Hero's Journey from Joseph Cambell's academic work, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, which also inspired George Lucas to write *Star Wars*. The hero's journey is the concept that there is a perennial myth that exists across cultures and human history hidden in great stories. For example, in *The Odyssey*, *Hercules*, and *King Arthur*, the hero goes through similar elements, facing challenges within and outside of themselves as they reckon with reality and the call to be a hero. Arthur, Hercules and Odysseus surmount great challenges, forcing them out of their comfort zone that ultimately changes them forever.

Recently, I embarked on a Hero's Journey in South America in the mountains of Patagonia. It was a simulated journey adapted from Cambell's work. The journey led by Juan Pablo Ventura, friend of the Rt. Rev. Daniel Genovesi, rector of St. Andrew's, Emporia, guided us with seven other retreatants into the wild of the mountains with all our belongings and food on our backs. The simulation engaged us in vulnerable experiences, taking us out of our comfort zone, and invited us to emotionally reckon with the challenges in our lives.

The hero's journey is an invitation into what Ventura calls following the way or the path, of our lives unknown and yet beckoning us to grow, to change, to battle with our past and hear the calling of becoming who we need to be for ourselves and for others in our lives.

We did not save the universe. We did draw close to each other admitting our human insecurities and fears and each summoning in our own unique way the strength for the next “yes” in our personal Hero's Journey.

While this retreat was not overtly Christian, for me the invitation was to follow Christ further on the path of becoming a “little Christ.” What this means is for me

to risk the pain of shedding that which does not serve me in this calling. Insecurity, pride, fear, vanity, hiding weakness, forgiveness are examples of challenges that hold us back and take effort and intention to face. Like Frodo I certainly wished my challenges could be different, easier, and not as vulnerable.

Gandalf, the great wizard in Peter Jackson's cinematic interpretation of *The Lord of the Rings* responds to Frodo's insecurity with a deep resonant and compassionate voice, “So do all who have lived to see such times, but that is not for them to decide. All you have to decide is what to do with the time that is given to you.”

This is the question we each face in our own hero's journey. ☉



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Canon Lisa Senuta in the mountains of Patagonia with fellow retreatants.

Calling on God This Advent

WHILE WE undergo our Advent wait for Christ's arrival, the diocese continues our season of waiting while the XI Bishop Search Committee reviews nominations and applications, conducting interviews and gathering candidates in a confidential process that, we trust, will manifest in an election slate in mid-Lent.

Though I do not guide the Bishop Search, in my work with vestries and search committees at the parish level, I remind them that this is a time when our spiritual practices ground us individually and corporately, filling us with grace and trust for those whom we have asked to lead our discernment. How are you drinking deeply of God's living water while you lift the search committee and our candidates in prayer?

This Advent I am drinking again from a study engaged last year. *Wounded I Sing: From Advent to Christmas with George Herbert* by Richard Harries, released last year and I appreciated its blend of poetic analy-

sis, Herbert biography, and the theological consonance of its focus on Advent and Christmas. Advent, with its dual anticipation of our annual remembrance of Christ's first nativity and Christ's return, has always been a season of expectant waiting, but for the Diocese of Kansas, this Advent's anticipation is compounded.

Among Herbert's poetry, I'm especially grateful for "The Call," his 1633 poem most familiar to us in its pairing with Ralph Vaughn Williams' music, as hymn #487. The original poem reads:

*Come, my Way, my Truth, my Life;
Such a Way as gives us breath,
Such a Truth as ends all strife,
Such a Life as killeth death.*

*Come, my Light, my Feast, my Strength;
Such a Light as shows a Feast,
Such a Feast as mends in length,
Such a Strength as makes his guest.*

*Come, my Joy, my Love, my Heart;
Such a Joy as none can move,*



*Such a Love as none can part,
Such a Heart as joys in love.*

Whether sung, said or read, "The Call" is a prayer to the One who calls us. As our Search Committee and Candidates mutually discern, may we continually remind ourselves that the process of calling the next bishop of Kansas is God's process. In reading "The Call," we are reminded that God's being is Way, Truth and Life; Light, Feast and Strength; Joy, Love and Heart. In saying "The Call," we share God's nature as reconciler and connector. In singing "The Call," we anticipate our noticing of a God who is already actively blessing us. ☺





The Episcopal Diocese of Kansas

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