

Episcopal Diocese of North Dakota
55th Annual Convention – October 24-25, 2025
Anchored in Christ's Love: One Body, One Mission



Leadership and Ministry Reports

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Bishop Provisional - The Right Reverend Brian Thom

The Canons of our Church and the liturgy for the Consecration of a Bishop make clear that a primary role of the office is to provide oversight to all matters liturgical and organizational. Yet, gratefully, my experience within the Diocese of North Dakota continues to be one of collegiality and shared responsibility. Among our congregations and within the leadership bodies of the Diocese, we have many skilled and experienced eyes watching over the fiduciary and administrative needs of our shared ministries. The commitment of wardens, clergy, diocesan staff, and members of our leadership bodies and program committees are forthrightly responsive to needs that must be met and to opportunities that arise. It has been my joy and honor to work beside such folk.

To be sure, some aspects of episcopal ministry are reserved for bishops. Two poignant examples of these responsibilities occurred in the last year:

- I was happily honored to preside over two ordinations for The Rev. Peter Akicmeir; first to the Diaconate on November 24, 2024, and then to the Priesthood on June 22, 2025. *(Additionally, just a few weeks ago, I signed a Letter of Agreement appointing Fr. Akicmeir as the part-time Priest-in-Charge for St. John the Divine parish in Moorhead. This position is a joint initiative of the congregation and the Diocese).*
- Another honor, though this one most bittersweet, was to preside over the deconsecration of All Saints Church in Valley City on May 17, 2025. The congregation had chosen the year before to close its doors, and the 2024 Convention affirmed their wisdom. By last spring, a historically-minded buyer had been found who intends to maintain the beautiful exterior of the one hundred forty-four-year-old building while converting it into a private residence. The church was lovingly and reverently prepared for this transition, with much repurposing of the practical and liturgical furnishings.

Other activities:

- Visitations to thirteen congregations since our last convention
- Presiding over five in-person Diocesan Council meetings (down from ten!)
- Watched with admiration and prayer the work of the Standing Committee and Bishop Search Committee
- Met with the bishop nominees in July
- Confirmed 7, Received 7, and received the Reaffirmations of 7 Episcopalians

So, not so much oversight... just much joy and deep gratitude for being able to share in the ministry of the Episcopalians of North Dakota.

Diocesan Missioner - Ashley Hubbard



Greetings, North Dakota Episcopalians! It has been my great honor and pleasure to serve alongside you since December 15, 2024. These past ten months have been very busy, and I am excited to share some highlights with you.

Travel, Travel, Travel...

Over 11,334 miles and counting! It has been a wonderful experience to travel the Diocese - to see our beautiful scenery and parishioners, and witness the work that God is doing in our midst.

I have been blessed to worship regularly with

- St. Michael's and All Angels – Cartwright
- St. Peter's – Williston
- St. John's – Dickinson
- St. Thomas – Ft. Totten
- Advent – Devils Lake, and
- St. Peter's – Walhalla.

In these past ten months, I have also attended services at

- St. Sylvan's – Dunseith
- St. Stephen's – Fargo
- St. Paul's – Grand Forks, and
- St. John the Divine – Moorhead.

It has been a joy to attend meetings at

- Grace – Jamestown
- St. George's – Bismarck
- All Saints – Minot, and
- Gethsemane - Fargo.

Experiencing the hospitality of St. Luke's – Fort Yates for Bp. Brian's visitation was all gifts. I look forward to visiting more regularly with All Saints – Minot in the coming months. When I am not traveling the Diocese, you can find me worshipping at St. George's – Bismarck.



All Saints LGBTQ+ Celebration Prayer Service at Minot State University



Sunday Service at St. Thomas – Ft. Totten

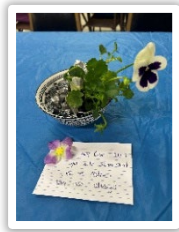


Children's Sermon at St. Peter's – Walhalla (photo credit Ross)

Conferences

Representing our diverse diocese well; cultivating relationships across the diocese, province, and Nation Church; and focusing on formation for the ministry of all the Baptized are priorities. Some of the conferences I have attended include:

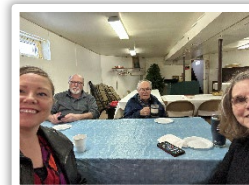
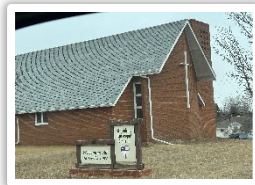
- Winter Talk
- FORMA Annual Conference
- National Climate + Faith Forum
- Episcopal Grasslands Network Gathering
- Bakken Human Trafficking Summit
- Tending the Vine – Church Growth Conference



Mother's Day at Advent – Devils Lake (Left) and Meeting OT Bible Scholar Ellen Davis (Right)

Events in the Diocese

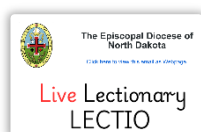
Hosting the Diocese of Texas (our companion Diocese) for four days in May was a wonderful opportunity exploring our future commitments together, continuing to build relationships, and learning from local parishes. I attended two somber events - the deconsecration of All Saints – Valley City and The Rev. Kim Fox's last service in the Diocese of North Dakota. Attending Peter Akicmeir's Ordination at St. John the Divine – Moorhead was a joyous occasion. The service was spirit-filled and great hospitality was shown to all in attendance.



