

The Episcopal Diocese of North Dakota

DIOCESAN PROFILE 2025



**Election of the 12th Bishop of the
Episcopal Diocese of North Dakota**

Our Profile

Prayer for the Search and Election of the Twelfth Bishop Diocesan of North Dakota

O God, creator of the world and sustainer of our lives. We thank you for bringing together the members of the Diocese of North Dakota, a diverse and faithful people. Help us to listen to your Spirit as we discern our choice for a bishop that will live with us, work beside us, and know and understand us as we grow together to serve your people. AMEN

Welcome Letter

Grace and peace to you in the name of Jesus!

On behalf of the Nominating Committee for Diocesan Bishop, we are grateful for your interest in The Episcopal Diocese of North Dakota and in our call for our next Bishop Diocesan, to be elected at our next convention in October.

The profile before you has been prayerfully prepared by a dedicated Committee that represents the diversity within our Diocese: European and Native clergy and laity, as well as representation from our LGBTQ community, our Sudanese church, and congregations large and small, liberal and conservative, from across the State.

We have spent the last few years with one part-time Assisting Bishop and two part-time Bishop Provisionals, who have coached us through a time of transition. Now we are ready to commit to calling a full-time bishop and are fortunate to have the financial means to support our next ecclesiastical leader.

As you review our profile, we ask you to keep in mind our diocesan motto: “deus incrementum dat” (God gives the growth - 1 Corinthians 3.6). We are eager to grow as a Diocese with the right episcopal leadership and with God's help!

Should you wish to make an application, please find the instructions on the last page of the profile. We are already praying for you and cannot wait to meet you!

Yours in Christ,
The Nominating Committee

Contact Information

3600 25th St S, Fargo, ND
58104

(701) 235-6688

nominatingcommittee@ndepiscopal.org

<https://www.ndepiscopal.org>

The Nominating Committee

Solveigh Barney

Sean Burt, Chair

The Rev. Kim Fox

Carmine Goodhouse

Alison Hiatt

The Rev. Harvey Henderson, Chaplain

David Lukudu

The Rev. Jamie Parsley

Dan Rice

Leslie Ross, Secretary

Chad Schmidt

Betty Swain

Canon Brian Nordwick, Consultant



Our History

Overview

The story of the Episcopal Church in North Dakota is reflected in the history of the state, the confluence of our cultures, including Native American, European, and Sudanese from East Africa. The history of North Dakota is influenced by its geography, location, and climate, which includes remoteness, dependence, economic disadvantage, oil boom and bust, and agrarianism.

In 1883 Dakota Territory was divided into North and South. Bishop William Walker was appointed the first Missionary Bishop of North Dakota who fitted out a railroad car to be a traveling chapel for use in services across the state. Scots and English came to the area drawn by agriculture and ranching. The growth of North Dakota was anticipated to be over 6 million. Railroad lines were laid out and small towns were founded with many Episcopal churches ready to accept members. The immigrants who arrived here were largely German and Scandinavian with Lutheran and Roman Catholic roots. The land, climate, and farming methods, however, did not support the expected growth. The population of North Dakota reached 650,000 around 1920 and did not increase again until 2010 when the oil boom increased the population to 750,000. In 1915 there were over 124 Episcopal churches, missions and preaching stations. But by 1989 the number decreased to 26. Today the number is currently 18 congregations.



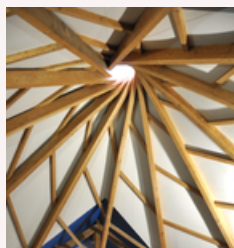
Bishops of the Episcopal Diocese of North Dakota
**not pictured, Bp. Keith Whitmore*

Indigenous History

Another part of our history in North Dakota is the ministry among the tribes that are located within our diocese. They are the Dakota, Lakota, Nakota, Turtle Mountain Chippewa, Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara people. In 1862, at the end of the Minnesota Uprising, the Santee people broke free from the Minnesota Valley reservation. At the time there were Christians among the Santee. They saved the lives of missionaries and settlers. All the surviving Santee were imprisoned and sent to Dakota Territory. An Episcopal Deacon, Samuel Hinman, served the Santee and went with them. He also translated the Prayer Book into the Dakota language.

