Archivist *Submitted by The Rev. Kathy Lamphere, Archivist*

The Diocesan Archivist catalogs and classifies all books, documents, and papers belonging to the Diocese that are not required to be kept by any other person or officer. The Archivist also collects and preserves materials that can be obtained relative to the Diocese's history and particular congregations to make their contents accessible for reference and use by anyone desiring the information.

The focus this year has been the continuation of labeling, filing, and cataloging boxes of church records sent to the Archives from churches that have closed. Materials contained in notebooks are being removed and filed in acid-free filing boxes to prevent damage. Metal staples holding pages together are rusting causing paper to deteriorate. The staples are being removed and replaced with plastic paper clips to prevent further damage to the paper.

My goal during 2027 is to file the blue prints in the vault in appropriate containers to help preserve them and to continue filing the materials contained in the many boxes stored in the basement at Paulsen House.

Beloved Community Working Group
Submitted by The Rev. Rick Matters and The Rev. Bill Osborne

The Episcopal Diocese of Spokane's Beloved Community Working Group supports individuals, congregations, and the diocese to work toward Becoming the Beloved Community that Jesus proclaimed in word and action. We work within and beyond our worshipping communities. We gather and disperse resources and communicate opportunities to learn, build relationships, and commit to loving action on behalf of Jesus Christ in the area of racial justice and reconciliation.

Learning Moments
Each monthly meeting included a brief teaching.

Supporting Each Other
The monthly agenda includes an opportunity to learn from each other through reports from various locations in the diocese by who are present.

Immigrants and Refugees
We continue to participate in the monthly meetings of the Spokane Clergy Immigration Table and to share opportunities to support immigrants and refugees to members of the diocesan community.

Indigenous Justice
We continue to participate in the Episcopal Indigenous Justice Roundtable https://dismantlediscovery.org/get-involved/episcopal-roundtable/?blm_aid=121806849. This roundtable is part of the Collation to Dismantle the Doctrine of Discovery.

Book Study Series
Throughout the past year we offered the following book/article conversations.
1. *The Crisis of Christian Nationalism*
2. *The Power of Bridging*, by john a. powell
3. *The Serviceberry,* by Robin Kimmerer (led in person by Indigenous facilitator)

4. *Loving Our Neighbor In This Moment in America* Article
5. *How Western Christianity God It Wrong: Replacing the God of Rear with a Spirituality of Healing,* by Indigenous Christian author, Randy Woodley in September and January
6. *Ordinary Mysticism* by Mirabai Starr in October-November

Resources We cited resources and learning opportunities at each meeting.

Note of Gratitude…to Rosemary Harrell for taking notes each meeting.

The Rev Rick Matters, rickmatters@gmail.com
The Rev. Bill Osborne, revbillo@gmail.com

Bishop's Discretionary Fund Report
Submitted by The Rt. Rev. Gretchen Rehberg

The Bishop's Discretionary Fund allows the Bishop to respond to needs throughout the diocese and wider church. There are several broad categories which monies fall into, these include scholarships, outreach ministries, pastoral assistance and ministry support.

Due to being out for a period of time for medical leave there was less, but still significant, activity in the fund

Scholarship requests come from a variety of people engaged in study, at different levels, and this past year I was pleased to be able to offer $31,137.71in scholarship support.

Outreach ministry is work not only in and through our diocesan congregations but with agencies in the diocese and work that happens in other diocese. This past year $16,500 was given out for particular outreach ministries. I am always pleased to see the good works done by our congregations and individuals and am happy to be able to contribute as needed for this work.

Pastoral care includes help when people are facing health issues, need funds for emergencies, are dealing with family issues and other such pastoral concerns. This year has had significant needs in this area with people struggling with serious health issues. This year $20,4952.09 was given out for pastoral care.

Ministry is a catch all for work that is happening which does not easily fit into outreach. This includes support for some of the work of congregations in and outside our diocese as well as funds for ministry in the wider church. This past year $4,000 was given out for the work of God through the Church's ministry.

The convention year saw the discretionary fund start with $151,320 as of August 24, 2025, and as of August 18, 2026 has $171,450.

Thank you to everyone who has given to the discretionary fund whether through the offering at my visitation or directly with a contribution. It is through the generosity of members of our diocese that I am able to respond to the needs which come my way.

Faithfully,
+Gretchen Rehberg

IX Spokane

Building Bridges; Healing Divides
Submitted by Mallory Davis, Grant Program Director

We are in the third program year of the Building Bridges; Healing Divides program, a five-year Thriving Congregations grant that focuses on congregational learning and new ministry development around bridging and healing across divides of cultural, social and political difference. In this year we have seen much change programmatically and transformation on individual and congregational levels.

In January, our Program Director Caroline McCall retired, and I had the great pleasure of moving into the role of director. The beginning of the year also saw many of our first cohort congregations completing or launching their post-program ministry experiments. These experiments ranged from hosting events for depolarizing worshipping communities, partnering ministries that centered on relationship building between community institutions and our congregations, community forum style events that asked for participants to go deeper in their understanding of each other, the birth of a contemplative group practicing in the outdoors with community partnered leadership and support, neighborhood café style invitations into understanding neighborhood needs and desires, and small group meetings for deepening relationships and bridging internally between members through talks and spiritual formation.

A second cohort program also began in May: Grace Church, Ellensburg, St. Matthew's, Prosser and St. David's, Spokane. Their work this fall begins in storytelling, laying the foundation of who God is calling them to be in this place and time so they can begin to dream about what that means for bridging and healing in their communities.

Additionally, a small group of trained coaches was formed from previous cohort learners and the diocesan consulting network. This group of coaches will serve a dual purpose in supporting our current grant congregations, but also in becoming a network of coaches available for coaching in other congregations

Weaving into our diocesan theme for the year, our grant offered a diocesan-wide retreat. The Music that Makes Community retreat centered on the intersection of communal song and the work of bridging and healing. Some reflections on learnings included: how "Music has the power to unburden us and offer a way to express," how communal song sharing can "offer a connection to spirit," and how "Singing together shapes our experience," and is "music 'with' versus music 'to.'" The big takeaways from retreat goers included: "listening," "witnessing," "holy life-breath," "playfulness," "fearlessness," and "gentle leadership."

If you are interested in learning about some of the resources for bridging and healing that we have been using in our grant program, please reach out to me.

Mallory Davis
Grant Program Director
Building Bridges; Healing Divides
Episcopal Diocese of Spokane

Camp Cross Ministry

Submitted by Cn. Alex Flanagan

2026 has been a remarkable year at Camp Cross: one of construction and celebration, challenge and resilience, generosity and growth. Indeed, it has been a fruitful year of *ministry.*

Children, youth, families, adults, staff, volunteers, clergy, lay leaders, and retreat communities have all crossed Lake Coeur d'Alene to spend time in this sacred place. They have come to swim and play, to worship and pray, to build friendships, to rest, to lead, to learn, and sometimes simply to breathe a little more deeply. In a world that can feel busy and fragmented, Camp Cross continues to offer something both simple and important: a different rhythm of life, rooted in community, creation, and the faith traditions of the Episcopal Church.

At the heart of it all is summer camp. 301 campers, 15 staff, and 25 volunteers spent part of their summer with us, learning to care for one another and this place. We aim to create a community in which people know that they belong. We enter into covenant with one another, agreeing to respect **people, program, and place.** Behind those 3 P's: a way of living together. Participate fully, assume goodwill, let go of self-doubt, leave places better than you found them, and make room for everyone at the table. For a young person who is unsure where they belong, this can matter tremendously. The same is true for those who carry the weight of stress, anxiety, hardship, loss, or isolation. The sense of belonging in a community can be balm for the soul.

