

The Sheaf

A publication of the Episcopal Diocese of North Dakota
Pentecost Edition ~ May 2024

Diocesan staffers could tell you that I struggled my first few months in the Diocese to pronounce the word ‘sheaf.’ I wanted to replace the ‘f’ with a more familiar ‘th.’ I even practiced correct pronunciation a few times. (Sheaf is more lips and sheath requires tongue tip and upper teeth.)

Enunciation skills notwithstanding, I have become quite taken by the image of a sheaf of grain as the name of North Dakota’s diocesan newsletter. Judging by the bound volumes of historic editions in the diocesan office, the moniker has been around for a long time. Quite apropos for a mission field upon the northern plains.



While what is most important about the quarterly Sheaf is that you read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest either word of it, I would offer that using the image of a sheaf in the newsletter’s masthead is a symbolic affirmation of how North Dakota Episcopalians hope and expect to share in the mission of Jesus Christ.

We are stronger when we are bound together.
We communicate better when we are bound together.
We are more efficient when we are bound together.
We feed more hungers when we are bound together.

Therein, within our spiritual community, a sheaf becomes an icon, a sacred window, through which we can perceive a shared journey of mission.

Simple symbols can carry deep meaning – like a cross. Or bread and wine. Or a sheaf. As Episcopalians we understand the power of symbols and symbolic language to be transformative; this is one reason why our liturgical worship, within our beautiful parish settings, captivates our hearts, minds, and spirits so thoroughly.

In the seasons of discernment ahead, I bid you to oft times consider the meaning of a sheaf – as a symbol of strength, nourishment, and hope. The very same gifts which come to us from our Lord Jesus Christ.

To which all the people say ‘Amen’.

+Brian

Bishop Provisional of The Episcopal Diocese of North Dakota



“WoDakota” (Beloved Community)

Annual Appeal

Pentecost Greetings!

The celebration of Pentecost is a time of proclamation; a time to lift our unique voices to share the Good News of Jesus Christ.

One of the voices we share is to support the mission of the Diocese of North Dakota. Therefore, I invite you to join me in making a financial gift to the 2024 **WoDakota Annual Appeal**.

The 2023 Diocesan Convention approved a goal of \$50,000 for 2024.

Generous lead donors have offered a challenge gift to MATCH the first \$13,000 raised between Pentecost and Memorial Day.

To make your donation, please scan this QR code, click on the “**Donate**” button on our diocesan website: ndepiscopal.org, or mail a check to the Diocesan Office: 3600 25th Street S, Fargo, ND 58104.



May your Pentecost support of **WoDakota** be a blessing to you!

+*Brian*

Established by Diocesan Convention in 2022, the first Annual Appeal in 2023 successfully raised over **\$50,000** to support the ministries of the Diocese.

On the successful completion of the Annual Appeal, Diocesan Convention renewed this commitment for 2024.

Named WoDakota: Beloved Community by the Diocesan Council, the word WoDakota calls us to harmony and balance with ourselves and the world around us.

This year we claim the spirit of Pentecost to inspire our giving.



Your WoDakota Generosity Will Support the New Season of Ministry Goals

- Initiatives Toward Reconciliation Among & Between Us
- Local Parish Youth Ministries & Search for a Diocesan Youth Missioner
- Local & Regional Efforts to Advance Creation Care
- Continue Our Development of Congregational Vitality
- Diocesan Council Work to Refresh and Renew our Diocesan Structure
- Preparations for Election of a Bishop

Diocesan Stewardship Share a Success for 2023

At its April meeting, our Diocesan Council was able to review the completed calculations for every congregation's participation in the 2023 Diocesan Stewardship Share. The Council felt that the results were quite commendable and wanted the success of last year's Stewardship Share to be announced to the Diocese.

