

The Episcopal Diocese of North Dakota
53rd Annual Convention – October 27-28, 2023
At the Threshold



Leadership and Ministry Reports

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Bishop Ely's 2023 Pre-Diocesan Convention Report

This report covers the time frame from October 2022 through September 2023 and is a summary of my ministry as Bishop Provisional in the Diocese of North Dakota during that time.

This past year has been rewarding on many levels and I remain grateful for the opportunity to serve in this capacity as we look to the future of the Episcopal Diocese of North Dakota. The pattern of making pastoral visits one week each month and working remotely from home the rest of the time continued throughout this past year, the best part being the times when I have been in-person. I have tried to live faithfully into the role of “coach” and to help fashion a more collaborative, collegial, and circular model of leadership. I believe we have made good strides in that direction and am most grateful for all who have assumed diocesan leadership roles.

During the year covered by this report, I have made eleven pastoral visits to North Dakota. During these pastoral visits, I have worshipped with: Gethsemane, Fargo; Advent, Devils Lake; Saint Stephen's, Fargo; Grace, Jamestown; Saint John's, Dickinson; All Saints, Minot; Saint James, Cannonball; Saint Luke's, Fort Yates; Saint George's, Bismarck; Saint Peter's, Williston; Saint Michael and All Angels, Cartwright; Saint Peter's, Walhalla; and, Saint John's, Moorhead. In addition, these pastoral visits included in-person meetings with the Diocesan Council, New Season of Ministry Task Force, the diocesan Ministry Support Team, various gatherings with clergy, individual conversations, and other appointments. These pastoral visitations are very full and rewarding. I was also pleased to welcome the Presiding Bishop to our 2022 Convention and the 150th anniversary celebration of our Cathedral.

My ministries with the Diocesan Council and New Season of Ministry Task Force have been the most significant commitments this year, as we lived into the various goals and priorities each group set for their work. I am deeply grateful for the time and energy commitment offered by those serving on these two bodies. They have served our diocese well and I hope you will find ways to express your appreciation for their faithful ministries. At this Diocesan Convention, you will be considering the recommendations from the New Season of Ministry Task Force, which have been endorsed by the Diocesan Council. This represents a significant offering and invitation as we head into the future.

During the course of this year, we navigated a transition in our financial operation, with the resignation of Charlotte Peterson, who served as our Diocesan Treasurer for the past several years. Charlotte's years of ministry stabilized our financial accounting and budgeting process, and for that I am most grateful. The hours she devoted to this ministry went far above and beyond the conventional work of a volunteer treasurer. Please thank her when you see her at the Convention. The transition we are continuing to implement has welcomed Amy Morrow from Saint Stephen's, Fargo, as our new Diocesan Treasurer and Sheila Leier as part-time Bookkeeper. In addition, Jessica (Thielke) Krzewina, our Diocesan Administrator, has taken on added financial and accounting responsibilities. This team of three has managed the transition to a new accounting program and they are working hard at building an increasingly transparent and easily

understood reporting of our finances. Please be patient with them as they do this work under the watchful eyes of our Finance Committee and Auditors.

During this period, the Diocesan Council initiated a financial appeal we called WoDakota (Beloved Community). People were invited to make a financial gift to this appeal over and above their regular local financial support, according to their ability, and in support of three ministry areas: Youth/Young Adult, Native American, and Congregational Development. We set a goal of \$50,000, and to date we have been blessed to receive gifts in excess of \$52,000. There is still time to make a gift to this appeal before the end of the year. I want to thank the WoDakota Committee for all their great effort in launching this successful appeal.

Another significant accomplishment this past year was the revision and adoption of our safer church policies for the Protection of Children and Youth and the Protection of Vulnerable Adults. This effort puts our diocese in compliance with the wider church policies and practices in this important area of our common life. For decades, The Episcopal Church has been in the forefront of providing safe church education and training for clergy and lay members of our churches. This commitment to establish and maintain safe environments for our children, youth and adults has been a hallmark of our denomination's baptismal commitment to respect the dignity of every person. In the Diocese of North Dakota, we participate in this ministry primarily through the Armatus Online Safe Church Training Program called Learn to Protect, offered by Praesidium. This training represents our strong ideals and teaching regarding the safety and protection of all those in our churches, and it helps us to implement the highest standards for abuse and exploitation prevention within our diocese. The Diocese of North Dakota provides this online training to help congregations implement the commitment we have made to ensuring that our churches are safe places. It is the responsibility of each congregation and its leadership to make sure that all those who provide leadership, pastoral care, education or childcare in our congregations have this training. I thank you for your dedication to keeping our churches safe.

I simply cannot say enough about the ongoing ministries of all the various committees, commissions, task forces, and other working groups and the considerable contributions they have made to our common life as a diocese. I'm especially thinking of the Standing Committee, the Commission on Ministry, the Reconciliation Committee, the Creation Care Committee, the Congregational Development Committee, the North Dakota Council on Indian Ministries, the Finance Committee, and the Personnel Committee. We are blessed by the many gifted people who play a vital role in our common mission and ministry as a diocese.

