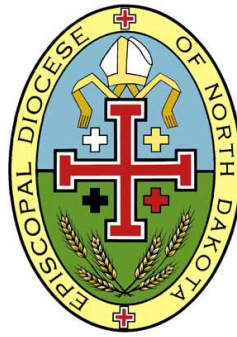


The Episcopal Diocese of North Dakota

54th Annual Convention – October 25-26, 2024

Journeying Together: Embracing Change, Preserving Identity



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Bishop Provisional's Report to Convention

The Right Reverend Brian Thom

My ministry among the Episcopalians of the Diocese of North Dakota began in late 2023 when I stepped in for Bishop Ely to cover his Visitations in November and December. On January 7th, with your support, I moved from Bishop Assisting to Bishop Provisional. In this role, I will serve the Diocese through 2026 or until a Bishop Diocesan is consecrated.

With the leadership of the Diocesan Council, the movement toward a search process has taken initial steps. A projected budget for 2026, which will include your new full-time bishop, was endorsed by the Council at its September meeting at All Saints in Minot. On October 3, I officially began the canonical process by calling for the election of a Bishop Diocesan. By the time you read this report in the Convention packet, the Standing Committee will have begun its work in organizing the Search and the Transition Committees necessary for the election and arrival of the XII Bishop of the Diocese of North Dakota.

A review of my calendar since last November reveals that I have been able to make Visitations to sixteen of the nineteen congregations of the Diocese. By next February, I will complete the cycle and begin again. Within these visits, it was my privilege to preside over 8 baptisms, 17 confirmations, 3 renewals of baptismal vows and 17 receptions.

Thus far in 2024, I have represented the Diocese at a few regional and national events: Winter Talk, an annual gathering of indigenous lay and clergy leaders held in Corpus Christi, TX; a retreat for bishops of Province VI in Colorado; the 81st General Convention of The Episcopal Church in Louisville, KY; and the Living Waters conference in Minneapolis. This last event brought together ecumenical lay and clergy ministry developers exploring innovative ministries in our changing times.

Throughout my travels in the Diocese, I have been graciously welcomed and well fed! I have encountered Episcopalians who are maintaining faithful rhythms of worship and service. From small to large, the parishes of the Diocese of North Dakota are clearly striving to live into the Baptismal Vows we share as Episcopalians and as disciples of Jesus Christ.

The journey is better together. I am blessed to share this one with you.

Diocesan Administrator's Report to Convention

Jessica Krzewina

As I look forward to attending (and hosting!) my third Diocesan Convention, I have been reflecting on what I have accomplished this past year, and what I hope to accomplish in the year ahead. As we, the Episcopal Diocese of North Dakota, start preparing for a full-time Bishop Diocesan, there are things I hope to have in order and completed by the time this new person starts! We shall see how the year ahead progresses, but first a look back at the highlights of the past year. Read on for an update on the year and 2025 goals I hope to meet by our next Convention!

Communications

If there was one central theme running through my job each day, it would be communication. A good portion of what I do focuses on communication, whether that be events, the phone, emails, finances, everything I do tied to communicating with the wider community. Any and all emails that come to the Diocesan Office (office@ndepiscopal.org) or the Finance Office (finance@ndepiscopal.org) are answered by me, as is the main Diocesan phone line (701-235-6688). Never hesitate to contact me, I am here for you!

As has been the tradition over the past couple of years, we have two main publications that we use as communication tools: the *Prairie* and the *Sheaf*. The *Prairie* is our biweekly email newsletter, and the *Sheaf* is our bi-monthly larger print magazine. Since our last Convention in October 2023, we sent out twenty-seven editions of the *Prairie*. Meanwhile, we sent out five editions of the *Sheaf*: Advent, Epiphany, Easter, Pentecost, and Pre-Convention.

Shameless Plug: We are always looking for more information for both the *Prairie* and the *Sheaf*. If your congregation or ministry-site is doing something cool, unique, awesome, or if you just want to share some pictures, please email the Diocesan Office. We would love to support you and your ministry throughout the diocese. Additionally, if you have anything you would like to share regarding the above *Sheaf* themes, please contact me. I am always on the hunt for articles for the *Sheaf*.

Finally, part of my communication tasks involves maintaining our web page, and to a lesser extent our Facebook page. Both of these tasks take time and effort to make sure information is current and relevant, and also keeping our diocesan calendar up to date, which can be found at www.ndepiscopal.org/calendar.

2025 Goal: Over the course of the next year, my goal is four-fold:

1. Update our FB page weekly with information that is pertinent throughout the Diocese.
2. Update our website, there are still a few pages that need to be created.
3. Solicit at least one new writer for an article in each of our editions of the *Sheaf*.
4. Create and maintain a robust membership software for the entire Diocese.

Events

This year, we did not have as many in-person events as we did the previous couple of years, mostly I planned lodging and food for Diocesan Council. When I do work on events, it requires lining up lodging, food, meeting space, and tracking those who will be attending each event. I have worked with a variety of hotels and food companies and am always looking to improve relationships with these companies.

2025 Goal: Find new food venues to cater from for Diocesan Council. Provide Council with more food options than in years past.