In 1871, the Missionary Diocese of Niobrara was created with William Hobart Hare consecrated as the first bishop, two years later. In 1874, Bishop Hare designed the Niobrara Cross which was given to each new Indian Christian. The cross has become a prominent symbol among the Lakota. On the cross are four tipis that represent the four gospels. The engraving (in Latin) translates to “That They May Have Life.” In 1975, at the Episcopal South Dakota Diocesan Convention, a resolution was passed to share the cross with all churches in the diocese, not just the Indigenous congregations. This cross is still given today to people at the time of their confirmation.

During this time Bishop Hare established several Episcopal boarding schools within Dakota Territory. They are: All Saints School, Sioux Falls; St Mary’s School for Episcopal Indian Girls, Springfield; Bishop Hare Home for Boys, Mission, and St. Elizabeth’s Mission, Wakpala located on the South Dakota side of the Standing Rock Reservation. Also, the Wahpeton Indian School was established in 1908. Many students at these schools came from within North and South Dakota and were related to one another as some were from the same reservations. The legacy of these boarding schools remains complicated and painful for many.



In April 2022, at an Executive Council meeting, Resolution MW062 was passed. This resolution created the Executive Council Committee on Native American Boarding Schools and Advocacy. Later at the 80th General Convention in Baltimore, Maryland, A127-Resolution for Telling the Truth about The Episcopal Church's History with Indigenous Boarding Schools was passed. There are currently four individuals from our diocese who serve on these two committees conducting important work to collect stories and calling forth our diocesan commitment to truth-telling and accountability. Ashley Hubbard (Cherokee) and Carmine Goodhouse (Hunkpapa) are appointed to MW062. The Reverend Deacon Angela Goodhouse (Seminole/Creek/Hunkpapa) and Reverend Joe Hubbard serve on A127.

For additional information, please see the website below:

[The First Scout: Ocheti Shakowin History & Culture: Ocheti Shakowin Territory Map](#)

Youth History

Ministry among the youth has been important to the diocese, including statewide youth gatherings in the 1960s and 70s, national events, and annual summer camps. Holiday House was the diocesan owned camp on Lake Pelican in Minnesota. It was eventually sold and is now part of our investments. Summer camps were held at Lake Metigoshe, and now the diocese owns Camp Gabriel on Standing Rock.



Sudanese History

In the 1990s, refugees from what is now South Sudan arrived in North Dakota from war-torn lands and refugee camps feeling unsafe for their personal welfare.



The Sudanese began worshipping at Gethsemane Cathedral but could not continue to worship together with the host members due to cultural differences and language barriers. Later, a decision was reached that under the ecclesiastical guidance of the Diocese of North Dakota and the Diocese of Minnesota, the Sudanese now worship at St. John the Divine in Moorhead, Minnesota. The now-retired priest Reverend Alex Kenyi and the vestry added Arabic and Dinka worship services.

LGBTQ+ History

The late 20th and early 21st centuries brought further social changes, especially regarding the LGBTQ+ community. In 2015, when the General Convention approved same-sex marriage rites throughout the Church, Bishop Michael Smith did not authorize the use of these rites in our Diocese. In response to this situation, St. Stephen's Fargo and St. John's Dickinson sought and was granted Delegated Episcopal Pastoral Oversight (DEPO), and Bishop Carol Gallagher was chosen to provide pastoral care for St. Stephen's until 2019. Under DEPO, St. Stephen's became the first congregation in the diocese allowed to officially perform same-sex marriage rights. In 2019, The Rt. Rev. Keith Whitmore was appointed as Assisting Bishop. Several church communities have and continue to engage in the LGBTQ+ community outreach, including an annual LGBTQ+ prayer service at Minot State University and local Pride events across the state.



Fun Fact!

The [International Peace Garden](#) is a beautiful symbol of peace and friendship straddling the U.S. and Canadian border of North Dakota and Manitoba.

Recent History

Following the retirement of our most recent full-time Bishop, the Diocese of North Dakota began a multi-year process to discern where God was taking our diocese in the future. In 2019 The Diocesan Discernment Task Force was formed to gain an understanding of where we were and what our needs and opportunities could be. The report created from that task force called for us to strengthen local ministry development and set up some transitional structures, such as a three-year Diocesan Minister and a grant-supported Northwest Ministry Coordinator. We also called a Bishop Provisional, The Right Rev. Tom Ely, for a three-year term. A second stage in the discernment process, a New Season of Ministry Task Force, was commissioned by Bishop Ely in 2022 to explore all the possibilities that the future could hold for our congregations. Through that process, we learned that, even through our many differences, we were called to remain as a single diocese. [The report of the New Season of Ministry Task Force can be found here.](#) In the fall of 2024, the annual Diocesan Convention voted to more fully and intentionally use our financial resources to support Indigenous congregations, reconciliation, creation care, and youth ministries, and to call a full-time bishop. In 2024 The Rt. Rev. Brian Thom was appointed Bishop Provisional.