Good colleagues make a huge difference! It continues to be a joy and privilege to work with the members of the diocesan Ministry Support Team: the Rev. Steve Godfrey, Diocesan Minister; Jessica (Thielke) Krzewina, Diocesan Administrator; and the Rev. Kim (Becker) Fox, Northwest Ministry Coordinator. This hard-working team connects with many people throughout the diocese in support of our common life and ministry. They are the folks on the ground, day in and day out, doing all they can to support the common life and mission of our diocese during this

season of discernment and transition. I am grateful for their friendship and their devotion to this ministry among and with the people of the Diocese of North Dakota.

In addition to all of the above, my ministry as Bishop Provisional has included ongoing ministry as a member of the House of Bishops, involvement with the bishops of Province VI, the bishops who are part of the Bishop's Collaborative, the other three bishops from dioceses receiving General Convention Grants (South Dakota, Alaska, and Navajoland), Winter Talk, and the Niobrara Convocation. I have also responded to several personal and pastoral situations involving clergy and lay members of our diocese. I have also been active in our communications ministry, social media, and of course via email and Zoom.

As I enter the final quarter of my third and final year as Bishop Provisional, I am facing some serious medical issues related to my diagnosis of stage four esophageal cancer. I am humbled and grateful for the outpouring of prayer and support from the people of our diocese. It is an unexpected and uncharted journey (at least for me). Being surrounded by the love, prayers, and caring support of so many people is making a tremendous difference. I continue to be grateful for the confidence you have placed in me as we navigate these transitional waters during this new season of ministry together and stand at the threshold of the next chapter in our life as the Episcopal Diocese of North Dakota. I remain mindful of the fragility that is part of our common life as a diocese, and at the same time, I am also mindful of the many hopeful aspirations of the people of our diocese, and the willingness to take some risks. Creator is with us on this journey as we devote our lives to the Jesus Way of Love and God's reconciling mission.

Faithfully yours in Christ,



The Right Reverend Thomas C. Ely, Bishop Provisional
October 14, 2023

Diocesan Council – The Rev. Steve Godfrey

Diocesan Council has met three times in person and five times by Zoom since the last convention, including one meeting switched from in-person at All Saints in Minot to Zoom due to a late season winter storm. In person meetings were held at Grace Church, Jamestown; the Wingate Hotel and St. George's in Bismarck; and the Country Inn and Suites and St. Paul's in Grand Forks, with gratitude for the hospitality of the host congregations.

During the past year, the Rev. Hal Weidman resigned from Standing Committee upon his acceptance of a call in another diocese and was replaced by the Rev. Elsie Magnus, by appointment of the Standing Committee to serve until the next Diocesan Convention; and the Rev. Larry Thiele resigned and was replaced by the Rev. Robert Hoekstra, by appointment of the Bishop to serve the remainder of that vacated term. Rev. Hoekstra had been serving in an annual bishop's appointment to Council.

During these meetings, the Council engaged in the following activities and actions:

- Prayed, led by various members of the Council or the Diocesan Minister
- Elected the Very Rev. Mark Strobel vice-president and Tammy Enockson secretary
- Updated the Mutual Ministry Review Matrix goals and reviewed the goals in June and again in September (see the results of that review below)
- Ratified appointments to Finance Committee
- Reviewed financial reports and accepted the 2021 audit
- Thanked Charlotte Peterson for her service as Treasurer
- Elected Amy Morrow to be Treasurer
- Adopted a Diocesan Stewardship Share policy
- Developed a budget proposal for 2024
- Approved a grant from the Bakken ministry fund to St. Peter’s, Williston, for building maintenance
- Adopted new Safe Church policies and procedures for training and background checks
- Supported annual appeal with the theme of “WoDakota: Beloved Community, Living in harmony with all of creation”
- Received reports and engaged in conversation with the New Season of Ministry Task Force over multiple meetings and ultimately endorsed the task force’s report and recommendations
- Scheduled the 2024 Diocesan Convention for October 25-26, 2024, in Jamestown, and recommended scheduling the 2025 Convention in Minot
- Received reports from the bishop, members of the diocesan Ministry Support Team, and committees and commissions
- Enjoyed fellowship

Donna Pettit, Leslie Ross, and Leo Wilking contributed reflections on the meetings to diocesan publications throughout the year.

Mutual Ministry Matrix Council Review: September 2023

These goals were approved by Diocesan Council January 17, 2023, and reviewed by Diocesan Council September 15-16, 2023.

- *What do we celebrate?*
- *What can we let go?*
- *What do we want earmark for future growth.*

Goals set in January	Assessment as of September
Clarify roles and responsibilities of the Diocesan Minister	Celebrate and let go
Broaden circle of leadership	Celebrate (e.g. Finance) and earmark
Maintain & improve sacramental support for small congregations	Celebrate and earmark