Financial Administration

As was the case last year, this is the portion of the job that has been in flux, yet more solidified this year. Throughout the course of this year, I have been able to find my way into specific routines, which have made working on the Diocesan Finances much easier. There are still challenges as we work to figure everything out, but things do seem easier than they did a year or two ago.

This is our first full fiscal year with QuickBooks and the program is a dream! Sheila Leier, our bookkeeper, and I continue to marvel at how well QuickBooks works for the Diocese. We are still fine-tuning the reports, but whatever we need to have done QuickBooks seems to be able to do.

A huge piece of the financial administration that I did not anticipate is working with the yearly audit. QuickBooks has made the audit easier in some regards, but there is still much that is needed from our auditors. Sheila picks up most of her yearly hours with the audit, as we work with the auditors on making sure everything is as it should be. Widmer Roel has been our auditing firm for the past couple of years. They anticipate having the 2023 audit complete by our November Diocesan Council meeting in Jamestown.

Finally, I also work with our grants, investments, and designated/donor restricted funds. Over the past year, this has been where I have learned the most information and realize there is still a ton more for me to learn and absorb. The diocese is looking into ways to make sure this information is accessible and readable for both our treasurer and Diocesan Council to be able to keep an eye on all things financial. This year, I reported on three different grants, which was a milestone for me, as two years ago I would not have been able to do that. Always fun to see where growth takes place.

2025 Goal: This is another two-fold goal:

1. Create and provide a Balance Sheet for Diocesan Council.
2. Work to better understand and report on our different investments and the designated/donor restricted funds for Diocesan Council.

Continuing Education

As Diocesan Administrator, I am part of the B+E+S+T Network (Bishop's Executives and Secretaries Together). Each year the B+E+S+T Network hosts a weeklong Continuing Education experience. This past May was a floating conference (yes, a cruise ship). It was a joy to be with my network of colleagues as we all work together in our various forms. In May of 2025, the conference will be held in St. Louis, MO. I said this after my very first B+E+S+T meeting that it was the best (no pun intended) continuing education experience I had ever been on, and that still holds true today. The networking and the information provided to us to help make our jobs run smoother is top-notch. I am incredibly grateful to be afforded the opportunity to attend B+E+S+T events and learn from my colleagues.

Safe Church

This year, another large project was Safe Church Training. Sandy Holbrook and I meet frequently as we work to make the program accessible for our diocesan volunteers. We have worked with Bronwyn Skov from The Episcopal Church and continue to meet with fellow safe church coordinators.

We have found there have been struggles through Praesidium Academy as our churches try to launch their Safe Church programs. The frustrations that you feel are heard and understood, and Sandy and I are working to iron out those kinks. We are grateful for your patience as we continue to move forward.

2025 Goal: Figure out how to remove the old courses from Praesidium Academy so there is less confusion when volunteers, staff, and clergy go in to take their Safe Church, Safe Communities courses.

I find it hard to encapsulate what I do in a year, and I know I left things off this report, but these are the highlights. I would be remiss if I did not mention that this year, I worked closely with Bishop Brian Thom as he started his ministry here as Bishop Provisional. As a member for the Diocesan Ministry Support Team, I attended many meetings and worked with The Rev. Steve Godfrey and The Rev. Kim Fox. It is a joy to be a part of the dMST.

There is more I could put in this report, but for the sake of ease I will end it here. As I reflect on the year and look forward to the year ahead, there are two more goals I wanted to add to my list.

2025 Goal:

1. Complete the Convention Journals for 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023.
2. Create a few working manuals for processes within the Diocese.

Thank you for allowing me to partner with you in our sacred work throughout the Diocese. I am honored to work alongside you, each and every day.

Missioner for Reconciliation, Creation Care, & Congregational Ministry Development's Report to Convention

The Rev. Kim Fox

Dear Beloved in Christ,

Since our last Convention, my role as Northwest Regional Coordinator ended (which had been supported by two Roanridge grants) and I assumed my new role in January 2024, appointed by Bishop Tom Ely.

Since then, my main focus has been on restarting two Native American congregations: St. Paul's, White Shield (MHA Nation reservation) and St. Sylvan's, Dunseith (just off the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa reservation). There is much growth potential in these two faithful congregations, with a great hunger for gathering in community and engaging youth.

We hope to have St Paul's church building back open by the Bishop's visitation following this Convention, so that services may resume on a regular basis. Our diocese/St Paul's was the recipient of a United Thank Offering grant I wrote in creation care, specifically environmental reparations. With the help of Robert Fox, Project Manager, much work has been accomplished there and by warmer weather, we hope to have the prayer path open and invite people to come to this pilgrimage site to reflect on the continued need for racial healing.

St Sylvan's now meets for worship on the first and third Sundays of the month and we enjoyed the Bishop's visitation in August 2024, with baptisms. I have also officiated at three funerals there thus far. There is interest in confirmation classes for youth, which I will prepare prior to the Bishop's next visitation. With the Bishop's approval, I also ordered new altar linens and missal, with Gospel book on back order.

