



The Sheaf

A publication of the Episcopal Diocese of North Dakota
Pre-Convention Edition ~ September 2024

Invitation to Diocesan Convention

*Submitted by: The Reverend Kim Fox,
Missioner for Creation Care, Reconciliation, and Congregational Ministry Development*

Dear Beloved in Christ,

Convention is upon us and as my third time serving on the Convention Planning Committee, I offer a few words of encouragement.

Yes, diocesan convention is busy and can seem like "all business," but fundamentally, it is an opportunity for each congregation's delegates to have their voices heard as we seek to grow into the full stature of Christ. In that sense, convention is an expression of our collective investment in being the Body of Christ in the Episcopal Diocese of North Dakota.

When I first visited North Dakota, it was at the invitation of Bishop Tom Ely and on that trip I was gifted a coffee mug which on one side reads, "what is God doing in North Dakota?"

I can tell you that God has done a lot in North Dakota since my arrival three years ago as Northwest Regional Coordinator. We have received a United Thank Offering grant in environmental reparations, a Roanridge grant in rural ministry.

We presented at Forma. We benefited from the coaching of Bishop Ely and now have the benefit of the guidance of Bishop Thom. The Rev. Steve Godfrey's ministry was also an important part of our journey. We welcomed Jessica (Jess) Krzewina as our amazing Administrator.

My ministry has shifted and adapted to focus more on two congregational restarts at St. Paul's, White Shield and St. Sylvan's, Dunseith. There is a hunger for community and for the solace of the sacraments, especially during times of loss. I have also had the privilege of officiating and assisting at baptisms at Cartwright and Dunseith, with baptisms also anticipated in White Shield during the Bishop's visitation in October. Our Church family is growing!



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Printed on the other side of my coffee mug is the invitation to "Explore North Dakota" and the prayer, "Oh God, open our eyes to see your hand at work in the world about us. Amen."



There is much to explore in North Dakota from the Badlands to the cities. God's hand is at work. I see this now literally as harvest is occurring. The golden wheat is being gathered and I remember the old hymn, Now the Green Blade Riseth:

Now the green blade riseth, from the buried grain,
Wheat that in dark earth many days has lain;
Love lives again, that with the dead has been:
Love is come again like wheat that springeth green.

We are Easter people; we believe in the power of Love to foster growth from what might appear to be death, to enable us to live out our faith, and to help us fulfill our baptismal covenant to respect the dignity of every person, while striving for justice and peace.

Especially during what can be a contentious political season, we also remember that The Episcopal Church teaches that voting is an act of stewardship. We will vote on matters before us at diocesan convention and then as Episcopalians we are called to add our moral voice to the election in November.

Your prayers and presence are requested at diocesan convention. If you are not able to be there in person, please be there in prayer and in spirit. This is an important convention wherein we will continue to discern direction for the future of our diocese.

The results of the New Season of Ministry Task Force report were overwhelmingly clear in the desire to remain together as a Diocese. A diocese is not something separate from the individual congregations. The individual congregations *are* the diocese. Priests serve, because the bishop cannot be everywhere at once.

Whether your congregation is large or small, rural or urban, Anglo or Native, LGBTQ-allied or more conservative, everyone's voice needs to be heard and respected, which is why I am pleased that the Reconciliation Committee will be spearheading a new initiative for building trust through storytelling. Look for more information on Coffee & Empathy soon, with thanks to Dr. Stephanie Garcia for her leadership.

Creation Care Committee, with the capable leadership of Solveigh Barney, has also been busy and there will be a joint Reconciliation and Creation Care workshop at convention, focused on environmental justice, including our grant for environmental reparations at St. Paul's, White Shield.

I have only been here three years and during those three years much has changed and much growth has occurred, but we need to keep moving forward in faith!

I remain honored to serve in this Diocese and I look forward to seeing many of you at Convention, where we will also break bread together socially and in the Eucharist, reminding us that,

There is one Body and one Spirit;
One hope in God's call to us;
One Lord, one Faith, one Baptism;
One God and Father of all.