Fun Fact!

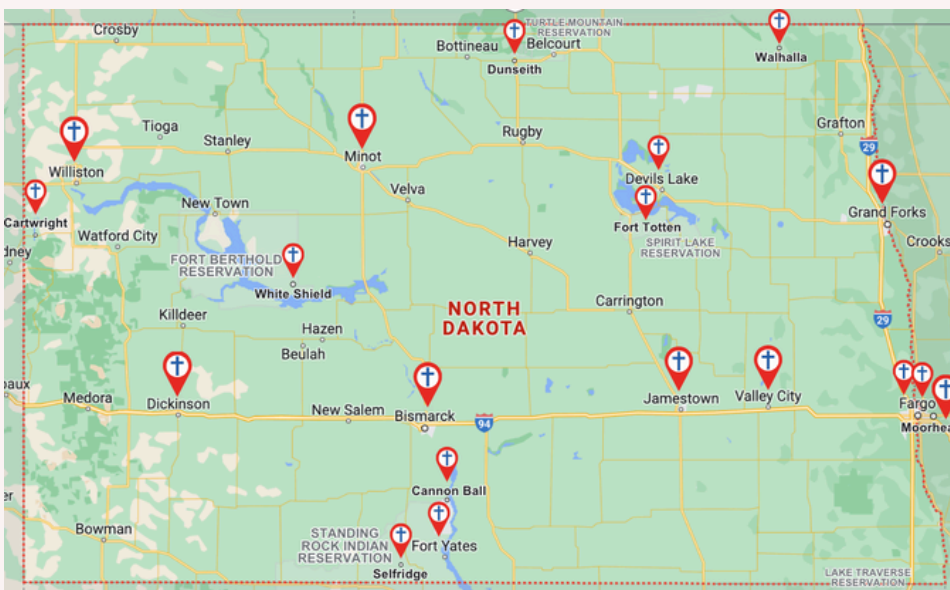
[The First Mosque in the Country Was Built In North Dakota.](#)





Our Diocese Today

The Episcopal Diocese of North Dakota is a small diocese covering a large geographic area including the whole State of North Dakota and Clay County, Minnesota. The Diocesan Office is located in Fargo. There are currently 18 congregations (see map); some are small and fragile; six are located among Indigenous communities and one is predominantly Sudanese. Our Diocese was awarded a United Thank Offering grant in creation care/environmental reparations for one of our Indigenous congregations, St. Paul's, White Shield. The most current Parochial Report statistics (2023) for our congregations show a baptized membership of 2,061, communicants in good standing of 1,289, and an average Sunday attendance of 461.



Fun Fact!

North Dakota holds the Guinness World Record for the most snow angels made simultaneously in one place. On February 17, 2007, 8,962 people made snow angels at the state capitol grounds beating the previous record of 3,784.

Congregation Statistics

	Adult Communicants in Good Standing	Adult Communicants in Good Standing	Average Sunday Attendance	Average Sunday Attendance
Congregation	2023	2022	2023	2022
Advent, Devils Lake	22	15	16	15
All Saints, Minot	16	16	8	9
All Saints, Valley City Closed in October 2024	2	3	4	4
Church of the Cross, Selfridge*	5	13	4	0
Gethsemane, Fargo	241	219	113	109
Grace, Jamestown	76	51	27	24
Saint George's, Bismarck	120	198	42	37
Saint James, Cannon Ball*	41	37	11	36
Saint John's, Dickinson	9	11	4	4
Saint John's, Moorhead^	218	219	40	38
Saint Luke's, Fort Yates*	75	75	13	13
Saint Michael & All Angels, Cartwright	18	18	11	12
Saint Paul's, Grand Forks	81	83	46	46
Saint Paul's, White Shield*	20	20	48 (Easter only) 21 (Christmas only)	38 (Easter only)
Saint Peter's, Walhalla	21	14	9	12
Saint Peter's, Williston	9	11	6	3
Saint Stephen's, Fargo	217	220	60	44
Saint Sylvan's, Dunseith*	86	No report	5	No report
Saint Thomas, Fort Totten*	12	10	7	8
Totals	1,289	1,233	461	452