I was recently appointed as Province VI representative to the national UTO Board and in that capacity, will be able to help other, especially Indigenous, applicants with their grant applications. I have also been invited to write the new liturgy booklet for UTO, from an Indigenous perspective, with the goal of completion by 2025.

While my role as Secretary of North Dakota Council on Indian Ministries ended a couple years ago, I am now part of the Executive Committee, along with Father John Floberg, and will work to advocate for the interests of St Paul's and St Sylvan's, as well as equity in allocation of resources for Native ministry.

I continue to serve at St Michael and All Angels, Cartwright, although once St Paul's is back open, may need to adjust my schedule once again, as we continue to adapt to circumstance; flexibility is key!

Cartwright's congregation has a strong relationship with Lutherans in Montana, where the youth take confirmation classes. Cartwright received an NDEF grant to replace their church doors, enabling them to contribute more to needs in their community.

Highlights of the last year were attending Winter Talk at Mustang Island, Texas as Indigenous clergy, as well as attending Deputies of Color pre-convention Caucus in Louisville, followed by serving as a clergy deputy at General Convention.

I have continued to support the Reconciliation and Creation Care Committees, encouraging their joint convention workshop on environmental reparations. I have encouraged a trauma-informed approach to reconciliation, using storytelling to build trust and empathy.

My role has continued as part of the diocesan ministry support team, working closely with Bishop Tom before his departure and now with Bishop Brian and Jess, our Diocesan Administrator, following Steve Godfrey's departure.

I have worked to share open opportunities in this diocese with clergy colleagues whom I feel would be a good fit and have shared that information with our Bishop. I have continued to develop collegial relationships within our Province and beyond.

Most recently, I attended the Living Waters conference in Minneapolis where, along with Steve Godfrey, our Bishop, Jess, our administrator, and Robert Fox, I presented as part of our North Dakota workshop: Learning from Transition.

One of the transitions from last year was the sale of St. Peter's church building in Williston and I was honored to walk with them during their last service when I was the preacher and Steve Godfrey was the celebrant. The proceeds of that building sale will allow for exploration of new ministry potential. There are natural cycles in churches and sometimes what can seem like a death is really a chance for resurrection to new life. Please continue to keep St. Peter's in your prayers, as they discern direction.

Likewise, please pray for discernment as delegates gather at Convention for the business of the Diocese, especially as we anticipate another transition in calling a new Bishop.

Thank you for the honor and continued opportunity to serve in this Diocese.

In Christ's peace, power, and love,
Kim+

Commission on Ministry

The Rev. Harvey G. Henderson, Chair

Commission Members – The Rev. Harvey Henderson, Chair, The Rev. Bart Davis, The Rev. Jamie Parsley, The Rev. Sloane Floberg, The Rev. Terry Overbo (Standing Committee rep.) The Rev. John Anderson, Donna Pettit, Elaine McLaughlin, Joanne Lassiter, The Rev. Steve Godfrey (DMSTeam).]

The Commission on Ministry met several times on Zoom and a few times in person over the past year. Bishop Thom joined us and shared with us his vision for the work of the Commission.

The Commission recommended to the Bishop and the Standing Committee that Peter Mading of St. John's Moorhead, be accepted as a Candidate for Ordination to the Transitional Diaconate.

One highlight of 2024 was the preaching workshop led by the Very Rev. Mark Strobel. About a dozen folks gathered at Grace Church, Jamestown on Saturday April 13, including a couple of Lutherans. One theme of the day was this:

1 Peter 2:9 - 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.

Congregational Development Committee

Donna Pettit, Chair

After the Partnership for Renewal group disbanded last year, we decided to go with Martin Darby to make presentations to several congregations during the year. Martin came to the Diocese and made presentations to St. John the Divine's, Moorhead; St. Stephen's, Fargo; and at Fort Totten. These met with varying degrees of success—one is working on a project, one is dealing with other issues in the congregation and one is not engaged with this effort. This implies no fault in any place but the realities of congregational dynamics and issues that need immediate attention.

When The Rev. Steve Godfrey came to North Dakota his main stated effort was to help and lead the Congregational Development Committee to find a viable way to complete their task. He was enormously helpful and clear in helping form a vision and action to do this work. But the longer he was here, the fuller his plate became and the more his attention was needed in other areas as well. And now his time with us is finished and we no longer have his skills to lead us.

After three years with our first provisional bishop leading us, we have a second provisional bishop whose task is to lead us in the next set of goals before we elect a Bishop for the Diocese. These tweaking of goals will need the Congregational Development Committee to see what changes need to be made to fit into the current efforts being made to strengthen the Diocese. There is no lack of options but the overall plan needs refining and our role in that plan defined. So at this moment, we cannot give you the plan for the coming year - it is under construction. But whatever plans are decided on and put into plan, our committee will have a role in the overall effort of congregational development and strengthening. The diocese has strong leaders and Bp Thom has been learning about us and deciding what pieces are needed to make us stronger and ready for a more permanent relationship with a Diocesan Bishop.

Members of this committee: John Baird, Tammy Enockson, Donna Pettit, and Leo Wilking. We would welcome interested members to this group.

