Diocese of Nebraska

Council Reports

2018
Altar Guild 2018

In my third year as Altar Guild coordinator, I am happy to report that the Eastern Nebraska Altar Guild groups continue to meet regularly. Each spring and fall we get together, whether in Omaha or Lincoln. Last fall, in 2017, we met at St. Martin of Tours in Omaha for a meeting on the embroidery ministry some ladies have taken on. This spring, 2018, we met in Lincoln at St. Matthew's, where I gave a talk on the history of Altar Guilds as a whole. This year I also attended Triennial in Austin, TX, so was unable to finance meetings out West, or in Central Nebraska. This next year, I plan on holding meetings in those areas. I wish to thank all the people that have attended the meetings and been so supportive of this ministry.

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
Bishop Kemper School for Ministry 2018

BKSM is a partnership of four Episcopal dioceses (KS, NE, WMO, WKS) and one Lutheran Synod (ELCA Central States). We are therefore the largest, best resourced local/diocesan formation program in the Episcopal Church. We have robust programs for future priests and deacons as well as lay leaders. We are often invited to share our story at church-wide meetings. We are a leader in the creation of new networks in theological education that will enable sharing of resources and mutual accountability in faithfulness to the Church’s mission today. The quality of our programs has been recognized by Nazarene Theological Seminary in Kansas City, MO, which accepts all our courses for graduate credit and provides full access to their library resources (many now online). We are in negotiations with Claremont School of Theology in California for similar recognition.

Recent Highlights

- **Enrollment** of new students in fall 2018 was our largest yet. One of the fourteen is Kyle Smith (Trinity Cathedral, Omaha), beginning the lay evangelism track. Our total enrollment of 31 regular students also includes Kim Culp (Holy Spirit, Bellevue), in her final year of presbyteral students.

- **Location**: we moved to our new campus at Grace Cathedral in Topeka, KS which includes three state of the art classrooms, extensive library holdings, offices, and a dining room. Our new video technology permits persons to join from remote locations. We also launched a pilot second campus in SE Kansas and will develop additional satellites as needed.

- **Continuing Education**: BKSM offered these summer courses in 2018: Prepare/Enrich (Premarital Preparation training); Grief Ministry; Parish Blogging; Diversity, Justice and the Church (canonically required anti-racism training). We regularly offer Biblical Greek and Leadership seminars. Summer 2019 courses will include subjects such as world religions, Native Americans and Christianity, preaching, church finances, church music, forming parish grief groups.

- **Grants**: BKSM received a grant from United Thank Offering to develop our lay evangelism curriculum by purchasing library books and develop an evangelism website to encourage dialogue and resource sharing throughout the Church. One of our partners, the Iona Collaborative, just received $1 million from the Lilly Foundation to establish cohorts to support and develop bi-vocational ministry. BKSM graduates are invited to apply.

- **Fundraising**: In 2018, donations received through the annual campaign and other designated giving substantially increased scholarship funds. BKSM awards scholarships to lay ministers as well as persons on ordination tracks.

The Diocese of Nebraska makes vital contributions to our shared work. We are so grateful for the constant support and counsel of Bishop Barker; the visionary board leadership of Ven. Betsy Bennett (board chair) and Rev. Judi Yeates; the financial counsel of Beth Byrne; and the excellent instruction of Ven. Bennett, Dean Craig Loya, Dr. Melissa Tubbs Loya, Rev. Dr. Charles Peek, and Rev. Ben Varnum. We give thanks for our growing community of alumni/ae in Nebraska. We stand ready to serve you to the best of our ability. Yours in Christ,

Respectfully Submitted,
The Very Reverend Dr. Don H. Compier, Dean
The Rev. Casey Rohleder, Communications Director
Bishop & Trustees-Executive Commission 2018

The Executive Commission and Bishop & Trustees of the Diocese of Nebraska held their quarterly meetings jointly in the year following Annual Council 2017.

November 30, 2017

A joint virtual meeting of the Bishop & Trustees and Executive Commission of the Diocese of Nebraska was held on November 30, 2017. Bishop Barker opened the meeting with prayer and a series of reflection questions. The Rev. Marisa Thompson reported on the canonical and constitutional changes approved at Annual Council, which anticipate the restructuring of Bishop & Trustees and the elimination of the Executive Commission, following a second reading at the 2018 Annual Council. Bishop Barker suggested the formation of a task force to consider practical ways to implement these changes. Ms. Beth Byrne, Director of Finance, reported on the finances of the diocese and reviewed the third quarter financial statements. Ms. Noelle Ptomey reported on the work of the sesquicentennial committee, and Brother James Dowd reported on the development of the Benedictine Service Corps. Bishop Barker closed the meeting in prayer.

February 10, 2018

A joint meeting of the Bishop & Trustees and Executive Commission of the Diocese of Nebraska was held at Holy Trinity Episcopal Church in Lincoln, Nebraska. Bishop Barker opened the meeting in prayer and small groups engaged in a Bible study. Bishop Barker reported on his hopes for the coming year, which included both technical and adaptive work, much of which was focused on the restructuring of diocesan governance. The Rev. Benedict Varnum reported on the work of the restructuring task force. Ms. Beth Byrne, Director of Finance, and Mr. Jeffrey Pirruccello, Treasurer, reported on diocesan finances. A subcommittee of the Bishop & Trustees was formed to review the Sudan Mission funds as well as other funds that have continuing balances. The bodies reviewed Faith Asking acceptances and requests for reassessment. The Ven. Betsy Bennett reported on upcoming sesquicentennial events. Bishop Barker closed the meeting in prayer.

May 31, 2018

A joint meeting of the Bishop & Trustees and Executive Commission of the Diocese of Nebraska was held at the Clarkson Center in Omaha, Nebraska. Bishop Barker opened the meeting with prayer and a devotion. Due to the death or resignation of several members of Bishop and Trustees, new members were elected in accordance with Article XV.2 of the Constitution. Bishop Barker and Canon Easton each provided reports on their respective ministries since the bodies last met. The Rev. Benedict Varnum provided a report on the restructuring of diocesan governing bodies. Mr. Jeff Pirruccello, Treasurer, reported on fourth quarter financial statements. Ms. Beth Byrne, Director of Finance, reported on diocesan finances and updates in Faith Asking. Mr. Pirruccello updated the bodies on the work of the sub-committee appointed to review the Sudan Mission funds. The Bishop & Trustees approved a matter regarding property zoning St. Martha’s in Papillion, pending the additional approval of the Standing Committee. Bishop Barker reported on upcoming sesquicentennial events and closed the meeting in prayer.
A joint meeting of the Bishop & Trustees and Executive Commission of the Diocese of Nebraska was held at St. Mark’s Pro-Cathedral in Hastings, Nebraska. The meeting began with a celebration of Holy Eucharist and Bible study, followed by dinner. Bishop Barker reminded the bodies of the upcoming second reading of Constitutional changes at Annual Council, which, if passed, would dissolve the Executive Commission and reconstitute the Bishop and Trustees. Discussion followed. The Bishop and Trustees voted to establish a custodial account for Christ Church in Beatrice, allowing them to request funds from the closing of St. Luke’s in Wymore for ministries that benefit the Wymore community. Ms. Beth Byrne, Director of Finance, provided a detailed overview of the draft budget. The meeting adjourned for the night and reconvened the next morning for continued discussion of the budget. The budget was approved to be presented at Annual Council. The Bishop and Trustees filled three vacant positions in accordance with Title XV.2. Bishop Barker closed the meeting with prayer.

Respectfully Submitted,
The Rev. Canon Elizabeth Easton, Secretary
Camp Canterbury 2018

It’s no secret that I LOVE camp.

I love worshiping out of doors. I love singing Sanctuary while sitting around a bonfire. I love greeting the same campers summer after summer and seeing how they’ve grown, as much as I I love welcoming a new face. I love working with people who give so deeply and so generously of themselves to create a holy camp experience. I love dining hall conversations and coloring in the craft cabin. I love swaying in the hammocks, floating in the pool and watching the talent show. I love witnessing a cabin bond and friendships form. The list could go on and on.

I look forward to camp all year long.

My own camp experience had a huge impact on my faith life. To this day some of the holiest experiences of my Christian journey have taken place at camp. There’s a very real part of me that wants to give back to something that so deeply formed me.

So, part of my camp ministry is about creating opportunities for that kind of formation for others. I want our diocesan youth to know Jesus. I want them to experience good liturgy. I want them to practice community in a safe and structured environment. I want them to make friends and have fun. I want camp to be something they look forward to every summer and I hope camp is something they can look back on and love. I want our campers to be lay leaders in their parishes, and I hope we have kids grow up, go to seminary and become priests that return to help run camp here in DioNeb.

I want a lot from one short week in July.

My hopes for camp are high. But here’s the deal.

As any teacher or school administrator can tell you, kids today face unprecedented stress and challenges. We live in a desperate and hurting world where there seems to be no end to ugly and malevolent violence. Hatred runs rampant. Depression and loneliness are epidemics. There are internet trolls and real-life predators. We live in an age of hate crimes and cyber bullying and monthly school shootings.

So, yeah, I have big hopes for camp.

Our kids need what camp offers.

They need Jesus. And they need places where they can grow their faith. They need to exposure to the living, breathing word of God. They need places and spaces where they can be themselves. They need mentors, and to see adults modeling their faith in healthy ways. They need to hear good preaching. They need a chance to stand on Holy Ground and feel the Holy Spirit move. They need healing and tender care. They need people to listen to them. They need rest and a chance to unwind. They need real examples of compassion and mercy.

I can’t claim that camp solves the world’s problems, but I do insist it’s a good place to start.

I’m incredibly proud to say we have a strong camp program in DioNeb. Summer after summer we plan, prepare, and program a quality camp experience where snoozing in the hammocks becomes holy rest
for the exhausted, where taking part in the talent show gives a child a voice and an outlet, where going back for seconds in the dining hall isn’t an indulgence. And where walking the cabin with a home-sick camper at two am is a real-time grace.

I’m grateful for the many people in this diocese who love and support camp as much as I do. People like:


I’m thankful and amazed that we have a Bishop and Canon who think camp is important enough to make attending a priority in their summer schedule.

I’m moved by the generous scholarship donations we receive every year and for the many churches that give financial assistance so that no child ever misses camp – especially the donation from St. Thomas, Falls City (a church without a rector and an ASA of less than 12 people).

Continued thanks to Fr. Mark Selvey, St. Francis, Scottsbluff and western deanery for the use of their van and for covering travel expenses.

I’m indebted to the people who volunteered to assist with camp check in: Monte Horine, Mary Jane Smith, Barb Alf, Nicole Cloudt, Angie Gallegos, Sandra Squires, Erin Rhian*, Rhonda Vest, Jan With, Kim Roberts, Lindsey Rowe*, June Edwards, Heidi Sell.

And I would be remiss to not thank Beth Byrne and Lachisha Baskin for their generous gift of time and talent behind the scenes, keeping our camp registration and finances in good order. And for not yelling at me when we go over budget.

Special thanks to my own family - Harlan, Rowan* and Brody - for their tireless support of my camp work.

I close this report by offering thanks and gratitude for the many, many people who have been part of our diocesan camp over the years: Jim Roach, Nancy and Terry Winslow, Rod and Mary Moore, Charles and Nancy Peek, Cindy Hoffmeister, Tom Miles, Jim Krotz, Tim and Carla Anderson, Suzanne Titus, Sharon Chamberlain, Mike Churchman, Don and Linda Raabe, John Nelson, Sandra Squires, Tim and Marsha Mattson, Bob Scott, Ruth and Larry Jaynes, Sarah Harding, Jason Emerson, Lara Shine, Kirsten Warren Carrell, Andrea Jay*, Neil Jay*, John Symonds, Susanna Des Marais, Tar Drazdowski, Mary Hendricks.

Forgive me for any omissions. I’ve no doubt the list could go on and on.

Faithfully submitted,

Noelle Ptomey, Diocesan Camp Director

*denotes DioNeb camp alumni
Clergy Compensation Committee 2018

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 2019 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 2% cost of living adjustment for all clergy for 2019 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**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Description</th>
<th>Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One service, one location</td>
<td>$100 plus travel reimbursement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two services, one location</td>
<td>$135 plus travel reimbursement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Each additional service on location</td>
<td>$35.00 per service extra</td>
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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.

2019 – 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 for all regularly employed priests and deacons. The definition of regularly employed applies if one of these are met:

- You have a letter of agreement (or other contract of employment) your employer
- You are duly called to your position by your bishop, vestry, or rector
- Your position has a formal title (for example, rector or priest-in-charge) indicating an ongoing substantial relationship with your employer
- Your employer issues you a Form W-2 (or equivalent)
- You are scheduled to work at least 20 hours per week

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 Chairs
Commission on Ministry 2018

The Commission on Ministry (COM) met twice during 2018. In January we met with 3 aspirants for the priesthood and recommended them for postulancy. In August we met with two postulants and recommended them for candidacy for the priesthood.

Several members of the COM participated in the Vocational Inventory Retreat this summer. This retreat allows the COM members to get to know the aspirants much better prior to their meeting with the COM.

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 2018

The secretariat for the Cursillo ministry served as support for the weekend Cursillo #26, provides monthly communication to the Diocese, has obtained future Cursillo sites and is available for anyone seeking information about the Cursillo movement.

A great team working with Ruth and Dale Thompson (rectora/rector) for the Cursillo #26 provided a wonderful weekend in this ministry. Many thanks to each person who shared in Christ’s love and this experience.

Web site administration, Kyle Smith, gets the word out via the Diocese Monthly Ministry bulletin. Thanks Kyle. Thanks to Lyndle Lewis – treasurer and Katharina Schwidtal – secretary – your work is appreciated. Under the direction of Bishop Scott Barker, Nancy Brown – Advisor, Spiritual Directors Mo Ruth Thomlison and Mo Pam Williams, Directors Ruthie Thompson and Dale Thompson provide guidance and support for this ministry.

Forward activities include start up for Team #27 and updated data base of persons who have attended their Cursillo.

Respectfully submitted,
Cheryl Hejl
Interim Lay Director

Sixteen candidates attended Nebraska Episcopal Cursillo #26 this summer. The candidates represented eight churches throughout the Diocese of Nebraska including: St. Luke’s, Kearney; St. Andrew’s, Omaha; Church of the Holy Trinity, Lincoln; St. David’s, Lincoln; St. Stephen’s, Grand Island; Church of the Holy Spirit, Bellevue; St. Mark’s, Hastings and St. Martha’s, Papillion.

Twenty-three team members representing twelve churches in the diocese attended three meetings in the months prior to the 4-day weekend. Churches represented by the team members included: St. Matthews, Lincoln; St. David’s, Lincoln; St. Mark’s, Hastings; Holy Trinity, Omaha; St. Martha’s, Papillion; Church of the Holy Spirit, Bellevue; St. Augustine’s, Elkhorn; Church of the Holy Trinity, Lincoln; St. Luke’s, Kearney; All Saints, Omaha; St. Stephen’s, Grand Island; Holy Trinity, Norfolk. Ruth and Dale Thompson from All Saints, Omaha were co-rectors for the weekend.

NEC #26 was blessed with the presence of four clergy members as spiritual advisors- Susanna DesMarais, Stephanie Swinnea, Ernesto Medina and Wes Agar. On Sunday, Bishop Scott Barker was present for the closing ceremony.

This was a spirit filled, joyful weekend with prayers, worship, discussion, music and fellowship abounding.
Daughters of the King 2018

Officers:
President - Carol Ott, St. Augustines, Elkhorn
Vice President - Mary Falkowski of St Andrews, Omaha
Secretary - Carol Schlismann, Daughter at Large, Norfolk
Treasurer - Marjorie Shaw of St Martha’s, Papillion
Chaplain - Mother Ruth Jaynes, Daughter at Large, Blair

Goals for 2017-2018
1. Enhance communication and sharing among chapters and Daughters at Large
2. Develop a budget and Guidelines on Spending compatible with provincial policies.
3. Develop guidelines for responsibilities of diocesan officers.
4. Update bylaws if necessary.
5. Increase documentation of diocesan Assembly activities.
6. Implement a diocesan-wide service project.
7. Increase number of new members by increasing visibility.
8. Initiate one Junior Chapter.

Membership
As of July 31, 2017 the Nebraska Assembly has 10 Senior Chapters. We are blessed to have a new chapter, Lilies, form at All Saints of Omaha with 6 members. North Platte had been inactive for several years, but joyfully, 10 new members have completed discernment classes and will be admitted September 23, 2018 when the chapter will also be re-dedicated. Two chapters disband this year at St Alban’s of McCook (due to lack of at least 3 active members) and at St Barnabas of Omaha (due to lack of support from their Roman Catholic Priest). There are no Junior Chapters although the Lilies chapter at All Saints is considering initiating one.

In Nebraska we have 87 members - with 10 Daughters at Large and 77 members in parish chapters (66 members are in the 2 Metropolitan cities and 11 are in Greater Nebraska). The largest Chapter, St. Margaret, at Holy Spirit in Bellevue has 22 members. Within the 8-chapter Annual Reports that were returned or given orally, 3 deaths were reported. Comparing to other states in Province VI, there are 543 Daughters in Colorado, 76 in Wyoming, 47 in Iowa, 26 in SD, 21 in MT, 20 in MN, & 7 in ND.

Studies completed by 8 chapters reporting a variety of 10 spiritual studies using Book of Common Prayer, spiritual books such as, “Being Disciples and “Being A Christian” by Rowan Williams, video series, or other materials. In addition, one chapter has a catechist instruct their members with catechist materials, such as “Six Marks of Discipleship.” One chapter is using “Continuing the Journey Study Guide” from the National DOK office.

Service by the Chapters sewing small travel bags for victims of abuse for Friends of Tamar; mailing birthday and anniversary cards to parish members; providing prayer request cards for collection during
the offering; making welcome bags for church visitors, making Fiddle Mats for people with dementia, working with food pantries, providing pies for midweek meals at the cathedral, meeting needs of The Stephen Center, and; mailing college and 1st year military boxes to young parishioners. Chapter St. Margaret, at Holy Spirit in Bellevue has purchased a portable labyrinth with carrying bags that they rent for $50 with a $150 deposit.

Service Project for the Diocesan Assembly of Nebraska was adopted for Saving Our Adolescents from Prostitution (S.O.A.P.) which was labeling motel soap bars with the hotline number for trafficking. We also sponsored a Service Work Day when 31 women attended from 6 chapters and 2 DAL’s to sew travel bags and make cards for Friends of Tamar New Beginnings and residents of Magdalene Omaha.

Involvement in Diocese Activities As usual, Daughters served at the Bishop’s request to organize and staff the Prayer Room at the Diocesan Annual Council, in October in North Platte. This is a meaningful opportunity to serve for all Daughters especially Daughters at Large and Daughters around the state when Annual Council is in their area.

Triennial Convention of The Order of the Daughters of the King in Austin TX, “Walk His Way” was attended by 3 Nebraska Daughters, Carol Ott, Carol Schlismann, and Mother Ruth Jaynes. Because the cost of attending Triennial was about $1000 per person, I am personally grateful for monetary support from my Chapter, Parish, Assembly, Province and Diocese of Nebraska. It was an informative and motivating spiritual experience related to the Jesus Movement and Building a Beloved Community. Keynote speakers were Canon Stephanie Powers and Canon Carrie Boren Headington. We elected the first African American woman as President of the National Order of the DOK, Krisita Jackson from Orlando, Florida. I returned with many new ideas for our chapters.

The Post Triennial Convention Reporting and Worship Day was attended by 30 women and 4 men attended the co-sponsored by DOK and ECW on 7/21/18 at St Augustine’s, Elkhorn. We are grateful to Bishop Barker and Canon Liz for attending and celebrating the Eucharist that day. The Annual Meeting of the DOK was also held on this day.

The Officers conclude that we have made great progress toward achieving our Assembly goals. We designed and purchased a new banner. We developed and sent an Assembly newsletter. We established an independent bank account as directed by National. We feel we have been fiscally responsible with our funds which come from national dues. Our beginning balance was $3,074, receipts from dues and disbanded chapters = $1461, disbursements =$1407, and balance = $3129 on 7/31/2018.

Plans for 2018-2019 include a focused effort to increase membership in The Order and to introduce DOK to all parishes in the state. Therefore, we are offering the alternative of teleconferences for Preparation Classes for discernment to become a Daughter via Zoom Cloud Meetings. Sandra Squires is leading these 6:30 pm to 8 pm CST, weekly Sept 11 to Nov 6, 2018. To date 4 women have registered. There is great interest from Province and National DOK in the response to offering this format on a trial basis.

Nebraska Daughters are pleased to serve Our Lord, Our Bishop, Our Priests, and Our Parishes. May we continue to Walk His Way and be part of the Episcopal Branch of the Jesus Movement.

Respectfully Submitted,
Carol Ott, President, Diocesan Assembly of Nebraska of The Order of the Daughters of the King
Deacons Report 2018

Since last Annual Council, deacons in the Diocese of Nebraska have begun gathering for Saturday morning Deacons Conversations. Each gathering is focused on a different topic, with conversations so far about the prophetic role of the deacon in our local parishes, creating a local support system, and resolutions and information from General Convention of special interest to deacons. In June, instead of a conversation for deacons, Bishop Barker, Canon Easton, and Archdeacon Bennett invited anyone in the diocese with an interest in the formation of deacons to a presentation about the discernment and formation process, and about expectations for ordained diaconal ministry in our diocese in 2018. We plan for these conversations to continue in the coming year and will announce dates and locations through the Ministry Memo and Spreading the Word.

St. Martin’s of Tours welcomed their new deacon, Mark Kowalski, on September 5 with a Service of Welcome and Celebration for his new ministry in our diocese and that parish. Deacon Kowalski was ordained in the Diocese of Chicago.

All deacons along with others interested in diaconal ministry are invited to attend the Association for Episcopal Deacons Triennial conference June 6-9, 2018, in Providence, Rhode Island. The conference theme is The Power of Hope: Transformation through Reconciliation and Relationship, and the keynote speaker and preacher will be Presiding Bishop Michael Curry. More information about the conference is available at the AED website episcopaldeacons.org.

With all that is happening in our nation and our world that affects the well-being of us all, the Church needs more deacons to lead in the ministry of serving people in the margins and of interpreting the needs, concerns, and hopes of the world to the Church. We are looking for people who are faithful members of a worshipping community but whose passions and interests extend beyond their own parishes and families to their wider communities, and who have the ability and willingness to interpret the concerns of the world to the Church.

Respectfully submitted,
Archdeacon Betsy Blake Bennett
Diocesan Archives 2018

It has been a busy year in the Diocesan Archive, not so much for the organization of, or acquisition of, new materials, but for research. In September 2017, Noelle Ptomey suggested that, in view of the upcoming 150th anniversary of the Episcopal Diocese of Nebraska, we “post” on a Facebook page, a series of Episcopal “firsts” recorded by the Diocese. While that would be extremely interesting, a list of “firsts” would also be exceedingly difficult to establish with certainty. Euro-American culture in this region dates to the Lewis and Clark Expedition in 1804 – even earlier by some European missionaries and fur traders. Although there were no American settlements in the area until after mid-1854, there were Episcopal chaplains among the soldiers stationed at the frontier forts on the Plains. They would certainly have used rites from the Book of Common Prayer. Rev. Henry Gregory, an early missionary to the Menominee from upstate New York and the high church mentor of the first diocesan Chancellor, James Mills Woolworth, was actually the first chaplain at Fort Leavenworth in 1838. And closer to home, Fort Atkinson, established in 1819, suffered a scurvy epidemic during the first winter of its existence north of present-day Omaha, killing over 300 men. Many of those soldiers were undoubtedly buried using some form of the funeral rites in the Book of Common Prayer. However, those “firsts” can be assumed, but not necessarily proven. What seemed more important was to honor the work of individuals who helped to build the Diocese of Nebraska, especially the laity, women, and people of color.

Although we got a rather late start in assembling such a list, over the past year, we have created short biographies for some sixty-five influential Nebraska Episcopalians. We have had multiple individual submissions, but I am grateful to Steve Kay of North Platte for writing and submitting many of the historic figures for the western part of the state. I am also grateful to Noelle Ptomey for faithfully posting the biographical submissions to a Facebook page each month. Although we are closing in on the end of our anniversary year, I believe it is important to continue adding individuals to that list. I have several ideas about how we might use information about the contributions of those figures beyond this year. I would encourage any and all of us to continue to submit the names of individuals important to the work of the Diocese of Nebraska. Each submission should:

1) Name the individual, his/her parish, and an important date. That can be a birth date, consecration date, ordination date, death date, date a group (such as a guild) was formed. It is helpful to have more than one potential date in case we have another entry for that specific date.
2) About 150 to 200 words of biographical info – specifically to include why the person is important to the parish – e.g. she like to cook, or he led Bible studies.
3) Include the name of the submitter.
4) Send them to me at jlbehrens@unomaha.edu

Additionally, through the year, I have written several short essays about aspects of diocesan history. These can be accessed on the diocesan anniversary page. Currently I am working on short essays reflecting the histories of the parishes memorialized in the Cathedral clerestory. Of the thirty-two parishes represented by windows in the clerestory, one-half no longer exist. But their congregations were an important part of the diocesan history.

Lastly, don’t hesitate to contact me to seek information about a parish or event. The questions are the fun part of doing this. I can be reached at the above e-mail. And many thanks to all of you who “Keep the Faith”

Respectfully submitted, Jo Behrens, Historiographer and Archivist
It has been a great pleasure to join the diocese staff this past January as the Director of Communications. It has been a very meaningful experience working with the Bishop and the team, as well as the staff at Trinity Cathedral, where I also serve as Director of Communications. I have very much enjoyed meeting and working with folks from all over the diocese and helping to spread the good news of God’s work in our communities.

I attended the annual Episcopal Communicators conference in April at Kanuga in North Carolina. It was a very worthwhile conference and I was pleased to meet some very talented new friends from all over the country who are doing some exciting work in the communications realm in our church.

The primary method for routine communication continues to be the weekly diocese Ministry Memo email. I have made some aesthetic changes to the Ministry Memo to reflect the liturgical season as well as some Nebraska-specific flair! 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. The Ministry Memo is sent to over 1,000 people weekly. If you do not receive it, please send me your email and I will get you added to the list.

Spreading the Word is a weekly newsletter from the Bishop directed at the clergy of the diocese. If you are a clergy member, please let me know if you are not receiving Spreading the Word.

The diocese webpage, www.episcopal-ne.org, has been refreshed aesthetically and navigation simplified. I am always open to feedback and corrections. The website for your diocese needs to work for you, so please let me know how it can be improved. Also please note the new simplified alternative address for the diocese webpage, www.dioneb.org

We are working on ways to re-invent The Nebraska Episcopalian platform, which has been a blog for many years and was once the name of our diocese printed newsletter. I am considering options such as expanding the blog, creating a space for more in-depth information about our ministries and events, or even preparing an on-line “magazine” for the diocese perhaps at the end of the year. I am certainly open to suggestions as to how to keep The Nebraska Episcopalian name alive and content vibrant.

The diocese Facebook page has over 1,000 followers and continues to be an easy way to communicate simple messages to the diocese, arrange for events, share photos and videos, etc. In this, our 150th Anniversary Year, it has been fun to read the “Holy Moments” and “Standing on their Shoulders” posts prepared by our archivist Jo Behrens and many others. I am also starting a post each week featuring who we are praying for each week as part of the diocese cycle of prayer.

Much thanks to Deacon Keith Winton who has coordinated the Ministry Memo, The Nebraska Episcopalian and other communications & liturgical efforts for many years and continues to be of great help in so many ways!

In this era of the internet, research shows that 60% of people make their first contact with a church through their webpage and/or social media channels. Therefore, our presence online is really a second “front door”. Therefore, it is not enough to just have a webpage and Facebook page, we need our channels to help tell our story, contain accurate/current information, and ultimately invite people to visit and get connected in our parishes. This is my mission as Director of Communications in our great diocese!

Respectfully submitted,
Kyle Smith, Director of Communications, ksmith@episcopal-ne.org
Diocese Disaster Preparedness 2018

We are pleased to announce that Mother Mary Hendricks is joining the Diocesan Disaster Preparedness Committee. We are changing our approach to help our diocesan churches get a disaster plan on paper with a copy also being sent to the diocesan office. Our committee will be happy to assist each and every church to accomplish this as soon as possible. With the tornados and floods effecting towns all over the state of Nebraska we have been fortunate there has been no property damage or any one injured in our diocese. But there could be, is your church prepared?

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; Mother Mary Hendricks 308.340.8996.

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.

Respectfully submitted,
Deacon Wes Agar, Charles Planz, and Mother Mary Hendricks
Co-Chairs Diocese Disaster Preparedness
**Education for Ministry 2018**

“Education for Ministry” (EFM) is a unique four-year distance learning certificate program in theological education based upon small-group study and practice. Since its founding in 1975, this international program has assisted more than 80,000 participants in discovering and nurturing their call to Christian service. EFM helps the faithful encounter the breadth and depth of the Christian tradition and bring it into conversation with their experiences of the world as they study, worship, and engage in theological reflection together.” *(Sewanee: The University of the South - The School of Theology)*

The Diocese of Nebraska has offered EFM for many years and supports the formation opportunity by maintaining a Diocese License for the program. This license allows EFM participants to pay a reduced rate for the annual tuition.

There are currently 4 seminar groups in the Diocese. Each seminar group is facilitated by a team of co-mentors.

Since mentor must be certified on an annual basis, the Diocese offers Mentor Training each year usually in the summer. This year the training was held in September.

Respectfully submitted,
The Rev. Ernesto Medina
Diocesan Coordinator of EfM
Diocese of Nebraska
Episcopal Diocesan Committee on Scouting in Nebraska 2018

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 a new program for the God and Country Awards for the Episcopal Church for Boy and Girl Scouts.

- Grades 1-3 Baptism
- Grades 4-6 Holy Communion
- Grades 7-9 Confirmation
- Grades 10-12 Relations

To receive the booklets for each award please call 402.981.9111, email: EagleDeacon1@gmail.com, or write Deacon Wes Agar, 2315 Georgetown Place, Bellevue, NE 68123-1050.

We have currently had five youth who are working on their God & Country Awards with this new program for this year 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

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
The Friends of Tamar/Magdalene 2018

The Friends of Tamar is an umbrella organization coordinating 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 of sexual violence in any form (including rape, domestic violence, and sex trafficking) ever had to be without community support again in the aftermath of such 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!

We remain awed by the generosity of the amazing people of DioNeb who have given so much time, talent, treasure, and prayers to answer this work. Since we delivered our first New Beginnings bag at Trinity Cathedral to a woman named Mary on Christmas Eve 2014, together we have delivered nearly 900 bags/suitcases (and counting) 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 whirl of sewing machines run by the “Grateful Threads” making tote bags at All Saints, you made this happen! We celebrate our diocesan partners -- 19 parishes in the following cities either are working with Trinity Cathedral in the Omaha area or have created their own local partnerships with social service agencies to offer other survivor support: Alliance; Bassett; Bellevue; Chadron; Elkhorn; Fremont; Harvard; Hastings; Lincoln; O’Neill; Papillion; Plattsmouth; Scottsbluff; and Seward. 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, hosted their own awareness events, and provided much-needed medical support to Magdalene residents via their health clinic.

Magdalene Omaha began as a Friends of Tamar project, then became its own separate 501c3 in 2016. Magdalene Omaha is a two-year residential recovery and economic empowerment program for women who survived prostitution/sex trafficking, violence, and addiction. The program is unique in its reliance on community, and its use of peer mentors and survivor leaders to run the program as they progress through it and after they graduate. Upon graduation, as part of our outreach programs, they are able to help women still stuck in the life to see that recovery can happen and help them to also find their way home. Founded in Nashville 21 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.

On July 22, 2017 -- the feast of Mary Magdalene -- we made an offer to purchase our first residence. Because of strong community support, we were able to finish the renovations to the home ahead of schedule and under budget. In December, we began to welcome residents home – just days ahead of Christmas.
The justice enterprise is the economic empowerment piece of our program. It is the small-business that the residents run when they achieve Phase II status (at approximately 6 months in the program). In Nashville, it’s called Thistle Farms. Ours is called Thistle Lights, which just launched a few weeks ago! We are deeply grateful to Bishop Barker for generously giving his time to come and bless the residence, Thistle Lights, and our office (not to mention a few of us who asked for that too) – and for being the very first to place a product order! In addition to selling our product lines made by our residents, we also carry Thistle Farms products and hope to serve as a distributor of these throughout DioNeb to help give our residents develop strong marketing skills. You can find out more via our Facebook page or our website: www.magdaleneomaha.org. Keep us in mind for stocking your bookstore/gift shop, and for your holiday shopping!

We remain so deeply grateful to all of you reading this – it is thanks to you that together we faithfully answer needs, launch programs, and stand with survivors. Know that 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 2019!!

**The 24 Spiritual Principles of the Magdalene Program**

1. Come Together  
2. Proclaim Original Grace  
3. Cry with Your Creator  
4. Find Your Place in the Circle  
5. Think of the Stranger as God  
6. Take the Longer Path  
7. Make a Small Change and See the Big Difference  
8. Let God Sort It Out  
9. Stand on New Ground and Believe You Are Not Lost  
10. Forgive and Feel Freedom  
11. Unite Your Sexuality and Spirituality  
12. Show Hospitality to All  
13. Laugh at Yourself  
14. Consider the Thistle  
15. Listen to a New Idea  
16. Lose Gracefully  
17. Remember You Have Been in the Ditch  
18. Walk Behind  
19. Live in Gratitude  
20. Love without Judgement  
21. Stay on Point  
22. Pray for Courage  
23. Find Your Way Home  
24. Leave Thankfully

Respectfully submitted,  
The Reverend Deacon Teresa Houser
Recovery Commission 2018

“We are going to know a new freedom and a new happiness. We will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it. We will comprehend the word serenity and we will know peace. No matter how far down the scale we have gone, we will see how our experience can benefit others. That feeling of uselessness and self-pity will disappear. We will lose interest in selfish things and gain interest in our fellows. Self-seeking will slip away. Our whole attitude and outlook upon life will change. Fear of people and of economic insecurity will leave us. We will intuitively know how to handle situations which used to baffle us. We will suddenly realize that God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves.”

~ “The Promises,” AA Big Book, pages 83-84

Since Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) was founded in 1935, millions of people have found a new way of living. AA and other 12-step recovery programs modeled after it, such as Narcotics Anonymous (NA), have offered a path for addicts to break through the darkness and enjoy “happy, joyous, and free” lives. The Twelve Steps are a spiritual program, and the heart of 12-step programs is helping the addict to restore right relations with God and others. Those who have spent time working the 12 steps are familiar with this expression: We have a daily reprieve from our addiction contingent upon the maintenance of our spiritual condition.

Many know the names of AA co-founders Bill Wilson and Dr. Bob. Not as many people know about Father Samuel Shoemaker, who Bill W. and Dr. Bob credited as being the spiritual mentor of the AA movement – a movement hailed, by the way, as one of the greatest inventions of the 20th century!

Samuel Shoemaker was an Episcopal priest. He was born in Baltimore in 1893 and ordained a priest in 1921. In 1925, he became the Rector of Calvary Church in New York City, where he worked for 16 years, and from where he became involved with the founding of AA. It was there where he had the courage and compassion to go out past the church walls and into the neighborhood. He saw the devastation of addiction – the suffering of those caught in a cycle of alcoholism, and the pain their disease wrought on their families. He welcomed even the most marginalized people to come to the church for comfort, company, and unconditional love. The Church commemorates him on January 31.

We call on you to follow Samuel Shoemaker’s example and go into our neighborhoods to serve those who struggle with addictions. We encourage you to welcome them into the church for worship, and the church basement (or hall) for the healing that comes from AA, NA, OA, Al-Anon and other meetings. We would love to hear from each parish about the work you are doing, and/or the work you would like to do in this area. We will be building additional resources in the year ahead. As we reform this commission, we invite anyone interested in being a part of that to reach out to me via teresa@magdaleneomaha.org.

We especially thank and celebrate our most recent leadership for their years of dedicated service, and for helping so many to “walk in the Sunlight of the Spirit.” We are glad and grateful they will continue to do this work with us. We have more gratitude than we can express for Chuck Peek, Nancy Brown, and Sr. Elizabeth Sojourner!

Respectfully submitted,
The Reverend Deacon Teresa Houser, Chair
Standing Committee 2018

The Standing Committee for the Diocese of Nebraska is made up of 8 elected members from throughout the Diocese. By the rules established by the Constitution and Canons, the Standing Committee is made up by 4 lay and 4 clergy (one of the clergy must be a priest).

The Canons dictate that the Standing Committee is responsible for:
1. Approving Postulants for Holy Orders for Candidacy and approving Candidates for Holy Orders for Ordination to the Diaconate and/or Priesthood.
2. Providing consent to the election of any person who has been elected bishop in a Diocese anywhere in the Episcopal Church. Consent would be granted if we are able to see enough data that supports that the election process occurred in a way consistent with the Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church.
3. Providing consent to any Diocese in the Episcopal Church if they request the addition of a new bishop for their diocese. (Example: If Bishop Barker asked our Council to add a Suffragan Bishop to the Diocese of Nebraska and then if the Diocesan Council approved.)
4. Approving any property transactions or any debt that a congregation may wish to incur.
5. Is available to serve as a Council of Advice for the Diocesan Bishop.
6. Takes the role of the Ecclesiastical Authority if the Diocese is without a bishop.

This last year the Standing Committee:
A. Approved for Keith Winton for both Candidacy and Ordination.
B. Approved Kim Culp for Candidacy.
C. Approved Elisabeth LaClaire Atkins for Candidacy

The members of the Standing Committee for 2017-2018 are as follows (the year is the term expiring):
The Rev. Ernesto Medina, St. Martha’s, Papillion (2018)
Jane Wisniewski, St. Francis, Scottsbluff (2018)
Bill Reno, St. Matthew’s, Alliance (2019)
The Ven. Betsy Bennett, Church of the Resurrection, Omaha (2019)
Nicole Clodt, St. Mary’s, Blair (2020)
Carol Schrader, Trinity Cathedral, Omaha (2020)
The Rev. Susanna DesMarais, Church of the Holy Trinity, Lincoln (2020)

Important Note: By the time the Diocesan Council meets this year, the Standing Committee would have had a face to face meeting just prior and most likely will be voting to “not consent” to the election of the Bishop Coadjutor of the Diocese of Haiti. If this outcome is different a verbal report will be offered at Council.

Respectfully submitted,
The Rev. Ernesto Medina, President of Standing Committee
United Thank Offering 2018

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 strengthening communication, I have compiled a list of parish coordinators who receive monthly UTO e-newsletters as well as occasional contacts from me. Training for UTO parish coordinators is being offered via webinar and in person, with plans to offer training in both the eastern and western parts of the diocese over the next year.

In 2017, then as UTO President I offered a half-day training at Church of Our Savior in North Platte. Three people attended, and UTO training in Western Nebraska is being offered in Scottsbluff prior to 2018 Annual Council.

Four notable things about Nebraska and UTO:
Grace Episcopal Church in Chadron won the Small Church celebration of Julia Chester Emery’s 165th Birthday. Congratulations Sally Zahn, parish UTO coordinator!
St. Andrew’s Episcopal Church in Seward had an article and photo of their parish Ingathering in the UTO Newsletter. Congratulations Carrie Graves, parish coordinator!
The Rev. Chris Plantz was elected to the United Thank Offering Board. She will represent Province VI Episcopal Church Women. Congratulations Chris!
Sandra Squires completed her two terms on the United Thank Offering, first as Province VI representative and then for the last 3 years as Board President. Thanksgiving and gratitude for completed service!

I have records for 26* participating parishes of our 53 parishes for the last two years. These are listed in alphabetical order by community. *If your donation is not listed, it may have been mailed directly to the UTO Post Office Box in St. Louis. Please notify Sandra Squires for any unacknowledged contributions.

<table>
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<th>Churches</th>
<th>9/1/16-8/31/17</th>
<th>9/1/17-8/31/18</th>
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To quote my dear friend Elizabeth Campbell of Minnesota about UTO Blue Box giving, “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 your many blessings.”

Thank you to all who support this great ministry which funds grants throughout the world.

**United Thank Offering Resources**

[unitedthankoffering.org](http://unitedthankoffering.org) for the Episcopal Church website-- [unitedthankoffering.com](http://unitedthankoffering.com) for the UTO Blog

Order UTO Blue Boxes and other materials at: shimaofnavajoland.com. Materials are free, but postage will be charged. Phone orders at 1-928-729-5540.

Subscribe to the UTO Newsletter: [https://www.episcopalchurch.org/posts/uto/united-thank-offering-e-newsletter](https://www.episcopalchurch.org/posts/uto/united-thank-offering-e-newsletter)

The UTO Board is encouraging parishes to participate in the **Gratitude Challenge** for the month of November which can be found at: [https://unitedthankoffering.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/uto-gratitude-challenge-final.pdf](https://unitedthankoffering.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/uto-gratitude-challenge-final.pdf) If this does not take you directly to the document, please cut and paste the address in your menu bar.

The updated UTO Coordinator’s Handbook can be found at:
Blue Box Prayer
Almighty God, I give you praise
for blessing me in many ways.

Create in me a grateful heart
and with this gift a blessing start. Amen.

United Thank Offering Prayer
Gracious God, we come before you in the knowledge that although we are varied in our gifts, we are united as laborers in your harvest. With grateful hearts, we give thanks for the blessings and challenges that inspire the work of the United Thank Offering. May the offerings given to UTO as an expression of gratitude go on to address the needs of our ever-changing world. All this we ask through Jesus Christ; whose life is a blueprint we strive to follow. Amen.

To volunteer or if you have questions.
sksquires@cox.net /402-397-4059 home /402-536-9781 cell—prefer texts

Respectfully and thankfully submitted,
Sandra Squires,
Nebraska UTO Coordinator
On January 1, 2018, I was privileged to begin as Vicar for Mission for the Diocese of Nebraska, assuming the work ably begun by Mother Tar Drazdowski of Christ Church, Sidney. For 2018, I set three goals for my work: 1.) become acquainted with the people and mission of the Dominican Development Group (DDG); 2.) begin planning for a diocesan mission trip to the Dominican Republic in 2019; and, 3.) develop a theology of mission under which all mission endeavors in the diocese might draw life and purpose. I would like to speak to each of these in turn.

The website of the Dominican Development Group describes its work in this way:
The Dominican Development Group (DDG), a non-profit organization within The Episcopal Church, assists the Episcopal Diocese of the Dominican Republic with project planning, program development, and construction expertise; raises funds for the diocesan endowment; and coordinates the schedules and the work projects of mission teams from the United States working in the Diocese of the Dominican Republic…The DDG works closely with the Episcopal dioceses with companion relationships with the Episcopal Diocese of the Dominican Republic…The DDG also helps coordinate the work of other organizations that support mission teams and other projects in the Episcopal Diocese of the Dominican Republic. The DDG is a Partner Organization in the Global Episcopal Mission Network (GEMN). (http://dominicandevelopmentgroup.org/home-2-3/)

The Diocese of Nebraska has an historic relationship to the Diocese of the Dominican Republic as a companion diocese. In the context of that relationship as Vicar for Mission, I serve as the Bishop’s Representative on the DDG Board, which meets twice a year—February in Santo Domingo, DR and Tampa, Florida in October. I attended the meeting in the DR in early 2018 and met the other members of the DDG Board, including Bishop Moises Quezada Mota, spending most of my time becoming oriented to the work of the DDG, and to the Diocese of the Dominican Republic and Dominican food, culture, geography, and life. I look forward to delving more deeply into my work on the DDG Board.

Bishop Barker and I set a goal to create a diocesan-wide mission trip to the Dominican Republic for some time in 2019. To that end, an exploratory team will travel to the DR in early November to scope out mission possibilities. That team includes Fr. Jeffrey Nelson+, Fr. Mark Selvey, Scottsbluff and Ms. Lois Vargas, North Platte. I want to thank each of them for giving of their time and resources for this project.

Finally, I am working with a team of persons to develop a theology of mission that will be posted on a special page on the diocesan website. The statement is meant to help orient our diocesan understanding of mission and give guidance to individual congregations that are or are planning to become involved in mission work either at home or abroad. It is my hope that the statement will be fleshed out with training materials meant to ground people as they prepare to engage in mission. The training materials will certainly be used as we prepare for diocesan sponsored mission trips but hopefully will be available for others who may wish to use them in their local parish. Further, the website will act as an announcement board showcasing mission opportunities throughout the diocese.

Again, I am grateful for the opportunity to serve as Vicar for Mission for the diocese. My thanks to Bishop Barker and his staff for their support and encouragement along the way, and to the diocese for nurturing a heart for mission as we seek to encounter Jesus in other people and places in the world.

Respectfully submitted,
The Rev’d Dr. Jeffrey S. F. Nelson - Vicar for Mission
Women’s Ministries 2018

Our focus this year is on the Way of Love, Practices for Jesus-Centered Life in the Jesus Movement as expressed by Presiding Bishop Michael Curry.
To that end, we are keeping these thoughts in the forefront as we plan for upcoming retreats and gatherings.

We have a new board this year and look forward to working together and with all Episcopal Women. Our board consists of:

Co-conveners: Beth Agar and Rebecca Smith
Past convener: Christine Grosh
Secretary: Susy Miller
Chaplain: Verneda Kelly
Communications: Heather Bauer
Altar Guild: Heather Bauer
UTO: Sandra Squires
CPC:
DOK: Carol Ott
Bishops’ Trunk: (housed in Hastings/Grand Island)

We are still searching for a few positions to be filled so anyone interested should contact Beth Agar at bethagar@live.com or Rebecca Smith at rsmith1956@msn.com.

In lieu of a Spring Retreat for 2017, Women’s Ministries joined with Daughters of the King on July 21, 2018 at St. Augustine’s in Elkhorn for a daylong event discussing the events of Triennial meetings and General Convention. Canon Liz Easton was Celebrant and Bishop Barker delivered the Sermon.

Upcoming events include a Spring Retreat 2019, which is tentatively planned for March 22-24, 2019 at Comp Comeca in Cozad, Nebraska and a Province Meeting on August 2-4 in Casper, WY.

Respectfully submitted,
Beth Agar
Rebecca Smith
Convener, Women’s Ministries
Youth Outreach 2018

The Road to Rosebud 2018 took place between June 17 and June 23. We had a small but mighty group this year. It was a year of change from the leadership of Fr. Tom Jones to Rev. Karen Watson. There were five adult volunteers and seven youth missioners along on the trip. We followed basically the same format – drive to Valentine, stay at St. John’s, journey to the reservation each day.

The Vacation Bible School was a success with a high of about 35 children from the reservation (the actual number changes each day). Although the numbers in our group were small, the group formed a very close bond and the experience for everyone was fantastic. Lots of hard work and some time for fun (it rained every day but one). It is wonderful that we recognize so many of the children who come for Bible School and they know who we are.

I believe that is the basis for building relationships with the people on the Reservation. The original plan was to go to the Convocation in Rosebud and help with the VBS but the young adults were pretty tired after a full week of hard work and voted to spend their last day at Columbus at the waterpark!

This year the Diocese that includes the Pine Ridge Reservation had their Convocation (Annual Council) in Rosebud. One family from our group, Shaun and Cathy Rife, along with their three children – Paige, Braxton and Mickey – went to the convocation for the second year in a row. Their time was spent helping in whatever way was needed – setting up chairs, helping set up for meals, etc. The children were involved in the cultural workshops provided all day Friday – learning Native American Games and dances.

This year we plan to do another trip. The dates are June 16 through June 21, 2019. The ages for youth participants will still be 12-19. The emphasis right now is on continuing and strengthening the relationships that have been built over the last ten years.

Respectfully submitted,
The Rev. Karen Watson
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Iona Bump
Richard Tickler
Thomas Kovanda
Nita Bornemeier
James Schmitt
Robert Mastin
Harlan Beideck

HOLDREGE, St. Elizabeth’s
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HYANNIS, Calvary Church
Opal Fiscus
Tom Dredla

KEARNEY, St. Luke’s
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KIMBALL, St. Hilda’s
None Reported

LEXINGTON, St. Peter’s
None Reported

LINCOLN, Church of the Holy Trinity
Darlene Percival

LINCOLN, St. David’s
Shirley White
Kathy Robbon
Raymond Strobbe
Ardyce Welch

LINCOLN, St. Mark’s on the Campus
Steven Sim
Sarah Fairchild
Ralph Sperry
Martha Davies
Nan Graf

LINCOLN, St. Matthew’s
Steffanie Roach

MITCHELL, Holy Apostles
Gilbert Kurtz

MULLEN, St. Joseph’s
None Reported

NEBRASKA CITY, St. Mary’s
None Reported

NORTH PLATTE, Our Savior
Jason D. Roth
Leona L. Hoatson
Wanda Smith
Eldie D. Cline
James Keller

OMAHA, All Saints
Margo Bassinger
Deng Beny
Donzel Erikson
Nancy Wolfe
Deacon Orral Murphy
Anna Elliott
Judy Freeman
Earl Waldon, Jr.
William Freeland
Evan Olson
Mary Landen
Eugene Fisher
Deacon Lynne Bacon
Richard Gibson

OMAHA, Church of the Resurrection
Olive Boggus
Mary Forsythe
Ned Williams Sr.
Nikki Schaefer

OMAHA, St. Andrew’s
None Reported

MCCOOK, St. Alban’s
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OMAHA, St. Martin of Tours
Jennifer Miles
Viva Forey
Nadine Agosta

OMAHA, Trinity Cathedral
Phillip Everette Chapman
Robert W. Dowell
Erika Adkins
Annie Caldwell Loring
J. Patrick Green
Douglas Lynn Steinkruger
Nathaniel Wesley Johnson
Joe T. McCartney
Christine L. Metry
Kristin Leigh Sutherlin
Catherine Lynn

OSHKOSH, St. George’s
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PAPILLION, St. Martha’s
Brayden Logan Sueper
Catherine Henson
Shirlee Sullivan
Carlos Gutierrez
Richard Gerlach
Joseph Dmuchovsky, Jr.

PLATTSMOUTH, St. Luke’s
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RUSHVILLE, St. Mary’s Holly
John Raymond Sherve

SCOTTSBLUFF, St. Francis
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SEWARD, St. Andrew’s
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SIDNEY, Christ Church
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TECUMSEH, Grace Church
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VALENTINE, St. John’s
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Priests Deceased Since Last Council
Ron Wiley

Deacons Deceased Since Last Council
Lynne Bacon
Ernest Gerhard
Fred Merritt
Orral Murphy
Mary Forsythe
### Diocese of Nebraska Vital Statistics of Congregations and Missions

Year in parentheses is last year of filing if not 2017

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<th>City</th>
<th>Congregation</th>
<th>Active Members</th>
<th>Communicants in Good Standing</th>
<th>Others Active</th>
<th>Average Sunday Attendance</th>
<th>Sunday Eucharists and Older</th>
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### Vital Statistics of Congregations and Missions

Year in parentheses is last year of filing if not 2017

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<td><strong>82</strong></td>
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</table>
### Diocese of Nebraska

#### Financial Statistics of Congregations and Missions

*Year in parentheses is last year of filing if not 2017*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>Congregation</th>
<th>Plate &amp; Pledge Income</th>
<th>Operating Revenue</th>
<th>Total Revenue</th>
<th>Operating Expense</th>
<th>To the Diocese</th>
<th>Outreach &amp; Development</th>
<th>Total Expense</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>141,622</td>
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<td>28,803</td>
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<td>51,659</td>
<td>61,473</td>
<td>4,020</td>
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<td>219,912</td>
<td>24,000</td>
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<td>30,269</td>
<td>38,295</td>
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<td>84,512</td>
<td>9,250</td>
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<td>260,775</td>
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<td>1,060</td>
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<td>71,296</td>
<td>6,223</td>
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<td>71,296</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
## Diocese of Nebraska

### Financial Statistics of Congregations and Missions

Year in parentheses is last year of filing if not 2017

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<thead>
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<th>Outreach &amp; Development</th>
<th>Total Expense</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lincoln</td>
<td>St Marks on the Campus Church</td>
<td>251,238</td>
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<td>24,769</td>
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Total | 5,081,509 | 6,605,660 | 7,695,537 | 6,558,562 | 698,280 | 682,673 | 7,236,675 |