

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

**February 11, 2026**

The Council of Trustees of the Episcopal Diocese of Kansas, Inc., met via Zoom on February 11, 2026. Prior to the start of the meeting, the Venerable Jim Cummins, President and Chair, began the meeting with prayer. President Cummins called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m.

Members of the Council of Trustees present were:

- 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
- Mr. Stephan Mann
- The Rev. Margaret McGhee
- Mr. Ron Olson
- Ms. Teresa Ryther
- The Rev. Daryl Stanford
- Ms. Martha Stone
- Mr. Mason Weber

Also present as advisors to the Council of Trustees:

- Mr. Brian Geary, Treasurer

Also present:

- Ms. Michael Funston, Executive Assistant to the Bishop
- The Rev. Patrick Funston, Canon to the Ordinary
- The Rev. Caroline Howard, Curate for Creation Care
- Mrs. Michele Moss, Director of Operations
- Mr. Couri Reinholtz, Assistant Treasurer and Comptroller
- The Rev. Karen Schlabach, Youth, Young Adult & Campus Missioner
- Mr. Chad Senuta, Director of Communications
- The Rev. Lisa Senuta, Canon for Spiritual Life & Clergy Care

**Minutes**

President Cummins presented minutes from the January 21, 2026, meeting. A motion to approve the minutes as presented was made by The Rev. Canon Jody Carroll, seconded and passed unanimously.

**Assistant Treasurer and Comptroller's Report**

Mr. Couri Reinholtz gave the financial report. He talked to Grace Cathedral about their apportionment, and they will send in the rest of the payment soon. Newton still needs to pay. The deficit for Covenant, Junction City, was a staff error and they have paid in full. Cash flow is in a decent place. Mr. Reinholtz will reach out to Fr. Lloyd at St. Matthew's, Newton, on their missing apportionment. Mr. Ron Olson asked Mr. Reinholtz about the reporting of endowment funds.

**Treasurer's Report**

Mr. Brian Geary reminded the council that Mr. Reinholtz is still learning the ropes. If there are reports that the Council is not seeing, let Mr. Reinholtz know.

Mr. Geary brought Bishop Bascom's decision to give St. Aidan's, Olathe a loan for replacing their HVAC system to the attention of the Council. It was not clear in her decision that St. Aidan's was to repay the loan from the Church Extension Fund. Mr. Geary will meet with St. Aidan's to discuss and clarify this loan with them. Mr. Geary hopes to put parameters in place to repay that loan to the Church Extension Fund.

The Very Rev. Laurie Lewis moved that the Council of Trustees clarify that, in accordance with past practice, the money St. Aidan's has received from the Church Extension Fund is a loan, and that the Finance Committee will determine the terms. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Mr. Geary thanked Mr. Reinholtz for hitting the ground running and doing excellent work.

**Standing Committee Business**

The President presented requests for consent to episcopal elections.

The Ven. Jim Cummins moved that the Council of Trustees, acting as the Standing Committee of the Diocese, consent to the election of the Rev. Karin MacPhail as Bishop Diocesan of the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

The Ven. Jim Cummins moved that the Council of Trustees, acting as the Standing Committee of the Diocese, consent to the election of the Very Rev. Richard Lawson as Bishop Diocesan in the Diocese of Alabama. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

President Jim Cummins shared with the Council of Trustees the Bishop Search Timeline, particularly the March dates. The work before the Council is to agree on a petition process after the slate is announced on March 9.

President Cummins then shared information from the meeting with Covenant, Junction City, that took place on February 7. The parish is currently under Canon IV.7. The mediation which took place on February 7 did not come to a resolution. Ms. Melanie Laster, Council member and member of Covenant, Junction City, shared that the endowment committee will pay for the new boiler but that they want the deed to

the church back and want to be self-governing. The deed remains in the Diocese's name and is filed with the Geary County Register of Deeds.

Canon Patrick Funston announced to the Council of Trustees that the vicar for Covenant, Junction City, the Rev. Wesley Smith, will be moving back to Georgia because of his wife's health. Covenant will be looking for a new vicar after Fr. Smith's last day with Covenant on February 28, 2026. This will be announced to the parish on Sunday, February 15.

President Cummins then shared the Ecclesiastical Authority Worksheet which goes over all the required actions of an Ecclesiastical Authority and how the Council of Trustees will manage those actions during this interim time while the Diocese of Kansas with without a bishop diocesan. Part of the EA Worksheet was having a bishop available if there are disciplinary actions that need to be acted on during the interim time. There is a Memorandum of Understanding with the Rt. Rev. Poulson Reed, Bishop Diocesan of Oklahoma.