Creation Care

Solveigh Barney, Chair

This year, the Creation Care Committee has primarily focused on the intersectionality between reconciliation and the environment. Environmental Justice is a key tenant to understanding this relationship. We are excited to be collaborating with the Reconciliation Committee in hosting a joint workshop regarding this subject matter at this year's Diocesan Convention. The definition I learned and favored during my time in college is from the national journal *Race, Poverty, and the Environment*, which defines Environmental Justice as "where we live, work, and play." I would also like to add "where we worship," as being stewards of the environment and engaging in Environmental Justice is a part of our Genesis covenant.

We are grateful for the support of The Rev. Kim Fox in her position as the Missioner for Reconciliation, Creation Care, & Congregational Ministry Development. She serves as an outspoken advocate for our ministry and brings our voice to council meetings and congregations across our diocese. Thank you also to our members: Amy Phillips, Jo Ann Keehn, Phyllis Bratton, and Robert Fox. The committee would not be the same without these exceptional people and the perspectives and ideas they bring to our team.

In looking to the year ahead, I hope to focus more energy on the Creation Care Committee. With the transition from college to a full-time adult job, I placed this committee on the back burner. Moving forward, I hope to host more meetings for our committee and members of our diocese to keep this ministry alive and as an ongoing conversation across our state. I plan on writing more articles for *The Sheaf* and using our diocesan website as a platform to spread awareness and provide information on how we can make our congregations greener. I want to access resources from the wider Episcopal Church to engage our diocese in a national conversation regarding a pressing issue that will continue to be a core and growing ministry.

Thank you for your support in the Creation Care Committee. As always, let me know if you have any questions, comments, or concerns, or would like to be a part of this ministry.

Solveigh.barney@gmail.com

(701) 595-6721

Episcopal Relief and Development

Andrea Stomberg, Chair



There has been little Diocesan activity related to Episcopal Relief and Development this year. An appeal was published in *The Prairie* in late December noting that materials are available at no cost through their

website and listing Andrea Stomberg as a contact. No parishes contacted Andrea for assistance in getting materials.

In the first quarter of 2024, three people from the Diocese attended a Episcopal Relief and Development tour in Tanzania to view outreach of the program in that country. Several presentations were made throughout the Diocese about this trip.

It is suggested that two or more members with a passion for outreach take this work up - to support each other and to discuss ideas for outreach within the Diocese. The work does not need to be time consuming, can be fun, is important and may be more successful with more than one person behind the effort.

General Convention

John Baird, Deputation Chair



Summary of some highlights from General Convention 81

We had 11 people attend the meetings in Louisville, KY. GC Deputies – Clergy – Kim Fox, Angela Goodhouse, Robert Hoekstra, John Floberg; Lay – Carmine Goodhouse, John Baird, Robert Fox, Charlotte Peterson; Bishop – Brian Thom; ECW Delegates – Mary Massad, Vanessa Strobel (who was also a lay alternate deputy if needed)

We arrived Thursday, June 20 and Friday, June 21 to stay at the **Courtyard by Marriott**. We attended several meetings and sessions at the Kentucky International Convention Center, the Galt House Hotel, and the Marriott, Hyatt, and Omni Hotels.

Committees:

There were 23 legislative committees. All resolutions must be heard by the committees before coming to the floor. We had good representation on the committees.

Bishop Brian Thom was a member of Legislative Committee 19 - Title III Ministry
John Baird, deputation chair, was a member of Legislative Committee 8 – Congregational Vitality & Data-Driven Initiatives.

Charlotte Peterson was a member of the Legislative Committee 14 – Ecumenical & Interreligious Relations.

Besides the committees we had deputies active on other bodies:

Kim and Robert Fox represented the Native American voice as a member of the Deputies of Color committee.

Carmine Goodhouse is a member of the Executive Council Committee for Indigenous Boarding Schools and Advocacy.

Angelia Goodhouse is a member of the interim body – The A127 Commission: a resolution for Telling the Truth about The Episcopal Church’s History with Indigenous Boarding Schools. She has also been appointed to The Episcopal Coalition for Racial Equity and Justice.

John Floberg was a senior deputy, having been part of 7 General Conventions, and recognized as such.

Robert Hoekstra served on legislative committee 11, Formation and Discipleship.

VBinder

The VBinder contains all resolutions, elections, legislative actions, and consent calendars from the 81st General Convention. This comprehensive resource contains all actions taken during the convention. Make sure to check the VBinder for any detailed information.

<https://www.vbinder.net/menu?house=HD&lang=en>

Photos from the 81st General Convention Available

Photos from the 81st General Convention are now available on flickr for you to use.

If you use any of these photos in publications, please be sure to credit the photographers accordingly.

Photos by Scott Gunn :

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/scottgunn/albums/72177720318139350/>

Photos by Randall Gornowich : <https://flickr.com/photos/195929240@N04/albums/>

Videos from General Convention

All videos from the House of Deputies, House of Bishops, worship services, press conferences, photos, and news are available at the Episcopal Church's Media Hub. Visit the Media Hub to access all these resources and stay updated on everything from GC81.

https://media.episcopalchurch.org/video/?mc_cid=e8a0c45094&mc_eid=7c703ace9c

Two of our major elections were for Presiding Bishop and President of the House of Deputies.