Goals set in January	Assessment as of September
Fulfill potential of Northwest Ministry project and determine future sustainability	Celebrate and let go to the New Season of Ministry recommendation for new focus
Clarify relationships among the various communities that worship at St. John's, Moorhead to seek direction for the future of St. John's and those associated with it.	Celebrate (e.g. Peter Mading in seminary) and earmark
Achieve measurable Congregational Development	Earmark
Identify or develop leadership teams in all congregations	Earmark, define, teach/discuss/discern
Improve and effectively promote School of Ministry and other offerings for ministry formation to support team leadership in all congregations	Celebrate discernment, earmark, define, discern, refocus
Develop Youth (and Young Adult) Ministry	Earmark for New Season of Ministry
Increase communication across the diocese	Celebrate and continue mostly, e.g. e.g. cycle of prayer, online payments, map; earmark Realm dissatisfaction and need for shared Zoom resources
Heal Divisions/ Reconciliation	Celebrate Owašte Wakan, convention workshops; Earmark generally
Improve Stewardship	Celebrate & earmark – need clarity re DSS, consider time & talent, need committee – Donna Pettit, Amy Morrow & Leslie Ross volunteered
Explore ways by which the diocese might provide administrative support for small congregations	Earmark – gather people, survey
Develop fuller understanding of wider church & diocesan funding for ministries within the diocese	Transparency & understanding in Council better, wider diocese?? Need to publicize NDEF deadlines
Increase transparency in diocesan financial matters	
Complete & document the \$2K pandemic relief grants from the \$40K grant from the Executive Council of TEC	All but 2 churches participated; report almost ready
All Canonical Obligations will be met.	Celebrate & earmark for regular review

Goals set in January	Assessment as of September
Articulation of a sustainable New Season of Ministry for our diocesan future (2023-2025 and beyond) in the spirit of <i>Living the Way of Love</i> in our parishes, our communities, our state, and the world. See this web page and particularly the video on the page about the Way of Love: https://www.episcopalchurch.org/way-of-love/	Celebrate!

Diocesan Minister – The Rev. Steve Godfrey

Following the goals identified in the Diocesan Discernment Task Force report (ndepiscopal.org/ddtf) and Mutual Ministry Matrix that Council developed in 2021 and updated in 2022, I have strived to affirm and develop congregational vitality and leadership; ensure sacramental celebration in all our communities; address youth and young adults ministry development; facilitate communication and reconciliation, and support administration and the work of the New Season of Ministry Task Force. The latest review of the Matrix is included among these reports to Convention and forms the basis of my report.

I have enjoyed facilitating the circle of leadership embodied by our diocesan Ministry Support Team (dMST), led by Bishop Tom Ely, and including diocesan administrator Jessica (Thielke) Krzewina and Northwest ministry coordinator, the Rev. Kim (Becker) Fox, and connecting our work with that of other key leaders and ministers. Much of my work is in partnership with and support of these colleagues as we address the ministry, leadership, communication, and administrative needs of the diocese.

A big part of my ministry focus is ensuring regular celebrations of sacraments, specifically Communion twice each month in each congregation, especially in Dickinson, Devils Lake, Fort Totten, and Walhalla. I am also grateful for the Rev. Mike Pretzer (ELCA), Rev. Mary Johnson, the Rev. Toby Rowe, the Rev. Charles Cherry, the Rev. Ann Schutz, and the Rev. Bart Davis, whose ministry has helped to ensure sacramental worship in the churches listed above and in Moorhead and Valley City; and for deacons Elsie Magnus, Don Leroux, Barb Olson, and Hellen Lodu, for their assistance in sharing communion and Good News in Walhalla, Devils Lake, and Moorhead. Kim’s presence has been instrumental in Minot, Williston, and Cartwright and I have assisted there when she has been on vacation. Overall, we are managing to fulfill this important goal and the increased frequency of sacramental worship seems to be continuing to energize most of these churches, with sustained new vitality and attendance and involvement of young people in several places, helped tremendously by the hard work of teams of lay leaders. I have also provided support and mentoring for two local leaders discerning or preparing for ministry as priest in the future.

It has been interesting to support Kim and the leaders of our congregations in the Northwest, where we have invested in a sense of potential and received some important grants. We have

addressed needs for healing and rebuilding in White Shield; LGBTQ+ and campus outreach in Minot; pastoral sustainability and youth engagement in Cartwright; and challenges regarding post-pandemic regathering in White Shield, Dunseith, and in Williston, where I have been helping leaders to decide to sell the church building that is too big and costly to maintain. At the other end of the diocese, I have continued to support the leadership of St. John's in Moorhead, often attending their monthly vestry and annual parish meetings, as they strive to sustain and grow a congregation worshipping in three languages and representing considerable cultural, liturgical, and ecclesiological diversity, in the midst of a very urban neighborhood and with the challenges of an old, historic building, all without the benefit of a rector or priest in charge, as the other churches of their size have. I provide this kind of pastoral, administrative, and congregational development support in a number of our congregations, including Walhalla, Devils Lake, Dickinson, and Fort Totten.

I have supported the Congregational Development Committee in pursuing the goal of measurable congregational development with the help of outside facilitators helping congregations identify core values and spiritual gifts and discern and articulate their visions for serving their communities. That committee is chaired by Donna Pettit and includes John Baird, Tammy Enockson, and Leo Wilking. Donna has also committed to finish gathering reports and sharing stories about the pandemic relief grants to congregations in 2021-22. I also attend monthly Zoom meetings hosted by The Episcopal Church's redevelopment staff, most recently on the topic of "shrinking smart" in rural contexts, and attended their annual conference in Los Angeles focusing on asset based community development and how to teach and support that approach in dioceses. I look forward to sharing the learning from these meetings in the months ahead. These various efforts are helping us to affirm and form effective leadership teams in most congregations. More traditional congregational development work has included supporting the search for a new rector in Bismarck and preaching in Grand Forks and at Gethsemane Cathedral.