Diocesan Stewardship Share Report

Episcopal Diocese of ND

2023

	% of Revenue
Congregation	DSS Paid
All Saints, Minot	18%
All Saints, Valley City	18%
Church of the Cross, Selfridge	1 payment = \$315.71
Church of the Advent, Devils Lake	18%
Gethsemane Cathedral, Fargo	18%
Grace Church, Jamestown	18%
St. George's, Bismarck	18%
St. James, Cannon Ball	18%
St. John the Divine, Moorhead	18%
St. John's, Dickinson	18%
St. Luke's, Fort Yates	22%
St. Michael and All Angels, Cartwright	18%
St. Paul's, White Shield	1 payment = \$90
St. Paul's, Grand Forks	18%
St. Peter's, Williston	No Data
St. Peter's, Walhalla	3 payments = \$809.46
St. Stephen's, Fargo	18%
St. Sylvan's, Dunseith	No Data
St. Thomas, Fort Totten	18%

Calendar

**All noted times are Central Time*

Bishop Thom's Schedule

June 2024

- 11th-17th: Bishop Thom in North Dakota
- 16th: Bishop's Visitation to St. George's, Bismarck
- 21st-29th: General Convention in Louisville, Kentucky

July 2024

- 9th-15th: Bishop Thom in North Dakota
- 14th: Bishop's Visitation to Advent, Devils Lake and St. Thomas, Fort Totten

August 2024

- 13th-19th: Bishop Thom in North Dakota
- 18th: Bishop's Visitation to St. Sylvan's, Dunseith

Diocesan Events and Dates to Note

June 2024

- 4th: Clergy/Congregation Leaders Meeting (Zoom); 6:30pm
- 4th: Province VI Small Church Gathering (Zoom); 7:30pm
- 8th: General Convention Deputies Meeting (Zoom); 10am
- 10th: Finance Committee Meeting (Zoom); 5:30pm
- 13th: Diocesan Ministry Support Team Meeting (Bismarck); 11am
- 14th-15th: Diocesan Council Meeting (St. George's, Bismarck)

July 2024

- 2nd: Clergy/Congregation Leaders Meeting (Zoom); 6:30pm
- 2nd: Province VI Small Church Gathering (Zoom); 7:30pm
- 3rd: Diocesan Ministry Support Team Meeting (Zoom); 9am
- 4th: *Diocesan Office Closed—Independence Day*
- 16th: Finance Committee Meeting (Zoom); 5:30pm
- 30th: Diocesan Council Meeting (Zoom); 7pm

August 2024

- 6th: Clergy/Congregation Leaders Meeting (Zoom); 6:30pm
- 6th: Province VI Small Church Gathering (Zoom); 7:30pm



Bishop Brian's Visitation Schedule

2024

June 16	St. George's, Bismarck
July 14	Advent, Devils Lake, and St. Thomas, Ft. Totten
August 18	St. Sylvan's, Dunseith
September 22	All Saints, Minot
October 27	St. Paul's, White Shield
November 24	Gethsemane Cathedral, Fargo, and St. John Divine, Moorhead
December 15	St. Paul's, Grand Forks

2025

February	St. Michael's & All Angels, Cartwright, and St. Peter's, Williston
March	St. Stephen's, Fargo
April	St. John's, Dickinson

TENS Webinar: Time & Talent—Focusing on the Other Ts

The Episcopal Network for Stewardship offers webinars throughout the year to help vestries, stewardship committees, and dioceses prepare lay and clergy stewardship leaders to talk about year-round stewardship and living generous lives.

Time, Talent, and Treasure are the “Three Ts” of stewardship. This webinar will explore ideas to encourage church members to share a diversity of gifts in the life of their congregation.

The webinar is Saturday, August 10, 11am - 12:30pm CDT. Admission is free. The webinar can be found at: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/time-talent-focusing-on-the-other-ts-tickets-829045516457>, or email the diocesan office (office@ndepiscopal.org) and Jess will send you the webinar link.



THE EPISCOPAL
NETWORK FOR
STEWARDSHIP

Harvesting Spiritual Learning from a Time of Transition

Submitted by: The Rev. Steve Godfrey, Diocesan Minister



We are celebrating Pentecost and how the Holy Spirit lands on each of us to enable us to share the Good News of God in Christ. At this time each year we begin the long, annual season of growth in the church, of being the ongoing Body of Christ, in the midst of the world, with good and challenging news of love and hope for all God's beloved. I am completing my service in the Diocese of North Dakota at this time of new spiritual beginning. I feel honored to have been invited to support this time of transition and I will certainly miss the many wonderful people throughout the Diocese. I am also wondering what we have learned in these last three years of transition that can be harvested for growth in the New Season of Ministry that is beginning and hoping that reflecting

on and articulating some of that learning might be a good focus for my remaining time with the Diocese's congregations and leaders.