Presiding Bishop Election

There were 5 candidates for Presiding Bishop. The House of Bishops were sequestered in Christ Church Cathedral on Wednesday, June 26 until electing the Rt. Rev. Sean Rowe as the 28th Presiding Bishop and primate of The Episcopal Church. His election was confirmed by the House of Deputies. He will serve for a nine-year term beginning November 1.

Rowe was chosen from among [five nominees](#) on the first ballot. Election voting results in the House of Bishops by ballot, with names listed alphabetically, were as follows:

The Rt. Rev. Scott Barker: 24

The Rt. Rev. DeDe Duncan-Probe: 9

The Rt. Rev. Daniel Gutiérrez: 17

The Rt. Rev. Sean Rowe: 89

The Rt. Rev. Robert Wright: 19

Rowe, 49, was ordained bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Northwestern Pennsylvania in 2007 and became bishop provisional of Western New York in 2019. From 2014 to 2018, he served as bishop provisional of the Episcopal Diocese of Bethlehem.

Born in Sharon, Pennsylvania, Rowe earned a bachelor's degree in history from Grove City College, a master of divinity from Virginia Theological Seminary, and a doctorate in organizational learning and leadership from Gannon University.

Rowe was the youngest Episcopal priest in the U.S. when he was ordained in 2000 at age 24, and he was the youngest member of the House of Bishops when he was ordained and consecrated at age 32.

Known for his research and work on organizational learning and adaptive performance in the church, Rowe serves as parliamentarian for the House of Bishops and the Episcopal Church Executive Council; chair of the Episcopal Church Building Fund; and as a member of the Standing Commission on Structure, Governance, and Constitution and Canons. He also serves on the Greater Buffalo Racial Equity Roundtable. In 2018, he became the first bishop to serve on the House of Deputies Committee on the State of the Church.

Two days after the election, Presiding Bishop-elect Sean Rowe, together with the planning committees for his transition and installation, announced that they will forego the traditional installation service in Washington National Cathedral in favor of a smaller, simpler ceremony in the chapel at the church's New York headquarters. This service will be livestreamed, and simultaneous interpretation will be available in multiple languages to ensure churchwide access.

President of the House of Deputies election

Julia Ayala Harris, a deputy from the Episcopal Diocese of Oklahoma, was reelected June 25 as president of the House of Deputies of The Episcopal Church. Originally elected at the 80th General Convention in 2022, Ayala Harris' second term as one of the denomination's two presiding officers begins on June 28 at the close of the church's 81st General Convention.

Ayala Harris, 43, is the first Latina and the first woman of color to serve as president of the House of Deputies. She resides in Norman, Oklahoma. A first-generation Mexican American and the daughter of an undocumented immigrant, she was reelected from a field of three candidates on the first ballot.

This was a historic slate of three women of color vying for the leadership position. Ayala Harris can serve up to three consecutive terms, or, in her case, a total of eight years. Ayala Harris received 521 votes, 107 more than the required number to elect. Candidate Zena Link of the Episcopal Diocese of Western Massachusetts received 241 votes; The Rev. Rachel Taber-Hamilton, a candidate from the Episcopal Diocese of Olympia, received 64 votes.

Other elections

Vice President of the House of Deputies

Five candidates stood for election. The Rev. John Floberg, from North Dakota, was one of the candidates. Other candidates were The Rev. Charles Graves, from Texas, The Rev. Ruth Meyers, from California, and The Rev. Steve Pankey, from Kentucky. Steve Pankey from Kentucky was elected on the second ballot as vice president. Second ballot results were Ruth Meyers of California, 278; Charles Graves of Texas, 71; Steve Pankey of Kentucky, 442; John Floberg of North Dakota, 21.

Executive Council

Elected were six lay members of the Executive Council, out of slate of nine, who included Heidi Kim, Minnesota, Gerlene (GJ) Gordy, Navajoland, Warren Hawk, South Dakota, Laura Russell, Newark, Katie Sherrod, Texas, and Grecia Christian Reynso, Dominican Republic. Two clergy were elected out of a slate of six. These are Lester Mackenzie, from Los Angeles, and Stannard Baker, deacon from Vermont.

Other elections included Michael Barlowe, from California, being reelected as secretary and N. Kurt Barnes, from New York, being reelected as treasurer. Elections were also completed for Trustees of the Church Pension Fund, lay, deacons, and priests to the Court of Review, lay and clergy members of the Disciplinary Board for Bishops, and lay, deacon, and priest members of the Joint Nominating Committee for the Election of the Presiding Bishop.

Angela Goodhouse recognition

Deacon Angela Goodhouse, for her work on the Executive Council of the Episcopal Church, particularly raising the issue of Truth Telling.

Changes to Dioceses

It was approved that the **Episcopal Church in Navajoland become a Missionary Diocese**. There was excellent testimony from the deputation of Navajoland and celebration in the House of Deputies of this decision acknowledging them.