Thanks be to our loving Creator,
Kim+

Journeying Together: Embracing Change, Preserving Identity

Submitted by: The Rt. Rev. Brian Thom



It would seem a permanent truth that annual conventions of a church body always include discussions concerning change – budgets change, canons can change, personnel changes. And, there are often discussions about loftier matters – realities, hopes, and goals. Therefore, to cast a theme for the 2024 Diocesan Convention that we need to *embrace change* may seem redundant.

And yet... being familiar with change is a core experience of the spiritual life, yes? Didn't Jesus sort of continually ask: "How have you changed today?"

As you have experienced over the past several years, the Episcopal Diocese of North Dakota is familiar with change. Indeed, you've attempted to sort these changes out; to identify your needs/hopes as a diocese and to peer into a future whose corner you cannot see around. And so, if you are going to go where you cannot see, it may at least be good to know who is making the trip.

Our 2024 convention theme—*Embracing Change, Preserving Identity*—is about this reality and its gift. We know we are meant to live lives of faithful discipleship. We know that choosing to embrace change is a much better choice than being run over by it. And finally, we know that our attitudes towards change are a core foundation upon which we can build the life God desires for us.

The second tone of our theme is actually how I think we are called to answer the first: Preserving Identity. Who we are as Episcopalians will be the best path into the missions God calls us to and will be the best gift we can give our North Dakota neighbors.

Hereabouts, being Episcopalian is something of a unique expression. We balance the traditions of Scripture, Tradition, and Reason in all our discernments. We hold Holy Scripture in a life-giving and loving way. We respect traditional expressions of faith and worship because they bear deep truths. We are not afraid to apply our considered reason to the interpretation of all that precedes it.

North Dakota Episcopalians also feed, clothe, tend, visit, and repair. North Dakota Episcopalians offer compassion to the broken, community to the searching, and have a way of speaking truth to power. These particulars of our character are the tools which will help us build both the path and the destination that God has in mind for the Episcopalians in North Dakota.

In your mind, what is your best attribute of being an Episcopalian? How, then, will you give that 'best part' into God's care and direction?

Join us at the 2024 Diocesan Convention to participate in this calling. Or, pray from home for the Convention, meeting in Jamestown October 25th-26th.

However we manage it, the journey will be better together.

+Brian



Diocesan Convention

October 25-26, 2024

Jamestown Civic Center & Grace Episcopal Church | Jamestown, ND

Theme: Journeying Together: Embracing Change, Preserving Identity
Convention Website: www.ndepiscopal.org/2024diocesanconvention

Opening Plenary Speaker—The Rev. Harvey Henderson

Change...in all Around I See

It was some time ago that Bishop Brian called and asked if I would deliver the opening plenary at the Diocesan Convention. I was honored. We talked a bit about the theme of our gathering, in a word, “Change.” He said the planning committee was hoping I would do something about change in the Bible.

The words from a familiar hymn came to mind along with a story from my seminary days. The Rev. Dr. Ray Peterson would often remind those students about to graduate and become Deacons of the Church, those who undoubtedly had great plans for changing the Church and perhaps even the world, to pay heed to the words of an old evening hymn: “Change and decay all around I see. O Thou who changest not, abide with me.” And to watch for the “BE” people: “I BE here before you; I BE here now; and I BE here after you leave.”

Change is hard but there is biblical precedent for change.

Here is a little taste of what I am thinking. In the 12th chapter of the Book of Genesis, the beginning of the history of God and the people of God, the Creator calls Abram and Sarai into a covenant relationship. God promises a land of their own, an abundance of offspring, and a blessing through which “all the nations of the earth shall be blessed.” (Gen 12: 4) And this is, I contend the mission of the people of God from that time until now – to be a blessing to all the nations of the earth.

Abraham, Sarah, and Joseph; Jochebed, Miriam, and Moses; Hannah, Samuel, and Saul; David, Bathsheba, and Solomon; Ezekiel, Ezra, and Nehemiah. These are some of the characters we meet in the Hebrew Bible portion of our story. Some remain true to the covenant and are a blessing to their neighbors. Other, not so much.