Learning is one of the steps on the [Way of Love](#) that has characterized ministry in The Episcopal Church during the leadership of Presiding Bishop Michael Curry and was a basis for the work of the New Season of Ministry Task Force. Once we turn to Jesus, we are invited to learn what we can about his way of life, especially from reading the Gospel accounts, but also through reflecting on our and others' experiences in life and ministry and relationship with God and one another. That learning informs our prayer, worship, blessing, going, and even resting. What can we learn about how the Spirit is calling the people of the Episcopal Diocese of North Dakota to pray, worship, bless, go, and rest in the years ahead? How can reflection on our experience of intentional structure of the last three years, in conversation with what we know about Jesus's priorities articulated in Scripture, help us inform our learning?

The intentional ministry structure articulated three years ago included:

- Discerning and implementing **administrative** support to congregations and leaders
- Structuring and supporting **communication** and **events** that help strengthen leadership
- Re-vitalizing the **School for Ministry** and moving toward ministry **teams** in congregations
- Having presence on **Sundays** in congregations and ensuring regular **Eucharist** celebrations
- Structuring and supporting efforts at **Reconciliation**
- Finding ways to engage with **youth** and develop a new generation of leadership

Many people have worked very hard in the last three years to address these goals. Some may remember the multi-page "matrix" that helped us manage them. The [New Season of Ministry goals](#) adopted at Convention last year reflect desire to maintain and strengthen many of these ministry areas. That is the work ahead.

As we reflect on these focuses, what have we learned about the role of each? What else have we learned that we may not have anticipated learning? What would it be helpful to note to strengthen the ministry of the Gospel and sharing the Good News of Christ in this part of God's creation going forward into this year's season of growth and the years ahead? I look forward to reflecting together on questions like these as we harvest some of what we have planted in these three years and look toward the season of continued growth ahead, grounded in (re)turning, learning, prayer, worship, blessing, going out, and holy rest.

School for Ministry Preaching Workshop

*Submitted by: The Rev. Harvey Henderson, Chair for Commission on Ministry
St. Paul's, Grand Forks*

Several Episcopalians and a couple of Lutherans gathered around the table on Saturday April 13 at Grace Church in Jamestown for “Proclaim the Good News,” a preaching workshop led by the Very Rev. Mark Strobel, Dean of Gethsemane Cathedral. The day’s teaching was aimed at all those “who may be called to preach.” We were introduced to a variety of methods for preparing a sermon. Mark shared many anecdotes about his preaching experience, even poking fun at himself a few times. Ask him about the response to the sermon illustration about freeing a bunch of whales trapped under the ice!

There was ample time for questions from folks at the table, and the format was much more like a seminar than a lecture. Mark is a good scholar and a great teacher.

One important piece that I took away from our time together was this: “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s own people, in order that you may proclaim the mighty acts of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.” (1 Peter 2:9) I now have this on a sticky note on the bulletin board next to the desk in my office where I spend my time crafting sermons week by week. The text reminds me of the awesome importance of the ministry of preaching – proclaiming the mighty works of Jesus – to bring light to those in darkness – to bring hope to those who despair.

This preaching workshop was part of a new emphasis adopted by the Diocesan School for Ministry – to train local leaders for the work of ministry. The Commission on Ministry is hoping to revive or renew licensed lay ministries and encourage congregations to raise up people to share in the work of ministry alongside those priests who are called to the sacramental ministry.

We are grateful to The Rev. Robert Hoekstra and the folks at Grace Church, Jamestown for their hospitality – good space and good food!



The Genesis Gathering

Submitted by: The Rev. Steve Godfrey, Diocesan Minister



I recently attended a Genesis Gathering at Grace Episcopal Church in Yukon, Oklahoma, a suburb of Oklahoma City, sponsored by the Office of Church Planting and Redevelopment of The Episcopal Church, which invites leaders involved with developing new or redeveloping struggling church communities to connect online monthly and in-person twice a year. About 40 people gathered from all around The Episcopal Church for worship, fellowship, encouragement, and learning from one another, in panels, workshops, small groups, and informally over meals and evening fellowship.

Grace Church was planted ten years ago after an older Episcopal church in that area had split up and the remaining people had run out of energy. The bishop sent a young, married couple of priests to start something new. They did that in the old building until they could build something more suitable to the needs they were discerning now. With substantial financial, spiritual, and organizational support from their diocese, the Genesis gatherings and grants, and others, the new building opened last year and houses a congregation that now averages over 200 on Sundays. They worship with a traditional Episcopal liturgy with well-integrated contemporary Christian music and architecture. It was an inspiring example of what is possible in a suburban setting. It might be something to ponder on a slightly smaller scale in some of our larger, growing communities in North Dakota.

Even more inspiring was the breadth and depth of commitment to planting, growing, and fostering new life in street ministries, ethnic church plants, new online communities, rural church redevelopments, etc. There was a palpable sense of abundance and possibility when people are able to be creative and interdependent. I was invited to be part of a panel addressing questions around vision for ministry – commitments we have made, challenges we have faced, what we have had to let go and do anyway, despite the cost. I shared about my commitment to identifying and celebrating abundance in the midst of the challenges of feeling like we do not have enough when we try to maintain old structures, of letting go of comfort and ease as I go many places and celebrate our diversity. I was inspired by the story of a Rwandan-American priest and his wife who planted an immigrant congregation in a dying church and are now creating a new multicultural congregation including people from both churches.





One afternoon offered time to go out in small groups to experience some of the context in and around Oklahoma City. I went to the new First Americans Museum celebrating the cultures of the 39 tribal nations in Oklahoma today, while honoring the people who inhabited those lands before. The museum is adjacent to a large hotel and water park still under construction. Families from around the state will be able to come and celebrate their heritage and lament the often disastrous effects of the United States and state of Oklahoma (which I learned is a from a Choctaw phrase meaning “red people”). I noticed a wall honoring many companies and organizations that have supported building that new institution and wondered what it would be like if The Episcopal Church and our dioceses and congregations with means contributed to building places like that, participating in interdependence with the communities in which we live and move and worship.

The online and in-person Genesis Gatherings are among the opportunities I value for learning and sharing encouragement as I strive to invite people to move beyond the challenges we face and creatively imagine a future full of possibility.

St. Michael and All Angels Church Receives \$7,500 Grant for Community Initiatives

Submitted by: George Abdilnour, St. Peter's, Williston

In a heartening development for the Cartwright community, St. Michael and All Angels Church has been awarded a substantial grant of \$7,500 to support their ongoing initiatives. The grant, approved by the North Dakota Episcopal Foundation, promises to invigorate the church's efforts in serving the local populace.

The funds from the grant are earmarked for a range of programs and activities designed to address pressing community needs. These include donations to the food bank involving Cartwright and its nearby communities, the Walk Out of Darkness event aimed at bringing awareness to the risk of suicide, and Warriors for Christ, an after-school bible study for middle-school students. Funds will be allocated to each of these worthy causes.

As St. Michael and All Angels Church prepares to embark on the next phase of its community initiatives, fueled by the newly acquired grant, there is a palpable sense of optimism and anticipation in Cartwright. With concerted effort and collective goodwill, the church endeavors to continue its noble mission of spreading compassion, hope, and solidarity throughout the town.

Grants are available for worthy causes through the NDEF. Applications can be found online on the diocesan website at <https://www.ndepiscopal.org/ndef/>.

"I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?"

Isaiah 43:19a



A Conference Reimagining
Church and Community

September 16-18, 2024
Minneapolis, Minnesota

TOPICS INCLUDE

Living on the Edge

Liturgical Renewal

Equipping Leaders

Local Vitality

YOU ARE INVITED!

These days, many of us find ourselves wondering about the future of the church. We invite you to join us as we reflect, experiment, dream, and challenge the boundaries that often create obstacles in pursuing a Gospel-centered life in community.

Featuring: Panel Conversations, Workshops, Open Space, Art, Music, and Collaborative Worship. Opportunities for networking, shared resources and fellowship

Registration & Details: tinyurl.com/Living-Waters-Conference

Location: DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel - Bloomington
7800 Normandale Boulevard,
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55439

Registration: \$350 (*Financial assistance is available*)

Book your hotel room with the link on the web site by September 2, 2024 to receive the group rate of \$149 + taxes.

What is the Living Waters Cooperative?

The Living Waters Cooperative is a joyful, grassroots collaboration exploring new, Spirit-filled ways of living out the Gospel throughout our neighborhoods and ministering communities.

Core Planning Team Members:

Ellen Bruckner, Lydia Bucklin, Anthony Francis, Martha Gardner, Steve Godfrey, Mary Groeining, Eric McIntosh, Charles Murphy, Don Phillips, Rayford Ray, Katie Nakamura Rengers, Donna Sweeting

Schedule

September 16, 2024

4:00 pm Registration Opens

6:00 pm Dinner (included) & Plenary

September 17, 2024

9:00 am Worship, Art, & Music

9:30 am Plenary + Workshops

12:00 pm Lunch (included)

2:00 pm Worship, Art, & Music

2:30 pm Plenary + Workshops +
Open Space

6:00 pm Dinner on the Town (small
group reservations)

September 18, 2024

9:00 am Worship, Art, & Music

9:30 am Plenary + Workshops

12:00 pm Lunch (included)

2:00 pm Plenary + Workshops

4:00 pm Break

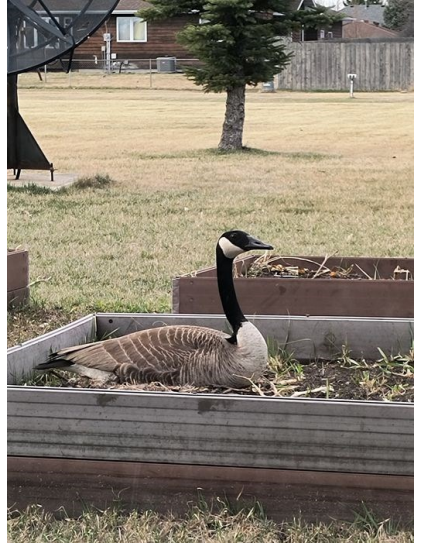
6:00 pm Dinner

7:00 pm Closing Plenary

Geese, Gethsemane, and the Holy Spirit

Sometime during the week of April 8, two geese nested in the gardens at the cathedral.

The goose made her nest in a garden box on the north side of the church while the gander patrolled the grounds and was often seen resting under a shelter between the gardens.



Werburch, the goose, hanging out on her nest.



Cuthbert, the gander, patrolling the area!

Based on an incubation period of twenty-eight days, the goslings were expected to hatch just in time for Mother's Day. And they did! Six goslings hatched on Wednesday, May 8 and Thursday, May 9. They didn't stay around for long. Shortly after they hatched, they were gone and off to look for water.

The visit of the geese was also nicely timed with Pentecost. In Celtic Christianity, the Wild Goose is an image of the Holy Spirit and shows the untamable power of God. There are times when the Spirit of God swoops into our lives, hard to ignore, and leads us in new ways. Celtic Christians believed this same untamable Spirit would lead us in new adventures with God "The wind blows where it wills," Jesus says, speaking of the Spirit in the Gospel of John. "You hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit."

Thanks to a poll among Gethsemane worshippers, both geese were named after Celtic saints. The goose was named Werburch, in honor of a 7th century nun at Ely Abbey who, in her life, had a deep connection with creation, including geese. The gander was named Cuthbert, the 7th century monk and abbot of Lindisfarne Abbey off the northeast coast of England, and the patron saint of all waterfowl.





The Sheaf

Episcopal Diocese of North Dakota
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The Sheaf—Pentecost Edition

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digitally, please go to:
www.ndepiscopal.org/the-sheaf