Juncture of The Episcopal Dioceses of Eastern and Western Michigan. The General Convention ratified the agreement of union between these two dioceses and creates the **Episcopal Diocese of the Great Lakes**.

Reunion of the Dioceses of Eau Claire, Fond du Lac, and Milwaukee into the **Diocese of Wisconsin**.

The boundaries of the **Diocese of Hawaii** were expanded to include Guam and Saipan and extinguished the separate entity of the Episcopal Church in Micronesia.

The House of Deputies recognized and warmly welcomed the deputation from the **Diocese of Cuba** who attended their first General Convention with seat, voice, and vote.

Presentations

Presentations were given to the House of Deputies by:

- Episcopal Relief and Development
- Episcopal Church Women and the Celebration of their 50th Triennial
- Episcopal Camps and Conference Centers
- the Official Youth Presence, and
- the Episcopal Coalition for Racial Equity and Justice

Special Orders of Business

We had special times set aside to discuss some important issues.

Amendments to the Rules of Order were discussed at two special order times.

Denominational Health Plan

Resolutions concerning the Holy Land

- D007 – Peace through Equal rights in Israel/Palestine – concurred
- D013 – Affirm the Imperative of a Palestine State – adopted with amendment
- D056 – Calling for a Ceasefire in Gaza – concurred

Budget

A joint session

Many other resolutions were discussed and passed or defeated. **A few that stood out include:**

- C008 would have decreased the assessment from dioceses to the national church to 10% by 2033. There was vigorous debate, and the resolution was defeated on a vote by orders (Clergy - 75 No, 10 divided, 21 yes; lay - 79 No, 12 divided, 15 yes)
- C032 – A Prayer to Remember the Innocents – “We will always remember them” – praying for all Indigenous children who were in residential and boarding schools in Canada and the United States. This prayer will now be the official prayer of The

Episcopal Church for commemorating the lives lost, and its use will be encouraged in liturgies throughout the Church.

Prayer card can be downloaded:

<https://houseofdeputies.us8.list-manage.com/track/click?u=f6bd2c17a7adbe20ca099de20&id=927a7eb7a0&e=438ddfb755>

- Discussion of site of 2030 GC83 - That the following sites be considered for the 82nd General Convention (2027): Phoenix, Arizona (Diocese of Arizona); Orlando, Florida (Diocese of Central Florida); Charlotte, North Carolina (Diocese of North Carolina); Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania (Diocese of Pittsburgh); and San Juan, Puerto Rico (Diocese of Puerto Rico).
- A086 Create a Task Force for Youth Formation and World Mission
- A092 Access to ordination and deployment

Courtesy Resolutions

- Greetings to former presidents of the house of deputies
- Expressed gratitude to several individuals and organizations
- Celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the Philadelphia Eleven, naming the eleven women and the three bishops who ordained them July 29, 1974.
 - As a show of the influence of this event and the richness it has added to our church all the female clergy were invited to stand in the House of Deputies and be recognized.
- The HOD honored the life, work, and legacy of the late Rev. George Werner, who had also served nine years as vice president of the House.
- During the HOD morning prayer, after Chaplain Lester Mackenzie read the necrology, he began singing while convention volunteers distributed placards to each deputation. These placards bore the name of the city and the number of people killed and injured because of gun violence victims from mass shootings that occurred in each diocese during 2023. The placards hugged on the walls of the Christ Church cathedral symbolized pain and sadness with each new addition. This poignant tribute served as a somber reminder of the lives lost and the impact of gun violence on communities across the nation.
- Discussed the EpiscopalCoalition.org

Worship Celebrations

We worshiped together in three Holy Eucharist and three Morning Prayer services. The closing Eucharist on Friday, June 28 had as preacher the Presiding bishop-elect The Rt. Rev. Sean Rowe and presider as the The Most Rev. Michael Curry, presiding bishop and primate.

Province VI gathering

Boarding School Talking Circle was held Tuesday evening, June 25 and was attended by a number of our deputies.

Community Covenant

A vast majority of deputies signed a voluntary community covenant, rooted in scripture, to respect the dignity of every person, seek Christ in all, strive for justice, care for creation, foster inclusivity and safety, pray for guidance, and support each other in accountability.

82nd General Convention will be held in July 2027 in Phoenix, Arizona

<http://azdiocese.org/gc-2027>

North Dakota Episcopal Foundation

The Rev. Dn. Beth Lipp, President

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Deacon Beth Lipp (2026), President (2nd term) Ila McKay (2027), (1st term)
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George Abdilnour 2027, Assisting Secretary (2nd term)

The Board of Trustees consists of 3 to 9 members. The Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of North Dakota, or a designated representative, is an ex-officio member. Trustees are elected and qualified at the annual convention of the Episcopal Diocese for 4-year terms. They may be elected to a second term but not to a third until ten months have expired. All baptized Episcopal members are qualified to become a trustee. Vacancies are filled by the board of trustees with the appointed trustee serving the unexpired term of predecessor. Officers are elected annually. Thanks to the gifts of Episcopalians who remembered NDEF in their wills, this Board manages a fund of approximately 1 million dollars to provide grants for projects within the NDEF guidelines.