The Rev. Margaret McGhee moved that the Council of Trustees approve the Ecclesiastical Authority Worksheet as presented to the Council. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

President Cummins asked the Council how they would like to make statements as the Ecclesiastical Authority if there are events in the news that require such. Mother McGhee had brought this up to the Council of Trustees and said that we can rely on the Churchwide Office, Presiding Bishop's Office for national and worldwide news. However, when there are local events, the Council may want to have a plan in place or subcommittee to address those. As it stands in the EA Worksheet there is a question mark next to responding to world events. There was discussion amongst Council members about how to create a process for these kinds of statements. A Communications Subcommittee was formed with members Mother McGhee, Ms. Laster and Canon Carroll with diocesan staff (Director of Communications and Canons) as advisors to the subcommittee.

### **Canon's Report**

The Rev. Patrick Funston, Canon to the Ordinary, asked the Council of Trustees if they would like to have a report every month on the actions of the Ecclesiastical Authority. Council members felt this would be a good idea.

Canon Funston touched on the Heartland Minster Dissolution, one of Bishop Bascom's final acts as bishop diocesan. A copy of the letter was sent to the Council of Trustees ahead of the meeting to see what was communicated to members of the parishes. Canon Funston touched on the reasons for the dissolution.

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

The Rev. Canon Carroll moved that the Council of Trustees approve the amendments to the Northwest Convocation Bylaws. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Canon Patrick Funston presented the amendments to the St. Andrew's, Derby, Bylaws. After discussion, the Rev. Margaret McGhee moved that the Council of Trustees reject the amendments proposed to the St. Andrew's, Derby, Bylaws and work with Canon Patrick Funston at their vestry retreat to draft new Bylaws to be approved by this Council and then adopted at their next parish meeting. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

The Council took a short break and resumed at 11:31 am.

There was discussion between Ms. Laster and Canon Funston about concerns relating to Covenant, Junction City.

Confirmations will be held after the installation of the 11<sup>th</sup> Bishop of the Diocese of Kansas.

Canon Funston shared the roadmap for the 167<sup>th</sup> Diocesan Convention in October. The diocesan staff needs to begin planning for this convention. The staff proposed that this year's convention be a one-day gathering possibly shortly after the installation of the new bishop.

The Very Rev. Laurie Lewis moved that the 167<sup>th</sup> Diocesan Convention will be a one-day event on October 24<sup>th</sup>. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

Canon Funston then gave a report on transitions happening in the Diocese at this time. He reminded Council members that because they are the EA (Ecclesiastical Authority), they will hear more information than they generally have when there was a Bishop Diocesan in place.

Canon Funston gave a report on the various parishes in a search for new clergy. St. James, Wichita, has an interim priest, the Rev. Audrey Miskelley. St. James is under Canon IV.7 and the Rev. Miskelley brought some questions to Canon Funston about what that means for the parish and her work with them during this interim time. Canon Funston reminded the Council on their decision with Bishop Bascom to put St. James under Canon IV.7. Canon Funston proposed to withdraw the Canon IV.7 for St. James because the reasons are not in place due to Mother Frankfurt's resignation and death. The other proposal is that St. James remain under Canon IV.7 with the plan being that they have an interim and search process that is in concurrence with Canon IV.7. There was discussion about the two proposals. It was decided that Canon Funston would meet with the Rev. Audrey Miskelley and let her know what the Council discussed after which she will meet with the vestry and report to the Council about whether St. James needs to remain under Canon IV.7 based on the Rev. Miskelley's finding.

Canon Funston then moved on to St. John's, Wichita, and their current search process. The vestry is about ready to consider the search committee's candidate.

St. Paul's, Clay Center, is without a vicar after the Rev. Rex Matney's health required him to step down. Deacon Carolyn Garwood has been serving as Deacon

Pastor for the parish. The Bluestem Minster has also been helping with services. Canon Funston and Transition Missioner Theresa Klimuick met with the vestry on February 8, 2026, to help them begin their search process for a part-time or shared pastor and creation of a parish profile.

Covenant, Junction City, will announce this Sunday that their vicar, the Rev. Wesley Smith, will be leaving at the end of February and Covenant will begin a search process. Canon Funston asked the Council for their reflections on the possibilities for their search process as they continue to go through their current mediation.

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

Canon Funston reminded the Council that parochial reports are due at the end of this month. He will be sending a reminder next week to get those into the Diocese as well as the General Convention Office.

Mother Howard, Creation Care Missioner, gave a quick report. Cami Genovesi has started to work as an intern at Bethany House & Garden. She's helping with communication and publicity of programs.

Canon Lisa Senuta, Canon for Spiritual Life and Clergy Care, gave a short report on her retreats with vestries and Bethany Communities. All of these events can be found in the DioLog and on the Diocesan website. Canon Senuta along with Dean Demo met with the vestry and clergy at St. Paul's, KCK. Canon Senuta shared some pastoral concerns. This was part of her usual report to the Bishop and now she will share that with the Council of Trustees as the EA. Please share any pastoral concerns that you have and do not assume that she is aware of those.

The Rev. Karen Schlabach, Youth, Young Adult & Campus Missioner presented a written report.

Canon Patrick Funston led the Council in Noonday Prayer celebrating Bishop Barbara C. Harris, First Woman Bishop in the Anglican Communion.

The meeting concluded at 12:40 pm.

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The Rev. Helen Hoch  
Clerk

## **Addendum to the February 11, 2026, Council of Trustees Minutes**

### **Standing Committee Notes, December 17, 2025**

After remarking on the finishing work done on the Ecclesiastical Authority worksheet, members of the Committee looked at changes that might be needed before approving the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Standing Committee/Council of Trustees and the 10<sup>th</sup> Bishop, the Rt. Rev. Cathleen Bascom. After the discussion, the Ven. Jim Cummings, President, asked for a motion on edits to the MOU. Canon Jody Carroll moved that the modifications for paragraph #4 be deleted and modifications for #3 be kept. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

The meeting moved to Executive Session to discuss personnel issues.

After coming out of Executive Session, the Rev. Margaret McGhee moved to recommend that the Rev. Caroline Howard be reinstated to full-time in 2026 and supervise all garden employees, interns and volunteers. The COT will support modifying the budget, if necessary. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously. There was a discussion concerning the donation of land that had been offered to the Diocese. President Cummins suggested that it be put off for a year. Canon Carroll moved to table this issue until the end of 2026. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

There was another short Executive Session.

Ms. Teresa Ryther reminded members about the goodbye to the Bishop at the January 21, 2026, meeting and requested some help setting up for that event.

The next meeting will be held on January 7, 2026.

### **Standing Committee Notes, January 7, 2026**

The meeting focused on communication plans and responsibilities for the Standing Committee in the absence of a bishop.

### **Standing Committee Notes, February 4, 2026**

Members of the committee discussed the bishop search process. Anne Schmidt explained that the Search Committee will present the final slate on March 4 which will be followed by a petition process announcement. Some members expressed concerns about the petition process being outdated and potentially disruptive. Anne clarified that while it's not required by canon law, the Committee should proceed with the process as it has been included on the timeline. There was discussion about suggesting that this process not be included in future bishop searches.

There was some clarification as to the date of the upcoming Council of Trustees meeting due to the date for Ash Wednesday being a conflict. The meeting will be held on February 11, 2026.

### **Standing Committee Notes, February 11, 2026**

Much of this meeting concerned the petition process. President, the Ven. Jim Cummins, would like to see 2 or 3 people to work on and present the documentation need for this process. Canon Jody Carroll, Mr. Mason Weber and the Very Rev. Laurie Lewis volunteered. The Rev. Helen Hoch volunteered to consolidate items discussed as necessary for this process. She will get this to the group working on the documentation. These documents will need to have gone to Chad and then be ready for publication on March 9.

There was also discussion as to the possible future for Bethany House and Gardens.

The next meeting will be on March 4 when the Standing Committee should receive the slate of candidates from the Search Committee.

### **Standing Committee Notes, March 4, 2026**

As Jim was not attending this meeting in person, he had asked Mr. Ron Olson to oversee this meeting. Fr. David Jenkins, chaplain for both the search and transition committees, opening the meeting with prayer. Search Committee co-chairs, Canon Torey Lightcap and Mr. Scott Howard, presented the report from members of the Search Committee (most of whom were in attendance). National church consultants, Anne Schmidt and Sarah Stonesifer-Boylan, were also on the Zoom meeting. The report from the search committee was that they were unable to present a slate of 3-5 candidates. Anne reminded that the worst thing would be to elect the wrong bishop. Sarah added that she was amazed at the powerful discernment that had occurred. A new timeline will need to be developed, the news will need to be shared with the Diocese, the current members of the Search Committee have all agreed to stay throughout the entire process and applications should reopen for 3-4 more weeks. There was a considerable amount of discussion.

Ms. Melanie Laster moved to follow the suggestions of the search committee to extend the search process. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

The Very Rev. Laurie Lewis moved that the electing convention be combined with the already scheduled Diocesan Convention making it a two-day gathering on October 23 and 24 of 2026, and that the consecrating convention be held on a date that works with the Presiding Bishop's calendar. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Next steps were discussed.

**E-mail motion, March 5-7, 2026**

The Rev. Helen Hoch moved that the consecration date for the 11th Bishop of the Diocese of Kansas be set for April 17, 2027. The motion was seconded and passed. One member of the standing committee has not voted.