2026 Camp Cross Programs	
Session:	*Attendance:*
Labor of Love	10
Adult Faith Formation Retreat	19
Leaders in Training	14
Mini Camp	10
Days at the Lake	71
High School Camp	28
Intermediate Camp	20
Arts & Music Camp	21
Mid High Camp	24
Clergy Camp	9
Queer Camp	19
Labor Day Family Camp	35
Creation Care Retreat	20
Total:	*301*

A New Chapter in a Long Book

Last year we broke ground, poured foundations, and raised the walls of the new cabins and retreat house. Work continued straight through the seasons (one week off for Christmas) and on **August 9th**, construction was completed. This project was a culmination of years of vision, planning, patience, and generosity from people throughout the Diocese of Spokane. The purpose is so much bigger than "give Camp Cross nicer buildings". Rather the purpose is to increase accessibility, to widen the circle of people who can experience this place, and hopefully welcome some of you back into the circle. That vision became reality almost immediately as we welcomed Clergy Camp here the very next day, **August 10th**! Fortunately a team of volunteers were on hand to help assemble the new beds and furniture and move them into the cabins (*thank you!)*.

As we headed toward fall, we welcomed Queer Camp, Labor Day Family Camp, the Sufi community's "Nature's Heart" retreat, the diocesan Creation Care retreat, and St. David's vestry. While youth summer camp remains central to our identity and mission, we continue to serve a wide range of groups outside of it. The new facilities allow the ministry of Camp Cross to stretch further into the year and further across the life of the diocese.

Extraordinary Generosity

Since Diocesan Convention of last year, supporters have given:

$413,040.73 to Woven as One in support of the construction
$116,874.48 to furnish the new cabins
$37,805.20 to the Camp Cross Annual Fund
$14,670.01 to the Camp Cross Scholarship Fund.

Together, that represents $582,390.42 given in support of Camp Cross since our last Convention. Behind every dollar, every hour volunteered, and every prayer spoken silently or aloud, is someone who believes this ministry matters. Thank you for your support and ongoing vote of confidence. Ultimately these gifts equip the camp to serve our mission of forming disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Built on Rock
Of course, 2026 was also full of reminders that ministry at Camp Cross is seldom simple. We came whisker-close to sending campers home in response to the smoke from the Spokane Complex fires. Behind the scenes, we navigated failures of our well pump, septic pump, multiple water heaters, and other pieces of aging infrastructure. In September, another well failure forced us to cancel two scheduled retreat groups and left camp without running water for an extended period. *Perhaps* the greatest setback of all: the coffee maker died.

And yet, each time something failed, folks **showed up.** Staff adapted, volunteers helped, contractors crossed the lake, donors responded, a new coffee maker was indeed purchased. Problems were solved and the ministry continued. My high school motto was "In Saxo Condita" which approximately translates from Latin to English as "built on rock". Camp Cross is an improbable place for a camp. Being boat-access only: infrastructure is difficult, construction is difficult, even ordinary routine maintenance can become an adventure! Yet, generations of people have looked at this rocky piece of shoreline and decided it's worth the effort. Through love, faith, grit, a little stubbornness, a great deal of generosity, and no small amount of creativity, they built something here. And here we are, still building it.

Looking Toward 2027
We are exploring long-term solutions for Camp Cross's water system, including the feasibility of treating lake water to supplement or potentially replace our existing well. We are working toward rebuilding the docks. The refurbishment of the concrete walkway that runs from the dock up to Wells Hall has been postponed until Spring of 2027, to accommodate the water system project and the moving of heavy equipment through camp.

We are also taking a careful look at the summer program to further strengthen staff formation, leadership development, training, expectations, and the daily rhythms of life at camp. My hope is that people will arrive here and discover something that feels peaceful without feeling empty, adventurous without being overwhelming, communal without losing space for solitude, and that brings them closer to God.

In 2026 we built new buildings that will serve Camp Cross for generations. In 2027 comes the more important work: **filling them with life**. Come to Camp Cross! Send a camper. Bring your family. Gather your vestry, ministry team, or parish community here. Volunteer for a week. Give to the scholarship fund so others can experience it for

themselves. Help us imagine what else is possible as we write the next chapter in this continuing epic adventure that is Camp Cross.

Thank you,

Alex Flannagan
Canon for Camp, Youth, and Family Ministry/
Camp Cross Executive Director

Creation Care Working Group
Submitted by the Rev. Pat Munts

We spent the early part of the year discussing the possibility of constructing a labyrinth at Camp Cross. The labyrinth has long been planned but its construction was shelved for various reasons. The site at camp has been selected so we spent time collecting information resources on design and construction needs. It helped to have the construction crews at camp that we could draw on to get the materials and light machine work done with.

Kristen Keyes helped us create a design. Pat Munts and Margaret Drumm evaluated what we would need to do with the site to fit the design to it. We calculated the materials that needed to be ordered and delivered to the site and scheduled beginning construction efforts for the Labor of Love weekend in early June. The construction crews brought in the materials and placed them at the site. Construction will be done by volunteers probably next spring.

Our second project was to schedule a creation care retreat at Camp Cross taking advantage of the new retreat center. The weekend is schedule for Oct 2-4 over the St. Francis weekend. We will host workshops on forest bathing meditation, art projects, creation care liturgy planning and lots of time for people to just enjoy nature at camp.
At the retreat we will have a discussion on how the Creation Care Working Group can expand its reach into the diocese and involve more people to join efforts to celebrate God's gift of nature and its value to our spiritual lives.

Church Growth and Development Committee
Submitted by the Rev. Cn. Susan Cleveley

Per Canon 5.3 of the Constitution and Canons of The Episcopal Diocese of Spokane:
5.3.1 The Church Growth and Development Committee, shall be responsible for receiving, reviewing and approving or rejecting requests by congregations and diocesan organizations for the funding of initiatives and programs from available funds relating thereto arising from the Growth and Development Endowment Fund administered by the Episcopal Diocese of Spokane Foundation.
Committee membership consists of six (6) members. The membership of the committee is as follows:

SE Region: The Rev. Mary Beth Rivetti (2028), retired clergy

Bishop's Appointee: The Rev. Canon Susan Cleveley, (2028) Canon to the Ordinary

Diocesan Council Appointee: Kelly Clift (2027), St. Timothy, Yakima, WA

NE Region: The Canon Bill Osborne (2027), retired clergy

NW Region: Tom Baxter (2026), Church of the Resurrection, Roslyn, WA

SW Region: Meg Milligan (2026), All Saints', Richland, WA

Committee Report:
The Church Growth and Development Committee meet several times this spring to update the application for grant applicants. June 15, 2026 the Committee awarded $16,200 in grants to five (5) congregations.

Grace Church, Ellensburg WA: Labyrinth Landscaping, $3,000
We are completing phase II of a Community Labyrinth project in the spring/summer 2026: landscape the site; develop a dedicated labyrinth website; print informational brochures; create video presentation for fundraising; and recruit a group of volunteers for routine maintenance.

Church of the Resurrection, Roslyn WA: Heritage Garden Project $3000
This project will be a collaboration between the Episcopal Church in Roslyn WA, the Kittitas County Conservation District, Washington Outdoor School and community members. The church has a large lawn area to the north of the building. We will partner with Kittitas County Conservation District about to the lawn with a Heritage Garden. The purpose of Heritage Gardens is to: "Promote the use of native plants especially those of cultural significance; Promote low-water use landscaping & efficient irrigation methods; and Educate our community about the history and biodiversity of the Columbia River Basin." These goals are within the church's mission to care for creation and to provide opportunities to reach out and educate community members on pollinator friendly, low water landscapes. The garden will allow us to essentially practice what we preach by replacing lawn with more pollinator friendly, lower maintenance plant materials.

