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

August 19, 2026

The Council of Trustees of the Episcopal Diocese of Kansas, Inc., met in the BKSM Larry Bingham Classroom on August 19, 2026. Prior to the start of the meeting, Mr. Ron Olson lit a candle and the Venerable Jim Cummins, President and Chair, began the meeting with prayer. President Cummins called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m.

Members of the Council of Trustees present were:

The Ven. Jim Cummins, President
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
Mr. Mason Weber

Members absent:

The Rev. Canon Jody Carroll
The Rev. Helen Hoch
Ms. Martha Stone

Also present as advisor to the Council of Trustees:

Mr. Brian Geary, Treasurer (via Zoom)

Also present:

Ms. Michael Funston, Executive Assistant to the Bishop
The Rev. Patrick Funston, Canon to the Ordinary
Mr. Clark Hanner, CPA, Marr and Company, P.C. (via Zoom)
The Rev. Caroline Howard, Curate for Creation Care
Mr. Couri Reinholtz, Assistant Treasurer and Comptroller
The Rev. Karen Schlabach, Youth, Young Adult & Campus Missioner
Mr. Chad Senuta, Director of Communications

Minutes

President Cummins presented minutes from the June 17, 2026, meeting. Canon Patrick suggested some corrections and re-wording. Ms. Teresa Ryther moved to accept the minutes from the June 17, 2026, meeting with those suggested changes. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Treasurer's Report

Mr. Brian Geary, Treasurer, thanked Mr. Couri Reinholtz, Assistant Treasurer and Comptroller, for his efficient work and noted that the audit report is being presented earlier than it has been in years past. Mr. Geary then introduced Mr. Clark Hanner, CPA, from Marr and Company, P.C., who was attending the COT meeting to present the audit.

Marr and Company issued a qualified opinion; in Note 13, the auditor notes that the diocese's policy of covering post-retirement benefits to retired clergy and employees is recognized as an expense when the insurance premiums are paid. The auditor suggested that for a more accurate financial statement, the liability accrued should be based upon the actuarial present value of both currently vested benefits and reinvested future benefits. Mr. Geary noted that the new bishop and the Council of Trustees should be aware of the post-retirement benefit costs.

The Rev. Margaret McGhee moved to receive and approve the auditor's report. The motion was seconded and passed without objection.

Assistant Treasurer and Comptroller's Report

Assistant Treasurer Mr. Couri Reinholtz reported that the parishes are in a good spot regarding apportionments. St. Thomas, Holton, has paid the entirety of their 2026 apportionment.

As of July 31, 2026, the 2026 income stood at $1,173,605.68 and expenses at $1,195,674.20. These figures do not include Mega Camp income.

Mr. Reinholtz announced that he's going back to graduate school next week and has a class at 10 a.m. on Wednesdays. He offered to make a written report to the Council of Trustees or that he would be available in person later in the day. The general consensus of the Council was to have him appear in person and that his report would be heard once he could make it to the meeting.

Standing Committee Business

The Venerable Jim Cummins, President, presented information relating to the Rev. David Sibley and consent to the August 1, 2026 election as Bishop Diocesan in the Diocese of Lexington. The Rev. Margaret McGhee moved that the Council of Trustees, acting as the Standing Committee of the Diocese consent to the election of the Rev. David Sibley as Bishop Diocesan for the Diocese of Lexington. The motion was seconded and passed.

The Venerable Jim Cummins, President, presented information relating to the Rev. Dr. Jenifer M. Chatfield and consent to the August 8, 2026 election as Bishop Diocesan in the Diocese of Northwestern Pennsylvania. The Rev. Margaret McGhee moved that the Council of Trustees, acting as the Standing Committee of the Diocese consent to the election of the Rev. Dr. Jenifer M. Chatfield. The motion was seconded and passed.

President Cummins reported that a member of the clergy has commented that there is a lack of information about the Bishop candidates aside from the brief biographical sketches that were sent out. Mr. Chad Senuta, Director of Communications, stated that he has sent multiple emails to search and transition committees in addition to the Council of Trustees about getting this additional information. The Very Rev. Laurie Lewis moved that the candidates' CVs/resumes and sample sermons that the search committee has be published on the diocesan website as soon as possible. The motion was seconded and passed without objection.

President Jim Cummins said that he will talk to both committees to get this information out within a week. It is important that this be disseminated before the meet and greets.

St. Paul's, Kansas City, Funding Request

Fr. Daniel Mafla, Fr. Gar Demo, Ms. Debbie Lainez, Ms. Jenny Steineger and Mr. Joe Steineger appeared on behalf of St. Paul's. Ada Ovalle was present to provide translation.

Mr. Steineger stated that with Fr. Daniel's arrival at St. Paul's a feeling of hope has come to the parish. Fr. Mafla is active and close to the parish. Good things are happening and children have started coming. The issue is with the finances. They want to make a commitment to the diocese showing that there is a place in Kansas City for a bi-lingual parish. St. Paul's depends on sister parishes for their volunteers and other support.

Through a Spanish language translator, Fr. Daniel stated that St. Paul's is a blend of the Hispanic and Anglo communities that have stayed together despite issues with Latinos in the USA. Even though the Anglo community is very small, it does support the parish. St. Paul's is the mustard seed that has the potential to increase this ministry in the diocese. One can look at this issue with gospel eyes or with financial eyes and gospel eyes are better.

