



2024 ANNUAL REPORT

This has been an exuberant year of leaning into God's call and uniting in our common lives together as followers of Jesus. Our budget reflects this robust year of activity throughout our diocesan programming and tells who we are and why we are here.

We raise up disciples.

One of the most heart-lifting events this year happened at youth summer camp after campers studied C.S. Lewis' "The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe" which then led the youth to ask the hard questions of faith and ended in nearly a dozen baptisms in Lake Texoma with those who were church and unchurched. This is the culmination of the faithful work of the Rev. Katie Gerber who is the Canon for the Youth Program and Camp. She oversees curriculum, music, activities, housing, dining hall, worship and coordinates clergy volunteers, all in effort to lead children to Jesus and create disciples. In addition, Gerber created programming throughout the year where she offered an instructional acolyte festival and honed-in on teaching about how to serve others at church and in the world. This year she took a group of youth on a mission trip to Mescalero Apache Reservation in addition to a trip to a farm in East Texas and local outings and activities in North Texas.



We are world leaders.



Just recently, our diocesan evangelist, Canon Carrie Headington participated in a panel discussion of the Lausanne Congress in Seoul, Korea, with other global evangelist greats talking about God's mission empowered by the Holy Spirit among other topics. While Headington's reach is far, her work in the diocese is closest to her heart where she has focused on workshops, retreats and consultations to teach congregations best practices in sharing the Gospel in word and action. She also led diocesan Parish Leadership Day, where two experts on demographics in the church discussed the declining membership in churches across all denominations and ways to address it. Headington also managed Parish Leadership Day where experts in their field talked about the ins and outs of church operations in finance, communication, catechesis, formation and grant writing. The diocesan evangelism outreach extends ecumenically to South Dallas where she has built relationships with African American churches and has united their leadership and congregations with those in the diocese.

Discernment is our call.

The Commission on Ministry, which is led by Sandy Mebus, helps others who hear the call to serve determine whether to pursue Holy Orders or lay leadership. The members on this commission view their role as discerning the needs of the Church and the needs for individual formation, education and training for those in the process. They strive to ensure that individual talents are developed in a way that will point them to good use for the needs of the world. This year the commission welcomed 19 folks from within the diocese to the discernment retreat with seven of those showing interest in the diaconate. Post Covid, this shows hope and renewal of the Church at the local level. The commission continues to build a new relationship with Baylor University in Waco, Texas as the school develops a new Anglican tract that would allow discerners the chance to be bi-vocational. This is important as the diocese is still a strong magnate nationally for those who want to come to an orthodox diocese to discern orders.



We help others to grow in faith.

The Stanton Institute led by the Rev. Louis Harris serves as a place to take theological coursework in topics such as Old and New Testament, church history, evangelism and more. The most popular classes and programs, about 90 percent of the school's attendance, are taught by the Rt. Rev. Michael Smith who teaches three courses on spiritual direction where students focus on their own spiritual disciplines, meet with a spiritual director and begin the work of guiding others. Additionally, he has recently started a class on healing prayer with the goal of bringing healing prayer ministries back to our churches. Many of the institute's classes are hybrid in that some students are in the classroom and others are in the class virtually. This has brought an enriching experience with students participating from all corners of the diocese, others from Albany, New York and still more from Ghana and Kenya. Smith also leads two popular Benedictine retreats to Lake Texoma where students worship, spend time reflecting on Benedictine practices and resting in God's presence.



We love our retired clergy.

The Rev. David Petrash brings compassion and love to his role of taking care of the pastoral needs of retired clergy and their spouses. This ministry includes sending them birthday cards, phone calls, prayers, visits, and pastoral counseling to let them know they are remembered. As a somewhat "retired" clergyman himself, Petrash also enjoys hosting a luncheon every year where retired clergy and their spouses can have a meal, visit and catch up.



Helping small churches is our ministry.

Almost all of our programming focuses on lifting-up our churches, particularly those that do good works but have few resources. The communications department led by Kimberly Durnan serves to not only create and oversee clear communications from the Bishop's Office but to share in the ministry of small churches with help on communication best practices, overcoming technical challenges and sometimes providing funding. The communications department is developing a new diocesan website that will connect to satellite websites for some of our mission churches to help them have an accurate and clear online presence.

Clergy spouses are our ministry partners.



The Clergy Family Commission led by Stephanie Hodgkins brings together clergy spouses and sometimes the entire clergy family to share in their community of similar experiences and ministries. Being the spouse of a clergy person is different than other ministries in our Church life and for them to spend time with others in similar roles brings support, community and comfort.

This group comes together for lunches, day trips, gatherings for Epiphany, spiritual reflection and other events.

Yoking to ease the burden.

During this challenging season of the Church where demographics have shown congregational decline, we are creatively working to keep our beloved smaller churches in play. The Affiliated Parishes of Northeast Texas is a model for connecting smaller churches in East Texas to the largest church, St. Dunstan's in Mineola, to share in resources, clergy, intercessory prayer, potlucks and mission so that they have a larger church community and can keep the doors open. This has resulted in growth and an increase of baptisms and confirmations for some of these churches.

We made friends and we voted.

This was a General Convention year where the diocese sends our three bishops and several delegates who serve in the House of Deputies. The weeklong affair includes worship, social activities, and voting on legislation that governs the Episcopal Church. The group also elected the next Presiding Bishop, Sean Rowe, and the House of Deputies president.

It was an opportunity to build friendships with Episcopalians from throughout the nation and participate in the governance of the Church.



Most importantly, we shepherd the flock.

The Rt. Rev. George Sumner serves us all as the Ecclesiastical authority of the diocese. The day-to-day duties are filled with the joyful rhythms of baptisms, confirmations, ordinations, and clergy placements. The broader crozier sweep illustrates Sumner's work to create a global Anglican catechism, the ordination of a church planter for Celina, Texas, and inviting to our churches the group Threaded, an organization that teaches others how to bring the Gospel to racial conflict. Sumner hired more curates for our churches and led progress of the Affiliated Parishes in Northeast Texas, where the spiritual fruits of growth, baptism, confirmations, prayer life, and community have brought inspiration to churches in other regions of the diocese that seek a similar way forward during this season of decline in the Church.



The bishop continues to spend time on ecumenical relationships with churches and congregations in South Dallas. He also nurtures relationships with our Anglican sisters and brothers by extending invitations to the global Anglican communion to come to Dallas. Most recently he has invited clergy from Africa to come to spend their sabbaticals in our Diocese, where they preach in our churches and share the Gospel in refreshing ways. Last year the diocese hosted the Rt. Rev. Felix Annancy from Ghana and this year we are hosting Archbishop Israel Amoo from Nigeria.

