Diocese of Nebraska

Council Reports

2017
In 2017, the Bishop and Trustees of the Diocese of Nebraska and the Executive Commission held three of their four quarterly meetings jointly. Each body held one independent meeting.

Joint Meetings
A joint meeting of the Bishop and Trustees of the Diocese of Nebraska and the Executive Commission was held on **December 10, 2016**, at Trinity Cathedral in Omaha. After opening the meeting with prayer and a brief reflection, Bishop Barker reported on the House of Bishops, the diocesan staff, clergy leadership development, opportunities for service and mission, ministries with children and youth, and basic finances. Canon Easton provided a report on parishes in transition, along with upcoming clergy retirements and recent ordinations. Beth Byrne, Director of Finance, reviewed the third quarter financial statements and led a discussion on the current budget. The Rev. Phil Chapman reported on the status of Grace Church in Tecumseh. After considering a proposal from St. David’s in Lincoln regarding the status of their loan, the Bishop and Trustees voted to amend the terms of the loan from the Revolving Loan Fund. The Rev. Susanna DesMarais reported on the recommendations of the Building Insurance Task Group, and the Executive Commission voted to refer a proposed resolution regarding policies on building and liability insurance to Annual Council. The Rev. Marisa Tabizon Thompson presented information regarding restructuring diocesan governance committees and distributed a report highlighting key concerns and questions for both bodies to consider. Brother James Dowd, Monk-in-Residence, updated the group on developments in his ministry. Bishop Barker closed the meeting in prayer.

A joint virtual meeting of the Bishop and Trustees of the Diocese of Nebraska and the Executive Commission was held on **April 27, 2017**. Bishop Barker opened the meeting with prayer and reflection, then provided a report on Holy Week and Easter visitations, the challenges of political divisions within our congregations, and recent experiments in communications strategies within the diocesan office. Canon Easton provided a report on parish transitions. The Rev. Marisa Tabizon Thompson provided an update on the work of a small restructuring committee, which gathered feedback from the Executive Commission at its last meeting. Having submitted a proposal for consideration, both committees were invited to contribute what they perceived to be the strengths and weaknesses of the proposal and to ask further questions of the larger group. Beth Byrne, Director of Finance, and Jeff Pirruccello, Treasurer, reviewed the first quarter financial statements and provided updates on 2017 Faith Asking. The Executive Commission considered a letter from Christ Church in Beatrice, who declined to accept their Faith Asking reassessment. The Rev. Ernesto Media moved an additional reassessment along with the formation of a small advisory group to work with Christ Church on developing a strategy to accept their full faith asking in 2018. Beth Byrne reported that St. David’s accepted the new terms of their loan and elected to pay the remaining principal in one installment. Bishop Barker closed the meeting in prayer.

A joint meeting of the Bishop and Trustees of the Diocese of Nebraska and the Executive Commission was held **September 8 – 9, 2017** at St. Augustine of Canterbury in Elkhorn. The meeting began with a
celebration of the Holy Eucharist, the Rev. Benedict Varnum presiding. Bishop Barker called the meeting to order with introductions and reflection, and Canon Easton led the group through a Bible study. After dinner, Bishop Barker updated the group on the most recent draft of the restructuring legislation, which included two proposed changes to the Constitution and one proposed change to the Canons of the diocese. Beth Byrne, Director Finance, reported on current financial statements for both bodies. The Rev. Marisa Tabizon Thompson moved that the Bishop and Trustees continue its current spending policy of a 4% draw on investments based on an average balance of the past twelve quarters. Bishop Barker introduced the draft of the 2018 budget by reporting on mission priorities and diocesan values. Beth Byrne presented the 2018 draft budget and discussion continued until the close of the day. The Bishop and Trustees were dismissed. The following morning, the Executive Commission began the meeting with prayer before continuing to discuss the draft budget. Decisions were made to: adjust the Faith Asking formula to lower the top tier to 15.5% and increase the camp budget by $1,000 to be used for the Camp Director’s compensation. All approved the amended budget. Bishop Barker closed the meeting in prayer.

Executive Commission
A meeting of the Executive Commission was held on February 11, 2017 at St. Stephen’s in Grand Island. The meeting began with a celebration of Holy Eucharist, the Rt. Rev. J. Scott Barker presiding. The meeting continued with introductions and reflection in small groups. Bishop Barker provided a report on the Bishop’s Society and on diocesan governance. Canon Easton provided a report on parishes in transition and upcoming ordinations and retirements. The group participated in a discussion of current diocesan structures, focusing especially on strengths, challenges, representation, and values. Beth Byrne, Director of Finance, reviewed the fourth quarter financial statements and discussed the current budget. Beth also provided an update on Faith Asking, and the group considered reassessments as requested. Bishop Barker closed the meeting in prayer.

Bishop and Trustees
The Bishop and Trustees of the Diocese of Nebraska met on March 23, 2017 at the Clarkson Center in Omaha. Bishop Barker opened the meeting with prayer, scripture, and an opportunity for the group to check in with one another. Bishop Barker provided a report on the recent House of Bishops meeting, Presiding Bishop Curry’s 2018 visit to Nebraska, and the ministry of Brother James Dowd, Monk-in-Residence. Canon Easton provided a report on recent clergy transitions in the diocese. Bishop Barker updated the group on the restructuring discussion that took place at the recent Executive Commission meeting. Jeff Pirruccello, Treasurer, presented a review of the 2016 financial statements as well as First National Bank’s year-end report. Beth Byrne, Director of Finance, reported on the Supplemental Parochial Report. The body considered a letter from St. David’s in Lincoln, regarding the decision that the Bishop and Trustees made at their December 10, 2016 meeting pertaining to their loan. Discussion followed. The Rev. Jeffrey Nelson moved that the Bishop and Trustees request a payment of $25,000 from St. David’s, then an additional payment of $25,000 over the course of the next five years. Payments must be made regularly and St. David’s must accept and pay their full Faith Asking in each of those five years. If all of those terms are met, the remainder of the loan will be forgiven. The motion was seconded and carried. Bishop Barker closed the meeting in prayer.

Respectfully submitted, The Rev. Canon Elizabeth Easton, Clerk
Bishop & Trustees Task Group for Building Insurance

In September, 2016, Bishop and Trustees tasked a small subgroup to examine the diocesan policies regarding building insurance for our church buildings. The group included the following people: Rev. Marisa Tabizon Thompson, Rev. Susanna DesMarais, Liz Jones, Nan Smutko, Jeff Pirruccello, treasurer, Woody Bradford, chancellor.

Some of the issues regarding building and liability insurance that we examined were:

1. Canonical requirements in Nebraska, other dioceses and national canons.
2. Programs to enable/aid churches to meet insurance costs: What happens to uninsured parishes?
3. Levels and scope of insurance to be required.

It was generally agreed that care and protection of our buildings and specifically liability is an issue of wise stewardship of resources. Local canons (section 14) on stewardship and at-risk congregations say nothing about insuring our buildings, which are owned technically by the Diocese. (Liability issues are a major concern.)

After reviewing written canons of several dioceses and speaking directly with a couple of dioceses, we have determined the following:

1. Written policies on building and liability insurance vary widely throughout the US from very specific and detailed canons to no coverage at all.
2. Diocesan policies on how to address the issue of maintaining building and liability insurance for parishes vary. Wyoming has a specifically helpful policy that we should examine for possible use in Nebraska.
3. There are no national canons regarding this; dioceses owns the properties not the ECUSA.

In reviewing our situation in Nebraska we made the following recommendations:

1. A yearly proof of insurance should be submitted to the diocesan office.
2. The level of insurance should be determined by diocesan office, including liability requirements for each church.
3. Canonical requirement: using the Diocese of Los Angeles canon as a template (with small modifications), we propose a similar canon be submitted:
   a. Each parish shall at all times maintain policies of property, liability, and workers’ compensation insurance consistent with minimum standards established from time to time by the Bishop and diocesan officers. Annually each parish shall report the following to the financial officer/Treasurer of the diocese:
      i. name of the issuing insurer;
      ii. policy number;
      iii. effective and expiration dates;
      iv. limits of liability of coverage; and
      v. such other information and documentation as may be requested by the diocesan officers or the Treasurer.
Further conversations on how to handle churches unable to obtain insurance could include a policy for applying for a loan in order to obtain insurance (this is where the protocols established by the Diocese of Wyoming would be helpful as a starting point.)

Respectfully submitted,
The Rev. Susanna DesMarais, member of Bishop and Trustees, Church of the Holy Trinity, Lincoln
I’ve been at a loss for words to describe Camp Canterbury 2017. I started to tell you camp was huge – our largest group yet, with 98 campers registered from 19 DioNeb parishes. And I needed to share about the 22 brave souls who served on our camp staff - about their tireless energy for camp ministry; and about the way they welcome our youth with a grace and enthusiasm that breaks down barriers and builds up hearts. I was going to be sure to mention our camp service project, and the 100 care packages we made for children who seek services from the Bridge (formerly Crisis Center) in Fremont.