The situation has become tense because of the process used in planning this ministry. In addition, the building which has a beautiful history is aging and has deferred maintenance.

Ms. Jenny Steineger, parish treasurer, stated that it was quite a transition when Mother Dixie left and that they have accomplished a lot with little since then. As it stands now, 15 pledges pay the parish's operating expenses, but not Fr. Daniel's compensation. St. Michaels and All Angels, Mission, supports the mission work. Trinity, Atchison, recently made a $5,000 donation. They are making partnerships in the city to fund their ministries.

Fr. Daniel stated that there is no set budget for maintenance. When he arrived at St. Paul's he found the building was totally abandoned and a community needed pastoral care. Spaces in the building were unusable but have been repaired, not opulently, but in a dignified manner. It is a place where volunteers and guests would want to return to. There is a growing Hispanic community. Due to the financial situation of the community, stewardship looks differently at St. Paul's than in other parishes. The community does help with sweat equity. St. Paul's depends on voluntary administrative help. Fr. Daniel has not had the opportunity or means to take a meaningful vacation since he arrived.

The food pantry serves 300 families on Saturdays. It's exhausting work for the same volunteers who are providing these weekly services. While not impossible to continue, they do need support. The grants they have received have ended.

Fr. Gar Demo stated that St. Michaels and All Angels provides a lot of funding and volunteers to St. Paul's. St. Paul's is a mission of the diocese and is critical to the life of the NE convocation. Fr. Daniel is a help to other parishes in the convocation.

The Rev. Patrick Funston, Canon to the Ordinary, led noonday prayer and led members in a meditation about the seven sorrows of Mary. The council then broke for lunch until 1:30pm.

After lunch and questions from members of the Council, the St. Paul's delegation left and discussions continued.

Mr. Tim Flynn moved to fully fund St.Paul's request as follows: An additional $25,000, above the $25,000 that is already budgeted, will be given to St. Paul's for 2026. For 2027, the $25,000 that is already budgeted for St. Paul's will be increased by $60,000 to $85,000. The motion was seconded and more discussion ensued.

Canon Patrick called for a moment of prayer.

A vote was taken on Mr. Flynn's motion. Seven voted for and four voted against. The motion passed.

After further discussion, it was determined that the Council's actions are not binding on the new Bishop and that the additional funds provided are contingent on Fr. Mafla being present at St. Paul's, Kansas City.

The Very Rev. Laurie Lewis moved that the extra $25,000 provided to St. Paul's, Kansas City, for 2026 come from the Millspaugh fund. The motion was seconded and passed.

Finance Committee Report

Mr. Reinholtz noted that there were a few changes to the budget. The line item for financial software was decreased by $20,000 due to the fact that accounting software will remain the same. BKSM contribution was increased by $1,200. After making amendments to the parochial reports for Epiphany, Sedan, and St. Paul's, Kansas City, their apportionments decreased by $168,237 and $35,065 respectively. That amount will be reallocated on the apportionment schedule.

Fr. Daryl Stanford moved to adopt the updated budget as presented here and in light of our previous vote concerning the request from St. Paul's, Kansas City. The motion was seconded and passed.

Canon's Report

Canon Patrick noted that there are seven candidacy interviews that should be held before the diocesan convention. Fr. Stanford nominated Mr. Stephan Mann to chair the committee.

With the Rev. Clare Sterm-Burbano accepting a call to serve as Associate Rector of Christ Church, Philadelphia, the Rev. Sarah Shipman will serve Canterbury House at K-State for the 2026-2027 school year.

Clergy health insurance plans for 2027 were brought up. A decision on which plans to offer must be made by September 28, 2026. The consensus of the Council was to pass the responsibility on making this decision to the executive committee.

Canon Funston brought two items to the attention of the Council at the request of the Vicar of Covenant, Junction City, Fr. Matt Zimmermann:

1. Can Covenant begin the process to search for the priest-in-charge/vicar to follow Fr. Zimmermann?
2. The diocese's continued holding of Covenant's deed continues to be a sore spot for many in the congregation.

Following discussion, the Council directed Canon Funston to respond with the Council's expectation that previously discussed timelines be maintained. Regarding the search, that Fr. Zimmermann's summer 2026 appointment as vicar was celebrated with the hope and understanding that a longer period of stability would provide more fruitful ground for reconciliation within Covenant and for discernment conversations with the 11th Bishop (or bishop-elect) about Covenant's next steps including both the resolution of its status under diocesan Canon IV.7 (when the deed could be returned) and Covenant's discernment about its needed level of priestly support relative to its ability to afford it.

Reports from Trustees and Staff

The Rev. Karen Schlabach, Youth, Young Adult and Campus Missioner, suggested Council members read the written report she presented.

The next Council of Trustees meeting, which was originally scheduled for September 16, 2026, has been rescheduled to September 9, 2026. This will avoid any conflict with meet and greets being held across the diocese. The meeting on September 9 will be held via Zoom.

President Cummins adjourned the meeting at 3:05 p.m.

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The Rev. Helen Hoch
Clerk