I have continued to work with the Commission on Ministry and its chair, the Rev. Harvey Henderson, to update the ordination process and manual and revive the North Dakota School for Ministry. We developed a new curriculum designed to form a learning community to address the formation needs of our leaders, and held one in-person gathering and several Zoom meetings, but the planned second gathering was under enrolled and cancelled, and there is a sense that weekend retreats are too much commitment for most people. So, the Commission decided to refocus the School on one day events aimed at developing lay ministry, and to identify online resources for clergy formation drawing on the increasingly robust availability from seminaries. The first workshop was cancelled due to a scheduling conflict. So, this is an area where we need to focus greater attention.

We have also continued to struggle with youth and young adult ministry, apart from the very successful Young Life Club and Camp Gabriel on Standing Rock. With a line in the 2023 budget, we formed a committee to define a part time youth and young adults ministry developer position, advertised, received and reviewed a limited number of applications and interviewed one candidate. But ultimately we did not succeed at filling that position. The learning from that

experience has informed the New Season of Ministry recommendation for the creation of a full-time position including youth and young adult ministry development as a major focus. Jess's faithful care and development of our website, biweekly email newsletter, *The Prairie*, and seasonal *Sheaf* magazine have meant that my work in that kind of communication efforts is mostly assisting and proofreading. Bishop Tom and I have continued to hold monthly Zoom check-in gatherings for clergy and other congregational leaders, though we took a break for the summer and attendance has been minimal since. We did have a successful clergy retreat last winter.

On the administrative front, I have also provided mostly advisory support for the completion of new Safe Church policies and procedures perfected by Jess, Sandy Holbrook, and the Rev. Zanne Ness. I was able to help one congregation complete a Parochial Report for the first time in years, and support completion of those reports by all but one church. I have also spent a lot of time supporting Jess and our new treasurer, Amy Morrow, as they transition the diocese's rather complex financial situation, with the help of bookkeeper Sheila Leier, from the leadership of former treasurer, Charlotte Peterson, of whose generosity of time and talent in the past several years we have been increasingly conscious.

The Reconciliation Committee, led by Carmine Goodhouse and Christie Iverson, held another retreat this year to share stories and build trust within that group, and committed to exploring options for anti-racism training for diocesan leaders. A few of us participated in online training offered by the Absalom Jones Episcopal Center for Racial Healing, a ministry of the Diocese of Atlanta, to test whether that program might be a good option for our diocese. Then Bishop Ely connected with the Venerable Paul Sneve, archdeacon of the Diocese of South Dakota, who was able to offer training called *Owašte Wakan*, anti-racism and racial reconciliation training from a Lakota perspective, addressing a key concern we have had about this kind of ministry in our context. We had members of the Diocese of South Dakota join us and enjoyed an overnight gathering at Prairie Knights of 44 people, roughly evenly divided among our two dioceses.

Owašte Wakan was a great pilot for collaboration with other dioceses, one of the key recommendations of the New Season of Ministry Task Force, whose work I have had the privilege of supporting this last year. Their call to explore collaborations also led to several conversations among bishops and diocesan leaders, and to a meeting we hosted in Fargo in September of members of our diocesan Ministry Support team and the staff of the Episcopal Church in Minnesota, to get to know each other and imagine possibilities for connection. I have enjoyed helping gather information and provide chaplaincy to the task force as they have listened to members of our diocese, examined various models of diocesan structure around The Episcopal Church, and discerned a commitment to remain the Diocese of North Dakota and invest in key areas of ministry like youth and young adults, sacramental worship, congregational development, Native American communities, reconciliation, and creation care. Every member of the diocese should read and pray with their report.

While I enjoy the breadth of my work, it is a struggle to try to serve and even feel responsible for so many different aspects of diocesan ministry. So, as I move through this final year of my initial

three-year commitment to transition ministry here and imagine possibilities for the future, I am grateful for the New Season of Ministry Task Force’s recommendation to change the title of my position to Diocesan Missioner, recognizing that the task is not to serve every need but rather to strategically support the ministers throughout the diocese in loving and serving our God.

Diocesan Administrator – Jessica (Thielke) Krzewina

As Diocesan Administrator I always find it complicated to answer, “what do you do?” My job can fluctuate on any given day with the tasks that need to be completed, depending on who I am working with or what I am working on for the Diocese. Below you will find some of the highlights from each of the main sections of my job over the course of the past year.

Communications

Much of what I do is focused on communication throughout the diocese. If you were to call the Diocesan phone (701-235-6688) or email the office (office@ndepiscopal.org) it is me who is on the other end. If ever you need anything, please don’t hesitate to reach out to me. I am here to communicate with each of you and connect you with whatever information I can.

We have two major publications that go out throughout the year. The first is the *Prairie*. This goes out every other week, with news and events throughout the Diocese. On *Prairie* weeks, much of my time in the first portion of the week is pulling together a draft, and then sending the draft to our Diocesan Minister and Bishop. With all our edits, we then send out the *Prairie*. Over the course of the past year, we have sent out 25 editions of the *Prairie*.