Six hundred years before the time of Jesus, the covenant appears to have collapsed. The people are living in exile. They are homeless. And then the great longing for someone to rescue them and restore them to greatness begins. When Jesus arrives on the scene and there is talk of a Messiah, a descendant of David, a Rescuer, one who will deliver them from their Roman oppressors. They expect a warrior king like David. Instead, they get a servant King who rides in on a donkey. “I came not to be served but to serve.” (Matthew 20:28)

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And there is the first big change – a servant king and not a warrior king, one who will be a blessing to all the nations of the earth. And then there is the second big change. The blessing of God is not only for the people of Israel, but for all the nations of the world. Remember the woman at the well, the Samaritan who binds up the wounded man, and the Centurion’s son who is healed.

And the second big change is hammered home by Paul in the first generation after Jesus. Leaders from Jerusalem, Jewish leaders, come to Galatia after Paul has established a community of Gentile believers there. They try to convince those new followers of Jesus that they must follow the laws of Moses, the men for example must be circumcised. Paul finds out and writes a letter reminding those “foolish Galatians” (Gal 3:1) that faith in Jesus Christ is sufficient for salvation. Remember the promise to Abram – a blessing for all the nations of the earth. The Gentiles are welcome.

I invite you to attend convention to see how these stories are an expression of the spirituality of change.

Fr. Harvey Henderson+
Priest-in-Charge
St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, Grand Forks

Convention Lodging

Gladstone Inn & Suites

111 2nd St NE | Jamestown, ND 58401

Book your hotel room by calling the Gladstone (701-252-0700). Mention the "Episcopal Diocese of North Dakota" to be reserved in our room block. The room rate at the Gladstone is \$89.00 (plus taxes), and is available for both Friday and Saturday nights. ***To receive the group rate, be sure to make your reservation by October 11, 2024.***

Baymont by Wyndham

507 25th St SW | Jamestown, ND 58401

Book your hotel room by calling the Baymont (701-252-3611). Mention the "Episcopal Diocese of North Dakota" to be reserved in our room block. The room rate at the Baymont is \$120.00 (plus taxes), and is available for both Friday and Saturday nights. ***To receive the group rate, be sure to make your reservation by October 11, 2024.***

Fairfield Inn & Suites

930 25th St SW | Jamestown, ND 58401

Book your hotel room by calling the Fairfield (701-952-6300). Mention the "Episcopal Diocese of North Dakota" to be reserved in our room block. The room rate at the Gladstone is \$189.00 (plus taxes), and is available for both Friday and Saturday nights. ***To receive the group rate, be sure to make your reservation by October 11, 2024.***

Over the next several pages are several helpful pieces of information regarding our Diocesan Convention.

Questions, comments, or concerns?

Please contact the Diocesan Office and Jess, our Diocesan Administrator, will route your inquiry through the proper convention committees.

Email: office@ndepiscopal.org | Phone: 701-235-6688

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October 25-26, 2024

Jamestown Civic Center & Grace Episcopal Church | Jamestown, ND

Theme: Journeying Together: Embracing Change, Preserving Identity
Convention Website: www.ndepiscopal.org/2024diocesanconvention

WHO are YOU?

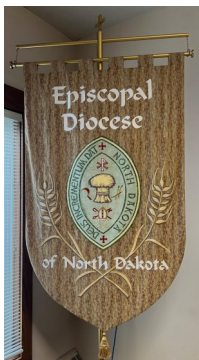
Displaying Congregational Identity at Convention

From the New Season of Ministry Report we learned that – in addition to valuing our diocesan identity – congregations also value their identities as individual Episcopal congregations. So, for this year’s diocesan convention – October 25-26 in Jamestown – the convention planning committee has invited each congregation to explore what identifies it as a congregation and to bring to convention for display something that represents that identity. We look forward to exploring the unique and creative expressions of congregational identity from each congregation. During our time together these displays will provide plenty of opportunities for informal conversations among delegates and guests and a unique way we can learn about each other as congregations.