Grants made in the Nov 2023 – April 2024 season are listed below.

- St. Gabriel's Camp, Diocese of ND: Bart reported on this request for \$10,000 for new bunkbed mattresses.
- St. Luke's, Fort Yates: Beth reported on this request for \$10,000 to complete renovations for an ADA compliant bathroom.
- St. Stephen's, Fargo: George reported on this request for \$2,100 for environmental sustainability: \$1,100 is for an Energy Assessment Audit \$1,000 for planting a Pocket Prairie
- St. Thomas Youth Ministry, Fort Totten. Amy reported on this request for \$10,000. The grant was for resources to start a youth ministry program (along with other grant money received from other sources). This ministry would target youths 3-17 years of age. The grant would be \$6,000 for Project coordinator and \$4,000 for equipment and materials such as books, toys, movies, supplies for crafts, etc.

- St. Michael and All Angels, Cartwright: George reported on this request for \$7500 for Outreach: 1. \$2500 Local food banks 2. \$2500 Warriors for Christ bible study for middle school children 3. \$2500 Walk Out of Darkness for Suicidal Protection.

The next grant cycle deadline is November 4, 2024. Grant guidelines and application can be found on the Diocesan Web-site: <https://www.ndepiscopal.org/ndef/>.

Reconciliation Committee

Stephanie Garcia, Chair

At the beginning of the present term, The Rev. Kim Fox transitioned into the role as the **Missioner for Reconciliation, Creation Care, & Congregational Development in the Episcopal Diocese of North Dakota**. Her dedication to the cause of reconciliation and racial healing has been critical for the work of the group. In January 2024, Stephanie Garcia assumed the role as the chair of the committee. The group spent several sessions reviewing the mission of the group, core values, and actionable steps to facilitate reconciliation throughout the diocese. The committee has written several articles for The Sheaf to provide education/reflections on topics relevant to our diocese, including recommendations on land acknowledgements within churches. The group has committed to engaging in internal work regarding intersectionality and storytelling. The reconciliation committee has developed a diocesan-wide series to foster empathy and relationship building within congregations and will be asking congregations around the diocese to participate in the future.

Safe Church, Safe Communities

Jess Krzewina and Sandy Holbrook, Diocesan Coordinators

Our baptismal promises to seek and serve Christ in all persons and to respect the dignity of every human are the foundation of our commitment to provide safety for all those who are involved in our diocesan and congregational worship, ministries, programs and activities.

A variety of diocesan efforts to refresh and update our Safe Church, Safe Communities work has been underway since distribution of our revised diocesan Safe Church, Safe Communities policies in summer of 2023. In addition, a robust section related to safe church/safe communities was added to the diocesan web page (<https://www.ndepiscopal.org/ministries/safe-church/>); it includes not only the revised policies but also some step-by-step instructions for the background checks offered through Sterling Volunteers, how to enroll in the online training offered through Praesidium Academy, and specifics about which courses are required for whom.

Our revised policies require background checks for clergy and a wide variety of lay people who are involved in ministries with children, youth and vulnerable adults (remember: any of us may

become a “vulnerable” adult for a period of time depending on changing circumstances/ situations in our lives). For 2023, the cost of the background checks was covered by the diocese; beginning in 2024 the cost of background checks for lay volunteers and employees became a congregational responsibility. Diocesan records indicate that to date 82 individuals have been identified by their congregations for background checks with 58 of them having been completed.

Our policies also require training for all clergy and a wide variety of lay people; that training is currently provided online through Praesidium Academy. The Praesidium Academy online training has, unfortunately, produced a number of challenges and frustrations - both in terms of technical difficulties and in course participation - for those who need the required training. For example:

- the online training is not available for use on tablets or cell phones. A laptop or desktop computer is required to take the training.
- there is consistent, significant confusion about which courses are required. Unfortunately, many courses which are NOT required are still available in a sizeable list. Although our policies specify which courses **are required** for various roles/ministries, those who have attempted to do at least a portion of the required training have consistently completed outdated or optional courses rather than those required courses. At the diocesan level we are unable to revise the online course listing in Praesidium Academy but are working through the Episcopal Church’s safe church/safe communities coordinator to get Praesidium to make the needed changes. It’s a slow process.

Although not the only reason, these issues have contributed to limited participation by those in our diocese who are required to have the training. To date, 166 individuals (both lay and clergy) have been identified as needing to take training through Praesidium Academy; with a total of 112 having created an account and started their Safe Church, Safe Communities journey. A much smaller number have completed the appropriate, required courses. There is more work to do in order to reach compliance with our policies.

Standing Committee

The Very Rev. Mark Strobel, President

Since the 2023 Diocesan Convention, the Standing Committee has acted on three property matters. In December, the committee gave consent for Grace Church, Jamestown, to proceed with exploration of the possible sale of the quarter section of land in Woodbury Township, Stutsman County. In April, the committee gave consent for Saint Peter’s, Williston, to explore the possible sale of the church building and property there. And in September, the committee affirmed the request of Saint Paul’s, White Shield, to dispose of the rectory as a part of a local fire department exercise.