Photos from left to right: Bp. Brian and Ardis Shaw reviewing historic service and parish registers at St. Thomas – Ft. Totten; St. John's – Dickinson building; St. Peter's – Walhalla Coffee Hour (Ashley, Ross, Bruce, Deacon Elsie);

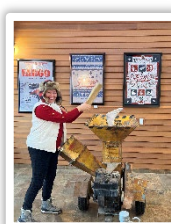
Congregational Leaders' Book Study

Calling all congregational leaders! The Diocesan missionary will host a book study on Tod Bolsinger's *Canoeing the Mountains* on the 3rd Thursday of the month at 12:30pm and 6:30pm Central Time (November 20th – May 16th). May 16th is a celebration dinner at Mary Johnson's+ after a trip to the L&C Interpretive Center in Washburn. Contact Ashley if you need a copy of the book (limited supply).



Lectionary Lectio

Hosting our Diocesan-wide weekly Lectionary Lectio since June has been a highlight for me in my role as Diocesan Missioner. This unique 45-minute Bible study experience is open to all. Come explore the Gospel reading for the upcoming Sunday through three different translations and respond to three different engaging questions. We also participate in breathwork and open ourselves to God's creativity within us. If you have not made plans to join us on Tuesdays at noon Central Time, I encourage you to do so.



Photos from left to right: Historic Plaques at Advent – Devils Lake; Ashley with Family in Cartwright; Ashley's trip to Fargo; Rev. Alyssa Stebbing and Connie Rainbow reminiscing about Alyssa's+ previous visits to St. Thomas – Ft. Totten

May God continue to bless our diocese and give the growth.

***Yours in Christ – Ashley D. Hubbard
ashley@ndepiscopal.org
334.324.6394***

Diocesan Administrator - Jessica Krzewina

In April 2025 I celebrated my three-year anniversary with the diocese, which means as I write this report I am currently looking forward to my fourth Diocesan Convention. I truly have no idea where the time goes. As usual, I will have a synopsis of my work throughout the year with the areas I focused on and then goals before our next Diocesan Convention!

Communications

Communication continues to be a huge portion of my job, whether it be through the bi-weekly *Prairies* or quarterly *Sheaf*. This year we sent out twenty-six editions of the *Prairie* and five editions of the *Sheaf*. Our *Prairie* newsletter goes to 335 unique email addresses, meanwhile our *Sheaf* goes to 441 mailing addresses.

Contact Information:

- Diocesan Office – office@ndepiscopal.org
- Finance Office – finance@ndepiscopal.org
- Diocesan Phone – 701.235.6688

Communication also includes maintaining our website and Facebook page. I am always working on these avenues! Also, don't forget that we have a Diocesan Calendar which can be found at www.ndepiscopal.org/calendar.

2026 Goal: Continue to invite more voices to contribute to both the *Prairie* and the *Sheaf*.

Events

For event planning, this year mostly consisted of in-person council meetings. I also helped organize the visit from the Diocese of Texas, as well as the Search and Transition Committees meetings, and the Discernment Retreat for the Bishop Search. NDCIM met as they started their reorganization process in March 2025. Finally, there was also a Clergy Retreat in March 2025. Each of these events required the planning lodging and food, meeting space, and attendance.

2025 Goal: Continue to find new food venues to cater for diocesan events.

Financial Administration

The financial portion of the past year was a bit stressful, as we spent much of the year without a treasurer. We appointed a new treasurer in August 2025, which has helped immensely. Thankfully, our bookkeeper, Sheila Leier, continues to plug along with me as we do the daily financial tasks.

I travel to the Fargo office three times a month to do weekly and monthly deposits and pay the bills. I organized and attended finance committee meetings, worked on the 2023 and 2024 audits, and worked on budget preparation for 2026. I also keep records for the Diocesan Stewardship Share.

A huge piece of financial administration, outside of the weekly accounts payable and receivable, is the yearly audit. Sheila picks up most of her yearly hours with the audit, as we collaborate with the auditors on making sure everything is as it should be. Widmer Roel continues to be our auditing firm. They anticipate having the 2024 audit complete by the November Diocesan Council meeting.

Finally, I also work with our grants, investments, and designated/donor restricted funds. I continue to make sure everything is reporting correctly and turn in Grant Accounting information when needed.

2026 Goal: Clarify the Designation and Donor Restricted Funds; as well as the Trust & Endowment.

Continuing Education

As Diocesan Administrator, I am part of the B+E+S+T Network (Bishop's Executives and Secretaries Together). Each year the B+E+S+T Network hosts a weeklong Continuing Education experience. In May 2025 we gathered in St. Louis, MO. This continues to be one of the greatest continuing education experiences I attend each year. The networking and information provided to us to help make our jobs run smoother is top-notch. I am incredibly grateful to be afforded the opportunity to attend B+E+S+T events and learn from my colleagues.