Church of the Resurrection, Spokane Valley, WA: A Collection of Garden Micro Projects $5000
Our project consists of a series of small improvements designed to boost the visibility, functionality, and inclusivity of our garden and orchard, fostering stronger relationships within the neighborhood, community, and diverse faith groups. This includes a large
"block" party with and for our many neighbors and sponsorship opportunities for immigrant gardeners.

St. Michael's, Yakima, WA: Parkway Place Apartments Outreach $2200
St. Michael's Mission will deepen our relationships to the women and children in Triumph Treatment's, Parkway Place Apartments, 2 year transitional housing program, next to St. Michael's Mission by providing welcome baskets to families as they move into Parkway Place and gift baskets as they graduate from the program and move to permanent housing or the next step of their journey. Currently, St. Michael's Mission hosts a Christmas Party and a Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper for the families and provides Christmas presents and Easter Baskets. With this expansion of our ministry, we will be able to connect with families at critical moments in their journey as the enter and exit the program as well as maintain supportive relationships with them through their stay in transitional housing.

St. Stephen's, Spokane, WA: Redesign and Upgrade the St. Stephen's Website $3000
We aim to make our website attractive, informative, and compelling, especially to the newcomer searching for a church home. We want to create a site that is easy to navigate, offering information about our liturgical services and formation classes, as well as our various ministries and programs for adults, youth, and children. We want to more accurately reflect our family-friendly congregation, open and welcoming to all people, no matter their religious background. Our mission to follow and serve Christ will be evident throughout the site.

Respectfully submitted,

The Rev. Canon Susan Cleveley
Canon to the Ordinary

College for Congregational Development
Submitted by the Rev. Cn. Susan Cleveley

The College for Congregational Development is an intensive two-year course of practicum and study designed for congregational teams, that include clergy and laity, wanting deeper, intentional learning, skills development and practice in the areas of organization development and congregational development so that they may assist their congregations in being more faithful, healthy and effective local expressions of the Body of Christ in their context.

The College for Congregational Development began in The Diocese of Spokane in 2014. We were the third diocese to adopt the curriculum that originated in The Diocese of Olympia in 2009. Currently, more than twelve dioceses across the United States and Europe offer the program, with more looking to launch the program.

As of 2025, we have hosted over 100 students from across the diocese and 200 from the wider church as well as trained numerous trainers who teach across the College system. God has borne tremendous fruit through our program.

After eleven years of offering the week-long intensive during the summer, the Bishop and I determined in February that we would pause the program for the summer 2026 to reassess and discern the best way to deliver the curriculum in the future. All these years later, we have many more options for delivering the curriculum outside of the week-long intensive than we did in 2014. Each option has pros and cons for participants and training staff. **Turns out, our discernment that God wanted us to pause and reflect was God creating space for the Bishop and I to experience miracles in the shape of new lungs!**

This year we sponsored a team from Grace Church, Ellensburg, to complete the program in The Diocese of Olympia, who made room for our participants to finish their second year.

As the director of our program, I continue to work with other directors in other dioceses on curriculum and other aspects of the College. I completed my term on the College Steering Committee in April 2026. Another Bishop's summit is planned for January 2028, which will offer Bishops of current programs, and those interested in launching programs, the opportunity to learn together and engage in deeper development of their dioceses.

Respectfully submitted,

The Rev. Canon Susan Cleveley
Director, College for Congregational Development

Commission on Ministry *Submitted by The Rev. Kathy Lamphere, Chair*

The Commission on Ministry assists the bishop in the discernment, development and formation of ministry vocations. This includes not only ordained vocations but the ministry of all the baptized. It is important for all the people of God to engage in serious discernment and ministry formation. Much of the Commission on Ministry's work deals with the discernment and guiding of persons seeking vocations in the Order of Deacons or the Order of Priest.

Members of the Commission on Ministry are:

Chair – The Rev. Kathy Lamphere

Vice Chair – The Very Rev. Heather VanDeventer

Term Expires: 2026

- Kristin Keyes
- The Rev. Chris Hagenbuch
- James Rosenzweig

Term expires: 2027

- Margaret Drumm
- The Rev. James DeDeaux
- The Rev. Kathy Lamphere

Term expires 2028

- The Rev. Kimmy Meineke
- Taylor Mather
- The Very Rev. Heather VanDeventer

Ex Officio Members:

- The Rev. Cn. Susan Cleveley,
- The Rt. Rev. Gretchen Rehberg

Vocational Discernment Teams

A training held this summer was completed by four individuals. There are currently two VDT members ready to be assigned to discernment teams, and six members actively working on discernment committees. A Basecamp Account was set up for members of the Vocational Discernment Team to assist with communication.

People in Process

- Elaine Patrick and Jeremy Armstrong were ordained into the priesthood in December 2026.

- Two postulants for the vocational diaconate completed their internships.

- One aspirant for the vocational diaconate was interviewed by The Commission on Ministry and recommended for postulancy pending the bishop's approval.

- Four aspirants have completed discernment and are waiting to interview with the Commission on Ministry pending completion of their required paperwork. One other aspirant is nearing completion with their discernment committees.

- One aspirant, approved by the bishop, is waiting until his work will allow him to begin discernment.

Foundation
Submitted by the Rev. David Walker

If you have read last year's Annual Report, this year's summary will sound rather familiar. Unpredictability of the world around us, whether in the form of cultural dynamics, the growing ubiquity of Artificial Intelligence and its impact on the labor markets, media, and the psyche of the general public, geopolitical turmoil throughout the globe, the stubborn reality of inflation, the volatility of the cost of oil, the rising costs of housing, a loss of trust in the institutions that have historically served its constituents well, and the continuing vitriol among our fellow citizens, all play a role in how think and react to how they might impact our own financial situations. For some, uncertainty about one's assets tends to lead to a more conservative approach. Others see the uncertainty of 'the markets' as opportunities for the 'next big thing,' with its attendant risks.

Thankfully, the current board of trustees has followed the longstanding policy of previous boards regarding the foundation's assets under their fiduciary care. The long-term approach of 'staying the course' relative to regular review of the foundation's Investment Policy Statement in conjunction with the investment advisor, the commitment to remaining fully invested at all times, not making tactical changes in either anticipation of or in response to short-term volatility, and the appropriate level of diversification in the assets overseen by the foundation board, have resulted in consistent and positive investment returns.

Given the timing of Convention, the returns presented in this summary are as of the end of August. For additional context, I have also provided the year-over-year performance as of August. In last year's report, the performance was 9.71% and 9.59% YTD and YOY, respectively. This year's numbers through August are 10.02% and 14.13% YTD and YOY, respectively. For all of 2025 (January through December), the portfolio returned 13.22%.

Of special note, the board approved a request for $500,000 towards the major renovation of Camp Cross, a reality made possible by the generosity of donors through the years, the vision and wisdom associated with the sale of several senior housing projects managed by the diocese that resulted in a significant amount of cash added to the investment portfolio, and the commitment to enhancing the spiritual development of new generations of campers with the much needed renovation.