Leadership

Five congregations are served by settled, compensated priests for $\frac{3}{4}$ time or more. Currently, three Indigenous congregations and Camp Gabriel on Standing Rock share one full-time priest, and two non-stipendiary deacons; two of the three other Indigenous congregations are served by a full-time priest. Currently, the two Diocesan Missioners, other seminary trained clergy (some ELCA), locally trained clergy and five non-stipendiary deacons provide sacramental and some pastoral support to eight of our congregations. Among our clergy are two Indigenous priests, a deacon, a Diocesan Missioner, and one retired Indigenous elder priest, as well as two Sudanese deacons, one of whom is preparing for ordination to the priesthood in 2025. (For the list of the clergy see www.ndepiscopal.org/clergy/) The laity are especially key to the effective ministry and leadership in all congregations. Notably, several congregations without settled priests are blessed to have such capable and committed groups of lay leaders. Also distinguished are the deacons, wardens and other local leaders in congregations, all of whom play a vital, prominent, and powerful role in their congregations and beyond. Many of these leaders hold leadership roles in the diocese in addition to their local roles.

Diocesan Ministry Support Team

The diocese is currently served by a [diocesan Ministry Support Team \(dMST\)](#), including a half-time Bishop Provisional, now in the second year of a three-year commitment, who travels from Idaho one week each month; a full-time Diocesan Missioner, who is based in Bismarck; a full-time Diocesan Missioner, who is based in Minot; a full-time Diocesan Administrator who is based in St. Cloud, MN and also works in the Diocesan Office in Fargo. In addition to these dMST members, the diocese has recently contracted for bookkeeping services on a part-time basis.

Fun Fact!

The geographical center of North America is marked in Rugby.



Diocesan Council and Active Ministry Groups

The work of the Diocese, between Conventions, is overseen by the Diocesan Council, working closely with the diocesan Ministry Support Team. The Diocesan Council is comprised of the bishop, six elected members of the Standing Committee, six elected members from the East Region, six elected members from the West Region, up to three members appointed by the bishop, the bishop-appointed Chancellor of the Diocese who serves ex-officio with vote, and the elected Diocesan Treasurer who also serves ex-officio with vote. The Diocesan Council meets 4-6 times each year; four are scheduled in-person meetings in various locations around the diocese and the rest via Zoom. The Council is responsible for oversight of the diocesan budget and for setting goals and priorities for the Diocese in cooperation with the diocesan Ministry Support Team.

Several elected and appointed committees, commissions, task forces, foundations, and working groups provide programmatic, financial, and administrative leadership throughout the year, making regular reports to the Diocesan Council. At last count, over 50 lay members hold leadership positions in the Diocese of North Dakota, along with most of our clergy.

Active in Ministry on Behalf of the Diocese:

- Canons Committee
- Commission on Ministry
- Congregational Development Committee
- Creation Care Committee
- Diocesan Council
- Diocesan Convention Planning Team
- Episcopal Relief and Development Coordinator
- Finance Committee
- General Convention Deputation, members serving on various church-wide bodies.
- North Dakota Council on Indian Ministries (NDCIM)
- North Dakota Episcopal Foundation (NDEF)
- Personnel Policy Committee including Safe Church
- Province VI Synod and Leadership Council
- Province VI United Thank Offering Board Representative
- Reconciliation Committee including anti-racism
- Standing Committee
- Title IV Disciplinary Board
- United Thank Offering Coordinators
- WoDakota Appeal Working Group
- Youth/Young Adult Advisory Committee