The rest of what happened this year included many meetings with many different people: Bp. Brian, Ashley Hubbard, committee members and chairs, Convention Planning group, Church Pension Group and Church Insurance, Province VI B+E+S+T members, ACS & Realm, just to name a few. I also had numerous phone calls throughout the year, which liven up the work-from-home office!

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

2026 Goals:

1. Complete the Convention Journals for 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023.
2. Create a policy manual for everything within the Diocese.
3. Finish the diocesan-wide database.

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

Respectfully submitted,
Jessica Krzewina
Diocesan Administrator

Commission on Ministry - The Reverend Harvey Henderson

Commission Members – The Rev. Harvey Henderson, Chair, The Rev. Bart Davis, The Rev. Jamie Parsley, The Rev. Dn. Sloane Floberg, The Rev. Dn. John Anderson, Donna Pettit, Elaine McLaughlin, Joanne Lassiter.

The Commission on Ministry met several times on Zoom over the past year.

Minutes of the ZOOM Meeting of May 13, 2025

Present: Harvey Henderson (Chair), Bart Davis, John Anderson, Donna Pettit, Elaine McLaughlin

It was moved by Donna Pettit and seconded by John Anderson that the **Commission on Ministry of the Episcopal Diocese of North Dakota recommend Peter Akicmeir for ordination to the Priesthood.** The motion carried unanimously.

Minutes of the ZOOM meeting of March 18, 2025

Present: Harvey Henderson (Chair), Bart Davis, John Anderson, Donna Pettit, Sloane Floberg, Jamie Parsley

It was moved by The Rev. Jamie Parsley, seconded by Donna Pettit that the COM approves **Ashley Hubbard's request for Postulancy in the Diocese of North Dakota.** The motion carried unanimously.

Minutes of the ZOOM meeting of September 16, 2025

The COM of the Episcopal Diocese of North Dakota met at 6:00pm on Tuesday September 16 by zoom. Present were Donna Pettit, Jamie Parsley, Sloane Floberg, John Anderson, Bart Davis and Harvey Henderson (chair).

It was moved by Jamie Parsley and seconded by John Anderson: That we approve Ashley Hubbard's request to be a Candidate for ordination in the Episcopal Diocese of North Dakota, and that we recommend that she seek out a congregation within the diocese to support her in her further discernment.

The motion passed with a unanimous vote.

The work of the School for Ministry has been on pause given the upcoming episcopal election.

Congregational Development - Donna Pettit

The past year has been one of inaction for this committee. It has been disappointing but understandable with the loss of our leader, Steve Godfrey and a new provisional bishop whose task was to move the diocese forward in our overall ministry areas in preparation for electing a new permanent bishop.

The election of a new bishop is happening during Convention weekend and many areas of ministry will find new goals as our ministry picture is formed and developed following that election. We look forward to those discussions and this committee's role in the plan.

Sadly, Martin Darby, who led several sessions with our parishes over two years, died during 2025. He will be missed, and we are thankful to have benefitted from his knowledge and ideas for doing congregational development in our diocese.

Committee members include John Baird, Tammy Enockson, Donna Pettit and Leo Wilking.

Diocesan Council - Amy Phillips

The Diocesan Council is the governing board for the diocese and, between meetings of the Convention, has the full power and authority to act for the Convention in all matters not expressly reserved to the Convention, the Bishop, or the Standing Committee. The Bishop is the President of the Diocesan Council. The Council collaborates with the Bishop in developing and executing the diocese's missional strategies, presenting a diocesan budget to the convention, and authorizing diocesan expenditures.

The Diocesan Council is comprised of individuals who are elected at regional meetings during Annual Convention. The Council meets five times per year, rotating among congregational locations. Meetings of the Council begin and end with devotions, as well as with a review of respectful communication guidelines and the Diocesan Land Acknowledgment statement.

Discussions and decisions of the Council since the 2024 Diocesan Convention have primarily focused on:

1. Budgets – reviewing, modifying, and approving finance reports and annual budgets
2. Reports – reviewing and accepting Diocesan committee, commission, and personnel reports (e.g., Standing Committee, Bishop Nominating Committee, NDCIM, ND Episcopal Foundation, Diocesan Administrator, etc.)
3. Policies – Creating or changing diocesan policies (e.g., pension equity between clergy and lay, clergy sabbaticals, public advocacy,)
4. Planning & Problem Solving – addressing a variety of congregational and diocesan issues (e.g. sale of church property, open clergy positions, church repairs, preparation for new bishop, etc.)

Minutes of Diocesan Council meetings can be found on the Diocese's website at <https://www.ndepiscopal.org/diocesan-council/>.