The second major publication is the *Sheaf*. The *Sheaf* goes out bi-monthly, averaging five to six editions a year. Over the past year we published five editions of the *Sheaf*: Advent (November/December), Epiphany (February/March), Easter (April/May), Pentecost (June/July) and Pre-Convention (September/October). Much time is spent on the *Sheaf*, gathering information and articles, and then proofing, editing, compiling, and preparing it for mailing.

As part of the Diocesan Ministry Support Team (dMST), I posted on our Facebook page, monitored comments and posts, and posted material as appropriate throughout the year. I also maintained the website, worked with our web developer, and designed new pages and needed.

In tandem with the dMST, I also updated the calendar, made sure meetings and events were up-to-date, and published in appropriate places. I also communicated with the dMST for meeting locations, time, and send out Zoom links as needed.

Events

Throughout the year, I planned and coordinated many different events. When it comes to planning events and retreats throughout the diocese, it requires lining up lodging, food, and meeting space, and then keeping track of those who will be attending each event. Throughout the past year I worked with a variety of hotels to get the best deal in each city, always trying to make lodging seamless for participants. Over the course of the past year, some of the events I planned and coordinated lodging and meeting space for were Council meetings (November, April, June,

and September), New Season of Ministry Task Force (March and July), Reconciliation (April), and Owašte Wakan (September).

Planning lodging and meeting space for events can be a challenge, but it is always extremely rewarding when events come together at the end. As we get closer to certain events, I have had to amend quite a few reservations, especially during last year's winter months. For example, I organized and planned the April 2023 council meeting, and then had to subsequently cancel everything due to a late-season blizzard.

Financial Administration

Over the course of the past year, this is the part of the job that has been in the most flux. In March/April of this year, our long-time treasurer resigned, which caused me to spend more and more time in the financial administration portion of the job over the past six months. In a regular week I complete weekly deposits, pay the bills as they arrive, and work with our new bookkeeper, Sheila Leier, on Wednesdays and Fridays.

At the current time I also attend Finance Committee meetings as they arise. I meet with both our bookkeeper and treasurer as we figure out the state of the finances for the Diocese during this transitional period.

Another large piece of the financial aspect of this job is grant tracking and reporting. Making sure funds have been released and that we, as a diocese, are accounting for where the money is being spent. It also requires turning in documentation and updating things as necessary as the year progresses.

Meetings

Throughout the past year I attended many dMST meetings (in-person and on Zoom). I also attended numerous finance committee meetings, online council meetings, safe church meetings, convention planning meeting, and helped with our WoDakota annual appeal. All these varied in their tasks as to what needed to be accomplished pre- and post-meeting.

There are also trainings that I attended that were offered through Praesidium, CPG, ACS, and other companies that help make the Diocesan Administrator job run more smoothly and gathered information as needed.

Diocesan Convention

Diocesan Convention is held every October. Throughout the year I attended Diocesan Convention Planning meetings to help the diocese be prepared for Convention. I, along with our Diocesan Minister, compiled delegate lists with information from each of our churches. There is also registration, pre-convention mailings, nomination forms, website, resolutions, table requests, and a myriad of other things that go on behind the scenes to make Convention successful each year. I also communicated with the hotel on a regular basis leading up to, and at the, Convention.

Continuing Education

This year I participated in the B+E+S+T Conference in May. The Bishop's Executive and Secretaries Together is a group of people who all do similar jobs. We were able to gather in Portland, OR and share resources with one another. It was a truly wonderful time, and I look forward to returning to the B+E+S+T conference in 2024.

Safe Church

Another major project that took place over the past year was the implementation and launching of our Safe Church. This required numerous meetings with the Safe Church coordinators and making sure we had everything ready to go with the policies. Everything was finally launched in August 2023. If there are questions about Safe Church, please reach out.

Overall, it was a busy year. I could keep going, as more and more things come to mind as I sit down to write a report like this. But hopefully this gives you a snapshot into what goes on behind the scenes at the Diocesan level.

Respectfully Submitted by,
Jessica (Thielke) Krzewina
Diocesan Administrator

Regional Coordinator for Episcopal Ministry in Northwestern North Dakota - The Rev. Kim Fox

Dear Beloved in Christ:

In my second and last year as Northwest Regional Coordinator, I have once again served as support for five Northwest congregations: St. Peter's, Williston; St. Michael and All Angels, Cartwright; All Saints, Minot; St. Sylvan's, Dunseith; and St. Paul's, White Shield. With a second Roanridge grant, my focus has been on resourcing small and largely rural congregations. Looking back over the last year, I note some "roses" (successes), as well as some "thorns" (challenges), and some "buds" (promise of new growth):

Roses:

- sacramental support (twice monthly Eucharist), including six baptisms in Williston at Easter and confirmation, reception, and reaffirmation at Cartwright during Bishop Tom's visitation
- continued work on United Thank Offering grant for environmental reparations for St. Paul's, White Shield, due to flooding of ancestral lands by Garrison dam: threefold project of prayer path, traditional garden, and elder-led classes
- continued work to secure renovation and re-opening of St. Paul's, White Shield
- LGBTQ service with All Saints, Minot and Minot State University's Lutheran Campus Ministry
- All Saints attendance at Pride Events in Minot

- work with Partnership for Renewal at Minot and Williston to identify how spiritual gifts can be directed to community needs
- youth participation at EYE

Thorns:

- difficult decision to confront financial realities and vote to sell St. Peter's, Williston building
- lack of engagement from some of the NW congregations
- underlying racial tensions
- reconciling creation care with oil dependency/profit

Buds:

- sale of Williston building will open up new ministry opportunities
- need for racial reconciliation can prompt curiosity and willingness to hear others' stories
- reflection on creation care as part of stewardship of Creator's gifts
- youth involvement
- newly-revisioned NW Ministry as proposed by NSMTF

It has been my privilege to serve as Northwest Regional Coordinator.

