

Diocesan Council Meeting Minutes
St. George's, Bismarck
February 14-15, 2025

Present:

Friday night: The Rev. Dn. Elsie Magnus, The Rev. John Floberg, Elaine McLaughlin, The Rev. Dn. Beth Lipp, Donna Pettit, The Rev. Dn. John Anderson, Tyrrel Decoteau, Jael Mogga, George Abdilnour, The Rev. Robert Hoekstra, John Baird, The Rev. Lindsey Dwarf, Susan Lisok, Ashley Hubbard, Jason Thoms, Rafael Decoteau, Bishop Brian Thom, Amy Phillips (Recorder)

Saturday: The Rev. Dn. Elsie Magnus, Elaine McLaughlin, The Rev. Dn. Beth Lipp, Donna Pettit, The Rev. Dn. John Anderson, Tyrrel Decoteau, Jael Mogga, George Abdilnour, The Rev. Robert Hoekstra, John Baird, The Rev. Lindsey Dwarf, Susan Lisok, Ashley Hubbard, Jason Thoms, Rafael Decoteau, Bishop Brian, Amy Phillips (Recorder)

Red items are included in the February Council Packet

Assignments/action items highlighted in yellow. Motions highlighted in blue.

Friday, February 14th 5:30-8:00pm

Arrivals and social time; Dinner at St. George's

I. Welcome and Opening Prayers (Bishop Brian and Jason Thoms)

II. Land Acknowledgment and Respectful Communication Guidelines (pp. 3-4)

III. Welcome to Ashley Hubbard

IV. Business Session

1. Review of Action Items from previous meeting(s)

- a. *Find a new communication platform (other than Realm) and an online shareable file structure* – Jessica called Realm and they helped her understand how the Diocese can use it effectively so Diocese will continue using it. Bishop noted that Jess will continue recruiting contact information from everyone in the Diocese. John Baird encouraged a security review of Realm (since people's names and contact info is contained in Realm).
- b. *Create a Policy Manual for Council to use for reference* – A set of policies has been collected in a Google Drive folder by Jess and Amy. Bishop will direct Jess to make this read-only and available to the DC and the Diocese generally (from some online location, possibly the Diocesan website or Realm). John Baird encouraged a security review of the policies. Amy asked everyone to look at the policies to see if there are any policies missing and if so, to send them to Jess.
- c. *Bishop to schedule a zoom meeting to explain financials to any interested DC members* -- Bishop will make this happen before the next meeting.
- d. *Find a Treasurer for the Diocese who will also serve on the Finance Committee* -- A treasurer is still needed.
- e. *DC to discuss pension equity between lay and clergy* -- No discussion.
- f. *Bishop to announce dates and locations of Diocesan Council.* (see p. 5 in packet and pp. 6-7 below).

- g. *The Nominating Committee will create a prayer for congregations to use to pray for the work of the Committee* -- This was done by Beth and Elsie and is available at the bottom of this webpage: <https://www.ndepiscopal.org/bishopsearch/>
- h. *Create a plan for how the Diocese moves into a sustainable financial situation after the larger withdrawal from Trust & Endowment* -- Bishop noted that the Diocese is anticipating taking bigger draws (9½) on the endowment net in order to fund the Bishop and Diocesan Missioner positions. But moving the draw to 9½ percent is an unsustainable level (draws were at 4%). No plan was created.
- i. *Bishop to schedule clergy retreat* -- Date for this will be March 13 in Jamestown.
- j. *New Letters of Agreement for Missioners (for council information)* – Tabled

2. Discussion of Council public endorsement of social issues – No decision made on whether or how the Council might do this.

Night prayers and recess

Saturday, February 15th, 8:30am-1:30pm

Gather and Morning Devotions

I. Business Session

1. *Continuing discussion on endorsement of social issues*
 - a. Bishop appointed a task group (Amy, Susan, and Lindsey) to come to the next DC meeting with a Council policy recommendation on how any Diocesan committee could bring topics forward to the Council for public endorsement by the Council. Amy, Susan, and Lindsey will meet via zoom to craft a proposal.
 - b. Any individual group can post information to the Facebook page.
 - c. Part of the Prairie will have content on legislative information or other issues on which parishioners may want to inform others.
2. *Approval of November 2024 Council Minutes (pp. 6-12)* – John moved to approve, Elsie seconded, all approved.
3. *Finance Report:*
 - a. *YTD 12-31-24 (pp. 13-18)* – YTD net total on page 18 is now \$-12,426.81. Bob moved to approve YTD budget, Elaine seconded, 17 yea, 1 nay.
 - b. *Designated & Donor Restricted Funds 2024 (pp. 19-26)* – Someone responsible for Camp Gabriel will be asked about the negative balance and how that amount will be covered. Also, Bishop search committee may need its expenses increased.
 - c. *Trust & Endowment 4Q2024 (p. 27)* – All reviewed.
 - d. *Clergy Compensation Policy for 2025 (p. 28)* – All reviewed.

II. Old Business

1. *NDCIM Spring Gathering* -- NDCIM will be meeting at the Dunseith Fitness Center on March 15th from approximately 10-3.

III. Reports

1. *Diocesan Missioner (p. 29-31)* – Ashley Hubbard summarized her activities.
2. *Bishop Nominating Committee Report* – Jason Thoms reported on the following:
 - o On 2/14/25, the Diocesan profile, timeline, etc. went up on the Diocesan website. (<https://www.ndepiscopal.org/bishopsearch/>).

- Anyone can nominate someone by sending an email to Sean Burt (chair of nominating committee) at bishopsearch@ndepiscopal.org.
- March 31st is the deadline for submission of applications.
- The nominating committee will announce candidates on August 1.
- October 25 is the date of the election of a new Bishop at the Diocesan Convention at Prairie Knights casino/convention center.
- March or April 2026 will be the installation of the new Bishop.
- Jason asked parishes to link the Bishop search webpage to their church websites. He also asked parishes to use the Bishop search prayer in their worship (<https://www.ndepiscopal.org/bishopsearch/>).
- On Jason's recommendation, Amy moved, John Baird seconded, and all approved a commendation to the nominating committee: "The Council commends the Bishop Nominating Committee for its thorough and timely work on development of the Diocesan Profile."
- The Standing committee will be sending out a call for nominees for members of the Transition Committee ("welcome wagon committee" which will operate through the time the new bishop is settled in ND). Nominee names should be sent to the Standing Committee (dr.jason.thoms@gmail.com).

Noonday Prayers; Lunch provided by St. George's

Reports (cont'd)

3. *Missioner for Reconciliation, Creation Care, and Cong Min Development (pp. 32-33)* -- Read by DC members
4. *Diocesan Administrator (p. 34)* – Read by DC members
5. *United Thank Offering (p. 35)* – Read by DC members
6. *ND Episcopal Foundation (p. 36)* – Beth announced that the deadline for the next grant cycle is March 24 (guidelines and application can be found here <https://www.ndepiscopal.org/ndef/>)
7. *Building/Real Estate Fund* – Amy asked about how congregations can apply for a grant through the Real Estate Fund. St. John's has an urgent need to repair their plumbing system. Susan Lisok reviewed the plumbing issue which prevents the congregation from using their bathrooms and kitchen. The Bishop requested a motion to approve an emergency grant of up to \$50,000 to help St. John's with assessment and repair of their plumbing. Elaine made the motion, Elsie seconded, all approved.
Amy noted that the Finance Committee needs to develop a procedure for congregations to apply for grants through the Real Estate fund.
8. *Other Reports: No reports provided.*
 - Commission on Ministry
 - Shepherds for New Season Goals
 - Congregational Development Committee
 - Personnel Committee
 - Canons Committee
 - ND Council on Indian Ministries - NDCIM
 - Episcopal Relief & Development
9. *Bishop's Report*
 - a. *Ashley Hubbard Ordination process* – The Bishop hopes that she will move to candidacy by fall 2025.
 - b. *Together for School Meals* – At Bishop's request, Amy sent an email to DC about HB 1475

- c. *Province VI Council* – Ashley Hubbard and Bishop Brian will be attending this meeting in Rapid City on June 18-20 to look at provincial level ministry. One Title IV Board (disciplinary action) will be formed for 7 Dioceses. Bishop is looking for 2 additional people to go to this. No one volunteered. A provincial council representative from ND will need to be appointed. Bishop will send out an email request for two additional people to attend the Province VI Council meeting.
- d. *Selection of Intake Officer for Title IV* – Bishop has engaged this person to address a Title IV complaint.
- e. *Ministry adjustments in Northwest* – Rev. Kim Fox will be solely focused on White Shield and St. Sylvan's (and no longer in rotation with St. Michael and All Angels, Cartwright). The Bishop will soon be making a visit to St. Michael and All Angels Cartwright.
- f. *Parish Visitations* -- St. Peter's in Williston will be visited by the Bishop in March. George announced that the St. Peter's congregation may soon be meeting in a Lutheran Church that is no longer in use by the Lutheran's.
- g. *Valley City church building* – Barnes County Historical Society is no longer interested in purchasing the church because of the cost of needed plumbing repairs. But an individual involved in a Christian ministry in Valley City is interested in renting or buying the property for an "apologetic center." Fr. Bart Davis will be providing this individual a tour of the property. If she is interested, then she will be negotiating with the Diocese and the DC would need to give approval of disposal of the property.
- h. *James and Dorothy Thompson of Fargo* – This couple sent a letter to the Bishop with an opinion about Bishop Budde's sermon. He wanted to know if anyone knew them. No one did.

IV. New Business

1. *Review of Sabbatical Policy (p. 37)* – Bishop brought the policy to the Council's attention. Bishop will provide DC with a sample of a more detailed sabbatical policy.
2. Eucharist by Deacons using reserved sacrament – Bishop asked when Deacons were given permission to administer eucharist from reserved sacrament. Elsie said 2007. Beth added that Bishop Michael allowed Deacon Eucharist at St. George's for a short time while without a priest. Bishop suggested the DC think about this practice.
3. Elaine McLaughlin announced she will not be at the next two meetings and this may be her last term on DC.

Prayers and Adjournment

(information cont'd below)

Diocesan Council for 2025

Standing Committee (Elected by Diocesan Convention)

• The Rev. Dn. Elsie Magnus	St. Peter's, Walhalla	1st term 2025
• Dr. John Baird	St. Stephen's, Fargo	1st term 2025
• The Rev. Dn. Beth Lipp	St. George's, Bismarck	1st term 2026
• Dr. Jason Thoms	St. George's, Bismarck	2nd term 2026
• The Rev. Dr. John Floberg	Standing Rock	1st term 2027
• Tyrrell DeCoteau	St. Sylvan's, Dunseith	1st term 2027

East Region: (Elected by Regional Convention Delegates)

• The Rev. Dn. John Anderson	St. Stephen's, Fargo	2nd term 2025
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| • Donna Pettit | St. Paul's, Grand Forks | 2nd term 2025 |
| • Susan Lisok | St. John the Divine, Moorhead | 1st term 2026 |
| • The Rev. Robert Hoekstra | Grace, Jamestown | 1st term 2026 |
| • Jael Mogga | St. John the Divine, Moorhead | 1st term 2027 |
| • Amy Phillips | St. Stephen's, Fargo | 1st term 2027 |

West Region: (Elected by Regional Convention Delegates)

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| • George Abdilnour | St. Peter's, Williston | 1st term 2025 |
| • Elaine McLaughlin | St. Jame's, Cannon Ball | 1st term 2025 |
| • Raphael DeCoteau | St. Sylvan's, Dunseith | filling unexpired term 2026 |
| • Rachel Schmidt | All Saints, Minot | 1st term 2026 |
| • The Rev. Lindsey Dwarf | St. Luke's, Fort Yates | 1st term 2027 |
| • Karilee Liberman | St. Paul's, White Shield | 1st term 2027 |

Ex Officio: *(with seat, voice, and vote)*

- Chancellor – Leo Wilking St. Stephen's, Fargo
- Treasurer – TBA

Calendar Dates

Clergy Retreat	TBA
NDCIM Gathering	March 15, 2025 St. Sylvan's, Dunseith
Province VI Gathering	June 18-20, 2025 Rapid City, SD
Ordination of Peter Akecmeir	June 21, 2025 St. John the Divine, Mhd
53 rd Annual Convention	October 24-25, 2025 Prairie Knights, Ft. Yates

2025 Bishop Visitation and Diocesan Council Schedule

February

12-17th North Dakota Visitation
 14-15th Diocesan Council @ Bismarck
 16th St. Michael's and All Angel's, Cartwright

March

12-16th North Dakota Visitation
 15th NDCIM meeting @ St. Sylvan's, Dunseith
 16th St. Peter's, Williston
 18-25th House of Bishops, Alabama

April

9-14th North Dakota Visitation

11-12th Diocesan Council @ Fargo
13th Grace, Jamestown

May

14-19th North Dakota Visitation
18th St. George's, Bismarck

June

18-23rd North Dakota Visitation
20-21st Diocesan Council @ Jamestown
22nd St. Stephen's, Fargo
22nd Peter Akecmeir Ordination to priesthood @ St. John the Divine, Moorhead

July

16-21st North Dakota Visitation
20th St. James, Cannon Ball
St. Paul's, Fort Yates

August

20-25th North Dakota Visitation
24th St. Sylvan's, Dunseith

September

TBD North Dakota Visitation
TBD Diocesan Council @ Minot
TBD St. Paul's, White Shield
9-16th House of Bishops

October

22-27th North Dakota Visitation
24-25th 53rd Diocesan Convention @ Prairie Knights, Fort Yates
26th Gethsemane, Fargo
St. John the Divine, Moorhead

November

19-24th North Dakota Visitation
21-22nd Diocesan Council @ Grand Forks
23rd St. Paul's, Grand Forks

December

10-15th North Dakota Visitation
14th All Saints, Minot