North Dakota Episcopal Foundation – The Reverend Deacon Beth Lipp

Trustees:

Deacon Beth Lipp, President (2026-2nd term)	Ila McKay (2027-1st term)
John Baird, Treasurer (2028-2nd term)	Oliver Mogga (2027-1st term)
Amy Oksa, Secretary (2025-1st term)	Leah Henderson (2028-1st term)
George Abdilnour, Vice-President (2025-2nd term)	

The Board of Trustees is 3 to 9 members. Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of North Dakota or designated representative is an ex-officio member. Trustees are elected and qualified at the annual convention of the Episcopal Diocese for 4-year terms. May be elected to a second term but not to a third until ten months have expired. Baptized Episcopal members are qualified. Vacancies are filled by the board of trustees with the appointed trustee serving the unexpired term of predecessor. Officers elected annually. Thanks to the gifts Episcopalians who remembered NDEF in their wills, this Board manages a fund of approximately 1.5 million dollars to provide grants for projects within the NDEF guidelines.

Grants made from Nov 2024 to April 2025 are listed below.

1. St. Stephen's: Request for \$8,714.28 to improve Energy Efficiency and a Healthier Environment - Replace thermostats, re-caulk windows, radon mitigation
2. St. George's: Request for \$10,000 for medical equipment destroyed by gang violence at St. Vincent's Center, a center that supports children with disabilities in Haiti
3. Gethsemane: Request for \$6,000 for a Sustainable Sanctuary - will re-lamp the Sanctuary and Great Hall with LED lights to continue to reduce the carbon footprint while reducing our overall costs
4. St. James Kitchen: Request for \$4,500 to improve kitchen with shelving, dinnerware and other equipment to use during funerals
5. St. Gabriel's Septic: Request for \$10,000 to partial fund the installation of a new septic system to make the Star Lodge usable year round
6. St. Luke's New Flooring: Request for \$10,000 to replace worn carpet in sanctuary with laminate/vinyl flooring for sanctuary and extended welcome area
7. St. George's: Request for \$5,140 for asbestos removal and equipment for Godly Play classrooms
8. All Saints, Minot: Request for \$480 for their outreach to LGBTQ families - this grant provided funds to purchase a high-quality vinyl sign to use at community events. It also provided funds to purchase books for children that are available at the church

The next grant cycle deadline is November 1, 2025. Grant guidelines and application can be found on the Diocesan Website. <https://www.ndepiscopal.org/ndef/>.

Reconciliation and Creation Care Committee - Solveigh Barney

Prior to 2025, the Reconciliation and Creation Care committees were separate entities. Since there was a good bit of overlap in terms of membership and goals, and in order to practice the best stewardship of resources, these committees decided in a joint meeting on 2/27/25 to seek approval for combining their efforts. At the April 2025 Diocesan Council meeting, the Council voted to merge the Creation Care and Reconciliation committees.

The mission of the new Reconciliation and Creation Care committee is *to provide and encourage education and advocacy on how to fulfill our baptismal covenant imperative to respect the dignity of every person and strive for justice and peace, including care of creation.*

The goal of the committee is *to enhance the Diocese of North Dakota's ability to raise awareness of environmental justice, racial reconciliation, stewardship of creation, and other social issues, as well as to "build community networks for justice by connecting and mobilizing people from the pews to the public square"* ([Social Justice and Advocacy Engagement – The Episcopal Church](#)).

The committee plans to:

- routinely provide information, tools, readings, etc. to Diocesan parishes and committees on reconciliation, creation care, and other social issues via *The Prairie*, *The Sheaf*, and any other forms of communication;
- provide educational workshops at annual convention and as requested by parishes;
- encourage social advocacy by the Bishop, Diocesan Council and other committees, parishes, and parishioners; and,
- encourage connections between parishes and with other denominations for the purpose of developing networks of support and advocacy.

In the past several months, the committee has experienced a significant loss of membership, so the committee is hoping that diocesan congregants will become involved. If you are interested, please contact one of the co-facilitators -- Solveigh Barney (solveigh.barney@gmail.com) or Ashley Hubbard (ashley@ndepiscopal.org)!

Safe Church, Safe Communities - Jessica Krzewina

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

A variety of diocesan efforts to refresh and update our Safe Church, Safe Communities work has been underway since distribution of our revised diocesan Safe Church, Safe Communities policies in summer of 2023.

Throughout the Diocese we are slowly working on getting everyone Safe Church Certified. With the onboarding of a new Bishop Diocesan in early 2026, we will be renewing our efforts to get all churches within the Diocese certified.

Our policies require background checks for clergy and a wide variety of lay people who are involved in ministries with children, youth and vulnerable adults. These background checks are being provided through Sterling Volunteers.

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

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

St. Gabriel's Camp – The Reverend John Floberg

St. Gabriel's Camp began to provide more useable months of ministry in 2024-2025.