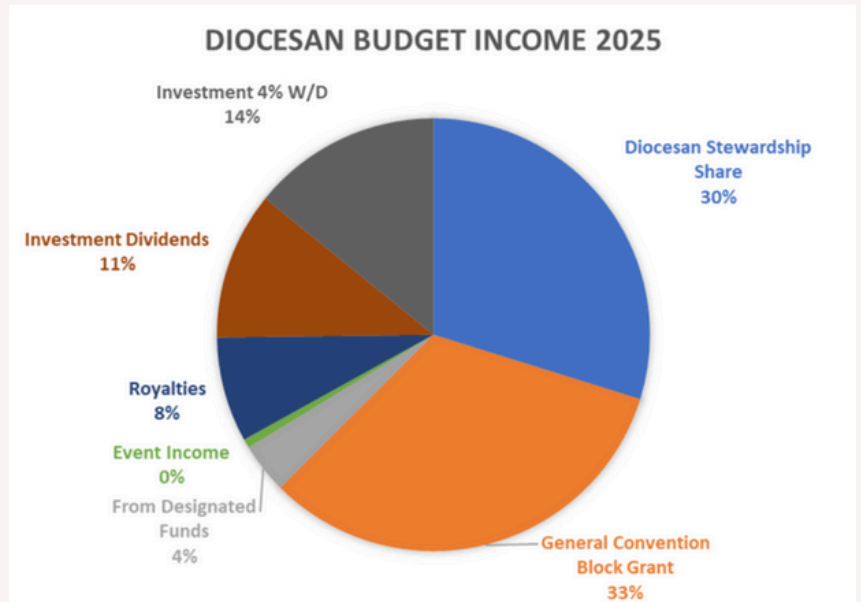
Fun Fact!

North Dakota is home to more wildlife refuges (63) than any other state. Wildlife viewing and birding opportunities are abundant.

Diocesan Finance

The Episcopal Diocese of North Dakota is blessed with various income streams that enable flexibility in our budgeting process. The operating budget is primarily funded by congregational giving and the General Convention block grant. Additional income is realized from interest and dividends from the Trust and Endowment Fund (see below) and royalty income. The current budgeted operating income of 2025 is \$900,764.

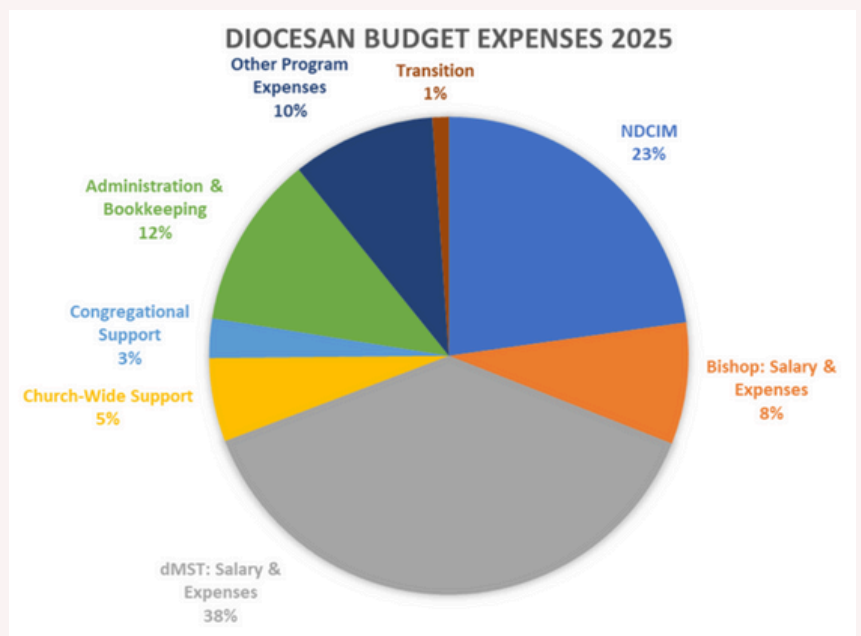
[See 2025 Budget.](#)



Expenses for 2025

The Episcopal Diocese of North Dakota's largest expense is staffing, which consists of compensation for the diocesan bishop and ministry support team. Below is a breakdown of the expenses in the 2025 budget, as well as a link to the 2025 budget approved by the standing committee.

Current Budgeted Operating Expenses for 2025 are \$898,917.



Trust and Endowment Fund Investments

At the end of the 2nd quarter of 2024, investments in the DFMS Trust and Endowment Fund were \$3,804,218.92. We currently budget an estimated 5% annual dividend of the fund value. We also budget a 4% withdrawal of the 3-year rolling fund average. With Diocesan Council approval, an additional draw of up to 1% of the 3-year rolling fund average is possible. It is of interest that the full amount budgeted is not always used.