Displaying congregational expressions of identity:

Each congregation should bring whatever is needed to display its expression of congregational identity (easel? small stand? whatever???!). There will be plenty of room - including wall space - in our main meeting room for the displays.

PLEASE NOTE: ONLY Command strips or painter’s tape can be used if something needs to be attached to the wall.



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Convention Schedule

Friday, October 27th

11:00am	Registration Opens
11:30am	North Dakota Council on Indian Ministries Lunch
2:00pm	Gathering Opening Plenary
3:30pm	Workshop Session #1
4:30pm	Workshop Session #2
5:30pm	Social Hour
5:30pm	Friends of Bill meeting
6:30pm	Dinner
7:30pm	Bishop's Address
8:15pm	Night Prayer

Saturday, October 28th

7:30am	Breakfast
8:30am	Eucharist
10:00am	Break
10:30am	Convention Business
12:30pm	Lunch & East/West Meetings
1:30pm	Reconvene—Convention Business
3:00pm	Anticipated Adjournment



Display Tables

At our convention, there will be space for display tables. We look forward to as many tables as there are people interested in sharing their ministries. We ask that tables be ministries or interests appropriate to the Episcopal Church. These display tables could also be a chance to showcase a special ministry or program at your church. Once you get an idea for your display table, please email Jess in the Diocesan Office for the next steps.

Budget

There will soon be a copy of the budget on our website under the convention tab (www.ndepiscopal.org/2024diocesanconvention). Budgets will be sent to all lay delegates and clergy 30-days prior to Convention. If there are questions, please contact the Diocesan Office.

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Nominations

There is a nomination form available on the website.

Know of someone who is passionate about the Diocese and would do well in a position of leadership? Nominate them for one of the many open positions throughout the Diocese. You yourself want to run? You may turn in your own nomination form. Questions about what it means to be a part of Diocesan Council or Standing Committee? Reach out to Bishop Brian Thom for more information.

Nominations to be included in the Convention packets will be accepted until Monday, October 7, 2024. After that date, as in the past, nominations “from the floor” for candidates for elective office will be in order at the Convention. Nominations from the floor will require all information from the nomination form to be distributed to all delegates by the nominee/nominator.

Secretary of Convention

Elect: 1 person, 1 year term, repeatable

This person is responsible for the recording of the proceedings of the Convention, and for their publication. The staff of the Diocesan Office provides assistance.

Treasurer of the Diocese

Elect: 1 person, 1 year term, repeatable

This person is responsible for oversight of receipt and disbursement of all diocesan funds, and for reporting the same in accordance with church and state laws. The Treasurer should have general knowledge of accounting procedures, and a close and supportive relationship to the Diocese and the local church. The position carries seat, voice, and vote in Convention and on the Diocesan Council. The Treasurer is usually, though not necessarily, the Chair of the Finance Committee. The Diocesan Administrator handles the day-to-day bookkeeping, payment of accounts, etc.

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Standing Committee/Diocesan Council

Standing Committee: Elect 1 clergy, 3 year term

Standing Committee: Elect 1 lay person, 3 year term

East Region to Diocesan Council: Elect multiple positions, 3 year term

West Region to Diocesan Council: Elect multiple positions, 3 year term

The Standing Committee meets concurrently with Diocesan Council (7 times per year) or on call by the President, or the Bishop. Its concerns are final approval, with the Bishop, of persons in process toward ordination, with legal matters, especially the sale or encumbrance of diocesan properties, and various canonical responsibilities at the wider church level (e.g., consents to the election and consecration of bishops). The Standing Committee also serves as a Council of Advice to the Bishop, and when the diocese is without a bishop and under certain other situations of the Bishop's absence or incapacity, the Standing Committee becomes the Ecclesiastical Authority of the Diocese. The President and Secretary of the Standing Committee are elected annually from among its membership. Members of this Committee are also members of the Diocesan Council.