- Beyond Camping in the months of June-August, it also hosted overnight weekend youth events with affordable heat being provided through Solar and Geothermal Heat and the completion of the Kitchen and Bathrooms/Shower in Star Lodge.
- \$25,000 was invested this spring in a new septic system for Star Lodge and Camper Dump accessibility. The funding was provided by a grant from the North Dakota Episcopal Foundation and the Diocesan Council (real estate fund). The area south and west of the Chapel was used for a new drain field. Grass was planted and in place by the time the first Camp in June came.
- Windstorms hit the area once again this season. We can now say that the buildings have withstood 90 mile per hour winds without sustaining insurable damage. One Ash Tree had some significant upper limb damage along with some Poplar Trees. They look as though they have survived after the area was cleaned up.
- A grant from the Cathedral in Cincinnati helped purchase a couple of peddling Hobi Kayaks along with a small Kayak trailer. These proved to be a big hit when brought down to Froelich Dam for a day on the water.
- Once again we had a student from the Seminary of the Southwest come to help put on camps and join in youth ministry. Jenesis Gomez has spent the better part of two summers volunteering.
- Josie Kelly, from Cannon Ball, was brought on Summer Staff through YoungLife this summer as she also did last summer. She is a college student at Northern State in Aberdeen, South Dakota.
- The Bathhouse at the Camp was scraped and repainted by a group of youth and adults from Church of the Good Samaritan, Paoli, PA and St. Paul's in Chestnut Hills, PA. Both are suburbs of Philadelphia. They also helped in putting on the July Camp at St. Gabriel's.
- Fairfield Lodge is now able to provide bathroom services for three seasons of the year and the ability to house people year around, utilizing the facilities in Star Lodge. It has two showers, a sink, oven, toilet and a refrigerator. It has a gas furnace and air conditioning unit.
- The valve of the underground water line to the bathhouse needed repairing. It was dug up and replaced. While the pit was open a new water spigot was put in place. More accessibility to water in this part of the Camp is a real good addition. It will make filling and maintaining the above ground pool easier, providing water for the lawn and a nearby camper hook up are real assets.
- A flood light and electrical outlet was established south of the Basketball Court. They illuminate the Court and the Driveway into St. Gabriel's.
- On the extended work list for the Camp are:
 - Rebuilding the deck platform on the north side of the camp
 - Scraping and painting the Chapel
 - Doing finishing carpentry in Star Lodge
 - Completing the Kitchen in the Apartment of Star Lodge

- Planting a large wildflower garden over the septic drain field on the west side of the Chapel
- Establish a Wiffle Ball Field
- Establish a watering system for areas of planted flower, grass and trees
- Stain or repaint some of the Cabins
- Reestablishing an outdoor volleyball court
- Reestablishing the Bishop's Hermitage
- Put new roofing on Little Bird Hall
- Put in new lighting and fans in the Chapel
- Groups and individuals are welcome to sign up and help with any of these projects

St. Gabriel's Kitchen is equipped with three refrigerators, three ovens, a chest freezer, a food pantry and cooking equipment.

Star Lodge and Fairfield Lodge are available for hunters, family gatherings and other groups throughout the year when otherwise not scheduled.

St. Gabriel Summer Camps are open to youth from the Diocese and welcome adult participation.

Contact: Fr. John Floberg at 701-891-2911

jffloberg@gmail.com

Standing Committee - Dr. Jason Thoms

Members of the Standing Committee

Jason Thoms, President

The Rev. Dn. Beth Lipp, Secretary

John Baird

Tyrrell DeCoteau

The Rev. Dn. Elsie Magnus

The Rev. John Floburg (until August 2025 when he became the Diocesan Treasurer)

The Rev. Jamie Parsley (beginning in August 2025)

Year Recap

The Standing Committee had a light year when it comes to their work giving consents to the elections of Bishops across the country. We did provide consent for Peter Akicmeir for both his approval to the Diaconate and to the Priesthood.

The majority of the work of the Standing Committee and the President was focused on the Bishop Election Process.

In August, the Standing Committee voted unanimously to take on a comprehensive review of all Diocesan property and assets to be able to provide the next Bishop on March 15, 2026.

Bishop Election Process – Nominating Committee

The Standing Committee hired Canon Brian Nordwick to be the consultant to guide us through the Bishop Election process. The Standing Committee then created a Nominating Committee to begin the Bishop Search Process in December 2024.

Members of the Nominating Committee

Solveigh Barney - St. George's, Bismarck

Sean Burt - Gethsemane, Fargo

The Rev. Kim Fox - Fort Totten and Dunseith

Carmine Goodhouse - St. Luke's, Fort Yates

The Rev. Harvey Henderson - St. Paul's, Grand Forks

Alison Hiatt - St. George's, Bismarck

David Lukudu - St. John, Moorhead

The Rev. Jamie Parsley - St. Stephen's Fargo

Dan Rice - St. Stephen's, Fargo

Leslie Ross - St. John's, Dickinson

Chad Schmidt - All Saints, Minot

Betty Swain - St. Sylvans, Dunseith

The Nominating Committee had their first meeting in early January. They were charged by the Standing Committee to create the ND Diocesan Profile and Search process, collect applications,

vet and select semi-finals, lead a discernment retreat, and ultimately provide at least 3 finalists to be candidates for Election. Leo Wilking, the chancellor of the diocese, also had a role in the Nominating Committee's work.