On behalf of my fellow board members, please consider how you might also add to the financial stability and spiritual legacy of your local congregation or diocesan ministry by making a gift to either or both from your personal estate. Gifts of all sizes make a difference in the current lives of Episcopalians in this diocese, those we serve, and for those who might come to discover God as a camper or through other meaningful ministry offered throughout the wider diocese. Your gift matters, and your generosity will not go unrewarded

Blessings,

The Rev. David Walker
President
St Michaels' Mission

Partnership Between St. Michael's, St. Matthew's and Holy Trinity
Between the Ridges
Submitted by the Rev. David Hacker

The big news for our Partnership is that the Rev. David Hacker is retiring effective November 1, 2026. St. Michael's Annual Fundraiser this year on Saturday October 24, will be an opportunity for the larger community to say goodbye and celebrate David's ministry among us. October 25 will be Rev. Hacker's last Sunday, a joint service with our three congregations at noon at the Sunnyside Senior Center where Holy Trinity meets regularly for worship.

For the last three years, the pastoral leadership of the Rev. David Hacker has been shared in a formal Partnership Agreement between St. Michael's, St. Matthew's, and Holy Trinity. But our regional collaboration has developed over many years. Originally with Christ Church, Zillah and other ecumenical partners we developed Between the Ridges in 2013, a non-profit that has implemented a variety of shared work over the years. 10 years ago, as this regional collaborative we worked with the diocese to establish St. Michael's as a Specialized Mission and the Rev. David Hacker was selected to serve as priest.

Together we collaborate on a weekly conference call worship, Zoom evening prayer and formation and periodic joint services. Members of the Partnership along with members from St. Timothy's participate in our Regional Community of Hope Pastoral Care Team. Holy Trinity meets twice a month in person at the Senior Center in Sunnyside, a church without walls. St. Matthew's this year is part of the Building Bridges Healing Divides cohort. St. Michael's is engaged in a wide variety of ministry with many community partners. Pat Reynolds, long time Pantry Coordinator, also retired at the end of 2025, and Yakima Community Aid, a local community partner, has taken over this role.

Between the Ridges has now evolved into an Alliance of diverse community organizations, holding events and actions on multiple issues: health care, environmental justice, immigration, housing and food security, GOTV and more. In September, BTR hosted a 3 ½ Day training in Yakima on the fundamentals of community organizing with trainers from our regional partner, Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF) Pacific. As a separate 501 C3, Between the Ridges is also the fiscal sponsor for the Yakima Association of Faith Communities, Yakima Immigrant Response Network and St. Michael's Food Pantry. Check out www.betweentheridges.org for more information. Special thanks to many Episcopalians from our SW Region who have served on the Board, who have over the years helped birth, nurture and grow this organization. Ann Davidson (St. Michael's) D'Anna Carson Clark (Holy Trinity) and Jeannie Jackson (St. Matthew's) were featured in a recent BTR video speaking as proud parents of Between the Ridges.

Regional Missions

Northeast Region
Submitted by the Rev. Cn. Jonathan Myers

Our clericus group in the NE region gathered on Thursday mornings monthly from 9:30am to 11:30am. We structured our gatherings with a check in around the question: How did you live out your vocation in the past month, and/or talk about how you sang a new song since our last meeting? After that check in we opened the room up to anyone to share about an adaptive challenge they were facing in their ministry that they wanted the group to help them discern. We ended with a time of sharing resources that were supporting us in our ministry. We look forward to gathering again this fall to support one another in our ministries. This year we had the opportunity to also throw a small shower for our dear colleague Rev. Katy Shedlock over the summer as she was preparing bring their new child into our world.

I continued to meet with our regional canons, the Rev. Cn. Susan Clevely, and Bishop Gretchen via zoom on a semi-monthly basis as was necessary to talk through clericus issues, plan gathering days, and any issues that arise in our diocesan congregations.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Cn. Jonathan Myers
NE Regional Canon

Northwest Region
Submitted by The Rev. Cn. Bill Osborne

I was appointed Canon for the Northwest Region at the 2025 Diocesan Convention. In the past year, since Convention, I have presided over three meetings of the Northwest Regional clericus – two via zoom and one in person at Clergy Conference. I participated in the monthly planning meetings of the Regional Canons to develop plans for the 2026 Spring and Fall Gathering Days, and I presided at the Gathering Days which were both held at St. Martin's in Moses Lake. In addition, I preached and presided in worship at St. John the Baptist in Ephrata, and I attended the United at the Font ecumenical gatherings in Moses Lake and Chelan. I have been attending Diocesan Council meetings as ex-officio member of Council.

Southeast Region
Submitted by the Reverend Ashley Mather

The Southeast region is the smallest region in the Diocese of Spokane, with only six churches. However, we are geographically spread out with two of our churches being a two and a half hour drive away from one another. The churches in our region are: Grace (Dayton), Holy Trinity (Grangeville), Nativity (Lewiston), St. James (Pullman), St. Mark's (Moscow), and St. Peter's (Pomeroy).

Our primary means of gathering is via Zoom. Our clerics aimed to meet most months -- with a break for summer -- via Zoom. This was a year of regathering for the Southeast region, so we decided to spend our time simply checking in with one another, which included sharing some resources and seeking advice from one another. When we gather for clergy retreat and conference, our clerics aim to eat at least one meal together.

Our Fall 2025 Gathering Day took place at St. Mark's, Moscow. We spent the day learning about worship, liturgy, and the Holy Eucharist. At our Spring 2026 Gathering Day we took a deep dive into our corporate and personal prayer lives through the Daily Office at Nativity, Lewiston. The entire day was a

wonderful day of learning, and our region was especially fond of creating and sharing different prayer stations.

Our churches are made up of a wide variety of leadership - part time priests, bi-vocational priests, a devoted deacon, and lay lead parishes who utilize our supply clergy. All of our parishes have committed lay leadership who are living into their baptismal promises.

As the regional canon, I meet with the Bishop and the other Regional Canons on a monthly basis and have a part in helping to plan and implement our Gathering Days. Those meetings help me disseminate information from the diocese to clerics. I'm also an ex-officio member of Diocesan Council and was able to attend most of the meetings.

My family and I moved from Moses Lake to Pullman in September of 2025, so this was my first year serving as the canon in this region. It was a year of transition for me as I learned more about my new area, the clerics, and our churches. I look forward to this upcoming year as the canon, and I'm looking forward to seeing how the clerics and people of our region can become even better connected.
If there are any questions, please feel free to reach out to me at revashleymather@gmail.com."

In God's Love,

Ashley+

Southwest Region *Submitted by the*
Rev. Cn. Jane Schmoetzer

The Southwest Region of our Diocese extends from Yakima (St. Timothy's and St. Michael's) through the Columbia Valley (Holy Trinity, Sunnyside and St. Matthew's, Prosser) to the Tri-Cities (St. Paul's, Kennewick and All Saints', Richland, and finally stretches to include St. Paul's, Walla Walla. As the Canon for Mission in this area I have been privileged to be both observer and participant to the ways these faithful communities strive to "go forth to love and serve the Lord."

As Regional Canon one of my responsibilities is to facilitate meetings of our regional Clericus— getting together regularly with other priests and deacons in our region to pray, to study, and to support one another in ministry. We generally meet on one Saturday morning each month via Zoom, which allows bi-vocational clergy to participate more easily. We have been grateful for the lack of lengthy drives and really enjoyed the ability of others outside our region to link in as their schedules allow.

Our Clericus study time each month has included intentional bible study and Continuing Education material. Our focus in 2025 has been sharing our various gifts and interests. We've continued to learn from one another about the passions that the Holy Spirit has inspired within us.

For our spring Gathering Day (March 29th), we met at we met at St. Pauls', Walla Walla; together we delved deeper into the practice of personal and corporate prayer. We shared an instructed Morning Prayer from the Daily Office, and build prayer stations to share for more freeform meditation. This fall's Gathering Day will be held September 26 at All Saints', Richland. As of this writing the program has yet to be announced. These days may be single events, but they take many hours of prayer and planning; we are fortunate to have solid leadership to support this work throughout the diocese.