In March, the Standing Committee reviewed the documentation for seminarian Peter Mading Meyr's candidacy for Holy Orders and confirmed that the canonical requirements have been met.

As plans are put in place for the election of a bishop, Canon 3 in The Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Diocese of North Dakota, outlines the work of the Standing Committee which includes appointing a Committee for the Nomination of a Bishop. To determine the shape and scope of the election and to carry out the work of the election, the Standing Committee will work closely with the Rt. Rev. Brian Thom, Bishop Provisional, with the Rt. Rev. Todd Ousley from The Episcopal Church Office of Pastoral Development, and with any consults as needed to assist the committee and the diocese.

Two spots on the Standing Committee are open for election at this Diocesan Convention: one clergy and one lay. Mr. Robert Fox and the Very Rev. Mark Strobel are each completing the second of their two terms and are unable to be reelected.

Members continuing on the Standing Committee, with terms expiring at the Diocesan Convention of the respective years, are:

- The Rev. Elsie Magnus, 2025
- Dr. John Baird MD, 2025
- The Rev. Beth Lipp, 2026
- Dr Jason Thoms DMA, 2026

St. Gabriel's Camp

The Rev. John Floberg, Rector, Standing Rock congregations & St. Gabriel's camp

St. Gabriel's Camp is ready to provide a welcome space for a variety of individuals and groups after the work that has been completed on the property in the past year. Star Lodge is now ready to serve as the hub of the campus for four season activities. With its connection to Geothermal Heating and Cooling and a Solar Panel array it can keep warm or cool depending on the season of the year. Two full bathrooms were completed in Star Lodge that provide hot showers for overnight stays. The Lodge also has two kitchen areas to prepare food for groups of up to 60 to eat in its dining hall space. There are three stoves and three refrigerators in these kitchens. There are four sleeping rooms in Star Lodge along with a dining area, living room and a 2nd floor balcony that overlooks the butte to the east.

For additional lodging space there is a lodge for 10 named after former Bishop, Andy Fairfield. It is equipped with heating and air conditioning as well. This lodge has also been upgraded this year with two showers, a toilet and a kitchenette. While it can host groups throughout the year, the water is on for three season as it is only a short walk to the bathrooms in Star Lodge.

During the spring and summer of 2024 the Camp hosted several groups. A college group from Dayton University of Ohio returned to make use of the Camp as a base for a week's long presence on Standing Rock. While doing some work at St. Gabriel's they also go into the communities and provide some resource to projects that are going on in them. Good Samaritan from Paoli, Pennsylvania also returned this year with their leader Jessica Campbell. They helped get the Camp fully open and ready for students that came from Standing Rock. The Camp also hosted a several day event with a group from All It Takes. They are a non-for-profit group based out the Los Angeles area in California and provide leadership training for teens. Once again teens from Standing Rock stayed at the Camp for this training.

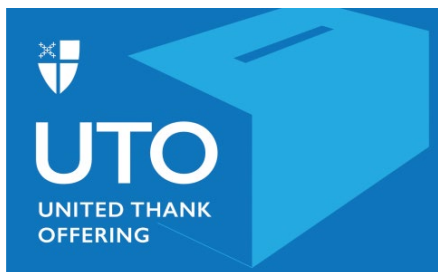
Each summer young adults from Standing Rock volunteer themselves to come out to the Camp to help put on the camps. These young adults are also the YoungLife leaders that serve these teens throughout the year. This year Standing Rock's YoungLife was able to add Josie Kelly to its staff for the summer to help put on camps, prepare for camps and wrap up after camp. A student from the Seminary of the Southwest (Austin, Texas) Jenasys Gomez, spent two months at St. Gabriel's helping out in the camps and working with Josie and Standing Rock's new YoungLife Staff, Tyrin Gates.

Joshua Floberg, a student at NDSU Landscape Architecture has created a detailed map of the camp with its buildings and utilities. This map will provide necessary information for anyone that is working on the property and for future development.

The Camp is now open for groups to book some time to come there. From hunting to Vestry Retreats to youth events – it is a reasonably priced place to be for a few days.

UTO Episcopal Diocese of North Dakota

Mary Massad and Vanessa Strobel, Co-Chairs



Work continues across the diocese to spread the word about UTO and getting information out to our parishes throughout the diocese. All materials are now available online and available for free with free shipping. Orders can include for a parish, family or an individual.

Individuals can sign up again this year for gratitude texts in November. <https://unitedthankoffering.com/>

The Rev. Kim Fox is now on the UTO Board of Directors representing Province VI. Kim wrote the grant for Creation Care/Environmental Reparations at St Paul's, White Shield, which is underway with construction. This is a part of our grant in creation care for environmental reparations. She will also be training as a reviewer of grant applications over the next three months.

Over the next 3 years, United Thank Offering, in the spirit of Matthew 25, will focus on areas of ministry that serve those who society has left out and left behind. The UTO grant focus for 2025 is on water, based on Jesus' words: "I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink." The first deadline this year is January 10, 2025.

Almighty God, I give you praise for blessing me in many ways.

Create in me a grateful heart and with this gift a blessing start.

Amen