But a dash board of stats doesn’t tell the whole story of camp; it doesn’t convey the human experience of community. Numbers can’t tell you how a cabin of first time campers bond or how our annual talent show can restore your faith in humanity. Stats might help you gauge growth, but they can’t measure the value of renewing friendships or the amount of gratitude a counselor feels when they stagger into the morning staff meeting and see that Bishop Barker brewed the coffee.

But where numbers fail, stories prevail. Stories can add depth of understanding; they can offer perspective through detail and point of view. Stories can inspire and unify; they can tease out our sense of humor or crack open our guarded and jaded hearts. Jesus himself, was no stranger to the power of a story to move hearts and minds.

This year, we spent a lot of time focused on story telling; with the idea that if we knew our neighbors better, we might be able to love them better. If we could tell our own story, that would build a bridge of understanding. If we could understand and be understood, we might just edge a little closer to a kinder, gentler world. The theme of Light from Light was all about recognizing that we are children of God, and are therefore called to be light bearers in this world.

To that end we welcomed some special guests to camp. On Tuesday, we laid a foundation for our theme by welcoming Anne Barker. She spent a morning teaching us how to be better listeners – and why being heard matters. On Wednesday afternoon, we learned how to articulate our own stories; and how doing so helps us process and understand ourselves on another level. Oral story teller, Jess McCallie, facilitated an interactive workshop with our middle school campers in which they picked an experience from their own lives to craft into an outline, and then had the chance to share. On Thursday four teaching artists from the Nebraska Writer’s Collective presented a workshop on slam poetry. There was a fair amount of skepticism from our campers who were pretty certain this poetry thing was going to be a dumb waste of time. But these talented teaching artists opened up by presenting a few of their own poems – and in the way of all good slam poetry, had these camper’s attention by the end of the first line. And at the bonfire later that evening, some of our campers wowed us by performing some of their original poems.

And all week long, our counselors modeled the power of our own story by concluding each meal time by sharing a three-minute story. These counselor stories were not only beautiful witnesses of community, love, transformation, and grace, they were also real-life examples of courage, vulnerability and strength.
It was a rich and transformative week of sharing that reminded me that, at its heart, camp is about the community, about the relationships forged as we duct tape in the craft room, dodge a fast ball in the gaga pit, or veg out in hammock village.

We shape that community with prayer and play, and center it around worship and welcome, but camp will always be about that sacred community that is formed when we gather in the name of Jesus. It’s the kind of community that bears light in a dark world.

A few notes of thanksgiving:

- My deepest thanks and gratitude to our camp staff: Chris Mattson, Wes Agar, Susanna Des Marais, Tar Drazdowski, Heath Hovendick, Ben Varnum, Abi Heller, Pam Williams, John Adams, Steven King, Claire Atkins, Jordyn Reese, Tony Anderson, Kyle Martin, Sarah Miller, Anne Hebert and Trudy Schnell. There are no words to express how grateful I am for your commitment to our campers and our camp program. Without your passion, creativity and loving presence, camp would not be possible.
- Nurse Skye, it’s no small task to care for the health needs of 120 people, but you do an amazing job at it and I’m grateful. Thanks for taking time off work to come work at camp.
- Fr Mark Selvey and the Western Deanery, thank you for having faith in a minibus, and the courage to go out on a limb.
- Lindsey Rowe and Beth Byrne, thanks for all you do behind the scenes to get us ready for camp. And thank you for still taking my phone calls. And for giving me the credit card number.
- Ellen King, I can’t tell you how grateful I am for your willingness to jump in and support camp barely months after moving into the diocese. Your wisdom and experience gave us a chance to look at camp through a new lens.
- If you’ve ever tie dyed, you know how messy and labor intensive rinsing your creation can be. Now imaging having to rinse about 120 tie dyed items. Now imagine the master camp tie dyer taking a tumble, and injured an arm right before camp. Thanks be to God for Amy Anderson who gamely said yes to helping us out of this jam - even though it meant giving up one of her last days off right before she started and new job.
- I’m in awe of the warmth and detail oriented-efficiency of our check in volunteers. Special thanks to Leslie Lewis, Mary Jane Smith, Barb Alf, Pam Eby, Nicole Cloudt, Erin Sloan and Angie Gallegos.
- As much as you love camp, Canon Easton and Bishop Barker, I’m well aware that it’s not easy to be away from your office and your daily lives for a whole week. It’s a huge gift to our camp ministry that you are present and we appreciate it very much. Thanks for supporting camp in this sacrificial way.
- Thank you to our DioNeb parishes who send campers, go without their clergy for a week, and who provide financial support and scholarships so that no child will ever miss camp because of money. And special thanks to St. Thomas, Falls City, ASA 12 people. You may not have any children camp age at your church, but thanks to your camp scholarship funds, you were able to send a child to camp. Thank you for all of this love and support. Without it, camp wouldn’t be nearly as successful as it is. Keep camp in your prayers and be sure to stop by our camp table for more information and our 2018 save the date magnets.

Thank you for your continued support of camp.

Faithfully Submitted by Noelle Ptomey, Camp Director.
Clarkson College, 2017

The 2016-17 academic year was another strong and impressive year at Clarkson College with accomplishments attained through hard work and discipline, and by the dedication of our students, faculty, staff, and Board of Directors.

The 2016-17 year resulted in exciting achievements including the College receiving national recognition for the sixth year in a row from U.S. News & World Report, another record-breaking spring semester in new student enrollment, our continued consistency of high board pass rates and job placement among our graduates, as well as ending the year with a significant positive variance to budget. These examples give me great confidence in where we have been and is a strong indicator of where we are headed as a Mission-led organization dedicated to preparing students.

AWARDS & RECOGNITION

The academic awards and recognitions during the 2016-17 year, included:

Online Graduate Nursing Program Ranked U.S. News & World Report ranked Clarkson College 39th out of 147 eligible institutions in the nation in the category of 2016 Best Online Graduate Nursing Programs, making it the top ranked school in Nebraska. This is the sixth consecutive year the College has been recognized by U.S. News & World Report.

Clarkson College Nurse Practitioner Program Affordable Colleges Online, a leading resource for online learning and college affordability information, ranked Clarkson College No. 28 in the nation in the category of Best Online Nurse Practitioner Programs for 2016-17.

Clarkson College Named Among Top Nebraska Schools for Online Education and ROI Affordable Colleges Online, a leading resource for online learning and college affordability information, ranked Clarkson College No. 3 in Nebraska for return on investment of a college education and 6th in the category of Best Online Colleges in Nebraska for 2016-17.

Clarkson College Nursing Leadership Program Ranks 14th in U.S. The Best Master’s Degrees ranked the Clarkson College online Master’s degree in Nursing Health Care Administration (NHCA) program 14th in the nation out of 96 accredited schools in the category of the most affordable online MSN in Nursing Leadership programs.

Ranked Among Top 10 Online Health Informatics Bachelor’s Degree Programs Clarkson College ranked fourth among the top 10 online Health Informatics Bachelor’s degree programs in the U.S. by Health Informatics Degree Center.

Clarkson College Medical Imaging Program 6th in National Online Ranking Online Colleges ranked the Clarkson College Bachelor’s degree in Medical Imaging sixth in the nation in the category of Best Online Colleges for Radiologic Sciences.

Clarkson College MHA Program Ranks 4th in National Online Rankings Online Colleges ranked the Clarkson College Master’s degree in Health Care Administration (MHA) program fourth in the nation in the category of Best Online Colleges for Healthcare Administration.
Clarkson College Online MHA Program Ranks 18th in U.S.

Top Master’s in Healthcare Administration ranked Clarkson College 18th in the nation in the category of 20 Best Online Master’s in Health Administration (MHA) Degree Programs. Clarkson College Ranked 22nd Best Online College in U.S.

Best Colleges ranked Clarkson College 22nd in the nation and as the only higher education institution in Nebraska on its Best Accredited Online Bachelor’s Degree Colleges of 2016 list.

ACCREDITATION
The College continues preparation for our upcoming accreditation visit in Academic Year 2018-19 by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC). Throughout the past year, teams of employees have been working on five criterion outlined by the HLC and have been gathering supporting evidence. The next step is to address any gaps and to begin writing the assurance argument. The College is confident our accreditation will be successful.

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS & SERVICES
The commitment to quality education at Clarkson College is evident in the high licensure exam pass rate (94%) and employment rate (91%). All Clarkson College student outcomes are annually updated and available online for transparency purposes.