In addition to the above, Regional Canons meet almost monthly (usually via videoconference) with the Bishop to share ongoing information, joys, and challenges. I pass along information any information to

regional clergy and lay leadership. These are part of ongoing efforts throughout the diocese to be open, clear, and effective in our communications.

By the time you read this report, our region will have experienced some significant changes in its clergy leadership this fall. The Rev. David Sibley has been elected as the next Bishop of Lexington; his last Sunday at St. Paul's is October 11. The Rev. David Hacker has announced his retirement effective November 1; his last Sunday as Vicar for St. Michael's, St. Matthew's, and Holy Trinity is October 25. And I also retire effective September 1; my last Sunday as All Saints was August 30. I am grateful to have had the opportunity to serve here, and I look forward to seeing where the Holy Spirit takes the Dicoese of Spokane in the days ahead.

God's peace,
Jane+

Nominations
Submitted by The Rev. Colby Roberts

The Committee on Nominations would like to announce that the following people have been nominated to serve for the following positions:

Secretary of Convention
Kathy Lamphere

Standing Committee, Laity
Katy O'Callaghan

Standing Committee, Clergy
Jonathan Myers

Standing Committee
Three year replacement, Clergy
Heather VanDeventer

Diocesan Council
Linda Bartholomew
John MacDonald

The committee confirms that each person is eligible to serve in the office for which they have been nominated.

Respectfully submitted by:

The Rev. Colby Roberts
Chair, Committee on Nominations

Standing Committee
Submitted by the Rev. Bill Osborne

The Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church establish Standing Committees in each diocese to act as a "Council of Advice" for the bishop, or to serve as the Ecclesiastical Authority and provide diocesan oversight during those times when there is no bishop. Our canonical responsibilities also include

- Formal recognition of new churches or missions;
- Approval for property to be bought, sold, or encumbered;
- Consent to the election of bishops throughout The Episcopal Church;
- Approving Candidacy for persons seeking Holy Orders;
- Certifying canonical requirements have been met and recommending for ordination persons to become deacons or priests.

The following people served on Standing Committee this year. Each person's term ends at Diocesan Convention in the year noted.

Lay
Clay Jackson (2026)
Rex Burns (2027)
Pia Longinotti (2028)
Marjie Mack (2029)

Clergy
Bill Osborne (2026) – President
Chris Hagenbuch (2027)
Jan Griffin (2028) – Secretary
David Hacker (2029)

Since the last Diocesan Convention, we gave consent to episcopal elections in the Dioceses of San Juaquin, North Dakota, East Carolina, Western Massachusetts, Los Angeles, Alabama, Southwestern Virginia, Long Island, Hawaii, and Taiwan.

Following conversations with the Bishop and the Diocesan Council, the Standing Committee approved a plan to continue visiting church properties in conjunction with the Diocesan Council. Members of the Standing Committee will partner with members of Council to visit all church properties in the diocese every three or four years. The purpose of the visits will be to follow up after inspections by Church Insurance Corporation staff, to identify any issues or concerns, and to ensure that the facilities support the mission of each property.

Respectfully submitted,
The Rev. Bill Osborne

Canon to the Ordinary
Submitted by the Rev. Cn. Susan Cleveley

Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

In a normal year, as the Bishop's Canon, I support her vision and priorities of the formation of disciples of Jesus and the practice of building congregations throughout our diocese and the wider church, to fulfill and embody their primary task, which is to be the local expression of the Body of Christ wherever they reside. I participate with the Bishop and other diocesan leadership in strategic planning, visioning and goals development and execution.
I am directly responsible for:

- Ongoing clergy development and formation: working directly with the Bishop to provide formation opportunities to all of our clergy. Such opportunities include clergy retreat, clergy conference, clergy mentoring and coaching, clergy in new calls, and monthly clericus meetings.
- Diocesan Transition Ministry (DTM): working directly with the Bishop, and all congregations and clergy in transition within the diocese. This includes all things related to our Call processes (working with all Call ministry groups, posting and advertising calls, background checks, letters of agreement, clergy orientation to the diocese, etc.), coaching and support of clergy as they seek or leave a call, and representing the Diocese of Spokane, our congregations, and clergy throughout Province VIII and the wider church.
- Directing the Spokane College for Congregational Development intensive session. The Director provides program oversight of personnel, design, and logistics (registration, facility, meals, etc.) and recruits, trains, supports, coaches, and mentors all trainers and participants. (Separate report submitted on the College for Congregational Development)
- Administrative support for the 5-year *Thriving in Ministry* Lilly Grant and beginning in January 2025 our 5-year sustainability grant.
- All other duties the Bishop assigns.

Since this year was anything but normal(!), the "all other duties as assigned" grew exponentially with the Bishop out on medical leave. In her absence, I supported Standing Committee, Diocesan Council, Commission on Ministry, the construction projects at Camp Cross and West Central Abbey, our congregations, their leadership and clergy, interfaced with the wider church on her behalf and managed diocesan staff.

The learning curve was great, and the work engaging, exhausting and full of joy. I felt your prayers throughout this season and give thanks for your faithfulness to our Bishop's vision and your continual labor in pursuit of God's mission in her absence.

Clergy Development:
I provide administrative support to and serve ex-officio on the Commission on Ministry meeting with them throughout the year to share in their work and provide regular updates on transition ministry.

The focus of clergy development and formation for 2026 follows the diocesan theme of *Sing to the Lord a New Song*. In February, 30 clerics gathered for four days and three nights of fellowship, prayer and retreat. Brother James Dowd shaped the retreat around scripture and song.
For clergy conference in April, 40 clergy attended a 3.5-day gathering with The Rt. Rev. Robert Wright in an uplifting time of communal acapella hymn singing and scriptural reflection on the Spirit of God that enlivens us through music and song.

Our active clericus groups, lead by the Regional Canons, meet regionally, once a month, either via Zoom or in person. The retired clericus group meets monthly via Zoom with clergy gathering across the country for fellowship and learning.
The new clergy call group consists of clergy who are in new pastoral calls in the diocese. They gather for three overnight retreats to learn, share, and reflect on the joys and challenges of entering into a new ministry setting. There was no cohort this year.

Transitions:
During the 2025-20265 convention year several transitions occurred around the diocese. Our congregations welcomed:

- The Rev. Jeremy Armstrong, St. Paul's, Cheney, WA, and St. Andrew's, Spokane, WA;
- The Rev. Elaine Patrick, Church of the Resurrection, Spokane Valley and West Central Abbey, Spokane, WA;
- The Rev. Rachel Endicott, All Saints', Richland, WA.

Our congregations said goodbye to:

- The Rev. Jane Schmoetzer, All Saints, Richland, WA;
- The Rev. Rachel Endicott, St. James, Pullman, WA;
- The Rev. David Sibley, St. Paul's Walla Walla, WA;
- The Rev. Frances Twiggs, Church of the Nativity, Lewiston, ID.

In my role as Diocesan Transition Minister, I represent the diocese twice yearly, spring and fall, at the Provencal gathering of transition ministers. While together, we share information about clergy seeking calls and congregations in transition, who they are, where they are in their discernment process and what they seek. Additionally, we engage in continuing education that is relevant to the unique ministry of transition. Our March gathering occurred in the Diocese of Alaska. The provincial gathering in September was hosted by the Diocese of Spokane in the new Camp Cross retreat center!