In Christ's peace, power, and love,

Kim Fox (240.472.1102 / nwcoordinator@ndepiscopal.org)

Standing Committee – The Very Rev, Mark Strobel

In anticipation of the passage of resolutions from the New Season on Ministry Task Force, the Standing Committee will begin the work of arranging to interview possible candidates to serve as the next Bishop Provisional.

The committee has met with Bishop Todd Ousley from the Office of Pastoral Development in the Presiding Bishop's Office to talk through, and make plans for, this work. The final step in the process will be to call a special convention of the diocese for the purpose of electing a new Bishop Provisional. The Standing Committee anticipates that special convention to be via Zoom.

The Standing Committee is made up of six members: three lay and three clergy. Members are elected to three-year terms. Each year an election is held for one lay member and one clergy member.

John Baird was elected as a lay member at last year's convention. Fr Hal Weidman was elected to a clergy position last fall but moved to Georgia early in 2023. The committee appointed Deacon Elsie Magnus to fill Fr Hal's term until the elections at this year's Diocesan Convention.

One clergy member of the committee is completing her second term and is not eligible for re-election: Deacon Terry Overbo. One lay member is completing his first term and is standing

for election to a second: Jason Thoms. I am very thankful for both Terry and Jason and for their wisdom and insight in our work.

The Very Rev Mark Strobel
President, Standing Committee

Current members of the Standing Committee, and expiration dates for terms are:

- Jason Thoms, 2023
- Deacon Terry Overbo, 2023
- Robert Fox, 2024
- Fr Mark Strobel, 2024
- John Baird, 2025
- Deacon Elsie Magnus, temporarily appointed for a term that expires in 2025

Congregational Development Committee – Donna Pettit

This has been a year of success and challenges for the Committee. St. George's, Bismarck and St. Peter's, Williston finished their sessions with Partnership for Renewal. St. Thomas, Fort Totten began the process last year but had several issues (death and loss of clergy leadership) that postponed moving ahead to the next steps this year. All Saint's, Minot and St. John's, Dickinson did the first sessions. But changes at Partnership for Renewal meant that they would no longer provide their program as a team. This has caused the Committee to discuss and try to discern how best to move forward and serve the congregations in our Diocese. We appreciated what the team brought to the discussions about self-reflection and renewal in our congregations and now are considering how to move forward either with one or both of the facilitators singly or whether another approach is called for. Our goal has always been to provide the best possible experience for each of our congregations and we have found one approach is not perfect for every congregation. So, we have moved more slowly than we had hoped this year. But we continue to work at providing good options because we believe this is an important step to help our congregations thrive. We have done a great deal of self-reflection as a diocese and have made decisions and plans that have clarified what we want to be as a diocese and what steps we need to realistically succeed at those efforts. We are making changes that will help assure our success. Congregational renewal and development is much the same; it is easy to continue what we have always done long after it has stopped being successful but it takes intentional discussion and reflection to decide what we would like to be and understand what abilities that takes and be able to discern if we actually have those abilities within our congregation. The Committee is hoping to match the right leadership and style of presenting this message to each congregation.

The Rev Kim Fox has resigned from the committee and we thank her for her efforts as a committee member.

The Committee consists of John Baird, Tammy Enockson, Leo Wilking, Donna Pettit and the Rev. Steve Godfrey. We would welcome interested members to this group.

Personnel Committee – Sandy Holbrook

The revised diocesan personnel policies (approved by the Diocesan Council in September 2022) are now available on the diocesan web page (go to the Administration tab and then to Forms and Resources). The Personnel Committee appointed at the Diocesan Convention in October 2022 includes: Bishop Ely, the Rev. Steve Godfrey, Diocesan Minister; the Rev. Robert Hoekstra, Grace Church; Sandy Holbrook (Chair, St. Stephen's); David Luduku, St. John the Divine; Leslie Ross, St. John's; Jessica (Thielke) Krzewina, Diocesan Administrator, and Chancellor Leo Wilking, ex officio, St. Stephen's. The committee's responsibilities include an annual review and amendment, as needed, of diocesan personnel policies in order to comply with church canons and state and federal laws as well as the review of position descriptions and letters of agreement for all the dMST for consistency with policies. Neither of these responsibilities required a meeting of the group in the past year. It is, however, time for the committee to do the annual review of these policies.

Safe Church – Sandy Holbrook & the Rev. Canon Zanne Ness

During this past year we have been heavily involved in getting our renewed safe church efforts in place. We have newly revised policies and a spot on the diocesan web page designated for information and instructions about implementing the revised policies (<https://www.ndepiscopal.org/ministries/safe-church/>). As diocesan coordinators, we have completed a variety of training offered for diocesan coordinators through The Episcopal Church's Safe Church Office and also completed all the modules in the online training that those in our diocese will be expected to complete.