This work was done from January to the end of July 2025, and the Nominating Committee selected 4 finalists to be candidates for Bishop:

- **The Very Rev. Benjamin Thomas from the Diocese of Wisconsin**
- **The Very Rev. Shay Craig from the Diocese of Western Kansas**
- **The Rev. Brandt Montgomery from the Diocese of Maryland**
- **The Rev. Lecia Diaz Brannon from the Diocese of Texas**

Bishop Election Process – Transition Committee

With the conclusion of the Nominating Committees work at the end of July, the Standing Committee created a Transition Committee to help guide the candidates and the diocese from the announcement of the slate of candidates to the election. The Standing Committee decided that they would all serve on the Transition Committee and Jason Thoms offered to serve as the Chair of the Transition Committee. The committee was supplemented with 5 additional members to help expand the geography and congregations of the diocese.

Members of the Transition Committee

Jason Thoms, Chair – St. George's, Bismarck

The Rev. Dn. Beth Lipp – St. George's, Bismarck

John Baird – St. Stephen's, Fargo

Tyrrell DeCoteau – St. Sylvan's, Dunseith

The Rev. Dn. Elsie Magnus – St. Peter's, Walhalla

The Rev. Jamie Parsley – St. Stephen's, Fargo (also served on the Nominating Committee)

Don Henderson – St. Paul's, Grand Forks

The Rev. Mary Johnson – Retired/Supply Priest

Joanne Lassiter – St. George's, Bismarck

Alison Hiatt – St. George's, Bismarck (also served on the Nominating Committee)

The Rev. Dn. Angela Goodhouse – St. Luke's, Fort Yates

The first item for the Transition Committee was to assign each candidate a Shepherd who would be their partner throughout the next stage of the election process. The shepherds would also attend the Meet and Greets so they would be able to build a personal relationship with their assigned candidate.

The shepherds and their candidate are:

- **The Rev. Dn. Angela Goodhouse – The Rev. Lecia Diaz Brannon**
- **The Rev. Harvey Henderson – The Rev. Brandt Montgomery**
- **The Rev. Mary Johnson – The Very Rev. Benjamin Thomas**
- **The Rev. Dn. Beth Lipp – The Very Rev. Shay Craig**

The next item was to set the dates and locations for the Meet and Greet Tour and then create and implement the tour plan. The four candidates for Bishop attended the tour from September 3-6, 2025. There were three evening Meet and Greet events that included a reception, dinner, and recorded Q&A time.

- **Tuesday, September 2 was held at Gethsemane Cathedral in Fargo**
- **Wednesday, September 3 was held at Spirit Lake Casino near Devils Lake**
- **Thursday, September 4 was held at St. George's Episcopal Church in Bismarck**

There were also additional stops so the Bishop candidates could see as many churches as possible and meet additional people.

Tuesday, September 2

- Church visit at the Church of St. John the Divine in Moorhead, MN

Wednesday, September 3

- breakfast at St. Stephen's in Fargo
- a lunch at St. Paul's in Grand Forks
- church visit at the Church of the Advent in Devils Lake

Thursday, September 4

- visited St. Thomas Episcopal Church in Fort Totten
- picture taken at the World's Largest Buffalo Monument in Jamestown
- clergy lunch at Grace Episcopal Church in Jamestown

Friday, September 5

- visited Camp Gabriel
- visited location of the Church of the Cross in Selfridge
- visited St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Fort Yates
- visited the "standing rock" monument in Fort Yates
- lunch at the Prairie Knights Casino (site of the Election)
- visited St. James Episcopal Church in Cannon Ball
- attended the UTTC International Powwow

The third and final item for the Transition Committee before the election was to provide information and education about how the election process will work and to encourage congregations and the voting delegates to research and know who each of the candidates are. Jason Thoms, Chair of the Transition Committee, led a diocese-wide Zoom call on Thursday, October 9 to explain the election process, encourage churches to be in conversation about the issues they are concerned with, and the qualities of the various candidates. One of the most important items shared was that there should be no campaigning for any candidate, and that each individual delegate must do their own research and spend time in prayer so that they can vote for the candidate they have discerned that God has called them to vote for.

Bishop Election Process – Standing Committee

The Standing Committee is indebted to the Nominating Committee, the Transition Committee, Leo Wilking, the diocesan chancellor, Bishop Brian Thom, and all of the congregational leaders who spent countless hours volunteering, working, and serving our diocese through their work on the Bishop Election Process. We especially want to acknowledge Sean Burt, the Chair of the Nominating Committee, Canon Brian Nordwick the consultant for the Bishop Search Process, and Jess Krzewina, the Diocesan Administrator, for their exceptional work and dedication to making the work of the Committees and the communication with the candidates so successful.

Final Steps to Consecration

The Standing Committee will be looking for volunteers to serve in a variety of ways after the election of the next Bishop is completed. We will be forming two more committees: a Consecration/Worship Planning Committee and a Relocation and Welcoming Committee.

- The Consecration/Worship Committee will be tasked with organizing, planning, and implementing all of the events and activities which will take place on March 13 and 14, 2026.
- The Relocation and Welcoming Committee will assist the new Bishop and their family with making the transition to moving to North Dakota.

The Standing Committee will take the lead in fundraising for the new vestments for the Bishop-elect. We will be contacting congregations and individuals to consider funding different parts of the vestments (miter, cope, choir dress, pectoral cross, etc).

Bishop's Nominating Committee - Sean Burt

On behalf of the members of the Committee for the Nomination of a Bishop (Nominating Committee), I would like to share this report on the completion of our work and the presentation of a slate of candidates pursuant to the Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Diocese of North Dakota.

The Nominating Committee was formed by the Standing Committee in early 2025 and held its initial meeting on January 25, 2025, at Grace Episcopal Church in Jamestown, at which we elected a chair and officers. The committee then created and circulated an application and Search Profile for our diocese. ([Click here for the Profile and other information about the committee and search](#)). Beginning in April, we conducted a prayerful discernment process, convening frequently by Zoom between February and July. During that process, we first reviewed paper applications, then advanced selected candidates through two separate rounds of Zoom interviews, and then, finally, invited a slate of semifinalists to an in-person Discernment Retreat. This retreat was held July 7–10 at First Presbyterian Church in Fargo. After the conclusion of the retreat, we met one final time on July 20 by Zoom to create a slate of candidates to present to the Diocese.

We are pleased to present a slate of qualified candidates that meets the requirements described in the Constitution and Canons. The four candidates are:

- The Rev. Lecia Diaz Brannon of the Diocese of Texas
- The Very Rev. Shay Craig of the Diocese of Western Kansas
- The Rev. Dr. Brandt Montgomery of the Diocese of Maryland
- The Very Rev. Benjamin Thomas of the Diocese of Wisconsin

Further information about each candidate, including a cover letter, short biographical sketch, resume, OTM resume, and brief video clip will be available on the Diocesan Bishop Search web page: <https://www.ndepiscopal.org/bishopsearch/>

We on the committee would like to share our gratitude for the work and ministry of every candidate who shared an application. We thank you all for your ongoing prayers for the work of the committee and the future of our diocese.

*Let your steadfast love, O Lord, be upon us,
even as we hope in you (Psalm 33:22)*



nominatingcommittee@ndepiscopal.org

United Thank Offering - Vanessa Strobel



Work continues across the diocese to spread the word about UTO and getting information out to our parishes throughout the diocese. All materials are now available online and available for free with free shipping. Orders can be made for a parish, family or an individual. <https://unitedthankoffering.com/> UTO will have a table with information available at our convention in October. Make sure you stop by!

As fall programming begins across the state for our younger members, UTO provides resources for teaching generosity to children <https://unitedthankoffering.com/generosity/families/> This is a wonderful way to let kids know that they have something to contribute to their family, community, and world.

Please reach out to Mary Massad or Vanessa Strobel if you have any questions.

“In ordinary life, we hardly realize that we receive a great deal more than we give and that it is only with gratitude that life becomes rich.”

Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Appendices

Standing Committee Charge to the Nominating Committee for the Twelfth Bishop Diocesan of North Dakota

January 11, 2025

In all things, remember that you are creating Holy Space for our diocese to discern our identity in Christ and how we might partner with God in mission in the years to come. On behalf of the Episcopal Diocese of North Dakota, this committee is to discern which nominees you believe that God is calling us to consider as we prepare to elect the Twelfth bishop diocesan of the Diocese of North Dakota.

We charge the committee to finalize the draft of the Profile for the Election of the Bishop of North Dakota, provided by the Standing Committee, by February 1, 2025 with the goal of posting the Profile and the position by February 10, 2025.

In doing this work, the Standing Committee asks the Nominating Committee to be mindful of our rich past and blessings but dedicated to our future and aware of the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.

This Profile is to be posted on our Bishop Search and Diocesan websites and social media sites thus making it available to the larger church. It is expected that the Consultant and our Diocesan Communication Staff will assist the committee in getting the Profile distributed to other Dioceses.

The Nominating Committee shall ensure that all nominees meet the constitutional and canonical requirements set forth by the General Convention of the Episcopal Church.

The Nominating Committee will present a slate of no fewer than three nominees by August 1, 2025, to the Standing Committee prior to presenting the nominees to the Electing Convention of the diocese, which will then elect one individual on October 25, 2025.

The Nominating Committee will communicate regularly with the Standing Committee with a written report provided to the President of Standing Committee at least monthly outlining the activities undertaken, progress made, and obstacles encountered, if any, in the Committee's work. A Nominating Committee report will be shared with the diocese through diocesan communications and via the Bishop Search webpage.

It is understood that each person on the Nominating Committee will be available for all meetings and will devote the necessary time to do what is required to represent the diocese in this process. If for some unforeseen reason a member feels they are no longer able to carry out their responsibilities, it is expected the member will make their concerns known to the Chairperson of the Nominating Committee.

The members of the Nominating Committee will work within the budget given by the Standing Committee.

The members of the Nominating Committee will work within the established timeline for the process which is expected to be published shortly after the initial organizing meeting of the Nominating Committee.

The Nominating Committee will use the Transition Consultant appointed by the Standing Committee and an elected Chair and Chaplain as its primary resource in leadership and spiritual guidance as it goes about its work. The Nominating Committee also needs to elect a recording secretary to take meeting minutes.