Respectfully submitted,
The Rev. Canon Susan Cleveley
Canon to the Ordinary

Canon for Discipleship
Submitted by Cn. Andrea Oetman

It has been another year of prayerful, collaborative work in the role of Canon for Discipleship within the Diocese of Spokane. My area of responsibility continues to be all things "adult discipleship," which is essentially how we follow Jesus and how we do so together. In this work, I report directly to +Gretchen Rehberg and work closely with the rest of the diocesan staff, clergy, and lay leadership.

This report is shorter due to the call for reports and the reports due date falling in my three month sabbatical time this summer. It was an incredible gift to have a sabbatical, and intentional calendar space to focus on rest and beauty. I spent the summer months outdoors as much as possible, out in nature of all kinds. I feel renewed in ways I couldn't have expressed need for at the outset, and am beyond grateful for the prayers and support during that time.

This past year has involved:

- the second of a two-year program through Whitworth's Office of Church Engagement in teaching, consulting, and coaching local pastors and residents in developing Intergenerational presence in

their worship communities. It's been a rich experience, and one that I'll be offering resources and learnings from to our Episcopal congregations this upcoming year.

- continuing in group spiritual direction with two different groups. One of these is a formal group through the Franciscan Center in Portland that I have been with for six years now, and the other is a more informal group of other clergy and lay leaders that I went through a Shalem group spiritual formation leadership training with about five years ago.

- completing a week long Community Organizing training through the Spokane Alliance. These skills and learnings will play out in numerous ways in my work this next year and for years to come and will begin with some stories collection and sharing about discipleship stories in our diocese.

- completing the first segment of Coaching training, as well as a training in Group Coaching. My plan is to incorporate coaching sessions with congregations in areas of discipleship matters, small group development, and intergenerational development.

- ongoing learning and involvement with the Sacred Design Lab out of Harvard Divinity School. This organization is on the cutting edge of innovation around designing spaces for meaningful experiences that ground people's social and spiritual lives.

This year I visited All Saints in Richland, and Grace Church in Ellensburg, as well as offering resources and conversation with many other congregations.

It has been a full year, with the gift of sabbatical right in the middle of it, and I look forward to how the Spirit will use this year of learning and depth in the next season of life and ministry together. If you have questions or would like to hear more about any of the items above, I always welcome further conversation!

Grateful to follow Jesus with you,

Andrea Oetman | Canon for Discipleship in the Diocese of Spokane

Report of Diocesan Council
October 2025 – October 2026

The Diocesan Council of the Diocese of Spokane works with the Bishop to provide financial oversight and direction for the Diocese and its congregations, guidance in setting and developing vision and mission for the Diocese, and strategic planning and implementation of diocesan vision.

Members of Diocesan Council from October 2025 to October 2026:

The Rt. Rev. Gretchen Rehberg, Bishop & President	The Rev. David Gortner, Vice President
Mr. Wayne Hawks	Ms. Lisa Church
The Rev. Jonathan Myers, Secretary	Ms. Sandi Peck
Ms Thersa Grate	The Rev. Colby Roberts
Ms. Theresa Grate	The Rev. Linda Bartholomew

***Ex officio* Members** (voice but no vote, attend periodically to assist with information and counsel):

The Rev. Susan Cleveley, Canon to the Ordinary	Ms. Caroline McCall, Canon for Cong. Development
Ms. Sarah Nowak, Office of Finance	Ms. Andrea Farley, Canon for Formation
The Rev. Dave Walker, Chair of the Foundation	The Rev. Bill Osborne, regional missioner
The Rev. Jane Schmoetzer, regional missioner	The Rev. Ashley Mather, regional missioner

Meetings: *Nov. 8, 2025; Feb. 26, 2026; May 29-30, 2026; Sept. 18-19, 2026*

Summary of meetings

The Council's work began each meeting with personal check-in, centering in prayer, and meditating and sharing reflections on scripture. During longer in-person full-day or weekend meetings, the days were punctuated by times of prayer and scripture.

The Council's work for the 2025-26 year focused on gathering feedback, conducting evaluation, and planning next steps in relation to the Strategic Plan for the Diocese. This work, along with general financial oversight, proceeded through the time of the Bishop's surgery and recovery.

Standard Fiduciary and Missional Oversight. November's meeting, during the All-Leadership Gathering, began with annual procedural matters: 1) Appointment of Trustees for the Diocesan Foundation (David Walker, Lisa Church, Sandi Peck, Jan Griffin, Dan Cenis, Chuck Kieffer); 2) Election of Council officers (David Gortner, VP; Jonathan Meyers, Sec.); 3) Council appointment to Finance Committee (Dan Bernardo); 4) Resolution for clergy designation of housing allowance; and 5) Approval of Diocesan Budget following convention amendments. This first meeting concluded with continued discussion of potential Latino mission and clergy deployment in Yakima and the Tri-Cities, and with commitment to proceeding with a year focused on evaluation and planning for next steps in relation to the 2022-25 Strategic Plan.

At each subsequent meeting, Council focused first on the status of the diocese, its congregations, and the diocesan camp. At its February meeting, Council received the concluding 2025 financial reports as being in good order. Each meeting included review of diocesan financial status and the finances of its grant programs and camp ministry, as well as the status of congregational apportionment contributions. With financial reports consistently provided in thorough fashion, the Council was able to review regularly the financial status of the Diocese, including revenues and expenditures, positions of investments and holdings.

Each meeting also included times of report from Council members regarding their congregations and the congregations of their regions. Over the course of the year, Council received and reviewed reports on major construction projects like West Central Abbey's restoration and renovation work and Camp Cross new buildings. The Council also received reports of changes to Safe Church training and clergy transitions.

Review, Evaluation, and Adaptation of Strategic Plan

For four years, the Council has sought to help and guide congregations through a process of "enriching the soil" of their faith and practice, in order to build rich fertile ground for the important work of planting, growing, and strengthening congregations – the three primary goals identified collectively across our Diocese. In order to plant, grow, and strengthen effectively and meaningfully, we needed to be deeply grounded in our faith and at ease in building connections and open-hearted welcome of our neighbors in our surrounding communities. As Paul reminded the faithful in Corinth,

> *If I speak in tongues of human beings and of angels but I don't have love, I'm a clanging gong or a clashing cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and I know all the mysteries and everything else, and if I have such complete faith that I can move mountains but I don't have love, I'm nothing. If I give away everything that I have and hand over my own body to feel good about what I've done but I don't have love, I receive no benefit whatsoever. (I Cor. 13:1-3)*

The work of "enriching the soil" was to help build the muscles and habits of love, rooted in desire to be in relationship – with Jesus, and with people in our surrounding communities. To nurture the soil, the Council worked with diocesan staff to create and provide resources and aids in helping strengthen our relationships with Jesus and our relationships with people around us. In strategic planning, Council and Staff mapped out three major areas for people's deeper growth:

- To embody the **hospitality of God**
- **Relationships with Jesus**

- Listening and learning with curiosity and courage

Council provided **tools, resources, and practices** for people to use and work with. Each year, from 2022 through 2025, these were distributed to church leaders, posted on the diocesan website, and used and practiced during regional gathering days and at diocesan convention. These included shared diocesan prayers, scriptures for reflection, daily examen prayers, and ways to practice – related each year to one of the major areas for growth, with a strong emphasis on building listening and story-sharing habits.
For 2026, the Council committed to evaluating and assessing congregational and individual participation in this several-year process of "enriching the soil," and outcomes in spiritual growth and clarity of purpose and direction in ministry and mission. Council stepped back from creating more resources, and instead asked the question, "Is what we are doing and offering helpful, is it making a difference?" Council further asked questions like, "What else has been helpful that we may not know about? What are people seeking now that we need to know?"
Council members built questions to bring to congregational members and leaders during the spring Gathering Day and in an online survey. Once reviewed and agreed, the questions were posted for responses during Gathering Day, and the online survey was dispersed for response by clergy and lay leaders in the congregations of the diocese. Responses were gathered and then sorted and reviewed in a report by Rev. Gortner. This report became a primary source of reflection and purposeful discussion during the Council's two-day meeting in May. From this discussion, Council set some fresh priorities and recalibrated goals for ongoing ministry and mission development for the diocese.
Report summary. Over 120 lay leaders and clergy offered responses either through Gathering Day tally sheets or through the online survey. The online survey responses were heavily represented by members and leaders of congregations in the Northeast region and those participating in the diocesan "Building Bridges" initiative. Gathering Day responses were more representative of those congregations that had a higher number of Gathering Day attendees. There were a few congregations for which responses were minimal or absent. While the results do not paint a perfect picture of all congregations across the diocese, they do provide a good glimpse into how our congregations participated in the aims of "enriching the soil," both through resources provided by the Council and through their own means and methods.
Among leaders and members responding, people indicated that they used these resources provided by Council from year to year (varying by year):

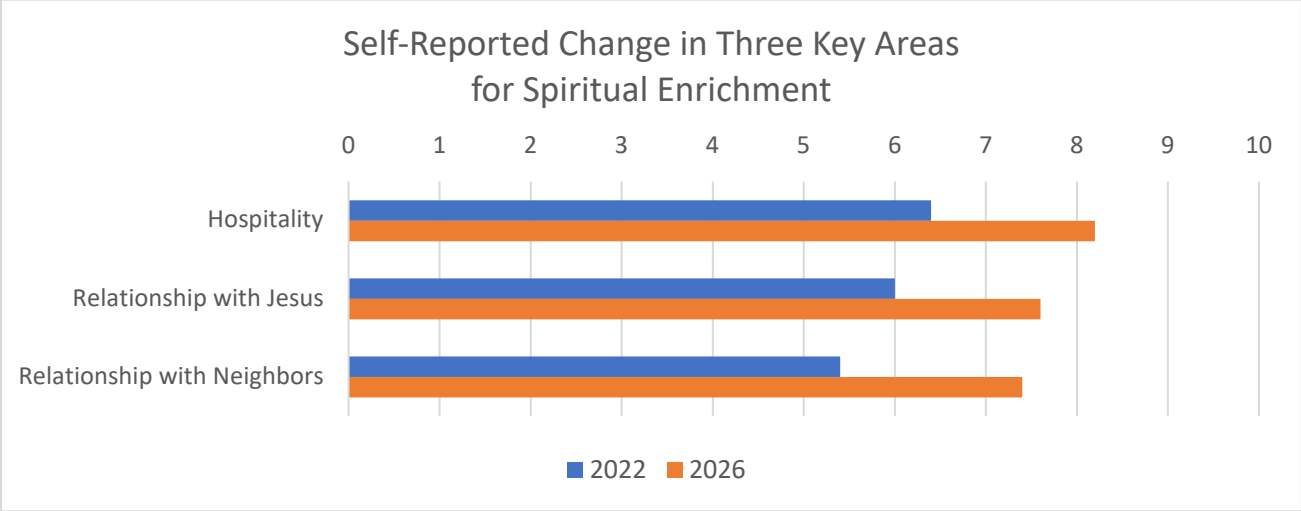
- Diocesan Prayers –
  Survey, 40%-48%
  G.D. by region, 45-80% cong., 15-70% indiv.
- Scripture Resources –
  Survey, 28%-38%
  G.D. by region, 65-90% cong., 20-60% indiv.
- Daily Examen Prayers –
  Survey, 18%-25%
  G.D. by region, 30-60% cong., 10-50% indiv.
- Meeting Review Questions –
  Survey, 18%-23%
  G.D. by region, 10-65% cong.
- Spiritual Practices (e.g., Story-Sharing) –
  Survey, 15%-28%
  G.D. by region, 35-80% cong.

Congregations that used the annual diocesan prayer did so in weekly worship, during vestry or bishop's committee meetings, and/or in meetings of different church groups. Diocesan groups used it regularly. Congregations that used and distributed the scripture resource booklets did so in vestry or bishop's committee meetings as part of reflection and formation time, in Sunday or weekday discussions (e.g., during coffee hour), in group meetings, or in individual and household study and discussion. Some congregations used the scripture resources in weekly or monthly meditations in online or printed newsletters. Diocesan groups used scripture resources to guide focused reflections.

Congregations that distributed the Daily Examen prayers did so through printing the provided bookmark for congregation members, and sometimes used them for prayer at the beginning or end of meetings. Diocesan groups and gatherings used the Daily Examen prayers regularly in worship.
Congregations that used recommended meeting review questions did so at the end of vestry or bishop's committee meetings, and sometimes at the end of other planning meetings. Diocesan leadership groups used these at the end of meetings.
Congregations that commended and modeled use of spiritual practices did so through paired or small group rehearsals and experimentations (for instance, practices in listening and sharing stories).
Diocesan staff and leaders provided other opportunities and resources. Local leaders varied in introducing and encouraging participation in these:

- Gathering Days – *Survey 75%*
- "From Many, One" Questions – *Survey 55%; G.D. regions, 10-40%*
- Monthly Zoom Sessions – *Survey 50%*
- Suggest Hospitality Expansion – *Survey 40%*
- "Being With" Sessions – *Survey 30%*
- "Braver Angels" Sessions – *Survey 25%*
- "Sacred Ground," "Beloved Community," Restorative Justice Sessions – *Survey 30%*
- Creation Care Sessions – *Survey 25%*

Regardless of congregational use of resources provided by Council, the attention by the Diocese together resulted in overall growth in the three key areas for "enriching the soil," from 2022 to 2026:



Getting a bit more specific, from Gathering Day responses, here is how people said they saw growth in their congregations' ability and commitment for each of these three key areas:

Relationship with Jesus: *Weaker – 0%* *Same – 17%-45%* *Stronger – 50%-83%*

Hospitality Efforts: *Weaker – 0%* *Same – 3%-29%* *Stronger – 62%-97%*

Listening & Learning with curiosity and courage

- Commitment to: *Weaker – 0%-3%* *Same – 20%-44%* *Stronger – 53%-80%*
- Ability in: *Weaker – 0%-4%* *Same –22%-40%* *Stronger – 56%-69%*

After reading through and discussing survey and Gathering Day responses, Council members read and considered people's written responses to open-ended questions in the online survey. These questions provided opportunity for lay leaders and clergy to offer insights into what else their congregations were offering and doing, where they saw gaps, and where they hoped to see continuing or fresh growth. These responses gave Council further insight into efforts and experiments in ministry by congregations involved with Building Bridges and the College for Congregational Development.
Following this in-depth review, the Council stepped back to name what developed and did not develop in relation to efforts with the strategic plan. What follows is an executive summary of key observations and

reflections of what has been enriched and strengthened, what gaps exist that can be addressed, and what these strengths and gaps direct the Council and Staff to do.

How has the soil been enriched? (*What has the strategic plan helped produce?*)

- ✓ There is reported growth in the past four years in hospitality, relationship with Jesus, and relationship with neighbors across one-half to three-quarters of congregations in the Diocese.
- ✓ There is a growing culture of experimentation that has been nurtured in Building Bridges and the College for Congregational Development
- ✓ Some congregations have already developed or found excellent, creative resources beyond those of the Diocese
- ✓ There is fresh openness to ecumenical connections, and eagerness to build these connections
- ✓ Given the current realities of life in the U.S., there is increased watchfulness and worry for neighbors, particularly for immigrants and refugees, and for LGBTQ+ people and networks
- ✓ There is increasing ease and embrace of Jesus and language about Jesus, countering and reversing an era of diminished direct speech about Jesus.