In late July clergy and congregational leaders received a letter from Bishop Tom with copies of the revised policies. Vestries have been asked to read and adopt these policies (with a record of that action in their minutes) and then follow up with the actions required by the policies. There have been several articles in issues of *The Prairie* and the latest issue of *The Sheaf* about next steps congregations need to take in order to update their safe church commitment. We are available to answer questions about background checks and the online training or other aspects of the policies as they arise.

Diocesan Safe Coordinators,
The Rev. Canon Zanne Ness, Sandy Holbrook, and Jessica (Thielke) Krzewina

St. Gabriel's Camp and Conference Center – The Rev. Sloane Floberg

St. Gabriel's camp completed its 27th season of camping this year. In the spring, the camp once again hosted a group from Dayton University in Ohio who worked at the Camp as well as assisting in other projects around Standing Rock. St. Gabriel's hosted three camps this summer and saw an average of 35 students in attendance at each camp session. Campers enjoyed different themes this year including the opportunity to go to a Bismarck theater to watch a movie and have a meal at Pizza Ranch together in the Bismarck/Mandan area, a multi-cultural camp with inner city students from Eastminster Presbyterian church in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and hearing from a special guest speaker, Jordan Shell Track, Jordan shared his faith journey that started with faithful parents and grandparents, attending Young Life youth group as a student, then student leader, becoming a Pathways camp staff at St. Gabriel's for two summers and is now an elementary teacher in Selfridge, ND.



Volunteers gather to plan a week of camp

St. Gabriel's Camp is not just a place for students to get away from it all at home free of charge due to our diocesan funding and generous donors, rather, a place where students and adults alike can embrace nature, time away from cell phones and a haven to listen to God's still small voice. It is also a place for groups who want to learn more about indigenous culture or want to be involved in outreach or service to others. St. Gabriel's is open to hosting groups from this diocese, whether it be for hunting, building projects, youth group outings or even a scrapbooking group.



Water game on basketball court



Jordan Shelltrack talking with students

If your students would like to attend one of our three camps, they have always been welcome to attend. If your church would like to help volunteer with one or all three camps during the summer, whether it's to be a cabin leader and lead cabin time, build a bonfire for smores and playing guitar, to cooking, driving vans or a boat for tubing, you are welcome to come check it out!



Tubing on Froelich Dam

St. Gabriel's has four seasonal cabins that sleep roughly 6-8 people, a seasonal "mess hall", Chapel, Canteen, and bath house with three showers and two commodes. There is a swimming pool, basketball court and four-square volleyball court. Many campers also take the hike to the butte that overlooks the 40 acres of land that was entrusted to the church by Chief Red Hail. There are two year-round buildings available as well. We have Fairfield cabin that sleeps 10 and has heat and central air, and Star Lodge, that has a geothermal system always set at 70 degrees, has a large meeting space, stage, kitchen, two bathrooms and an apartment in the back that sleeps five to six. We are so very thankful for all of your generous financial gifts and sweat equity that make camp a reality each and every year. If you would like to find out more, simply call Father John Floberg at (701) 891-2911 or email him at jffloberg@gmail.com.



Creation Care Committee – Solveigh Barney



For the last two years, the Creation Care Committee has been an active organization within our diocese, pursuing work in areas of climate advocacy and environmental justice. When the committee met in late July, we took the time to think about all that the diocese has accomplished surrounding Creation Care since the establishment of our team.

Circling back to the 2022 convention, the Creation Care Committee hosted a presentation and table to share with the diocese what creation care is and why we should take action in addressing this ministry. This led to increased dialogue about creation care within our diocese and recruited a few new members to our team. We also shared some physical resources to continue this ongoing education and hope to launch a web page in the next month to host these resources, providing ongoing access. Some of the more significant resources include our annual Earth Day video, this year with the bishop, and our quarterly *Sheaf* articles offering insight on how to be more sustainable in our daily and church lives.

For ongoing projects, we continue to support and celebrate the environmental reparations work through the UTO grant at White Shield. We also plan to continue to expand our network of partnerships, including with Minnesota Interfaith Power and Light, Interfaith Alliance of North Dakota, and the Citizens Local Energy Action Network. Another project we are looking at investing our time in this coming year is making a directory of those participating in Creation Care around our diocese to celebrate their commitment to the cause.

Another cause for celebration is that St. Stephen's in Fargo started their very own Green Team. We hope their work will inspire others, and we will be using them as a model at the convention during our presentations to exemplify how other congregations can either start a green team or get more involved with creation care at a local level.

As we approach another convention and the church year comes to a close, I am looking forward to another year of our committee furthering our climate action. Our team is made up of exceptional people, and I would like to thank every single one of them for their commitment to this ministry: Amy Phillips, Gin Templeton, Jo Ann Keehn, Kim Fox, Mary Johnson, and Robert Fox. Additionally, I am excited about the proposed new diocesan position of the Missioner for Reconciliation, Creation Care, and Congregational Ministry Development. I am optimistic about this position; I look forward to working with them and contributing to the needed expansion of these ministries within our state.

As always feel free to contact me with any comments, questions, or concerns.