All matters before the Nominating Committee and deliberations of the Nominating Committee are to be held in the strictest confidence, including the names of the persons being considered.

We ask that the committee pay careful attention to the needs of all nominees and their families. The Standing Committee is committed to a process that upholds the dignity of everyone involved. This would include a timely and dignified response to those that are not moved forward.

As members of the Diocese of North Dakota, know that we will pray for you and give you the support necessary to fulfil your charge. You have our full trust and deep gratitude for the work you are committing to accomplish. May God who has given you the ability to fulfill this ministry, give you the grace to accomplish it.

Transition Committee Position Description

The Transition Committee will manage the opportunities for diocesan members to get to know the candidates for bishop - including the election process in collaboration with the Standing Committee. This will require a significant commitment of time and energy, gifts of hospitality and organization, and attentive pastoral care for all involved.

The Transition Committee will include about 8 members embodying the diversity present in North Dakota diocese. With the help of the consultant provided by The Episcopal Church's Office of Pastoral Development, the Transition Committee will be responsible for

- introducing the slate of candidates to the diocese, shepherding the candidates as they visit our diocese,
- working with the Convention Planning Committee to plan the election of the bishop at the 2025 Diocesan Convention, and
- being pastorally present to all the candidates following the election.

Strong planning and organizational skills, gracious hospitality, and a servant's heart are vital for members of the Transition Committee. The Standing Committee reserves the right to appoint additional members as needed.

Specific responsibilities of Transition Committee members include:

- Building a budget in consultation with the Standing Committee.
- Working with the Diocesan Convention Planning Committee to coordinate the bishop's election with the rest of the convention's business. *(Typically, the Presiding Bishop's Office will be in contact with the Transition Committee to ensure that the electing-convention protocols are correctly followed and documents are in place for confirmation by the bishops and Standing Committees across the Church.)*
- Identify shepherds for the candidates (this can be members of the Transition Committee or possibly inviting others to participate in this role. Each candidate will have a committee member acting as contact, answering questions, and guiding the candidate from the time of the slate's announcement through the election. Each committee shepherd will treat the candidate with loving pastoral care, hospitality, and respect in what will be a stressful time for the candidates and their families.

MEET AND GREETINGS

- Introducing the candidates to the diocese and the diocese to the candidates. This will include meet-and-greet events, but the committee will need to offer other media for this introductory work, too – for example, candidate videos, sample sermons, social-media interactions, etc.
- Planning and executing the meet-and-greet events – locations, dates, times, logistics (candidate travel, lodging, and meals), and formats for diocesan lay people and clergy to submit questions and have dialogue with the candidates. We anticipate these events taking place late-August through September 2025 across the regions of the diocese.

- Maintaining neutrality and cultivating a level playing field for the candidates. Committee members will share information with all candidates equally, and they may not advocate or campaign for particular candidates. Maintaining neutrality will model that this is a prayerful discernment process guided by the Holy Spirit. Maintaining absolute confidentiality about the process and the candidates at all times, now and always.
- Working closely with the diocesan communications team to promote opportunities for interaction with the candidates and to inform the diocese about the election.
- Working closely with other diocesan staff about planning, logistics, payments, etc., related to candidate travel and events.

ELECTION DAY

- Being present at the convention.
- Each shepherd will call their candidate after each round of voting but before the results are announced to the convention and online. This is a pastoral gesture that also allows candidates to withdraw after ballots if they receive low vote tallies.

AFTER THE ELECTION

- After election day, following up with and thanking each candidate.
- Helping the bishop-elect begin to transition into the diocese – for example, helping the bishop-elect and family find a realtor, physicians, schools, employment opportunities for a spouse, etc.
- Planning a celebration for the outgoing bishop provisional.
- Writing a report outlining the transition process and lessons learned in it.

As a reminder, the following are the gifts, skills, and characteristics required of committee members that were requested at the time of your application:

- Knowledge of The Episcopal Church's worship, ethos, organization, and governance.
- Availability to devote significant time and energy to the work.
- Committee members will take part in an all-day retreat in July 2025 with expenses paid (date to be determined).
- Other personal expenses related to committee service will be reimbursed.
- Planning work will begin following the retreat. We anticipate the slate of candidates will be announced in early August 2025, at which point the committee's activities will intensify through the meet-and-greet sessions in September and conclude soon after the election at Diocesan Convention on October 25, 2025.
- Strong oral and written communication skills, as well as willingness to engage via e-mail, manage shared documents online, and participate in videoconferences.
- Respect for the viewpoints of others, especially those that differ from one's own.
- Openness to receiving feedback.
- The courage of conviction but also open-minded respect for others' convictions.
- Willingness to prioritize the needs of the diocese as a whole and set aside regional, congregational, or personal agendas.
- Willingness to compromise, build bridges, and make decisions.

- Second-nature ability to engage others with dignity, respect, and love – both in relating with committee members and with candidates.
- Desire to care for the candidates and their families, making the process a blessing for all involved.