Where are the gaps? *(What has been missed?)*

- One-third to one-half of congregations (or their representatives) indicated no growth, instead indicating stasis, in the key areas of hospitality, relationship with Jesus, and relationship with neighbors through listening and learning with curiosity and courage
- There remains room for continuing growth and support of what has grown in these three key areas
- Listening and learning with curiosity and courage remains the weaker of the three key areas, despite growth
  - People wrestle with finding courage for direct conversation, and with basic skills and confidence in how open conversation, how to make initial connection, and even how to invite
  - Some communities and individuals still express resistance to the idea of conversation with neighbors, and also to the ideas and practices of healthy evangelism, public engagement, and faith-rooted building of partnerships
- Resource use by clergy and congregations depends in part on timeliness of resource deployment – some congregations plan their Christian formation plans for the program year before Fall each given year, and diocesan resources did not get deployed until near the end of each year or in the new year
- Congregations need additional "How-to" helps, resources, and practice trainings
- Clergy and key lay leaders can sometimes function as gatekeepers and do not intentionally open and encourage participation in use of resources provided
- Congregations do not know each other's strengths in resources, tools, or initiatives that strengthen and support "soil enrichment" and growth in the key areas and other areas
- People need to be equipped with and encouraged to engage with ways to argue and contest against their own internalized scripts that resist connection with others and verbalization of their faith
- People need community leadership development, with a focus on "How to" partner with other organizations, groups, faith communities in their areas.

What Council & Staff need to do for the sake of the Diocese

- ❖ Continue to work on "enriching the soil," but really emphasize the next work of building skills and capacities specific to planting, growing, and strengthening congregations
- ❖ Continue to provide resources that many churches will put to good use
- ❖ Make sure resources are prepared, finalized, and deployed in a timely way, by mid-summer so that planning congregations can consider in advance and plan for use in the fall-spring program year
- ❖ Invite churches that plan ahead to share their plans and resources with other congregations
- ❖ Build a process and repository for collecting, connecting, and distributing different congregations' resources around the Diocese
- ❖ Make more opportunities for sharing projects and ideas among congregations at gatherings

- ❖ Partner with congregations and organizations in building community conversations and connections

In order to emphasize what is needed next, Council focused on the three major desires/goals of the Diocese: Planting new faith communities, Growing congregations, and Strengthening congregations in need. In discussion, Council first considered congregations that exemplify positive movement in each of these major goals, identifying strengths contributing to their growth or development. From that discussion, Council then developed focused objectives for planting, growing, and strengthening.

Planting – current example: There are currently two mission-plant congregations under ongoing development in the Diocese. There has also been an effort to develop and nurture Latino congregations, in two locations – but with an extended and challenged search for the right missioner for Latino ministry.

- ✞ West Central Abbey, Spokane – This plant began with a goal of ecumenical partnership between Episcopal and United Methodist denominations and was built and rooted through community organizing connections in the neighborhood and wider city. It has sought to reach people with "church baggage" and negative history in their church experiences, including religious trauma. A major attractor and core part of its identity is an ongoing invitation to creativity.
- ✞ Methow Valley – This plant began with a family, with particular strength of a key matriarch. It has grown by invitation, with ads now further contributing to its draw.

In both cases, the strength and power of growth comes down to leadership – Leaders who are energetic, focused, and capable.

Planting – next needs:

- ➢ Spark imagination – share videos of successful plants, invite speakers or members from plants to speak, etc.
- ➢ Develop planters – teach and train core leaders and key members to set and meet this goal of planting congregations. While there is strong desire and goal to plan, the Diocese needs to build knowledge and train people specifically in this process, we will continue working with the wider church in training church planting teams
- ➢ Continue and intensify the search for Latino / Spanish-speaking planters
- ➢ Interview and converse with successful planters (here and elsewhere, Episcopal and ecumenical), asking "what did you do," "how did you do it," "was there a turning point," and other questions – to learn best practices directly from practitioners
- ➢ Set key objectives and timeline with existing plants and for future plants
- ➢ Tap strongly into networks to find resources and potential partners (Episcopal, ecumenical, civic/local)
- ➢ Decide and commit strategically to the next places and accompanying investments for plants
- ➢ Make decisions and develop policies regarding property use and, when needed, rental or purchase, for plants
- ➢ Explore possibility of shared plants (ecumenically)

Growing – current examples: Council considered two congregations that are exhibiting signs of solid growth in some areas of ministry, and recovery of Sunday attendance post-COVID.

- ✞ Church of the Resurrection, Rosyln – The congregation as added a "Terra Divina" service which has seen a great deal of interest and attendance from the wider community. They are exploring how this service, which has attracted many who were not participating in Sunday morning worship, may inform and assist with additional growth on Sundays. By noticing and meeting the needs of the local community they are seeing significant growth in participation in this ministry.

- ✞ All Saints Church, Richland – The congregation's attendance is returning to pre-pandemic levels, thanks in no small part to the strengths of their music and children ministries. A key area of growth has been in public service and community engagement: All Saints has since the pandemic offered space-use to the wider community, beginning with an emergency warming shelter. The church grew in knowledge and skill in ministry with people in vulnerable situations and with mental health challenges. From their

learning, they have offered trainings, and they have made intentional asks and invitations to other churches and area organizations.

In both cases, the strength of growth comes from willingness to step into bold new experiments and step outside ideas of "normal" church functions – and is undergirded by trusting and empowering leadership.

Growing – next needs:

- Ask – Connect – Invite – Reach Out. Teach, train, and practice these skills with all congregations, to build new habits
- Encourage and train for "Next Level" hospitality – beyond warm welcome, moving fully into open conversation, listening, follow-up, intentional reaching out, and connecting with people by their interests and gifts
- Encourage and press for clarity for each congregation in its vision, mission, and purpose – and for owning and embodying it
- Help congregations to focus – to choose an area of ministry and then build & strengthen it – with "what we do exceptionally well" as a starting point
- Help people shift from competitive and scarcity mindsets, foster creative and collaborative ideas
- Help congregations promote and do good P.R. about what they are doing that is good, enriching, new

Strengthening – current example: One example particularly arose in Council discussion, as a smaller congregation becoming stronger and growing as a result.

- Grace Church, Ellensburg – The congregation has seen a doubling in average Sunday attendance, and a solid commitment to Bible study, prayer, and spiritual growth together as well as stronger community presence and engagement. The steady presence of resident clergy has helped tremendously, as well as the ability to celebrate and share Holy Communion through the diocesan-approved rite of distribution from the reserve sacrament. Livestreaming the service has contributed to the increase in attendance and wider outreach.

Strengthening – next needs:

- Discuss tools to seek and build momentum, to reach "critical mass" in building a ministry or increasing a group
- Help congregations identify their passions and strengths
- Reflect back to congregations what others observe as their passions and strengths
- Help strengthen muscles and motivation for the actions needed and desired to change
- Encourage members and leaders to enroll in IONA courses
- Guide congregations in learning how to share with and partner with other churches (Episcopal and ecumenical)

Setting Clear Next Steps and Goals

From this intensive review, the Council is moving into goal setting for the next year, three years, and five years. Undergirding all our goals and next steps is the reminder that we are not responsible for our own salvation, that we are simply called to follow Jesus and to find and participate in the work God is already doing in the world.