Clarkson College addressed Quality Improvement Initiatives as a significant component in our Annual Strategic Plan. These efforts included the implementation of a new Learning Management System; Canvas, our HLC Pathways Initiative and updating Assessment.

FINANCES & PERSONNEL
The 2016-17 Academic Year closed favorably with a positive variance of $1.7 million to budget with credit going to the College directors for fiscal discipline throughout the year. Clarkson College practices accountability through monthly variance reports and budget explanations during Operations Council.

The 2017-18 Academic Year budget was approved and included an increase in tuition of 3.5%, maintaining our proud stance as the most competitive of all private colleges in Nebraska, and the creation of new positions at the College to better educate and serve our students.

The Employee Opinion Survey was conducted in January 2017 with an 86% participation rate (117 employees) resulting in an excellent positive engagement score of 86.8% (1.5% higher than 2016). When comparing the results to all other educational institution nationwide, Clarkson College scored 3.2% more favorable.

ENROLLMENT
The 2016-17 enrollment goals were met with 596 new students to the College and a total of 1,250 students overall. Our spring semester had a record 179 new students as compared to 146 and 139 respectively. As the fall 2017 semester begins, we expect our credit hours to remain stable and consistent with last year’s record totals, with an estimate of 2% above our budget projections.
The College will continue to grow the programs where there is capacity, specifically our online programs, and continue to focus on quality and student retention.

**FACILITIES**
Several capital improvements were completed in 2016-17 including an investment in IT infrastructure, new classroom and residence hall furniture, an upgraded fire alarm system and Radiologic Technology equipment.
A team is currently working on the Master Facilities Plan to prioritize needs to continue to achieve the Mission of the organization. The initial report reflects the need of more classroom, study and office space. The plan will be written to address the needs of facilities, technology and equipment for the next five years.

**CONCLUSION**
Clarkson College is currently in a strong position as we move into the next academic year, with consistency in enrollment and positive outcomes to high student and employee satisfaction. As the need for health care providers increase in the market, specifically the current need for nurses, we will continue to partner with Nebraska Medicine and other facilities to help fill that gap by graduating high-quality, ethical and compassionate health care professionals.

Respectfully submitted,
Tony Damewood, Ph.D.
President
Clergy Compensation Committee, 2017

The Bishop’s Advisory Committee for Clergy Compensation conducts an annual review of the financial compensation of the full time clergy of the Diocese of Nebraska and prepares guidelines to assist congregations with their negotiations with clergy for compensation.

In order to successfully call and retain clergy to serve Nebraska congregations, we must compensate clergy at a level that is competitive on a regional and national level.

The 2018 recommended compensation schedule includes only a minimum salary standard for the diocese. Parishes should consider years of service; cost of living adjustments; merit increases when appropriate; and market conditions when negotiating salary. The diocesan office can provide resources to help a parish determine current market rates for clergy compensation.

Other Recommendations:

• It is a best practice for the Vestry and Rector to arrange for an Annual Mutual Ministry Review.
• It is a best practice that conversation about compensation be held at a time separate from the Mutual Ministry Review. Compensation conversations are a good time to discuss any “merit” or “time in service” increases.
• Annual planning retreats for Vestry and Clergy provide good opportunities to discuss the goals and work plans of Clergy and Lay Leadership for the next year.
• **We recommend a 1% cost of living adjustment for all clergy for 2018 to account for inflation.**
• Travel expense reimbursement is to be paid at the current IRS rate. (See exception for supply clergy below)
• Full time clergy should be covered **only under the Diocesan Medical Insurance Plan**, or have insurance that is fully comparable to that of the diocesan plan through spousal insurance or other preexisting insurance. If the diocesan “high deductible” plan is selected, parishes are required to cover at least ½ of the deductible. The parish should fund the clergy’s Health Savings Account at the beginning of each quarter.
• All incoming full time should be paid 7.65% in addition to their cash compensation to offset “SECA” taxes. See notes under “base for clergy compensation”.
• It is a best practice for priests serving in full–time paid cures to take a time of sabbatical leave every seven years. Clergy should negotiate the terms of sabbatical leave – including how supply coverage and sabbatical support will be paid for - at the time of their hiring or during their annual review.
• Family leave for newborns and adoptions are important for both mothers and fathers. Per CPG guidelines, we recommend at least twelve weeks of leave for birthing parents, and at least three weeks of leave for non-birthing parents.

Supply Priest Compensation

| One service, one location | $100 plus travel reimbursement |
| Two services, on location | $135 plus travel reimbursement |
| Each additional service on location | $35.00 per service extra |
For example, if a church has four services over a weekend, the compensation would be $205 plus travel reimbursement. Travel reimbursement rates may be negotiated by the parish and clergy for supply work. A reimbursement rate of 28 cents per mile is recommended.

2017 – Base for Clergy Compensation

The minimum compensation standard for a priest in the Diocese of Nebraska working full time is $50,000 except for curates, whose compensation shall be negotiated between the priest, the diocese, and the parish to whom the curate is assigned.

“SECA” tax of 7.65% of compensation should be added for all new incoming clergy and should be strongly considered by those parishes who do not currently offer it. *

The total compensation figure above does not include health, life and disability insurance or other benefits as may be negotiated between the clergy and parish.

Church pension fund payments are mandatory, even for supply clergy under certain circumstances. For example, if supply clergy earns $200 for three consecutive months, pension is mandatory. Please contact Beth Byrne at the diocesan office if you have any questions about this.

IRS rules for clergy are different than for a normal employment situation. Compensation (excluding benefits) can be divided between “salary” and “housing”. Please contact the diocesan office for guidance in how to set each category, especially if the parish supplies a rectory as part of compensation. Otherwise, clergy can designate whatever portion of total compensation they wish as “housing allowance” within IRS guidelines and as designated by the vestry each year in December.

WHEN ISSUING A W-2 FORM FOR CLERGY PLEASE CONSULT WITH BETH BYRNE AT THE DIOCESAN OFFICE.

*Clergy are considered “self-employed” for IRS tax purposes and pay the full 15.5% tax on their earnings.

Respectfully submitted,
The Rev. Dr. John Schaefer, Clergy Compensation Chair
Commission on Ministry, 2017

The Commission on Ministry (COM) met once during 2017 with the Standing Committee on Saturday February 4 at the All Saints Retreat Center. We participated in Anti-Racism training as a commission. We then met with two aspirants, one for the priesthood and another for the Diaconate. We have another meeting scheduled in September to meet with a postulant for the priesthood.

The COM provides each postulant/candidate with a liaison to help them through the ordination process. This person maintains contact with the postulant/candidate, prays for them, and is a contact with the Diocese of Nebraska. The liaison program has been popular with both the COM members and the postulants/candidates.

Respectfully Submitted
Margaret Schaefer
Chair Commission on Ministry
**Cursillo**

The Cursillo Ministry for the year 2017 held three administrative meetings to organize the direction of this movement, provide updates of the Cursillo #25, obtain financials and project future needs and commitments. Updates were given to Bishop Barker.

Members of Secretariat are Bishop Barker, Nancy Brown, Mother Ruth Thompson, Mother Pam Williams, Lyndle Lewis, Katharina Schwidal, Dale and Ruth Thompson, Ruth Richter and Cheryl Hejl. All financial activity is conducted through the diocese under a designated account.

Members of the Secretariat supported the rectoras of Cursillo #25. Prayers were offered for the leadership, team, candidates and sponsors, and the sharing of members of time, talent and support given. Palanca was a part of our outreach. A very special thank you to the rectoras – Natalie Garden (Trinity/Norfolk) and Pam Wright (St. Augustine/Omaha) and their wonderful team. Their theme of “You did not choose me, but I chose you - John 15:16) was demonstrated throughout the spirit filled weekend.

We would like to announce Cursillo #26. This will be held at Immaculata Monastery & Spirituality Center – Norfolk, NE. Dates for this event are Thursday May 31, 2018 – Sunday June 3, 2018. Ruth and Dale Thompson (members of All Saints, Omaha) will share their gifts as Rectora/Rector of this Cursillo. Please keep this ministry and the weekend in your prayers.

Are you being called to share in the Cursillo ministry? Will you sponsor a candidate to Cursillo #26? Will YOU be a team member?

Submitted in gratitude by Cheryl Hejl, Interim Lay Director.

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CURSILLO #25 Report by Natalie Garden and Pam Wright - Rectoras -2017

Pam and I are pleased to report a successful Cursillo held on June 8th – 11th at the Immaculata Monastery in Norfolk Nebraska. We felt this location was very accommodating and affordable. The location also allowed us to have a cook team.

We had 16 candidates attend and a total of 22 team members. The team consisted of 2 Rectoras, 3 clergy members, 6 table leaders, 4 palanca team members, 4 music team members and 3 kitchen team members. Candidates consisted of 8 males and 8 females. Having two leaders was wonderful and strongly suggested if possible.

We will be passing along our notes to the next leaders for the next years Cursillo #26. Of course, we are both happy to offer any information if any questions arise.

Looking forward to the Ultreya on August 12th in Lincoln at Saint David’s Church.
Deacons Report, 2017

The primary ministries of deacons are service in the world in the name of Christ and interpreting the needs, concerns, and hopes of the world to the church: to help those in need and be a prophetic voice in the church. Deacons in Nebraska serve people directly through ministries such as feeding programs, healthcare, and visits to those who are sick or otherwise in need, and we also participate in advocacy and education to serve those who are poor, sick, hungry, or otherwise marginalized. Our newest deacon, Teresa Houser, serves as Executive Director for Magdalene Omaha, a residential recovery and economic empowerment program for women who survived sex trafficking, addiction, and abuse.

The deacon’s service in the liturgy — proclaiming the Gospel, setting the table and helping distribute the bread and wine during Holy Communion, and dismissing the people to go out into the world and serve — reflects both our ministry in the world and the foundation of our ministry in Christ.

This year both Greg Burke from St. Mark’s Pro-Cathedral and Teresa Houser of Trinity Cathedral completed the formation track for deacons at the Bishop Kemper School for Ministry. The Bishop Kemper School continues to make good progress in offering courses and formation tailored to the unique vocation of deacons. This offering not only is helpful to those in formation, but also helps the dioceses involved in the school continue to understand and live into diaconal ministry as it exists today.

As part of BKSM’s effort to encourage a healthy growth of the diaconate in our dioceses, the school hosted a Deacons Conference on June 24 in Topeka, with about half a dozen people from our diocese in attendance. Out of conversation among those at the conference came an idea for regular half-day gatherings of deacons and those in formation for the diaconate focused on a topic or concern that has surfaced among deacons. We are looking at quarterly meetings in the coming year alternating between eastern and central/western locations. We also plan a spring gathering for people interested in learning more about the diaconate, especially those discerning a call and people serving on discernment committees. In addition, I encourage people considering a call to be in touch with me. I’m happy to visit parishes where someone is discerning a call to the diaconate to help people get clarity about this order of ministry.

I attended the Archdeacons Conference in Atlanta in March. This year’s conference focused on lifelong ongoing discernment of our call for deacons: once we answer the call to ordination as a deacon, what is the specific work to which God calls us at various stages of our ministry?

Respectfully submitted,
Betsy Blake Bennett, Archdeacon
Diocese Disaster Preparedness

We are a bit upset that we have not gone any disaster preparedness plans over this last year from any of the diocese churches. We would hope that each church would get into writing what they would do in a disaster. After this last summer with the tornados that hit Bellevue and Plattsmouth, we were fortunate there was no property damage or any one injured.

We would like to at least get the Bronze Plan that was passed out last year to all churches. If you need a new copy please let us know. When you complete the plan, copy it and send a copy to Wes Agar care of the diocesan office.

It is better to be pro-active then reactive to these plans. You don't what to write one after you have had a fire, or lost your roof to a hail storm or the whole building from a tornado. Think positive as you work through them.

We want to work with each parish if they would like our help and have them all create a disaster preparedness plan and file a copy of it with the Diocesan office. Please call us to schedule a meeting to fill out the paperwork and/or help with the forms. Phone numbers are Deacon Wes Agar 402.981.9111; Charles Planz 308.360.2025.

We would like to make presentations to each deanery and provide some guidance for all the parishes.

We look forward to working with all the churches in the diocese and sharing ideas and best practices.

The Rev. Deacon Wes Agar                      Charles Plantz
Co-Chair Diocese Disaster Preparedness        Co-Chair Diocese Disaster Preparedness
This has been an interesting year for me personally. After many years in the History Department at the University of Nebraska at Omaha, I retired at the end of June 2017. I spent more time getting my “retired feet” on the ground than I thought I would. So, my volunteer archive work has taken a backseat, but I continue to research events in the formation of the Diocese of Nebraska, my primary research interest.

As the diocese approaches its 150th anniversary in October of 2018, I have been working on short biographies of the earliest parishes in the diocese. In late August, that research formed the nucleus of a presentation at St. Thomas in Falls City. Those are great fun for me, and if I can assist your parish in such a presentation, please let me know.

The diocesan newspaper digitizing project by the UNO Dr. C.C. and Mabel Criss Library continues. The earliest newspapers are available on the UNO Library website under “digital collections.” These include the 1873 and 1874 issues of the Guardian and the 1889 Diocese of Nebraska newspapers. More newspapers are digitized and uploaded to the website as the UNO Library has time and personnel to undertake.

In the archive, sorting and filing of ephemera continues, although most of what was originally stored here has been examined. I am always on the lookout for photographs and research on the earliest parishes and personnel, both lay and ordained. I recently located a descendent of one of our earliest missionaries, Rev. Thomas Betts. He and his son George were both originally from Ireland, and both ordained here in Nebraska – George in 1865 and Thomas in 1867. The descendent has done extensive research on her ancestors, and when her collected files of information arrive, they will add greatly to our biographical collection.

I am always available to respond to parish and/or diocesan historical queries. For now, please continue to contact me at my UNO address, jlbehrens@unomaha.edu. My access to the internet in downtown Omaha is very slow, and often non-existent. So, my plan to create an archive web page with easier access to your queries and my collected information is on hold.

Lastly as always, to all parish historians elsewhere in the diocese, I thank you for working to Keep the Faith!

Respectfully submitted,

Jo Behrens, Historian and Archivist
The Friends of Tamar – Magdalene Omaha

The Friends of Tamar is an umbrella organization overseeing a number of initiatives to support survivors of sexual violence in all its forms. The vision for this work was to write a redemptive ending to the biblical passage known as the rape of Tamar (2 Samuel 13: 1-22), so that no survivor ever had to be without community support again in the aftermath of violence. Thank you for being such an important part of revising the ending so that the Tamars of our world feel your love and support, and for all you have done to answer the call to combat violence with love!

Months of outreach meetings in 2014 with representatives from hospitals, shelters, and local social service agencies identified certain gaps in services for survivors of violence, and volunteers from Trinity Cathedral and St. Martin’s sprung to action to answer these needs in our community. In November of 2014, we launched the first project, the New Beginnings Project (formerly known as the Suitcase Project), when we placed collection bins in both churches and began asking for donated items. At the 148th Annual Council meeting in Grand Island, in keeping with the conference theme, we asked all churches in the diocese to help light their lamps for survivors of sexual violence in all its forms – including rape, domestic violence, and sex trafficking.

We remain awed by the generosity of the amazing people of DioNeb who have given so much time, talent, agencies, and prayers to answer that call! Since we delivered our first bag to a woman named Mary on Christmas Eve 2014, together we have delivered over 600 bags/suitcases to survivors in the Omaha area (including surrounding communities) who went through trauma so severe that they could not return home and had nothing with them. That effort generously is supported by several churches throughout the diocese, and we are so deeply grateful for all you have done to make these deliveries of hope possible. From offering collections, to collecting items, to the whir of sewing machines run by the “Grateful Threads” making tote bags at All Saints, you made this happen! We celebrate our diocesan partners who also have delivered bags and/or created partnerships with local social service agencies to offer other survivor support in Alliance, Bassett, Chadron, Lincoln, O’Neill, Scottsbluff, Seward, and all our great friends at Camp Canterbury last summer. We also are blessed to have received enormous support for the Friends of Tamar and Magdalene Omaha from Kountze Memorial Lutheran Church in Omaha, which has opened the doors of many other Lutheran churches to us as well. They have run donation drives, attended our events as volunteers, and are beginning to host their own awareness events.

2016 also marked the start of the second major Friends of Tamar project in the metro area with the official launch of Magdalene Omaha. During our many conversations to research local needs in 2014, we heard repeatedly from service providers and experts about the need to do more to address Omaha’s growing sex trafficking problem. We began to explore the Magdalene community recovery model that serves women who endured years of sex trafficking/prostitution, abuse, and addiction. Founded in Nashville twenty years ago by Becca Stevens, this program has been so successful and so transformative, that several sister programs working to replicate the model have developed in cities throughout the United States.
The Magdalene model is a two-year residential recovery and economic empowerment program. Residents each have an individualized care plan that helps them access all the trauma-informed care they need to heal and recover – including housing, clothing, groceries, medical, dental, and mental health care and substance abuse treatment. All of this care is contracted with a network of service providers and provided free of cost to the women we serve. Additionally, every woman will receive financial literacy and computer skills training as we also work with each resident on her individual career goals. We assist her in reaching for whatever educational goals she sets – whether that is obtaining her GED, vocational training, a professional internship, or some college coursework. We use best practices developed in the original Magdalene community that began in 1997 in Nashville (www.thistlefarms.org) which has achieved stunning success rates: 84% of the women who enter the program graduate two years later, clean and sober; 66% of them go on to achieve long-term sobriety and economic independence.

In 2015, we began a comprehensive study to determine the feasibility of planting a Magdalene program in our area. By 2016, we became convinced that it would work well here and had built strong community partnerships to enable its success. We then spun off the Magdalene work from the Friends of Tamar into its own separate 501c3, Magdalene Omaha. To officially launch this new entity, we hosted Becca Stevens and graduates of Nashville’s program for a series of successful events last October. At that time, we expressed our highest hopes to achieve our lofty strategic goals to be able to receive residents in 2018.

I am pleased to report that because of the generous community support we have received to date – which again has left us in complete awe -- we are in position to move up our operations timeline by a full quarter and welcome our first residents to their new home this year.

On July 22, the feast of Mary Magdalene, we made an offer to purchase a house, and within three weeks progressed to closing on our first residence. We are in the process of finishing renovations in the next month, currently ahead of schedule and under budget. We have hired a full-time Executive Director, full-time Residence Manager – who survived sex trafficking as a child in Omaha -- and three part-time staff. Significantly, one part-time staff member is a graduate of the original Magdalene residential recovery program in Nashville (now known as Thistle Farms), upon which our model is based. She has designed our residential recovery program and provided impressively valuable insights on how best to begin our accompanying justice enterprise.

The justice enterprise is the economic empowerment piece of our program. It is the small-business that the residents will run when they are ready for that phase of the program – in Nashville, it’s called Thistle Farms. We expect to launch ours – Thistle Lights -- in early 2018. As we prepare to welcome the first six residents in December, we are mindful that the need far outweighs our initial capacity, so we also hope to add a second home in 2018. We remain so deeply grateful to all of you reading this – it is thanks to you that we have been able to faithfully answer needs, launch programs, and stand with survivors. Yet, we need you now more than ever. Please contact me at teresa@magdaleneomaha.org to join our circle of hope for survivors by donating your time, talents, and treasure – Help Thistle Lights Shine in 2018!!

Respectfully submitted,
The Reverend Deacon Teresa Houser
GROW, 2017

GROW is our “micro” youth retreat program that was established in the fall of 2016. The program features a “hands on” service event, opportunities for community building and a mini faith retreat. The Micro means we do all this in just one day!

Taking the TREC ideals of travelling light and going into the neighborhood, these GROW events are nimble and adaptable enough to fit into a busy high schooler’s schedule, while meeting a need in community in a real and practical way.

Our first GROW event gathered around the theme “Prepare the Way of the Lord.” We explored ways we could make room for Jesus in our own hearts and communities – and why that might make a difference in the world. Our youth collected personal care items and packed 100 sack lunches for the People’s City Mission in Lincoln, where we could tour the facility; and learn more what it was like to be shelter insecure in Nebraska.

Our second GROW event was held at Trinity Cathedral, where most of our youth participants had never gathered before. This beautiful and holy space was the perfect back drop for us to examine the “Community, Justice and Beauty” of the Episcopal Church. Our youth chopped, measured and prepared pans of homemade chicken pot pie and brownies for a Downtown Episcopal Outreach meal. They also collected socks and underwear donations for the people who come to Cathedral for these weekly meals.

Our next GROW event will be October 28th at St. James in Fremont where we plan to celebrate the Feast of Simon and Jude by looking at what it means to be a disciple in the world today as we take up a service project for Youth Emergency Services – an Omaha-based organization that addresses teen homelessness.

While this youth program is still in its early stages of development, it is clear to see, the youth in DIONEB have a great capacity for ministry and hearts for service. We bid your prayers for us as we continue to find ways to go into our communities and seek out ways to deepen our faith. If you are interested in knowing more about GROW, please visit our booth for more information on ways you can get involved or support this special DIONEB youth ministry.

Faithfully Submitted,
Noelle Ptomey
The Nebraska Episcopalian

Thanks to everyone who reads, and everyone who contributes to, The Nebraska Episcopalian. A special shout-out to Fr. John Adams for his on-going column *The Eggplant!* As always, you can see the full TNE blog site and archive at [http://nebraskaepiscopalian.org](http://nebraskaepiscopalian.org). Please continue to send stories and photos of service and outreach opportunities, and of celebrations and activities of discipleship that demonstrate our Christian life and mission together. You can submit your stories to me at wintonkd@gmail.com or to Lindsey at dioadmin@episcopal-ne.org.

And don’t forget to subscribe to the weekly Ministry Memo by clicking on its link in the right-hand margin of the diocesan website at [http://www.episcopal-ne.org](http://www.episcopal-ne.org).

Respectfully submitted,
Keith Winton
Recovery Commission, 2017

“We cast off the burdens of the past and the anxieties of the future, as we begin to live in the resent, on day at a time. We are granted ‘The serenity to accept the things we cannot change’ – and thus lose our quickness to anger and our sensitivity to criticism.”

AA Big Book page 559

2.6 million people with addictions have a dependence on both alcohol and illicit drugs. 9.4 million people in 2011 reported driving under the influence of illicit drugs. 6.8 million people with an addiction have a mental illness. Rates of illicit drug use is highest among those aged 18 to 25.

Raising awareness about the disease of Alcoholism and the many other faces of addiction, is the primary goal of the Nebraska Episcopal Recovery Commission, as well as that of the National Episcopal Recovery Ministry. We provide resources to parishes and clergy for support and assistance to those and family members who are struggling.

The nine-member Commission continues its efforts in enlisting a contact person in each of the churches of the Nebraska Diocese, to deliver its message of awareness and to disseminate information about educational and recovery/ treatment programs.

September is National Recovery month. St. David's in Lincoln announced a Recovery service for Sun. Sept. 17th. Mary Barry Magsamen, Director at St. Monica's Treatment Center was speaking. Holy Apostles Episcopal Church announced Recovery Eucharist Service on September 24th with 12-Step Liturgy will be celebrated and recovery speaker, Brittany J. from the community will give her testimony. Invited were those in the community for these special events commemorating National Recovery Month. If there are other parishes doing a 12-Step Recovery Service, please let Nancy Brown or Sr. Elizabeth Sojourner know so we may support you with materials or service outlines at nbrown5@neb.rr.com or Sandra.M.Raney@gmail.com.

An open AA meeting was sponsored by the Commission during the 2016 Annual Council and will be sponsored again this year.

Nancy Brown sends daily motivational readings via email from Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation. If you wish to be included in her Email list, contact her at nbrown5@neb.rr.com. The Commission Web site, www.ne-episcopal recovery.org, lists articles, liturgies, contacts and resource information on educational and treatment programs, including the web address for the National Episcopal Recovery Ministry.

Respectfully submitted,
Nancy Brown, Co- Chair
Sr. Elizabeth Sojourner, Co- Chair
Nebraska Recovery Commission
Episcopal Diocesan Committee on Scouting in Nebraska, 2017

The Episcopal Diocesan Committee on Scouting in Nebraska is still in search of more members, especially from the Girl Scouts, Camp Fire, and 4-H programs.

Our mission is to promote the God and Country program to all youth and adults across the Diocese. Your members of Boy Scouts of America, Girl Scouts of America, Camp Fire, 4-H members, Sunday school classes, Vacation Bible School, Confirmation classes, and other church groups can earn these awards.

We have had one God & Country Award recipient for this year beginning January 2017 in the diocese that we know about. If you know of any award recipients, please let us know. Call Deacon Wes Agar at 402.291.6768 or email EagleDeacon1@gmail.com

Carmine Hirko, God and Family, Pack 483, Church of the Holy Spirit

We did not present any St. George Awards this past year.
We strongly suggest that each parish use this program in their religious education programs. Programs of Religious Activities with Youth 1.800.933.7729. Mailing address: P.R.A.Y., 11123 S. Towne Square Suite B, St. Louis, MO, 63123. Fax 314-845-0038. Or P.R.A.Y. can be contacted at www.praypub.org Student, Mentor, and Counselor manuals are now $4.50 each. And questions please PRAY at the number above or Deacon Wes Agar at 402.291.6768 or email EagleDeacon1@gmail.com

We also want to have each parish look at its adult members and help us recognize the adults in Boy Scouts of America, Girl Scouts of America, and Camp Fire programs who have been active in those programs, their church, and deserve recognition. The Episcopal St. George Award can be presented to those adults who have provided outstanding service to youth.

We hope and pray that more youth throughout our Diocese will take on the challenge to earn these awards and be recognized.

Respectfully submitted,
The Reverend Deacon Wes Agar
Chairman, Episcopal Diocesan Committee on Scouting in Nebraska
Standing Committee, 2017

Meetings
The Standing Committee met for a face-to-face one time for the reporting period. We met in February 2017 at All Saints’ Church in order to participate in Anti-Racism training. The Standing Committee also met for an occasional conference call. Electronic consents were given for various consents of Episcopal Elections.

Consents for Episcopal Elections
The Rev. Canon John Taylor as Bishop Coadjutor of the Diocese of Los Angeles
The Rev. Canon Gretchen Mary Rehberg as Bishop Diocesan of Spokane
The Rev. Jennifer Baskerville-Burrows as Bishop Diocesan of Indianapolis
The Rev. Samuel S. Rodman as Bishop Diocesan of North Carolina
The Rev. Jennifer Brooke-Davidson as Bishop Suffragan of West Texas
The Rev. Canon Rafael L. Morales as Bishop Diocesan of Puerto Rico
The Very Rev. Dr. DeDe Duncan Probe as Bishop Diocesan of Central New York
The Rev. Carl Walter Wright as Bishop Suffragan of the Armed Forces and Federal Ministries

Diocese of Nebraska Ordination Process
Approved Gregory Burke for Candidacy to the Diaconate
Approved Anthony Anderson for Ordination to the Diaconate and Priesthood
Approved Teresa Houser for Ordination to the Diaconate.

Standing Committee Roster

M.L. Martin, Lay
Church of Our Saviour, North Platte 2nd Term expires 2017

The Rev. Jason Emerson, Clergy, President (resigned, July 2017)
Church of the Resurrection, Omaha 1st Term expires 2017

Carol Schrader, Lay
Trinity Cathedral, Omaha 1st Term expires 2017

The Rev. Ernesto Medina, Clergy (President - elected, July 2017)
St. Martha’s, Papillion 1st Term expires 2018

Jane Wisniewski, Lay
St. Francis, Scottsbluff 1st Term expires 2018

The Rev. Betsy Bennett, Clergy
Church of the Resurrection, Omaha 1st Term expires 2019

The Rev. Colleen Lewis, Clergy
St. Luke’s, Kearney 1st Term expires 2019

Bill Reno, Lay
St. Matthew’s, Alliance 2nd Term expires 2019

Respectfully Submitted,
The Reverend Ernesto Medina+
Standing Committee President
UTO, 2017

The United Thank Offering is a ministry of The Episcopal Church that teaches us to be grateful for all the blessings God bestows on us. UTO has been actively collecting funds for mission work since 1889. Each year funds are gathered through donations given in the little blue boxes, checks, and envelopes. The following year all the funds collected are given away through grants. Grants are awarded throughout The Episcopal Church and Anglican Communion.

As a means of building good communication, I now have a list of parish coordinators who will receive monthly e-newsletters from the UTO office in New York as well as occasional contacts from me. Training for UTO parish coordinators is being offered prior to this Annual Council, and there are plans to offer training in both the eastern and western parts of the diocese over the next year. I can be contacted at sksquires@cox.net or 402-397-4059.

The UTO Board is encouraging parishes to have a 165th birthday party in September for Julia Chester Emery, one of the founders of United Thank Offering and a remarkable woman who worked in women’s ministry and mission for 40 years. Since I also serve as the President of the UTO Board for The Episcopal Church, I am hoping Nebraska parishes will remember this remarkable woman. If you missed it, it is never too late to celebrate her big day.

I have records for 18* participating parishes of our 53 parishes. These are listed by in alphabetical order by community:

Alliance—St. Matthew’s Church: $334.43
Bassett—St. Mary’s Church: $216.42
Broken Bow—St. John’s Church: $165.30
Central City—Christ Church: $120.96
Elkhorn—St. Augustine of Canterbury: $1449.79
Fall City—St. Thomas: $49.27
Holly Rushville—St. Mary’s: $105.30
Holly Rushville: $50.00 in honor of James & Phyllis Krotz
Kearney—St. Luke’s: $446.67
Lincoln—St. David’s Church: $283.33
McCook—St. Alban’s: $66.95
Mitchell—Holy Apostles: $75.00
Nebraska City—St. Mary’s: $48.93
North Platte—Church of Our Savior: $988.00
O’Neil—St. Michael’s and All Angels: $155.78
Omaha—Trinity Cathedral: $736.65
Scottsbluff—St. Francis Church: $534.33
Seward—St. Andrew’s: $387.31
Sidney—Christ Church: $59.80
Annual Council 2016: $395.57
Western Deanery: $2.02
15 Memorials for Kathy Graham: $1662.85

Kathy Graham served as our diocesan UTO coordinator from 2013 to late spring. When Kathy became ill she resigned, and I agreed to take on this ministry for DioNeb. Kathy unexpectedly died and many people remembered her in memorials to UTO.

To quote my dear friend Elizabeth Campbell of South Dakota about giving to your UTO blue box, "If you give a penny, then next year give two pennies. If you give a quarter, give two quarters, and if you give a dollar, give two dollars in your daily thanksgiving for you many blessings." Thank you to all who support this great ministry.

*If your donation is not listed, it was most likely mailed directly to the UTO collection center in St. Louis.

Recognizing of the 165th Birthday of Julia Chester Emery, and her work on behalf of United Thank Offering and Women in The Episcopal Church

Please join United Thank Offering in recognizing the 165th birthday of Julia Chester Emery, who along with Ida Soule, founded the United Offering in 1889, later called the United Thank Offering (UTO). She was the Secretary of the Woman’s Auxiliary at the age of 22, a position she held for 40 years. Ms. Emery helped establish a network of women volunteers to support mission work in The Episcopal Church through “box work”- boxes of necessary gifts- which were given annually to missionaries throughout the world. Monetary collections given to the United Thank Offering funded women missionaries—domestic and foreign, missionary bishops, built deaconess houses, and later established a pension fund for women missionaries. In addition, the United Thank Offering has built churches, schools, and hospitals, purchased vehicles, and started other new ministries, work that it continues to this day. In 2015 UTO Board created the United Thank Offering Julia Chester Emery Internship and recently hired its third intern.

Ms. Emery’s work continues through the spiritual discipline of gratitude as demonstrated through daily thanksgivings for God’s blessings and gifts to Blue Boxes which have given $133,242,104.47 in grants and gifts to missionaries during the last 128 years. These annual grants to churches, dioceses, young adults and seminarians support mission and ministry throughout The Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion.

Julia Chester Emery was a remarkable woman in The Episcopal Church whose legacy touched the lives of many, including those in the Diocese of Nebraska. Through Ingatherings and grants, we recognize her contributions to the work of women and mission in The Episcopal Church. Happy Birthday 165th Birthday, Julia Chester Emery!

Respectfully submitted,
Sandra Squires
Thanks be to God, the people of the Diocese of Nebraska continue to be inclined to do the work of the Gospel in our communities, our nation, and the world. We have sent teams to the Dominican Republic, Rosebud, and Pine Ridge Reservations. As a diocese and as individuals, we have supported the mission of the church in many ways.

We have spent this year working with the Diocese of South Dakota in building relationships with communities of worship and the diocesan office. This has been a transition year for them as they were actively seeking a missioner to work with the churches on the Pine Ridge. As of September 1st, that position has been filled, and the new missioner will be living in Martin, South Dakota. The missioner will be a tremendous asset as we continue to building trust with our neighbors to the North.

We had two teams who represented the Diocese of Nebraska in South Dakota this summer. Fr. Tom Jones and his wife Sharon lead a diocesan team to Rosebud, South Dakota. They worked with the children and provided Vacation Bible School, arts and crafts, and playground activities for the children each day. They also did minor repairs on the church. This team has enjoyed a long-term relationship with the worship community at the Church of Jesus.

The second group of missioners from St. Andrew’s and the diocese at large represented the DioNeb at the Niobrara Convocation. The Rife family camped during convocation on the church grounds of Red Shirt Table. Paige represented the youth of our diocese and participated with youth from California, South Dakota and New Zealand. Paige had a blast. Brother James Dowd, the Reverends Christine Plantz and Tar Drazdowski were also present.

St. Mary’s, Holly hosted a Day of Care and Sharing. We gathered together to tell our faith stories, share a meal and receive Holy Communion. Participants came from St. Mary’s, Grace Church, Holy Apostle’s, Christ Church, Trinity Cathedral, St Mark’s and St. Catharine’s, Martin South, Dakota.

Our work in the Dominican Republic has continued in a mighty way. We sent a diocesan youth team to work at the camp in Jarabacoa. The youth team painted the school, sealed a leaking roof, and provided music camp for the children in the village. One of the highlights of the trip was the renewal of the team’s Baptismal vows at the waterfall. It was very successful under the leadership of Don and Melisa Peeler.

St. Andrew’s also formed a new adult team which worked in San Francisco. The team painted the church and took part in many cultural activities. This new team had a very successful trip also under the leadership of Don and Melissa Peeler.

In the near future, new mission opportunities will be possible through the work of Dr. Tom McGowan, St. Matthew’s, Lincoln. Tom has been given missionary status through The Episcopal Church. Tom is currently working as an adviser to the committee that oversees the diocesan schools in the Dominican Republic. Tom will be looking for ways that educators can help in this effort.
Another way the DioNeb supports the work in the Dominican schools is in the form of scholarship assistance. Jack Keester, St. Mathew’s, Lincoln, has been raising money for scholarships for more than twenty years. This year through your gracious support and his efforts more than forty scholarship were awarded to support St Esteban School.

Our diocesan budget reflects support for the Dominican Development Group, which was organized for the sole purpose is to provide funding for the infrastructure for schools and churches in the Dominican Republic. The DDG is a 501-C non-profit organization that allows us to make a tax-deductible contribution to the work we do through the Dominican Church. The DDG also supervised construction projects and worked closely with the Mission Team Office to support our missionaries while they travel and work in the Dominican Republic. Fr. John Schaffer was elected to serve on the board as a member at large. Rev Drazdowski served as Bishop Barker’s representative.

One last way the DioNeb will support the Iglesia Dominicana is to contribute to the Endowment Fund. It has been the dream of Bishop Holguin that the diocese would become self-sufficient and not dependent upon the funds given by the national church as those funds are dwindling. An endowment has been set aside for this purpose. They have almost reached their goal and are asking for their companions to contribute in honor of retiring Bishop Holguin’s work in the diocese over the last 25 years. To honor Bishop Holguin’s work, Bishop Barker has graciously dedicated the money we receive at the closing Eucharist of this Annual Council to be designated for the endowment. Please give generously.

In Christ’s service,

The Reverend Tar Drazdowski
Vicar for Mission
Diocese of Nebraska
**Women’s Ministries, 2017**

Our mission is to support and connect women in the Episcopal Church. We want to help women recognize their worth in God’s eyes and the significance of their roles in every part of life. Women’s Ministries in our diocese sponsors two retreats a year. We have given a scholarship to a young woman starting college. Many churches have an ‘ECW’ organization. Some have no formal women’s organization.

In April, Sister Ann Prentice, an Episcopal nun from the Order of St. Helena, presented a workshop at the St. Benedict Retreat Center at Schuyler. She gave us an experience of the contemplative life with talks and reflection time. 20 attended. We held a brief business meeting to consider next year’s retreat topic and to identify potential leaders for women’s ministries in our diocese. In August, Province VI held a retreat at Grace Church Chadron. Canon Liz Easton presented ‘Holy Ground, Encountering Jesus in Sacred Geography’. 20 women attended this retreat.

Francine Watkins of All Saints, Omaha, was awarded the Women’s Ministries Scholarship this year. She is studying at UNL.

Our diocese participates in Province VI and national church work. Current officers: Sandra Squires, of St. Augustine’s Elkhorn, United Thank Offering Coordinator in our diocese and President of the United Thank Offering Board. Sandra took over as our diocesan coordinator when Kathy Graham of Alliance had to retire for health reasons. Beth Agar of St. Martha’s Papillion, is our Province VI Representative for National Episcopal Church Women. Heather Bauer, of St. Matthew’s Lincoln, serves as Altar Guild Coordinator for our diocese and she has been elected President of the Province VI. Deb Sneller of St. Matthew’s Lincoln, serves as our Church Periodical Club Coordinator. Pat Wellnitz of St. Mary’s Holly serves as the Secretary of National Episcopal Church Women Board.

Our focus now is to elect delegates to Triennial which runs concurrently with General Convention. It will be held in Austin, TX, July 5-13. We also will select a woman to be honored at Triennial. This is part of a tradition at the convention. In making this selection, we recognize that all women work hard and make contributions to our church!

Respectfully submitted, The Rev. Christine Grosh, Convener

**Altar Guild:**

On October 22, 2016, I held a Western Nebraska all member Altar Guild meeting at St. Matthew’s-Alliance. I had 14 attendees, with 4 churches represented. We discussed how each of our groups recruits new members, how long our terms are for Directress are, and what it means to be on Altar Guild. We had a lovely breakfast, a wonderful discussion period, and I was very pleased with the outcome.

On November 12, 2016, I held a Central Nebraska all member Altar Guild meeting at St. Luke's-Kearney. I had 9 attendees, with 2 churches represented. We discussed membership, recruitment, and we could come to an agreement on a new meeting time for the St. Luke’s Altar Guild. They are very excited to have so many younger women in their ranks, and it was nice to find a meeting time that would fit all schedules.
The Eastern Nebraska Altar Guild members meet twice a year. A leader’s meeting is held in the spring, and an all member meeting is held in the fall. We are so blessed that so many women want to come together on such a consistent basis, and we are never at a loss for a church willing to host the group. We have an Eastern Altar Guild meeting for all members in September, at St. Martin of Tours-Omaha.

I plan on getting a Western and Central Nebraska meeting set up in 2018. I have enjoyed meeting so many wonderful women. Working with them, and learning from them has been a real privilege. I look forward to next year's meetings.

If anyone has any questions, suggestions or would just like to talk, my cell phone number is: 402-890-3811 and my email is: greenpeacecats121@yahoo.com. I look forward to working with you all.

Respectfully Submitted, Heather E. Bauer, Altar Guild Coordinator

**Daughters of the King:**
As of July 31, 2017, the Nebraska Assembly has 11 Senior Chapters with two of these in the process of disbanding (McCook and North Platte has been inactive for several years) and one seriously considering disbanding (St. Barnabus). There are no Junior Daughters Chapters. We have 9 Daughters at Large and 82 members in Parish Chapters (70 members are in the 2 Metropolitan cities and 21 are in Greater Nebraska). This compares to Colorado’s 535 Daughters. In 2015 we had 15 chapters so this loss of 6-7 chapters over the last two years is disheartening. However, we are excited to report a new Chapter, Lilies, at All Saints in Omaha completed the Services of Institution and Admission 9/10/17. Also, there is reported interest at St Andrews, Seward to initiate a Chapter and there may be interest in Re-Dedicating the North Platte Chapter, St Elizabeth of Seton, at Our Savior.

The largest Chapter, St Margaret, at Holy Spirit in Bellevue in the Nebraska Diocese has 20 members. Our smallest Chapter has 2 members and is disbanding. Within the 6 Chapter Annual Reports that were returned or given orally, 4 deaths were reported.

**Studies completed by Chapters:** A variety of 9 studies using books or others materials were reported. In addition, one Chapter has a Catechist instruct their members with Catechist materials at every meeting. One Chapter is using the “National Study Guide.” Another Chapter had a retreat featuring the spiritual practice of the labyrinth.

**Service by the Chapters:** collecting small travel bags for victims of abuse at Friends of Tamar; mailing birthday and anniversary cards to parish members; providing prayer request cards for collection during the offering; making yarn crosses for Daughters in Uganda; purchasing six rhodium crosses for DOKs in Uganda; hosting diaper drive for teen parents; working with food pantries; collecting toiletries for St Monica’s Behavioral Health Services for Women with substance abuse and mental health issues; organizing clothing and paper drives, collecting “Pennies for People” with the proceeds going to the Rector’s Discretionary Fund; collecting goods for Stephen Center for Substance Abuse, and; mailing College and 1st year Military boxes to young parishioners.

**A Service Project for the Diocese** was identified, knitting temporary breast forms for women following mastectomies, but it did not progress into action. We may replace this with a project for Friends of Tamar since 5 of the16 parishes across the state who are partnered with Friends of Tamar have DOK Chapters.
Involvement in Diocesan and Province VI activities: Approximately 20-24 Daughters attended the Diocesan Assembly Daughters Day in 2017 at Church of the Holy Spirit in Bellevue (Chapter St. Margaret). Margaret Schaefer led a meaningful program on Creation (in the dark because of the tornado the night preceding). Mary Falkowski was installed as the new Diocesan Vice President and Carol Ott as the new Diocesan President.

Traditionally, Daughters serve at the Bishop’s request to organize and staff the Prayer Room at the Diocesan Annual Council. The Prayer Room is open early mornings and on all breaks so that attendees may use it to pray alone or with a Daughter. Prayer request cards are provided to delegates and other attendees. Prayers are offered during the discussion and voting on any amendments. This is a meaningful opportunity to serve for Daughters at Large and/or Daughters around the state when Annual Council is in their area.

Four Nebraska DOK’s, with 23 other Daughters, attended the Province VI Retreat at the Prairie Woods Franciscan Spirituality Center near Hiawatha, Iowa 8/18-20/17. This was the first-time Iowa has hosted the Province VI Retreat and they even arranged for their Bishop Scarfe to speak and dine with us. He shared information about the 40 Revivals to rekindle and refresh families that they are having across Iowa including one at St Paul’s in Council Bluffs on Sat. Sept 30. Six of 8 states in Province VI were represented at Retreat. No Daughters from Montana or N. Dakota were in attendance. It was thrilling to meet 6 Hmong Daughters from St Paul, MN; one is a Priest and two are Deacons who had been raised up by the Minnesota Bishop and now participate in Shared Ministry. They had converted from Catholicism to have more leadership opportunities for their women. I believe this group was originally from Laos. The second largest population of Hmongs in the U.S. live in MN. They surprised us during our final worship service by beautifully chanting the Lord’s Prayer in the Hmong language. The Program Leader of “Stepping Over the Thresholds into Grace and Mercy,” was Chesley Vohden of Virginia, 2nd Vice President of National and 2018 Triennial Chair. Susan Keith from S. Carolina, who is on the National Board, also attended. Two Nebraska Daughters at Large, Carol Schlissmann and Suzanne Titus, serve as Secretary and Treasurer, respectively, for Province VI. A new Province Treasurer and DAL to Triennial were elected.

Nebraska Daughters are pleased to serve Our Lord, Our Bishop, Our Priests, and Our Parishes.
“May we continue to shine the Light of Christ as We Walk His Way” this year toward the Triennial Convention in Austin, Texas June 2018.

Respectfully Submitted, Carol Ott (For past President Suzanne Titus) President, Nebraska Diocesan of the Order of the Daughters of the King

ECW:
As a member of the National Board of Episcopal Church Women, I represent the women of Province VI. The National Board includes a president, 2 vice presidents, a secretary – our own Pat Wellnitz, a treasurer, a social justice chair, and representatives from the nine provinces that make up The Episcopal Church. As a province representative, I attend as many gatherings within the province as I can, report to the Board what is happening in my province, and report to interested people in my province after a Board meeting.
The Board’s agenda is to continue with the resolutions that were passed at the last Triennial. One is to publish a book that will tell of the history of the Episcopal Church Women. We are approaching 150 years as an organization and that will be a celebration of those years. Another resolution was to explore the opportunities for change within the ECW and make it more accessible and meaningful to women today. We also are tasked with planning the Triennial Meeting which will be held in Austin, Texas in July 2018.

Province VI hosted the Board in June, 2017 in the Episcopal Church in Minnesota. There is no ECW presence in MN, so we were thrilled to have visitors from the area who were interested in reviving ECW. They have since represented ECW at their Diocesan Convention and are excited to get things started. It is the practice of the Board to make a $1000 grant to the hosting diocese and that grant will be given in the Farmington, MN area. At the Province meeting in August in Chadron, we were heartened also, by a visit from some women from North Dakota who were interested in ECW.

The work of the Board continues. We are partnering with Forward Movement in the Good Book Club – a Bible study for the whole church to be held during Lent and Easter, 2018. Nominations for the elected positions on the Board are being accepted through the Nominations Committee. Triennial Meeting planning is in high gear. We have selected a chaplain, a musician, a parliamentarian, and many committees are being formed. The charities for Triennial have been named. Trinity Shower Ministry in Austin provides weekly private showers for homeless women along with personal items. Community First Village, a part of the Mobile Loaves and Fishes group, is an amazing community set up for people who have been homeless for years. Revitalization of Women of Vision is underway with training sessions being held for presenters. Women to Women grants are available for women who are establishing businesses, or charities that help women and girls.

The National Episcopal Church Women’s Board works to keep women connected so that we can all live into the vision for Episcopal Church Women which is: As the eyes, ears, hands, and heart of Christ in the world, we will persist in the work of healing, justice, and peace.

Respectfully submitted, Beth Agar, Province VI Representative
Youth Outreach, 2017

I know I sound like a broken record, but it was another awesome year for our Youth Outreach Program offering diocesan youth opportunities to meet Christ in the world around us; and once again we were blessed to have so many youths interested in helping make a difference in the lives of others.

For youth 12 and up, we held our annual pilgrimage to the Rosebud Indian Reservation. Operating out of St. John’s in Valentine, youth traveled up to the town of Rosebud working at the oldest Episcopal Church on the Reservation, The Church of Jesus. While on this pilgrimage, we provided lunch and vacation bible school to area youth. Each day we enjoyed fun, food, and fellowship with between 20 and 35 area youth. Most of the kids we serve we have gotten to know over the years, for one family, this was their fifth year in a row participating in our VBS. At the same time, we are working with area youth, we also undertake a service project that benefits the community in some way. This year, we re-stained the handicap ramp to the church, painted the outside of the community center, and repainted the kitchen. To learn more about what we do, and see pictures of the fun we have, check out the diocesan website and click on one of the Rosebud links provided.

For youth 16 and up, we once again traveled to the Dominican Republic and worked in a small community outside Jarabacoa called El Pedregal. After the great job, we did helping complete the play set and a nearby home, and last year working to install sound and video systems in the retreat center, this year our team took on another construction project. Working to refurbish and improve an unused building next to the Episcopal School, our team picked up where a previous team left off to turn that building into a Children’s Shelter. Our team made real progress and the team that followed us put on the finishing touches.

In the Diocese of Nebraska, we are blessed to offer our youth these types of opportunities at both the parish and diocesan level. Through pilgrimages like these, our youth have formed friendships and built relationships with youth from across the state, the region, and with our global partners. If you would like to know more about how you can be part of this wonderful ministry, please contact Fr. Tom Jones at frtom@chsepiscopal.org or Don Peeler at dpeeler@cox.net.

Yours in Christ,

Respectfully submitted by
The Rev. Tom Jones
## NECROLOGY LIST

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Church Name</th>
<th>Names</th>
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<td>Kathryn Lyon Graham</td>
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HOLDREGE, St. Elizabeth’s
None Reported

HYANNIS, Calvary Church
None Reported

KEARNEY, St. Luke’s
Stephen Lyons
Delight Fox
John Monroe
Barb Bancroft

KIMBALL, St. Hilda’s
None Reported

LEXINGTON, St. Peter’s
None Reported

LINCOLN, Church of the Holy Trinity
Mary Jean Andrews
Charles Wahl
Donna West
Charles Barton

LINCOLN, St. David’s
Rick Jasa

LINCOLN, St. Mark’s on the Campus
Michael Veak
Ralph Sperry

LINCOLN, St. Matthew’s
Gene Ward
Kathleen Mary Sewell
Ronald Conrad
Patricia Ward
Michael Boosalis
Jon Jorgensen

McCOOK, St. Alban’s
Michael C. Connely
Sherrel Lou Adams
Nancy S. Haller

MITCHELL, Holy Apostles
Julie Ann Edwards
Phil Hatch

MULLEN, St. Joseph’s
None Reported

NEBRASKA CITY, St. Mary’s
None Reported

NORFOLK, Trinity Church
Charles F. Parks
Charles Robert Hales
Elizabeth Sullivan
Wanda M. Mosier
Mahlon (Rudy) Nuttelmann

NORTH PLATTE, Our Savior
Byron O. Neiman
Merle F. Axford
Barbara Ann Johnson
Angie Milroy
Betty R. Levine
Dean G. Candea
Beatrice M Ugai
Catherine “Katy” Varicak

OGALLALA, St. Paul’s
None Reported

OMAHA, All Saints
Everts Sibbernsen
Paul Pearson
Susan Conine
Robert Morley
Florence Bain
Alice Snow
Willa Williams
Barbara Talmadge
Doris Farland
William Shearer
Robert Kruger
OMAHA, Church of the Resurrection
None Reported

OMAHA, St. Andrew’s
Patty McWhorter
Betty Schmitz
Lorene “Rene” Reed
Bob Clark
James L. Johnson Sr.
Janeen Kennedy
Nancy Tritsch
Ken Cratty
Ann Smythe
Richard Richardson

OMAHA, St. Martin of Tours
None Reported

OMAHA, Trinity Cathedral
Thomas Klein
Dorothy Minister
Hope Hayeks
Jimmie Matzen
Charleszine Artison
Frederick Hervington

PAPILLION, St. Martha’s
Logan Edward Sueper
Betty B. Proctor
Brenda Stevens
Kate Couch
Midori Mock

PLATTSMOUTH, St. Luke’s
None Reported

RUSHVILLE, St. Mary’s Holly
John Frank Wheeler
Kathryn Lyon Graham

OSHKOSH, St. George’s
None Reported

SCOTTSBLUFF, St. Francis
Duane Walsh
Katie Shaw
Scott Blundell
Morgan Cook

SEWARD, St. Andrew’s
Ruth Watson

SIIDNEY, Christ Church
None Reported

TECUMSEH, Grace Church
None Reported

VALENTINE, St. John’s
None Reported

Priests Deceased Since Last Council
The Rev. Lyle F. Martin
The Rev. Phillip E. Chapman

Deacons Deceased Since Last Council
None Reported