Additional Resources

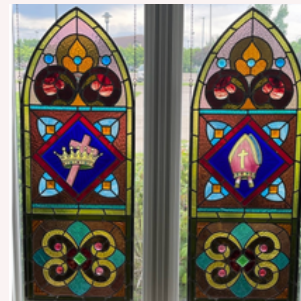
North Dakota Council on Indian Ministries

North Dakota, along with South Dakota, Alaska, and Navajoland (which was unanimously approved as a Missionary Diocese at the 81st General Convention in Louisville in 2024), are the four dioceses receiving block grant funding from the General Convention budget, which is included as income in our diocesan budget. In 2023, this grant for North Dakota was \$242,900, of which \$196,510 (80%) provides stipends, benefits, and travel for clergy serving Indigenous congregations. Other funding from the block grant, along with additional support from the diocesan budget, supports much of the operation and program associated with our Indigenous ministry. NDCIM meets at the discretion of the bishop, in consultation with clergy serving Native congregations. Officers are elected from within NDCIM and everyone from the Indigenous congregations is invited to attend meetings and vote on decisions, including equitable allocation of resources. The next meeting is March 15, 2025 in Dunseith.

North Dakota Episcopal Foundation

NDEF is an independent foundation overseeing investments of more than \$1,600,000, providing grants for various congregational, diocesan, and mission projects from its Heritage Fund and other funds designated for specific purposes. In addition, ND funds are invested along with funds from two Fargo congregations in the Diocesan Pooled Investment Fund (PIF). The bishop serves as a member of the NDEF Board which is a self-perpetuating board





The Leader We Seek

The Bishop Search for the Episcopal Diocese of North Dakota

We seek a bishop with these personal qualities:

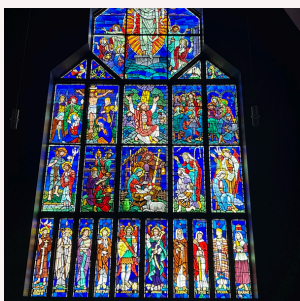
The heart of a servant who follows the Way of Love of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Courage to face the challenges in our diocese, our communities, state, and nation.

A spiritual life of prayer, worship, study, and service that sustains his, her, or their faith.

A resilient constitution that can withstand long days, driving long distances in all kinds of weather, and the daily challenges of serving as a Bishop.

Patience in listening to storytelling for building trust in relationships, encouraging, consoling, and inspiring individuals and groups as we share our dreams and aspirations as well as our sorrows, disappointments, and challenges.



We seek a bishop with the skills and abilities to:

1. Plan with other diocesan leadership to articulate a clear vision for the future.
2. Build community to create unity of purpose and belonging among diverse groups—being able to serve a multicultural population which includes Native peoples, Sudanese, LGBTQ individuals, and African Americans with a goal of reaching out to other communities such as the Hispanic community and the wider African American community.
3. Shepherd the flock and be pastoral and approachable. Serve as an example of the Way of Love in all relationships with special attention to the clergy, who are often isolated and lacking colleagues.
4. Embrace, articulate, and embody the Baptismal Covenant and the doctrine, discipline, and worship of the Episcopal Church.
5. Be a public voice on matters related to climate justice and racial justice, and inspire others to walk more gently on the earth and to work to repair the brokenness between people, institutions, and systems.
6. Unify the diocese, which struggles with overcoming long distances, infrequent gatherings, isolated parishes, and socio-economic and cultural differences.
7. Recognize the history of our state and diocese, as well as the reality of intergenerational and historical trauma, and be an agent of reconciliation between the Indigenous communities and the European Immigrants who occupied their lands.
8. Collaborate with other faith leaders to advance the Way of Love both within the faith community and in the public sector.
9. Organize and manage the work of the diocese including the diocesan office, staff, and oversee the effective operation of the Diocesan Council, the Standing Committee, the various other committees, and the Conventions.
10. Communicate effectively in speaking, preaching, in writing, and in media to carry out the ministry of the church.



Intentional Focus Areas:

1. Take a leadership role in working with churches that are struggling.
2. Equip clergy and other leaders in congregations with strategies geared toward bringing in new members and re-establishing struggling congregations.
3. Create a thoughtful discernment process to reimagine how Episcopal churches in our region can remain vital, vibrant and thriving.
4. Encourage connections between the Diocese and national church Reconciliation and Creation Care initiatives.



Statement of Preferred Future:

In the Episcopal Diocese of North Dakota, we hope, with God's help, to be a Diocese that provides responsive and meaningful support to our congregations, so they can navigate the many hardships they are facing.