The Diocesan Council is similar to the Vestry or Bishop's Committee of a local congregation. It serves to carry out the program, policy, and budget of the Diocese between meetings of the Convention. Currently, meetings are held in person [up to 4 of them (Friday evening to Saturday afternoon)] and on Zoom [3 of them (Tuesdays or Saturdays)]. Members need to have good internet access and the capacity to attend all in-person meetings, including required travel (at diocesan expense) and Zoom meetings. This is an important leadership, policy setting, planning, and administrative group, which, with the Bishop, make many decisions about the on-going life of the Diocese. Persons serving on Council should have a good understanding of the Church at the local level and a strong personal commitment to Christ.

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Workshops

An Update on the Native American Boarding School Experience: Both the Executive Council and the General Convention of The Episcopal Church have adopted resolutions establishing committees related to the Native American Boarding School crisis. Carmine Goodhouse and Deacon Angela Goodhouse served on these committees during the last triennium. Join them and hear updates about the historical realities and continuing issues associated with this difficult chapter in the lives of our indigenous sisters and brothers, including the role of The Episcopal Church, as well as other religious and governmental entities.

Environmental Justice: Join the Reconciliation Committee and the Creation Care Committee as they cohost a workshop centering on Environmental Justice at the 2024 Diocesan Convention. Learn what environmental justice is and how it teaches us how these two committees are inseparable. We will provide examples of environmental injustice in our state and what community members are doing to bring awareness to and fight back against these injustices. Please come with your questions, comments, and concerns as we want to open this space up for conversation and brainstorm ways our diocese can better engage in the ministry of Environmental Justice!

Practicing Stewardship and Managing Finances in Congregations: This will be a “working” workshop – first exploring stewardship resources available for congregations – especially small ones - keeping in mind that stewardship is all that we do with all that we have all of the time. There will also be suggestions and tips for keeping track of financial resources and providing information related to DSS (Diocesan Stewardship Share) with ample opportunity to ask questions or share concerns from the congregational perspective and plenty of opportunity for participants to share their ideas about what works in their congregations.

Calendar

Bishop Thom's Schedule

September 2024

- 16th-23rd Bishop Thom in Minnesota and North Dakota
- 16th-18th: Bishop Thom at Living Waters Conference
- 22nd: Bishop's Visitation to All Saint's, Minot

October 2024

- 22nd-28th: Bishop Thom in North Dakota
- 27th: Bishop's Visitation to St. Paul's, White Shield

November 2024

- 19th-25th: Bishop Thom in North Dakota
- 24th: Bishop's Visitation at Gethsemane Cathedral, Fargo and St. John the Divine, Moorhead

Diocesan Events and Dates to Note

September 2024

- 16th-18th: Living Waters Conference (Minneapolis, MN)
- 20th-21st: Diocesan Council Meeting (Minot)
- 24th: Convention Planning Committee Meeting (Zoom); 6:30pm

October 2024

- 1st: Clergy and Congregational Leaders' Meeting (Zoom); 6:30pm
- 1st: Province VI Small Church Gathering (Zoom); 7:30pm
- 3rd: Diocesan Ministry Support Team Meeting (Zoom); 10am
- 8th: Finance Committee Meeting (Zoom); 7pm
- 17th: Diocesan Ministry Support Team Meeting (Zoom); 10am
- 25th: Diocesan Ministry Support Team Meeting (Jamestown); 11am
- 25th-26th: Diocesan Convention (Jamestown)

November 2024

- 5th: Clergy/Congregation Leaders Meeting (Zoom); 6:30pm
- 5th: Province VI Small Church Gathering (Zoom); 7:30pm
- 11th: Diocesan Office Closed—Veterans Day
- 12th: Finance Committee Meeting (Zoom); 7pm
- 14th: Diocesan Ministry Support Team Meeting (Zoom); 10am
- 18th: **Advent Sheaf Deadline**
- 22nd-23rd: Diocesan Council Meeting (Jamestown)
- 28th-29th: Diocesan Office Closed—Thanksgiving



The Sheaf

Episcopal Diocese of North Dakota
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The Sheaf
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If you would like to see a colored
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digitally, please go to:
www.ndepiscopal.org/the-sheaf

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