Solveigh Barney (chair)
solveigh.barney@gmail.com

Episcopal Relief and Development – Andrea Stomberg

As Diocesan coordinator, I sent invitations to all parishes containing a link to materials available from Episcopal Relief and Development, and indicated that I would coordinate an order. I received one response and provided the requested materials. St. George's is hosting a series of "Coffee Houses" after service to highlight various outreach efforts of Episcopal Relief and Development and to collect a free-will offering. Informational pamphlets and envelopes are available at the church. I feel it is incumbent on each church to decide their level of outreach, and hope that there is some recognition and support of this fine and effective organization.

Province VI – The Rev. Steve Godfrey

The Province VI Council finalized grant guidelines, awarded grants, continued hosting online conversations for people involved with small churches, and planned meetings, including an in-person retreat for Council members in January 2024, an online Synod in April 2024, and an all-province in-person gathering, probably in 2025. A lay representative to Council from North Dakota is now needed based on the new structure.

Pandemic Relief Grants Report – Donna Pettit and The Rev. Steve Godfrey

At its August 2021 meeting, Diocesan Council decided to divide the \$40,000 Covid Relief fund from the Episcopal Church Executive Council between our 19 congregations (\$2000 per congregation), to "provide relief from Covid-19 related financial hardship or to support the most vulnerable, the marginalized, and the under-served and under resourced, within or beyond each diocese," as outlined in the Executive Council memo.

Covid and the need to stop being together for worship and meetings posed problems for much of North Dakota. Many of our congregations did not have the online and technical ability to provide worship or meetings during the shut down for Covid. Using all or part of their share of money helped several of our congregations become technically able to keep worshipping and meeting together during this time. This alone was a great gift to our Diocese.

Sixteen of our nineteen congregations asked for funding and provided their plans for using the money. From East to West, they are:

Church	City	Pandemic Relief Grant Funding Uses
St. John the Divine	Moorhead	Our Sudanese congregation bought the equipment needed to stream services online.
St. Stephen's	Fargo	Since we have decided to keep live streaming so that we can continue to offer services online, we will improve our system to be more permanent.
Gethsemane	Fargo	\$215 donation to DMF 463 Foundation in honor of parishioner Liam Medd, who died by suicide. The remaining amount of the grant will go to organizing a presentation with the local Suicide Prevention Group on dealing with various aspects of suicide. This program will be intended for clergy education.
St. Paul's	Grand Forks	\$750 for winter gear for Wilder elementary School; \$645 to Northlands Mission for gloves, hats, scarves, underwear and hygiene items; \$625 to Northlands Mission for Backpack program which provides food over weekends
Church of the Advent	Devils Lake	We will obtain equipment to facilitate live streaming of services from the Church to those unable to attend services in person during periods of elevated risk from the pandemic. We will also obtain a monitor so those who minister to the Church, especially ordained ministers outside the community, can stream to us for those able to attend.
St. Thomas	Fort Totten	Planned and held several meals for the community which gave an opportunity for honoring those who had Covid and survived and for a chance to remember those who did not survive and left loved ones to mourn. The meals will continue to be held.
Grace Church	Jamestown	Upgraded video equipment for remote ministries. The remaining will go to "Come to the Table" a community feeding program Grace belongs to and which will continue even after the pandemic.
St. George's	Bismarck	\$1000 to Community Action Weekend Backpack Program which provides food for families over weekends. \$1000 to Hope Manor which supports those with addictions.
St. Luke's	Fort Yates	Establish a robust vegetable garden on the property. The food, when harvested, was available to members. Meals were provided for summer camp groups.

St. James	Cannonball	Establish a robust vegetable garden on the property. The food, when harvested, was available to members and used for meals at camp. Youth work takes place at Cannonball and gravel was added to the driveway to avoid a muddy slurry when it rains and to keep the interior of the church cleaner.
Church of the Cross	Selfridge	\$1000 to Standing Rock Youth Ministry to offset the expenses of doing a weekly supper serving 65 teens and adults. \$500 to the Standing Rock Youth Ministry vehicle repair/replacement fund. \$500 for Church of the Cross to host picnics and meals in the area.
St. Paul's	White Shield	Have white satin star quilts embroidered with the names of those lost in the pandemic, then displayed in the church when it is opened.
St. Sylvan's	Dunseith	Plan to reopen youth ministry by fixing van and working with Peace Lutheran church for joint youth program.
St. Peter's	Williston	Donate to community food banks to help alleviate food insecurity due to economic fallout of pandemic.
St. Michael and All Angels	Cartwright	\$2000 to Out of Darkness Walk and the American Association for Suicide Prevention. St. Michael's member, 15-year-old Anders Lassey died by suicide in 2020 and the congregation has spoken up in support of suicide awareness and prevention. They unanimously decided to donate all their Covid relief fund to this important cause, especially given the increase in mental health issues in response to the stress of the pandemic.
St. John's	Dickinson	The local Food Pantry, the AMEN Food Pantry has limited storage for meat. We are providing hams, turkeys, etc., for special family meals. We also have an offer for use of short-term freezer space. We are working with Ministerial Association to identify where the need is greatest.
Diocesan Council		The Diocesan Council voted to donate \$5000 to the Great Plains Food Bank

Thanks for all who helped decide how to use the grants and then another thanks to those who helped make the decisions become fact.