We aspire to be a valuable resource for congregations, supporting them in fulfilling their unique missions and becoming vibrant, integral parts of the region and communities they serve.

We will commit ourselves to fostering strong leadership development and establishing a transparent, Diocesan-wide decision-making process guided by representative leaders who are approachable, collaborative, and open to diverse approaches for overcoming challenges.

Our time together in ministry and service will be guided by a clear, unifying purpose to serve our Creator and one another, ensuring that all participants feel encouraged and inspired by the meaningful work of ministry we do together to better serve Christ and our communities.

We strive to make the Diocese a visible, inclusive, diverse and actively engaged presence within the faith community and the broader public, living our faith out loud in a state where the Episcopal Church is in the minority of denominations.

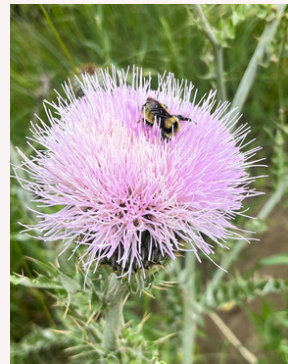
About North Dakota

North Dakota is a state that perhaps sits on a line between the West and the Midwest. The cities on the eastern side along the Red River of the North, particularly Grand Forks and Fargo-Moorhead, are border communities that are the homes to the research universities and share significant economic and cultural connections with Minnesota. Cities in the western part of the state, such as Minot and Dickinson, have geography that is more similar to that of eastern Montana. Bismarck-Mandan, home of the state capital and the second most populous metro area, is roughly in the center of the state.

North Dakota has historically been—and largely remains—an energy- and commodity-based economy, due mostly to petroleum products and large agricultural commodities (though it is also the top honey-producing state in the country). The state has seen economic growth in other areas, recently, too. After long stretches of population stagnation or decline in the late 20th century, the state has seen substantial population increase in the last 15 years. For a state with a small population, North Dakota has a significant number of institutions of higher education: two public research universities, four public four-year universities, two private four-year universities, five tribal colleges, and five public two-year colleges. Five tribal nations have territory within the boundaries of North Dakota: Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate Nation, Spirit Lake Nation, Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, Three Affiliated Tribes-MHA Nation, and Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa.

Additional Resources:

- [The Episcopal Diocese of North Dakota](#)
- [The Constitutions and Canons of the Episcopal Diocese of North Dakota](#)
- [Information about tourism in North Dakota](#)
- [Resources about relocating to North Dakota](#)
- **For the early history of the Episcopal Church in North Dakota, see *God Giveth the Increase: The History of the Episcopal Church North Dakota (1959)*, by Robert P. Wilkins and Wynona H. Wilkins, on the [Digital Horizons database](#).**



Apply by August 11, 2025 before 11:59 am

The Nominating Committee has completed their work and released the names of the four candidates that have made it through their process. If you have discerned a calling to the ministry of Diocesan Bishop in North Dakota and believe you should be a petition candidate we would welcome your application.

A completed application must contain the following items:

- Cover Letter
- Official Application Form with essay questions added.
- Resume/Curriculum Vitae
- Updated OTM Portfolio
- References with contact information, including:
 - Clergy member of the Episcopal Church
 - Lay member of the Episcopal Church
 - A third reference, either lay or clergy, who is not your spouse, relative, direct supervisor, or a person under your direct supervision, or the person (if any) who nominated you
- Names and current contact information for all previous bishops under whom you have served
- Consent and Authorization Form.

Deadline: Application and all supplemental material must be received by August 11, 2025 before 11:59 am. Late applications will not be accepted. Petition applicants will have to pass the background check before being considered an official candidate.

Please submit the entire Application Packet in one email; the name of any file should include your LastnameFirstname as part of the file name. Please email to standingcommittee@ndepiscopal.org.

Because of the short window of application, if you are planning on submitting a petition application please immediately contact the President of the Standing Committee, Jason Thoms, at standingcommittee@ndepiscopal.org or our TEC search consultant, Canon Brian Nordwick, at bnordwick@yahoo.com



“Almighty God, giver of every good gift: Look graciously on your Church, and so guide the minds of those who shall choose a bishop for this Diocese that we may receive a faithful pastor, who will care for your people and equip us for our ministries; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.”

BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER