

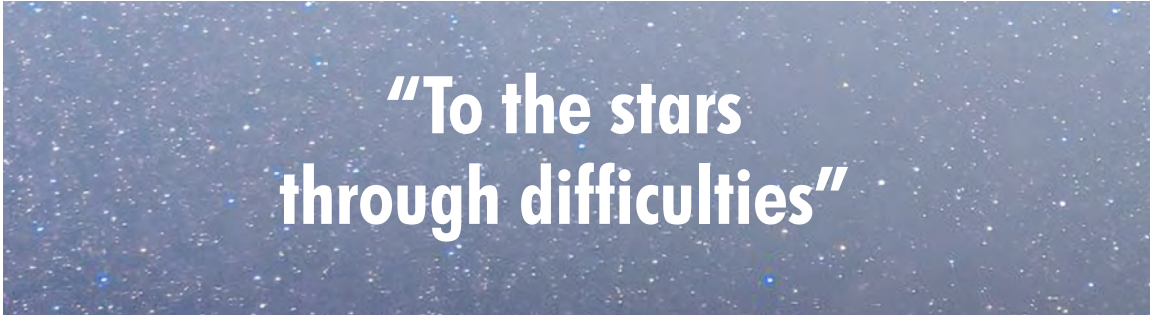


# The Episcopal Diocese of Kansas

Search for the Eleventh Bishop of Kansas



## Bishop Search Profile



# “To the stars through difficulties”

Dear friend,

Grace and peace to you in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

On behalf of the people of the Episcopal Diocese of Kansas, we welcome you into a sacred season of discernment with us as we seek our 11th bishop. This is a holy moment to pause and reflect with gratitude on our past, be honest about our present, and look to the future we know God is preparing for us.

Kansas is a land of wide horizons and deep resilience. Its prairies, rivers, fields, and cities speak to us of God’s abundance and care. These landscapes are “sites of insight” that shape who we are as people of faith: grounded, persevering, our eyes expectantly on the horizon.

The story of Kansas is one of determination and promise. Our state motto, *ad astra per aspera* – “to the stars through difficulties” – speaks to the heart of who we are. As Senator John Ingalls wrote, “The aspiration of Kansas is to reach the unattainable; its dream is the realization of the impossible.”

From the days of “Bleeding Kansas,” when convictions about justice shaped our entry into statehood, to the steadfast witness of immigrant communities who brought faith, hope, and traditions that continue to enrich our common life, Kansas has always embodied a kind of aspirational resilience. Our congregations reflect this legacy: communities in bustling cities, small towns, and rural crossroads, each bearing unique gifts yet all united in Christ and working to figure out what’s next and how to get there.

We acknowledge that our history is complex. This diocese was founded in 1859 amid the struggles of a divided nation about to be plunged into chaos. Our past holds moments of prophetic courage as well as seasons of complicity in exclusion and injustice. Today, we are committed to reconciliation and healing, seeking to disentangle ourselves from whatever diminishes life. We are leaning into God’s call to justice, equity, and beloved community.

We hold fast to the psalmist’s proclamation: “The earth is the Lord’s and all that is in it, the world and those who live in it.” This conviction is a call to discipleship, brought to us with clarity under the leadership of our 10th bishop. Care of the earth and of one another are central to how we live our baptismal vows. It finds expression in parish gardens that feed the hungry, in ministries that teach reverence for the earth, and in advocacy for climate justice from the breadbasket of the world.

Like the prairie itself, our diocesan life is marked by both patience and renewal. Seeds that lie hidden in winter rise in God's time to new life, and we trust that the Spirit is bringing forth fresh growth in us now. We face turbulent challenges: shifting demographics, changing patterns of faith, and urgent calls for racial justice. Yet the story we know is one of resilience, and we are encouraged by vitality – creative outreach, renewed ministries of advocacy, strong lay leadership, and clergy who walk faithfully with us in service and prayer.

As we seek our next bishop, we pray for a leader who will be a pastor, teacher, and companion. We long for someone who is prayerful, effective, centered, wise, and present. We hope for someone who loves this land and its people, who can call us to deeper discipleship, who will inspire us to care boldly for creation, and who will challenge us with vision and humility to embrace the mission God has set before us.

We are a community eager to grow, hopeful for the future, and confident that God, who has always guided us through the generations, will continue to lead us into new life. We believe, as ever, that God has already given whatever is needed.

If these words stir your spirit, we invite you to discern with us. Please pray with this profile and ask whether you see yourself reflected in it.

Faithfully in Christ,

Scott Howard and Torey Lightcap  
Co-chairs of the Bishop Search Committee



IMAGE CREDIT TO BILL SCHONE OF TOPEKA

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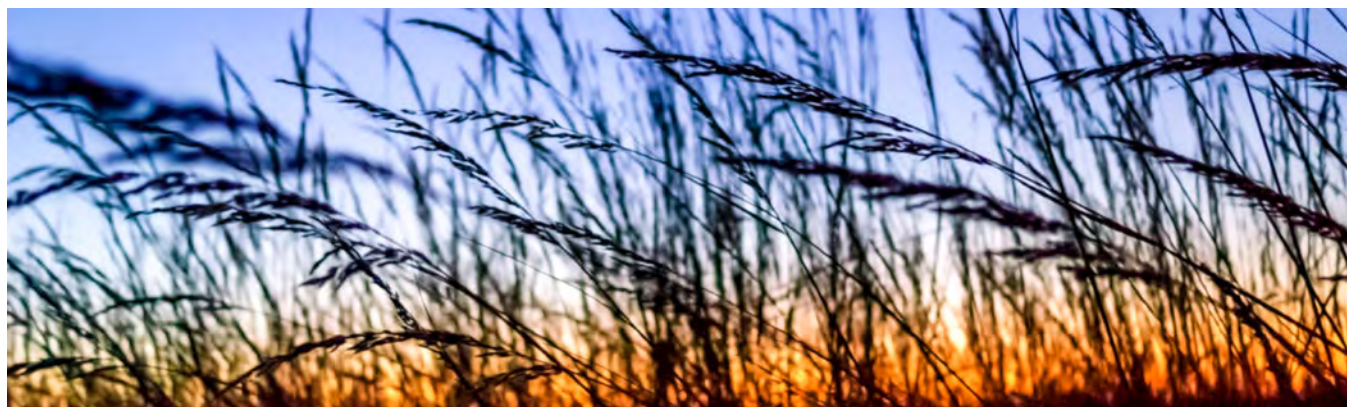
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# The Bishop We Seek

The Episcopal Diocese of Kansas seeks a bishop who is deeply rooted in prayer, grounded in the Gospel, and equipped to help us embody Christ's mission in the world. We seek someone who will walk with us as pastor, teacher, and leader, guiding us into the next chapter of our common life with wisdom, vision, and grace.

This ministry is not for the faint of heart and demands a leader who thrives under pressure and approaches the often-complex work of change not with anxiety but with steadiness, resilience, and trust in the Holy Spirit.

We hope for a bishop whose leadership is characterized by sound judgment, personal integrity, and spiritual depth. We seek a person of discernment and prayer who will proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ with power and clarity, inspiring us to deeper faithfulness and bold witness.

As a dynamic preacher and clear communicator, our next bishop will guide us in faithful conversation amid the complexities of our time and help us discern how to live as people of hope and reconciliation in a divided world.

Our next bishop will guide us through seasons of transition with clarity and confidence, facing the realities of church decline honestly while articulating a compelling vision for the future and helping us find and embrace new opportunities for growth and mission.

They will be an adaptive leader — open to new insights, willing to learn, and able to adjust approaches as circumstances evolve, responding to change not as a threat but as an opportunity for the Spirit to do something new.

We seek a bishop who is grounded and self-aware, with the humility to grow, learn, and even change their mind. They will model teachability and a commitment to continual growth, encouraging the same posture of faithful curiosity and openness across our diocesan community.



*Grace Cathedral, Topeka*

Effective episcopal leadership requires both pastoral sensitivity and practical skill. We seek a bishop who is an able administrator, financially literate, and transparent in goals and budgeting. Faithfully guiding the mission of the church within its established frameworks, they will help us speak across differences and clearly discern the work God is calling us to do.

With a collaborative and team-oriented approach, they will trust, support, and build up those called to serve, cultivating a culture where all gifts are recognized and utilized for the sake of God's mission.

We also seek a bishop who is relational, visible, and accessible — a compassionate pastor who provides excellent care to clergy and congregations and who fosters genuine spiritual community among all people.

They will demonstrate a deep commitment to justice and outreach, embody the full inclusion of LGBTQ+ persons, and support ministries that nurture and form youth and young adults. With a personable presence, a good sense of humor, and a capacity for responsive, rather than reactive, leadership, they will walk with us in times of joy and challenge alike.

Finally, we desire a bishop who values our ministries and understands the distinct character of our diocese. They will help us speak across differences, engage faithfully within church structures, and clearly discern the work God is calling us to do.

Above all, we seek a bishop who will share a long-term commitment to this diocese — providing stability, continuity, and steadfast leadership as together we build up the Body of Christ in Kansas and beyond.



*Grace Cathedral, Topeka*



*Dr. Andrew Earis leads a workshop at Tocher Event, St. Michael and All Angels, Mission*

## Listening Process

Over the course of two months, 13 listening sessions were hosted by the Search Committee. Two in-person sessions took place in each convocation, with separate sessions for priests and deacons. One session was for members of the diocesan staff. There also were four online listening sessions: two open to everyone, one for youth, and one for young adults. In total, 165 people participated in these sessions. Here are some of the emergent themes.

Clergy appreciate a bishop who is approachable and supports collaboration and collegiality between churches. The implementation of minsters was well received.

For priests, financial challenges have been exacerbated post-pandemic, with an increasing need for pastoral care at the parish level and a desire to address membership declines due to aging parishes. Deacons feel empowered and have been able to build more connections by meeting together at the annual clergy gathering.

Under Bishop Bascom's tenure, the Liturgy, Music and the Arts task force worked on a liturgical rite, "Communion in the Absence of a Priest" (COMAP), for use in designated congregations that go without the services of a priest for extended periods of time. This raised questions about compensation when deacons are called upon to conduct these liturgical rites.

The diocese has attracted two Spanish-speaking priests, and these early successes in Kansas City and Emporia are noted. Participants also flagged

youth and campus ministries, minsters, and the Bishop Kemper School for Ministry as examples of areas where things are running smoothly.

Attendees expressed their desire that the 11th bishop should be spiritual and able to speak about their faith journey one-on-one and in preaching. The bishop should be someone who is able to meet the current moment both politically and historically.

Overall, members liked the 10th bishop's outreach and evangelism work on creation care, but expressed concern about current financial prospects. Members are seeking more transparency about the decision-making process, more collaboration and a possible decrease in the apportionment paid by churches toward the overall budget. Additional draws from endowment funds have people worried about the future, particularly for the viability and sustainability of small churches and aging congregations.

In addition, members would like more understanding of what the bishop is doing, and they want more communication about what is happening in the diocese as well as about available resources for vitality. People also want the bishop to understand the needs of small, rural churches.

There was mixed feedback about whether the best candidate needed to have experience outside of Kansas. It also was important to members that the next bishop will want to stay a while, and that in the event of their departure, they might account for a time of transition.

# Survey Results

As part of the bishop search process, people across the diocese were invited to answer a survey that was administered and analyzed by Holy Cow! Consulting, a church-data analytics firm. A total of **465 people** took part, and all the responses were benchmarked against regional associations (dioceses or similar adjudicatory bodies) to help determine **what is typical, as well as what is extraordinary**, about the Diocese of Kansas.

## Some statistics about the people who responded

- **Age:** The majority were older than 65; 32% were 64 or younger
- **Years in congregation:** The majority had been in their current congregation more than 20 years; 31% had been there 6-20 years; 24% were there 5 years or fewer
- **Self-reported awareness** regarding the work of the diocese: 26% consider themselves very aware, 71% said they are somewhat to moderately aware, and 3% said they were unaware

Overall, approximately 45% of the people who responded are **clearly satisfied** with how things are going in the diocese. Approximately 39% feel there is a **compelling sense of purpose** or energy, and that they aren't just "going through the motions." (When this survey was taken in 2017, 27% said they were satisfied, and 23% said they felt a sense of purpose.)

But, more than a third of those who took the survey are considered "on the fence" about the measure of both satisfaction and energy. They may be waiting to see what happens next before saying whether they are clearly satisfied or energized. This could indicate a level of anxiety or conflict within the diocesan system.

The main takeaway: compared to other regional associations, **the overall vitality of this diocese is high**, and it is generally more positive than similar organizations across the country.

In addition, 36% of responders said they think the diocese is stronger than three years ago, while 18%



*St. John's, Parsons, 150th Anniversary Celebration*

said it is weaker. These numbers indicate people perceive the strength of the diocese to be high.

This sense of overall vitality tells us a lot about the people of the diocese. For many, there is:

- A renewed corporate spiritual zest
- A prevalence of **healthy, healing relationships**
- A sense that our activities are **purposeful**
- A **distinctive** mission and vision
- A focus on the needs of the **congregation and the greater communities** of the diocese

Taken together, the data indicates that the diocese would benefit from continued clarity around its sense of mission and vision for the future.

The survey was designed to help us understand not only the levels of satisfaction and energy, but what specific areas of focus were driving them. The survey found five different **drivers of satisfaction** for people within our diocese: shared vision, desire to get involved, trust in leadership, a chance to do work that is meaningful, and a healthy tolerance of differing opinions and beliefs. There were also five identified **drivers of energy**: overall spirit, lack of conflict, genuine hospitality, adequate opportunity for consideration of different approaches, and strong support for people serving in diocesan ministries.

As survey responders looked to the future, they stressed **four priorities for congregational work** and for the organizational streamlining of the diocese:

1. Equip rectors and other leaders in congregations with strategies to help them **reach new members**
2. Take a leadership role in working with **churches that are struggling**
3. Streamline our diocese organizationally and administratively so that it **makes better use of financial resources**
4. Equip clergy and other leaders in congregations to **help members** become growing, vital disciples

While priorities 1, 2, and 4 are typical of regional associations like dioceses today, priority 3 is unusually high on the list. It may indicate a unique need within this diocese to be further explored.

Overall, among the various constituent groups that completed the survey, several priorities are consistently related to a **common theme: equipping clergy and lay leaders to lead effectively in the 21st century church.**

Across seven performance metrics many other insights were seen. But here's one that kept returning: responders perceived the diocese to demonstrate an **average level of flexibility and openness to new ways of doing things.**

While 72% of people said they feel a moderate to large amount of change is necessary for their vision for the diocese to be met, 8% desire to change almost everything. This indicates that people are longing for a **higher than usual amount of change** to make the diocese reflective of what people envision. This number may point to some strategic dissonance: the diocese has a culture **not fully practiced or com-**

**fortable** with making change, but people desire to make a **substantial amount of change**. The diocese will need to do some important work focused on the internal culture of how it operates, as well as if and how that culture can support the diocese's vision for its future. As our survey consultant noted, when the culture is out of sync with its vision, the culture will dominate every time.

### **What critical abilities do we desire in our next bishop?**

The survey revealed three core competencies:

- Strategic leadership (casting a vision and leading toward it)
- Change management (leading through significant and necessary change)
- Capacity for pastoral care of leaders in time of need

### **What personal qualities do we want our next bishop to have?**

Sound judgment and wisdom, personal integrity, spirituality rooted in prayer, and compassion.



*Procession to Eucharist at Diocesan Convention, Grace Cathedral*

# Getting to Know Kansas

Kansas takes its name from the Kanza people, also known as the Kaw Nation, the original inhabitants of the region's land. The Kanza lived alongside other Native people in the Great Plains, even as the area was being visited by explorers seeking wealth or other treasure, including Coronado in 1541 and La Salle in 1682. Kansas was part of the territory that made up the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, and some of the earliest European Americans began arriving in 1812.

The Kansas Territory – which included all of current-day Kansas and much of what now is eastern Colorado – was formed in 1854 by the Kansas-Nebraska Act, which also allowed white settlers into the area. Abolitionist Free Staters from New England and pro-slavery settlers from neighboring Missouri rushed in to determine whether Kansas would become a free state or a slave state. The area became a hotbed of violence and chaos as these forces collided during a period known as Bleeding Kansas.

Abolitionists prevailed, and on January 29, 1861, Kansas, with the boundaries it has today, became the country's 34th state – and a free one. After the Civil War, the population of Kansas grew rapidly, when waves of immigrants turned the prairie into farmland. Volga Germans who had moved to Russia before arriving in Kansas brought with them hard red winter wheat, a variety that for decades made Kansas the breadbasket of the nation. Soon immigrants from across Europe, as well as Mexicans who worked on the railroad, found their way to the Midwest, making the state their home.

In addition to farming, the Kansas economy today is a mix of private sector employers – including major manufacturers, a robust aviation industry, a growing tech sector, and small businesses – as well as those who work in health care, education, and ranching.



*Students from Canterbury House K-State hike the Konza Prairie near Manhattan*

Within the diocese there also are three major military bases – the Army's Fort Leavenworth and Fort Riley (located between Manhattan and Junction City), and McConnell Air Force Base in Wichita.

# Getting to Know the Diocese

The Episcopal Diocese of Kansas covers the eastern third of the state. While this represents 46 of Kansas' 105 counties, it includes 2.43 million people, which is more than 86% of Kansas' overall population of 2.97 million. While a large majority are white, more than a quarter of residents identify as another race or ethnicity, or as two or more.

ETHNICITY	Population	Percentage
White	1,749,167	72
Hispanic or Latino	283,385	11.7
Black or African American	154,037	6.3
Two or more Races	131,006	5.4
Asian	80,054	3.3
American Indian and Alaskan Native	19,862	0.8
Some other Race	8,742	0.4
Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander	2,848	0.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,429,202</b>	

Within the borders of the diocese, the Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve is a significant remnant of the once-vast prairie ecosystem that greeted pioneers moving west. It is in the Flint Hills, an area known for its beauty and gently rolling hills. Along the Missouri River that forms the state's border in the northeast, one can see sweeping river vistas from bluffs above. Hills also are present throughout the diocese, and while gentle, the elevation of the state rises about 3,000 feet from its eastern border to the Colorado state line.



IMAGE CREDIT TO WWW.NATURE.ORG

*Tallgrass National Prairie Preserve near Strong City*



IMAGE CREDIT TO TYLER CIPRIANI

*The Keeper of the Plains sculpture, Wichita*

The diocese is home to five of the state's six major universities – the University of Kansas in Lawrence, Kansas State University in Manhattan, Wichita State, Pittsburg State and Emporia State. Washburn University in Topeka, Benedictine College in Atchison and Baker University in Baldwin are in the state's top 10 colleges by enrollment.

A National Park Service site in Topeka honors the landmark 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* case, in which the Supreme Court declared that separating children in public schools based on race was unconstitutional.

Four recognized Native tribes have reservations within the diocese, and Haskell Indian Nations University in Lawrence, a federally supported institution within the Bureau of Indian Education, serves more than 900 students, all of them members of more than 150 tribal nations.

Cities within the diocese were home to two famous Americans – aviator Amelia Earhart of Atchison (who was baptized at Trinity Church) and President Dwight D. Eisenhower, whose presidential museum and library are in Abilene. A museum in Wamego celebrates someone who is perhaps Kansas' most famous fictional citizen – Dorothy Gale, who found herself over the rainbow in *Oz*, both in the L. Frank Baum novels and the beloved 1939 movie.

Also to note: There are two adjoining cities named Kansas City, one in Kansas and one in Missouri. They often are abbreviated KCK and KCMO. Together they are a part of the metro Kansas City area, of which three Kansas counties are considered a part.

# History of the Episcopal Diocese of Kansas

In the mid-19th century, Episcopalians were among the early pioneers in the Kansas Territory and later in the state of Kansas after it was admitted to the Union in 1861. Most of the Episcopal priests were sent by the Missionary Association for the West, a group from Philadelphia. Their goal was simple – that “Kansas would be forever free and the Church forever low.”

One of those priests, the Rev. Charles Calloway, established a school for girls, first in Tecumseh and later in Topeka, lured by 20 acres that would eventually become Bethany Place and the center of diocesan life. By the summer of 1859, clergymen in the territory asked Bishop Jackson Kemper to call a convention. Seven priests and 11 lay men gathered in St. Paul’s Church in Wyandott, and on Aug. 12, 1859, they created the Diocese of Kansas. Without a bishop, Iowa Bishop Henry Lee offered his help when he could.

In September 1864, five years after the diocese was founded, the Rev. Thomas Vail of Iowa was elected the first bishop. When he got here, there was no money for a salary, and he had to serve as rector of the church in Atchison to earn a wage.

Bishop Vail started with 10 congregations. A quarter-century later, the Diocese of Kansas had grown to 83 congregations, with more than 3,000 communicants. The fortunes of the diocese often rose and fell with the economy. In 1874, new wheat varieties helped farms boom and parishes flourish. When crops failed because of drought and infestations of grasshoppers, membership withered, along with church coffers.

Bishop Vail discovered that clergy who liked creature comforts didn’t last for more than a year or so on the prairie, so he started the Kansas Theological School to train priests for mission work here. In 1884 Bishop Vail and his wife, Ellie, used their own money to open Christ Hospital in Topeka. It treated patients whether they could pay



*St. John's, Wichita, 1871*

or not. Money was scarce there, too. Bishop Vail was in Pennsylvania raising money for these causes when he died in October 1889.

The next bishop, Elisha Thomas, helped start the now-closed St. John’s Military School in Salina, and he continued to educate even more clergy at the Theological School. A period of good fortune crashed in a nationwide economic panic in 1893, but with hard work Bishop Thomas was able to save church properties from foreclosure. After just five and a half years as bishop, he died of an apparent heart attack in March 1895.

The dean of Grace Cathedral, Frank Millspaugh, became the third bishop, the first Kansas bishop consecrated on Kansas soil. And Episcopalians were getting busy, building 36 new church buildings and 21 rectories. But with more than 100 churches now spread across the state, the General Convention of 1901 agreed to split the diocese in two, creating the Missionary District of Salina out west. It’s now known as the Diocese of Western Kansas.

Bishop Millspaugh never lived to see his dream of a new cathedral. His funeral in September 1916 was the first service in the yet-unfinished building.

Bishop James Wise took over on the eve of World War I. Between a failing economy and men at war, parishes floundered. When the war ended,

some churches just dwindled away when people moved from small towns to bigger cities. In ill health, Bishop Wise died during a parish visitation in July 1939.

Goodrich Fenner became bishop at the start of another world war. Existing churches started to flourish. But he also saw the coming need for new churches in growing areas and created the Church Extension Fund. To this day it supplies low-cost loans for church construction. After the war, new churches did start up, first in Johnson County, then in Topeka and Wichita. In 1955, the diocese recorded 1,000 confirmations. Bishop Fenner retired in 1959 on the diocese's 100th anniversary, the first Kansas bishop to retire and not die while in office.

Under Bishop Edward Turner, churches continued their postwar surge in membership, so he worked to expand the church loan fund just in time, as 11 new churches were planted. As part of a broader liturgical renewal movement, he encouraged a switch from Morning Prayer to the Eucharist as the norm for parish worship. He also closed two of the diocese's three historically Black churches, in Topeka and Wichita, as a stand against segregation, but their members often felt uncomfortable in the city's white churches that had previously shunned them.

In November 1975, Grace Cathedral in Topeka was gutted by arson. With the help of people across the diocese, it was rebuilt in less than three years. Bishop Turner retired on his 25th anniversary as bishop.

Richard Grein, rector of St. Michael and All Angels in Mission, in 1981 became the first Kansas priest in almost a century to lead the diocese. He established a strong diaconate and ordained the first woman in Kansas' history. He encouraged a number of parishes to move or merge to enhance their mission. He led the successful Venture in Mission campaign in 1982, raising more than a million dollars. That helped start Venture House in

Wichita, now Breakthrough Episcopal Social Services. In 1988 Bishop Grein was elected bishop of New York, where he served until he retired in 2001.

The diocese was without a bishop for more than a year when William Smalley was elected in 1989. He helped create the Kansas School of Ministry, to train local priests and deacons, much like Bishop Vail's old Theological School. But KSM was open to lay people, too, and educated many parish leaders. Bishop Smalley guided a major revision in the governing bodies of the diocese, with the Trustees, Diocesan Council and Standing Committee merged into today's Council of Trustees. Bishop Smalley retired at the end of 2003.

Dean Wolfe took office in January 2004. He breathed new life into the Kansas School of Ministry and then collaborated with bishops from neighboring dioceses to expand the school into the Bishop Kemper School for Ministry. It now educates and forms priests, deacons, and lay leaders from six nearby dioceses.

He guided a major capital fundraising drive, joining forces with Grace Cathedral's own fund drive to make significant changes on the Bethany Place campus: renovating an existing diocesan building into Upton Hall Conference Center;



*Grace Cathedral destroyed by arson, 1975*

remodeling cathedral space into a modern home for the Bishop Kemper School; and adjacent to the cathedral providing new offices for the diocesan staff and new gathering spaces for the cathedral congregation. Bishop Wolfe left in January 2017 to become rector of St. Bartholomew's in New York City.

The diocese was without a bishop for more than two years when Bishop Cathleen Bascom was consecrated in March 2019. Her election the previous October would make her the diocese's first woman bishop in its 160-year history, and it also was the first episcopal election featuring an all-female slate. With a strong environmental focus she created Bethany House and Gardens on the original diocesan grounds, featuring a variety of garden areas as well as an outdoor chapel that honors St. Simon's, the Black church that was closed in 1964.

Bishop Bascom announced her plans to step down on January 31, 2026, to work as a consultant to Presiding Bishop Sean Rowe focusing on creation care.

## Fun facts about the diocese

### **For three years Pike's Peak was part of the Diocese of Kansas**

When the diocese was formed on August 12, 1859, its boundaries were the same as the Kansas Territory, which stretched from the Missouri border across the eastern portion of Colorado, including Denver, Colorado Springs, and Pike's Peak. That same year the diocese was admitted to General Convention, which canonically set its borders.

Kansas became the 34th state on January 29, 1861, with the boundaries it has today. But the size of the diocese didn't match the state borders until General Convention made that change in 1862.

### **What's the meaning of the motto on the diocesan seal?**

The motto, *In Cruce Solum Nobis Ancora*, is Latin for "The cross alone is our anchor." That is the reason an anchor cross is featured so prominently on the seal – an otherwise somewhat unusual selection for a landlocked state. The seal first appeared in 1939 and assumed various shapes until the one we have today.



### **When was the first bishop elected?**

That depends on whether you mean the first person selected or the first one who said “yes.” At the diocesan convention on April 11, 1860, just nine months after the diocese was formed, delegates elected the Rev. Heman Dyer of New York as its first bishop. But he turned down the position.

Some speculated that he believed the diocese had too few people to sustain itself. Some Kansas clergy had argued against forming a diocese at all for that very reason.

It was another four-and-a-half years before the diocese tried again to pick a bishop. The Rev. Thomas Vail of Muscatine, Iowa, was elected on September 14, 1864. He accepted, becoming the first bishop of Kansas.

### **A presidential visit**

President Theodore Roosevelt visited the diocese’s College of the Sisters of Bethany on Sept. 29, 1902, during a stop in Topeka. He was presented with a nosegay of flowers by the students after his speech. While in town, he also met with his friend William Allen White, the storied editor of *The Emporia Gazette*.



*The Rt. Rev. Thomas Vail, First Bishop of Kansas*

# Our Churches and Clergy

## Churches of the diocese

The diocese includes 43 churches located in cities and towns spread across the diocese. Despite being varied in size and location, they all are actively engaged in outreach within their communities, serving those in need through food programs, community education, and partnerships with local schools and other institutions.

Based on 2024 parochial reports, the diocese has 5,095 active baptized members and an average Sunday attendance of 2,225. Parish attendance averages range from a high of 245 to a low of 5. Members of the diocese are overwhelmingly white – 90% – with an average age of 52.

## Baptized members by regions of the diocese

Convocation	Number of churches	Active baptized members 16+	Active baptized members under 16	Total active baptized
Northeast	12	2,320	451	2,771
Northwest	10	738	86	824
Southeast	9	269	26	295
Southwest	12	1,063	142	1,205
<b>Total</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>4,390</b>	<b>705</b>	<b>5,095</b>



*Baptism at Trinity, El Dorado*

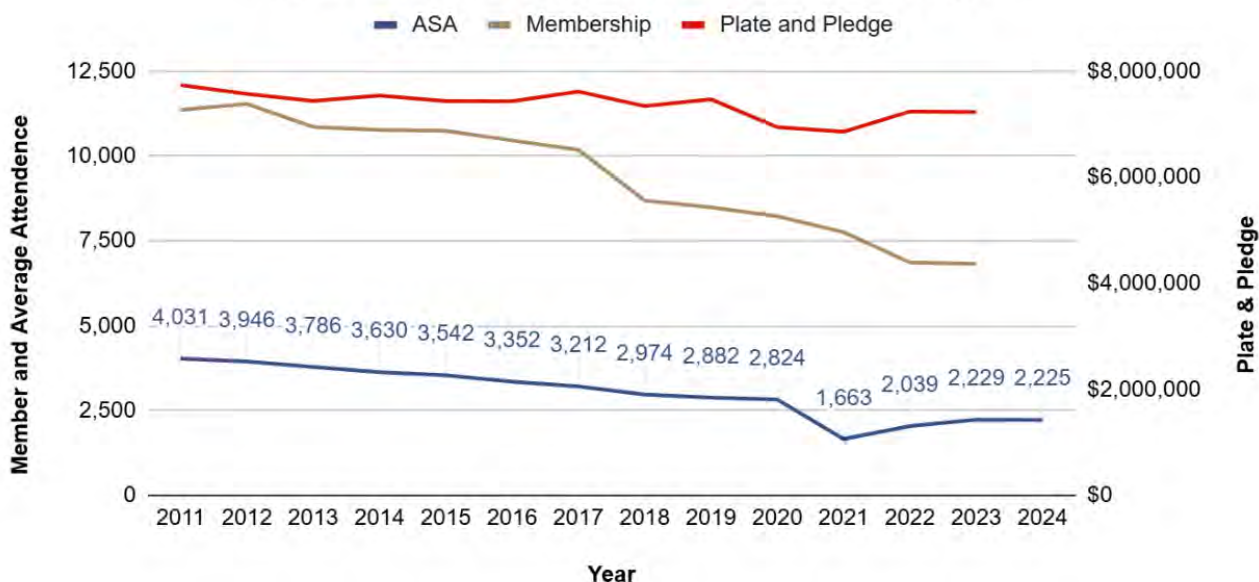
**Across the diocese, these sacramental services took place in 2024:**

- Eucharists: 2,833
- Baptisms: 78
- Confirmations: 56
- Burials: 148
- Marriages: 56



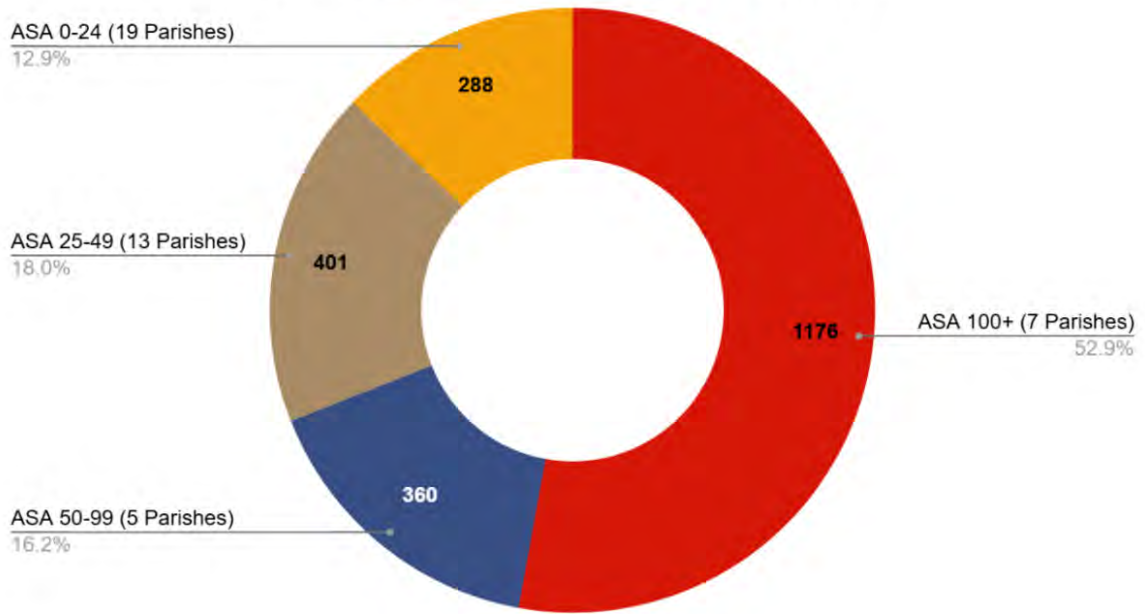
*St. James, Wichita*

**ASA, Membership and Plate and Pledge**



This chart shows that while parish membership and average Sunday attendance across the diocese have declined since 2011, the plate and pledge giving has declined to a much smaller degree. In addition, the average pledge has grown by almost 14%, indicating that individual pledging has gone up each year.

## Number of Attendees by Parish ASA



The largest seven churches, all with an ASA above 100, represent more than half the people in church weekly.



*St. Andrew's, Emporia, Spanish language prayer service*

## Clergy leadership

The diocese is served by priests and deacons serving in a variety of capacities:

- Full-time priests or deacons in one position: 20
- Full-time priests in two or more positions: 9
- Part-time or non-stipendiary clergy: 16
- Non-parochial priests: 13 (this includes three priests who work full-time for Episcopal institutions)
- Retired priests: 35
- Assigned deacons: 24
- Non-parochial deacons: 2
- Retired deacons: 13



*Clergy process for diocesan ordination service, Grace Cathedral, Topeka*

## Finances

The fiscal management of the diocese is prudent and secure. Members are proud of the diocese's long and consistent support of the annual assessment for the work of The Episcopal Church.

By canons, the annual diocesan convention is required to adopt a balanced budget, which is called the mission plan.

A 2022-2023 primary research "listening project" forms the development of the diocesan mission plan, or budget. That listening project included one-on-one interviews; a confidential, diocesanwide online survey; and online and in-person focus groups with clergy, minister shepherds, and regional convocation representatives.



From this, a diocesan strategic plan was introduced at the 2024 diocesan convention that highlighted four priority areas:

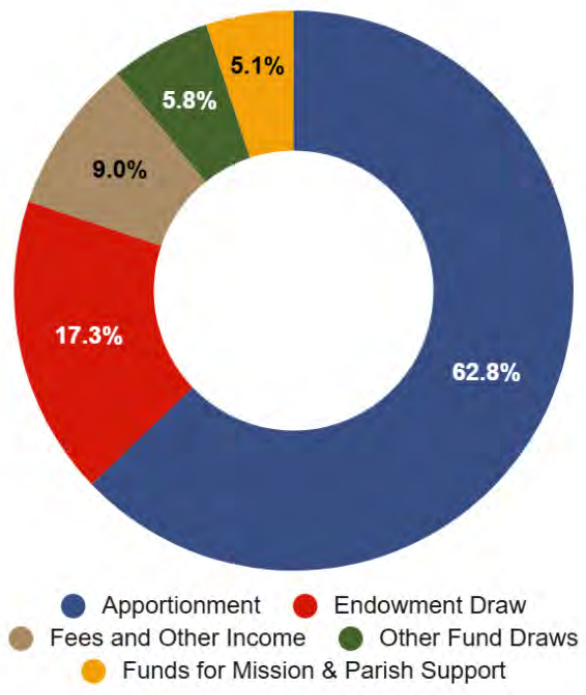
- Congregational vitality.
- Justice, welcome, and inclusion.
- Youth and young adults.
- Clergy and lay leadership.

Each priority now is supported by a task force consisting of lay leaders, clergy, members of the Council of Trustees, and parishioners. Their work will continue through 2027.

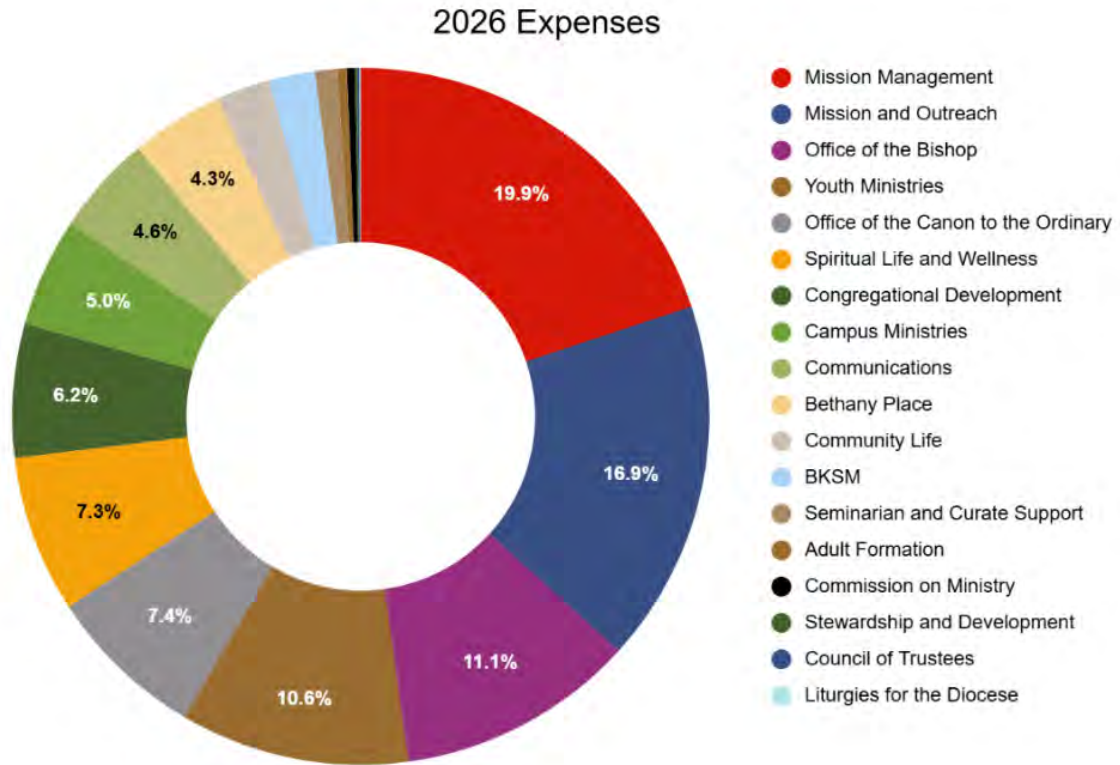
Money to support the mission plan comes primarily from apportionments paid by parishes of the diocese. Congregations with greater income take a larger portion of this responsibility, but by canon, there also is a maximum percentage of apportionment that cannot be surpassed.

For 2026, apportionments are expected to fund nearly 63% of proposed diocesan expenditures.

### 2026 Income



The mission plan proposed for 2026 totals \$2,249,796, with spending dedicated to the areas described here.



Although the overall budget has increased each year since 2017, the overall rate for parishes has decreased, while remaining income has been provided by increased investment draws.



# Diocesan Governance and Structures

The **annual convention** of the Episcopal Diocese of Kansas is the highest decision-making body of the diocese. It meets in October at a variety of locations around the diocese and includes all clergy who are canonically resident, as well as delegates elected from every church. Every church is entitled to at least two delegates, and larger churches can send up to eight delegates, as described in the canons.

Each of the two campus missions are entitled to one delegate each, and the youth of the diocese, with the bishop's prior permission, are entitled to elect four people with seat and vote, to be part of the convention.

In addition to being a time to conduct the business of the diocese – elect people to a variety of positions, adopt the next year's mission plan, and hear the bishop's address – it also is a time of fellowship and an opportunity to celebrate the diocese's successes and recommit to the diocesan vision.



*The Rev. Doreen Rice-Daab, rector of St. David's, Topeka, speaks about strategic plan implementation at the 165th Diocesan Convention*

**The Council of Trustees** is the governing body of the diocese between conventions. It also functions as the Standing Committee and acts as the Ecclesiastical Authority in the absence of a bishop. Six members are elected at large by the convention, and each of the four convocations elects one layperson and one clergyperson. Council members serve a maximum of two, 3-year terms.

**Convocations** – the Diocese of Kansas is divided into four regional convocations, each with officers and periodic meetings. Convocations are established in diocesan canons and consist of the clergy and convention delegates from its churches. Convocation boards elect their own officers, adopt bylaws and meet at least three times a year. One of those meetings takes place before the convention, so delegates and representatives of the diocese can discuss what business will be upcoming and hear from the bishop and diocesan staff about the proposed mission plan.

**Minsters** are small groups of churches (currently anywhere from two to six), geographically close to one another, that are designed for mutual support and sharing of resources. They also are established by diocesan canons for relationship, ministry, sacramental provision, and mission in their shared neighborhoods. The bishop appoints a minster shepherd, who is joined by clergy and lay people from every congregation to form the Minster Team, which meets at least every two months.

### **Task forces**

Six task forces address specific ministry priorities across the diocese:

#### **Care of creation**

This task force seeks to restore sustainable living, native plants, ancient Anglican connectedness to nature, and moral leadership in the public sphere. After the creation of Bethany House and Garden, its focus now is on providing support to local ministries, including helping them reduce their carbon footprint through the development of a “Do-It-Yourself Energy Audit for Congregations” and increased awareness of the Sustain Island Home carbon-tracking website.



*Students tag Monarch butterflies for release at Bethany House and Garden*

## **Global partnerships**

The three identified Global Task Force ministries in Kenya, Haiti and Nepal have continued their important work of supporting our brothers and sisters in Christ within some of the poorest areas of the world. Each ministry is led by teams of individuals, hosting meetings as needed to make decisions for the ministries affecting thousands.

## **Justice, welcome and inclusion**

The group's mission is to help create an equitable environment and promote awareness of human rights, peace and community in neighborhoods, communities and parishes, through learning, training, and advocacy.

In 2025, Kansas Episcopalians participated in Manhattan's Little Apple Pride, Kansas City Pridefest (jointly with the Episcopal Diocese of West Missouri), Lawrence Pride, Emporia's Fourth Annual Pride Parade and Celebration, and Topeka's Pride Palooza.



*Clergy and leaders from St. Paul's, Manhattan, participate in Manhattan's Little Apple Pride*

## **Liturgy, music and the arts**

One effort of this group has been to create, at the direction of the bishop, a liturgical rite entitled "Communion in the Absence of a Priest" for use in designated congregations without the services of a priest for extended periods of time. COMAP, as it is known, allows communion elements consecrated by a priest to be distributed to these congregations. It also has provided training sessions for deacons and lay leaders in congregations that are approved for use of the rite.

The group also has been considering new liturgical resources with more expansive language for existing rites prepared by The Episcopal Church's Task Force on Liturgy.

## Mission and outreach

This group oversees the Alleluia Grant program, providing up to \$3,000 for one-time mission-related projects upon application by a parish. Since its inception in 2016, the program has distributed more than \$114,500.

Projects have included start-up money for a laundry ministry, capital improvements to enhance food ministries and community outreach, service to children and youth, and support for young adults with special needs.



*Leaders from St. Thomas the Apostle, Overland Park, receive check for Alleluia Grant*



*Camper climbs high ropes course during Episcopal Mega Camp at Camp Wood YMCA*

## Diocesan staff

In addition to the bishop, the staff of the diocese includes seven people who are full-time and 11 who are part-time or non-stipendiary.

Full-time employees are:

- Canon to the Ordinary: the Rev. A. Patrick K. Funston
- Canon for Spiritual Life and Clergy Care: the Rev. Lisa Senuta
- Comptroller: Couri Reinholtz, CPA
- Director of Operations and Registrar: Michele Moss
- Director of Communications: Chad Senuta
- Executive Assistant to the Bishop: Michael J. Knoll Funston
- Missioner for Creation Care: the Rev. Caroline Howard
- Youth, Young Adult and Campus Missioner: the Rev. Karen E. Schlabach

## Youth and young adult

This task force supports the youth ministries of the diocese and looks for ways to support both parishes and ministers. A diocesan convention resolution passed in 2024 directed the establishment of an endowment fund for church camp and youth activities. The task force also is developing grants to assist parishes and ministers with youth ministry.

Part-time or non-stipendiary positions are:

- Canon Pastor: the Rev. George Wiley
- Chaplain for Retired Clergy and Spouses: the Rev. Shawn Streepy
- Curate for Campus Ministry at Canterbury K-State: the Rev. Clare Stern-Burbano
- Curate for Diocesan Youth Ministries: the Rev. Sarah Shipman
- Deacon for Diocesan Spiritual Life: the Rev. Mary Becker
- Eco-Region Fellow for the Grasslands Network of The Episcopal Church: the Rev. Madison Bishop Knoth
- Groundskeeper for Bethany House and Garden: Willie Madl
- Multi-Cultural Pastoral Consultant: the Rt. Rev. Daniel Genovesi
- New Episcopal Community Planter at St. Thomas, Holton: the Rev. Jere Hinson
- Sexton: Greg Bennet
- St. Simon's Multi-Cultural Young Adult and Youth Minister: Camila Genovesi
- Transition Ministry Coach: Theresa Klimiuk

## About Bethany Place

Bethany Place is the nickname given in the 19th century to the property that now forms the home of the diocesan offices and Grace Cathedral. It once was the site of a girls' school, the College of the Sisters of Bethany, which stood in the center of the property from 1872 to 1928. The school closed that year, a victim of low enrollment and the beginning of a crashing U.S. economy.

In 1888, land on the north end was given to Grace Cathedral to build a new church building, which was completed in 1917. In 1928, land on the south end was sold to the Topeka School District for construction of its new Topeka High School, completed in 1931. Later purchases by the district created practice fields and a gymnasium on the western portion of the campus.

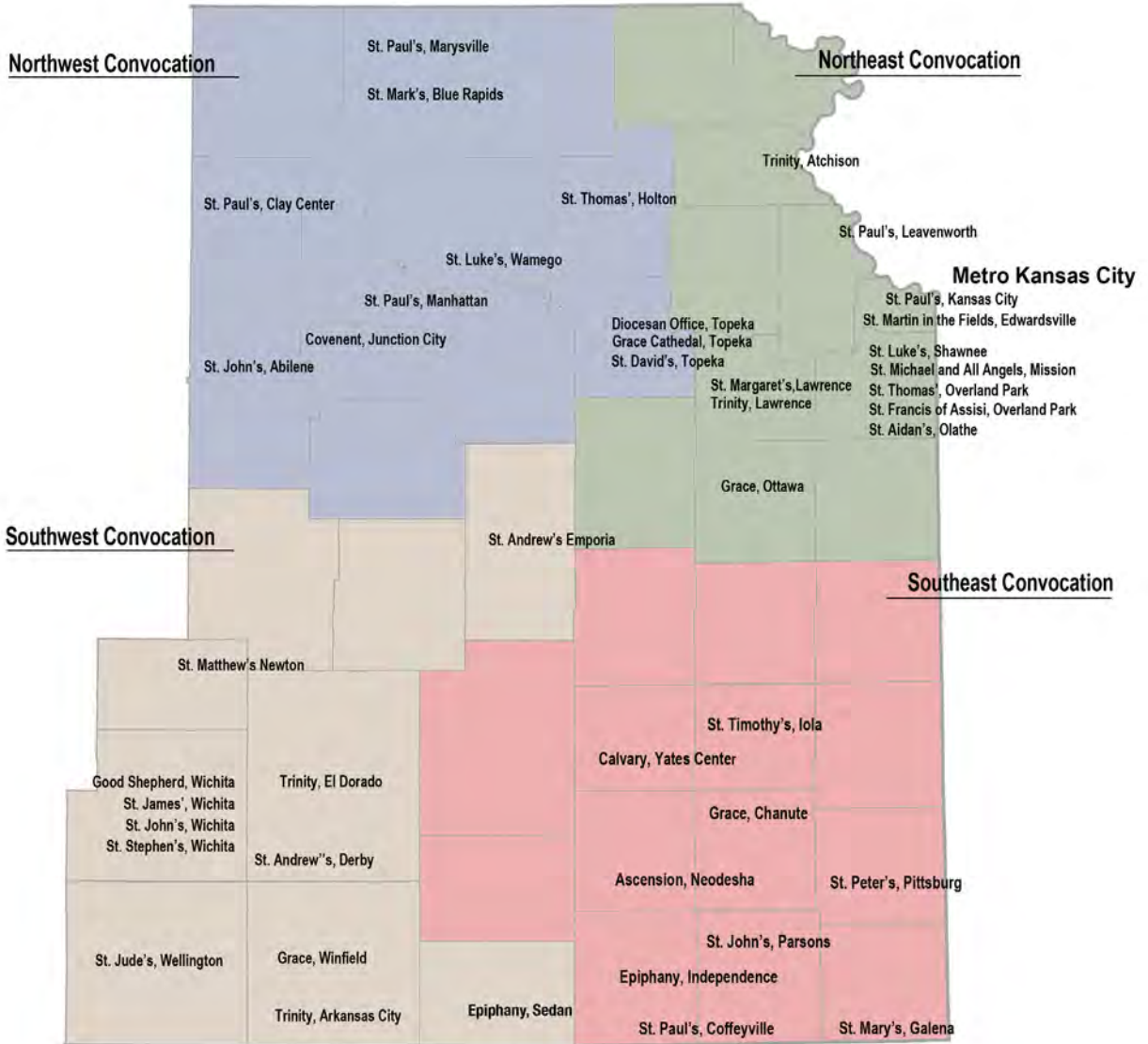
Two of the original college buildings, both built in 1875 of native limestone, remain in use. One is Upton Hall Conference Center, named for a pioneering and beloved deacon. The other, now called Bethany House, forms the hub of Bethany House and Gardens established in 2022. Before that, the building was home to the office of the bishop and diocesan staff.

The diocese and the cathedral both undertook capital campaigns in the 2010s that eventually were pooled to create much-needed space for both entities. New modern diocesan offices are adjacent to a large, new cathedral parish hall and welcoming common room. The old cathedral parish hall, in the basement of its education wing, was turned into three classrooms and an office for the Bishop Kemper School for Ministry.



*Bethany House*

# Map of the Diocese



# How We Serve

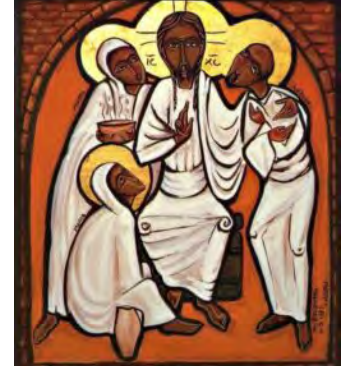
## Diocesan Ministries

### Adult Formation

The diocese continues to support Education for Ministry as a primary means of Adult Formation. The diocese continues to subsidize ongoing mentor training. The Cursillo movement is also supported.

### The Bethany Community of Saints Mary, Martha, and Lazarus

The Bethany Community is an intentional, contemplative community for spiritual growth and support. It commemorates three saints who were friends of Jesus and lived in Bethany. The community regularly studies and prays together, rooting deeply in spiritual practices and principles. It hosts monthly “Taste & See” events as an invitation to others to experience personal connection, guided silent prayer, and spiritual conversation.



*Icon of Saints Mary, Martha, and Lazarus with Jesus*

### Bethany House and Garden

Opened in October 2022, Bethany House and Garden offers the diocese’s neighbors in urban Topeka a space for prayer and meditation, creation care initiatives, and outdoor worship.

There are four unique garden spaces:

- The prairie and pollinator garden serves as an outdoor classroom, teaching how prairie grasslands, wildlife, and insects are beneficial to our environment.
- The culinary food garden provides space for growing vegetables for the community and a place to teach methods for raising wholesome food and herbs to local students.
- The spiritual life garden invites visitors into meditation, prayer, and rest.
- St. Simon’s Chapel expresses the diocese’s commitment to racial and economic equality and empowerment. It commemorates Topeka’s historically Black St. Simon’s Episcopal Church, which was closed in 1964 by Bishop Turner, who asked members to attend one of the other Episcopal churches in town.



*Prairie garden*



*Culinary garden*



*Spiritual life garden*



*St. Simon's Chapel*

## Campus and young adult ministry

The diocese operates Canterbury Houses at the University of Kansas and at Kansas State University. They provide live-in accommodations for undergraduate students, who in turn serve as peer ministers that create weekly programming for those living in the house and evangelism outreach to their campuses. The annual Bishop's Bowl is an annual event held by the Canterbury Houses where each house competes for the coveted bishop's mitre. The host house gets to select type of competition; in the past, games have included cornhole, flag football, bowling, giant Jenga, Mariokart, and "minute-to-win-it" style games.

Young adults have the opportunity to take part in a yearly retreat at Camp Wood YMCA.



*Canterbury House at University of Kansas*



*Canterbury House at K-State*

## Daughters of the King

Daughters of the King is an order for women who are communicants of the Episcopal Church and churches in communion with it. Across the Diocese of Kansas, local groups strive to offer meaningful ways to grow in faith and find ways to spread Christ's Kingdom. They also are striving to increase their membership and establish groups in more parishes.

## Episcopal Church Women

The Episcopal Church Women of the Diocese of Kansas represent all women in the parishes of this diocese, whether they are part of an organized ECW group or not, by virtue of their baptism and confirmation. The purpose of the organization is to assist the women of The Episcopal Church to carry on Christ's work of reconciliation in the world and to take their place as leaders in the life, governance and worship of the church.

## Youth

The youth program serves youth in grades 6-12, bringing them together to worship, play, and learn together at events throughout the year. This includes summer camp at Camp Wood YMCA in Elmdale, Kansas (called MegaCamp since 2011, when campers of all ages gathered for the first time during the same week), Happening, a junior high retreat, the Miqra Bible-reading-themed weekend and the mission-focused MissionPalooza.

Youth also can take part in the Mustard Seeds (a diocesan youth worship band), the Servant Leadership Program (appointed youth who are trained in ministry and Christian leadership to serve in their parishes, communities, schools, and diocese), the Youth Commission (including elected youth and adults who help steer youth programs and events), and serving at Diocesan Convention.



*Campers enjoying games at Mega Camp*



*Youth participants put arms around one another during a Happening closing service*

# Affiliated Institutions

## **Bishop Kemper School for Ministry**

The Bishop Kemper School for Ministry offers formational learning opportunities for ordination-tracked persons called to holy orders, and for lay persons interested in pursuing either licensed ministries or personal enrichment. BKSM is supported by a formal partnership of the Dioceses of Kansas, Western Kansas, Iowa, Missouri, West Missouri, and Nebraska.

Students meet once a month for a “focus weekend” in the school’s classrooms adjacent to Grace Cathedral and at Upton Hall Conference Center in Topeka, as well as other times during the month online. Distance-learning enables “hybrid” class environments with some students joining remotely.

Lynne Moss Bahr, Ph.D. became the school’s third dean this summer.



*BKSM Graduates 2025*

## **Bishop Seabury Academy**

Bishop Seabury Academy, an independent Episcopal school located in Lawrence, is a college-preparatory school for grades 6 through 12. In 2024, 182 students were enrolled, with 27 seniors graduating. Diversity and inclusion are important aspects of the Seabury school community; subsequently, 27 percent of students receive financial assistance to attend Seabury, and 28 percent are students of color.

A part-time chaplain, the Rev. Steve Segebrecht, is employed by the school and leads weekly chapel services, acts as the school’s spiritual advisor and teaches world religions. Service and outreach also are vital aspects of the Seabury culture and its Episcopal identity.

## **Breakthrough Episcopal Social Services**

Breakthrough Episcopal Social Services serves as a mission agency of the diocese, with the bishop holding an ex officio seat on its board.

The agency's mission is to create an inclusive, supportive community where individuals impacted by poverty or serious mental illness can discover opportunities, build resilience, and improve their quality of life.

Guided by faith, dignity, inclusion, collaboration, innovation, integrity, and advocacy, Breakthrough Episcopal Social Services provides therapy, peer support for the unhoused, representative payee services, spiritual care, and its Clubhouse model. This evidence-based, non-clinical community approach utilizes social practice to help members develop skills, access employment and housing opportunities, and connect with peers.

Founded in 1983 as Venture House, Breakthrough Episcopal Social Services now serves Wichita, Hutchinson, Newton, and Salina, empowering over 30,000 individuals, and continues to partner with the diocese to transform lives and communities. The Rev. Andy Houltberg serves as its chief executive officer.



*St. Andrew's, Derby, launches garden project to support Breakthrough ESS*

### **Saint Francis Ministries**

For 80 years, this non-profit, independent organization has been dedicated to the needs of children and youth through its ministries in adoption, behavioral health, foster care, independent living, in-home prevention, and residential programs.

It is one of five providers of foster care contracted by the state of Kansas.

It was founded in 1945 in Ellsworth, Kansas, as Saint Francis Boys' Home by the Rev. Robert Mize, Jr., an Episcopal priest and later bishop of Damaraland in Southern Africa. Starting with Mize's original 12 boys, today the organization serves 12,000 children and youth in Kansas, Mississippi, Nebraska, Oklahoma, and Texas.

Saint Francis Ministries is headquartered in the Episcopal Diocese of Western Kansas. It has offices and staff in the Diocese of Kansas who support foster children and families.

### **The Prospect KC**

The former Episcopal institution Nourish KC in 2024 became part of The Prospect KC, an agency that provides high-impact solutions to food insecurity, economic inequality, and workforce development.

The Nourish KC Community Kitchen itself began in the 1980s as Episcopal Community Services, which was an agency of the Dioceses of Kansas and West Missouri with offices in Kansas City, Missouri. It operated as a soup kitchen in the basement of Grace and Holy Trinity Cathedral. The name was changed from Episcopal Community Services to Nourish KC in 2017.



*Volunteers assist with Nourish KC Food Distribution Network*

# Bishop Search Timeline

<b>April 6, 2026</b> .....	<b>Application period opens</b>
<b>May 11, 2026</b> .....	<b>Application period closes</b>
<b>June 26-27, 2026</b> .....	<b>Discernment retreat</b>
<b>July 10, 2026</b> .....	<b>Slate submitted to Standing Committee</b>
<b>July 12, 2026</b> .....	<b>Slate announced</b>
<b>September 14-18, 2026</b> .....	<b>Meet-and-Greets</b>
<b>October 23-24, 2026</b> .....	<b>Electing Convention</b>
<b>April 17, 2027</b> .....	<b>Ordination/Consecration</b>

# How to Apply

## Application process

If you have discerned a calling to the ministry of the 11th bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Kansas, we welcome your application.

A completed application must contain the following items or documents (please submit these items together as attachments to a single email):

- Cover letter.
- Official application form with completed essay question (Note: please download the fillable application form [HERE](#), but do not begin filling it out until after it has been downloaded.)
- Resume/curriculum vitae.
- Updated OTM portfolio.
- References, with contact information, including:
  - One clergy person in the Episcopal Church.
  - One lay person in the Episcopal Church.
  - A third reference, either lay or clergy, who is not your spouse, relative, direct supervisor or a person under your direct supervision, or the person (if any) who nominated you.
  - Names and current contact information for all previous bishops under whom you have served.
- The signed and scanned consent and authorization form. (This form can be downloaded [HERE](#).) Email the scanned form and then mail the original separately by U.S. mail.

**Deadline:** The application and all supplemental material must be received by 5 p.m. Central Time on May 11, 2026.

Submit the entire application packet in one email. All files submitted should include your name in LastnameFirstname format as part of the file name. Please email your application to: [applications@edokbishopsearch.com](mailto:applications@edokbishopsearch.com).

If you have questions at any time, please feel free to contact either the Very Rev. Torey Lightcap ([torey@edokbishopsearch.com](mailto:torey@edokbishopsearch.com)) or Mr. Scott Howard ([scott@edokbishopsearch.com](mailto:scott@edokbishopsearch.com)), co-chairs of the Bishop Search Committee.

## Nomination process

The Bishop Search Committee of the Episcopal Diocese of Kansas welcomes your nominations for candidates to be considered for the position of bishop. Nominations must be received by 5:00 PM Central Time on May 4, 2026.

Accurate and complete contact information for the nominee must be supplied so the committee may contact them with instructions for the next steps in the application process.

Note that once a nomination is received the candidate must submit a completed application accompanied by all the required information and supporting documentation by 5:00 PM Central Time on May 11, 2026. (Please see the Application Process section for details).

A nomination is not required for a candidate to apply.

Nominators must have the consent of the person they are nominating.

To submit a nomination:

- Download the nomination form from [THIS LINK](#).
- Complete the form, including the 500-word essay.
- Save the file including the nominee's name as part of the filename.
- Email the file to [applications@edokbishopsearch.com](mailto:applications@edokbishopsearch.com).

Thank you for your prayers and participation. If you have questions at any time, please feel free to contact either Dean Torey Lightcap ([torey@edokbishopsearch.com](mailto:torey@edokbishopsearch.com)) or Mr. Scott Howard ([scott@edokbishopsearch.com](mailto:scott@edokbishopsearch.com)), co-chairs of the Bishop Search Committee.



*Diocesan youth band, The Mustard Seeds, leads Diocesan Convention in prayer and song.*

# Search and Transition Committees

## **Search Committee**

Co-chairs: Scott Howard and the Very Rev. Torey Lightcap

Members: The Rev. Yvonne Amanor-Boadu, the Rev. Maddy Bishop-Knoth, the Rev. Oliver Bunker, Andres Felipe Burbano, Daria A. Condon, Shelby J “Jim” Edwards III, the Rev. Monte C. Giddings, Kurt A. Harper, the Rev. Loren Andrew Houltberg, Kirsten Lee

## **Transition Committee:**

Co-chairs: Dakota Bennett and Martha Jenkins

Members: Zachary Buffington, Catherine Caffera, Julian Campbell, (Sonja) Heidi Daley, the Rev. Martha Lamoy, Dana Moodie, Susan Kasper Pingleton, Debbie Pitts, the Rev. Jeff Roper, the Rev. Catherine Shield, Scott Joseph Shipman

Chaplain: The Rev. David Jenkins

Clerk of the search process: Mike Morrow

## **Standing Committee**

President: The Ven. Jim Cummins

At-large members: The Rev. Jody Carroll, the Rev. Carl Edwards, Mr. Stephan Mann, Teresa Ryther, the Rev. Daryl Stanford, Mr. Mason Weber

Northeast Convocation members: The Ven. Jim Cummins, Ron Olson

Northwest Convocation members: The Rev. Margaret McGhee, Melanie Hoyle Laster

Southeast Convocation members: The Rev. Helen Hoch, Martha Stone

Southwest Convocation members: Tim Flynn, the Very Rev. Laurie Lewis



*Acolytes process at Grace Cathedral, Topeka*