

# Ministry Reports in the Episcopal Church in Delaware

## **BISHOP AND COUNCIL**

Nancy Talmo, Vice-President

The year 2024 began with Nancy Talmo being elected as vice-president (VP) of Council. The bishop and VP work together to set agenda topics for the meetings.

We welcomed new members. We approved the site for the 240th Annual Convention, took care of the annual business of housing allowances, approved a resolution for St. Nicholas Church to use its MFA account for property repairs, and approved changes for Family Leave in our Active Clergy Guide.

We had a rich discussion about the Mutual Ministry Review. We approved the Camp Arrowhead 2024 budget and approved a motion for the use of funds from a generous gift made to the camp. The bishop and treasurer kept the council apprised on the proposals for financial outsourcing. The bishop shared information from the annual parochial report, which is information submitted by all parishes. The Rev. Canon Marianne Ell, the canon for strategic mission, joined the meetings to discuss the blueprint for growth, discipleship, and service. Cynde Bimbi, director of communications and public relations, joined our meeting to discuss the One Church Campaign.

A great deal of our conversation centered on our financial performance, including the budget for the current year, the small parish audit program, and the audit of the books for Diocesan Council, Inc. We have also been working on the budget for the upcoming year, with Teri Quinn Gray, chief operating officer, and Frank Daniels, treasurer.

Anyone who wishes to see more of what council is doing is welcome to go to the diocesan website where you can find brief summaries of our minutes. We are grateful to the volunteer who does this good work for us. We are also more than grateful to the Mission Support Team who are there for us every step of the way. They keep us informed and on task. We take our responsibilities to you all very seriously and are grateful to serve you. We do our best to keep the best interests of all our parishes in our deliberations.

Many thanks to Cindy Cozza, Suzanne Crager, the Rev. Michael Kurth, Jennifer O'Connor, the Rev. Deacon Sheila B. Sharpe, and Nancy Talmo, who are rotating off Diocesan Council as of December 31. Your service is much appreciated. Wishing all the best to the continuing members and the newly elected members of council.

## **BISHOP'S CHAPLAINS TO RETIRED CLERGY, SPOUSES AND SURVIVING SPOUSES**

The Rev. Edward E. Godden

Good News! For the first year since adaptations to COVID, the Bishop's Chaplains to Retired Clergy, their Spouses, and Surviving Spouses (RCSSSs) will come to convention as a full team. The Rev. Deacon Dottie Vuono was appointed in October, just before our last convention; the Rev. Harry Hiltner was appointed in November, and Sr. Barbara Conroy, A.F., was appointed in July. These new chaplains joined the "ongoing team." The majority of Church Pension Group (CPG) chaplains are couples, both lay and ordained, and now continuing is the Rev. Elizabeth Kaeton, Sr. Barbara's spouse. They will share responsibility for communicating with Delaware's canonically resident RCSSSs who live outside the state, who, in turn, are served first by chaplains in their "residential dioceses." Deacon Dottie and Rev. Harry took on primary responsibility for ministry face-to-face for our RCSSSs living in Sussex and Kent counties; Dottie for all of Kent, the Smyrna zip codes in New Castle, and a few zip codes in north Sussex; and Harry for the rest of that still fast-growing county. Continuing also are the Rev. Celeste Cox, former chaplain for Kent who now lives in Rehoboth and is a back-up chaplain, on-call as needed by her local colleagues. The Rev. Ed Godden continues as primarily responsible for our RCSSSs in New Castle and is coordinating chaplain. Chaplains may, and do, share ministry from time to time, by mutual consent, with people outside their "list."

What do these chaplains do? In every diocese of this Province of the Anglican Communion, The Episcopal Church, their ministry is defined as "an extension of the diocesan bishop's ministry", who is ultimately responsible for ministry to her or his clergy. They respond to emergencies, going to the hospital, or attending a death when the bishop is away, visit in homes, at coffee hour, over lunch or dinner, and they meet and welcome new RCSSSs who move into Delaware, all of them charged with coordinating their ministry with clergy colleagues where RCSSSs attend worship as a member of the community. They offer collegial support "plus" for retired colleagues, so many of whom are assigned part-time to parishes. Many retired clergy are officially "working in retirement" (that's the CPG term, they are still retired even though they work) and often are supported by their spouses. Without them, many churches and schools would not be able to offer consistent sacramental ministry. If it were not for the support to congregations given by so many surviving spouses of clergy, local parishes and institutions would suffer considerably.

Who are our Delaware RCSSSs? Retired clergy can range in age from 55 to 100 years and more; and their spouses and surviving spouses have no age restrictions, other than marital! The "Delaware list", like all diocesan lists provided by the CPG, contains all RCSSSs who are canonically resident no matter where they live, as well as all who live in the state of Delaware as their "residential diocese" but are canonically resident elsewhere. That list provides the bishop and chaplains with contact information, as well

as dates of birth, ordination, marriage, and death. In our list of June 2024, there were 56 clergy and spouses, two clergy couples, 24 more clergy living singly, and 23 surviving spouses, in 103 households. The retired far outnumber the active, probably in any diocese. About 30% of our RCSSSs live beyond Delaware, about half of them living from near the Delaware border up to a couple hours driving distance, and the other half living farther away. Another third live in Delaware and are canonically resident in another diocese, while 35% both live, and are canonically resident, in Delaware. The youngest person on our list is still an active priest who is too young to be on the list, because they are the surviving spouse of a priest. Our oldest surviving spouse is 102, and our oldest listed cleric is 107!

### **BRANDYWINE COLLABORATIVE MINISTRIES (BCM)**

Babak Golgolab and Mark Thompson, Sr. Wardens, BCM

Laura Glazar and Genia Thomas, Jr. Wardens, BCM

Brandywine Collaborative Ministries (BCM) continues to be in a time of transition. The Rev. Kije Mugisha Rwamasirabo was called to the BCM as resource priest, July 1, 2024. The Rev. Christopher Moore continues with the BCM as associate priest. Calvary-Hillcrest Church and Church of the Ascension vestry and parishioners continue to collaborate in worship and other ministries.

The vestries of the BCM continue to work together to reform the BCM as a collaborative of the two churches and to begin planning for our future. Calvary Church and Church of the Ascension are focusing on worshipping and supporting outreach together as we continue to collaborate and grow.

During this time of growing, the members of the BCM are committed to following where the Spirit leads!

### **CAMP ARROWHEAD**

Darlene Calton, Interim Executive Director

2024 marked the first year of new leadership at Camp Arrowhead. Walt Lafontaine graciously and thoughtfully smoothed the way for a seamless transition. As our new interim executive director, I've spent this past year getting to know our systems, processes and, of course, people. We have an amazingly intelligent, welcoming, and supportive diocese and camp community.

Part of this transition involved replacing staff. We hired a camp registrar in the late fall of 2023 and two Program Directors this past spring. Our new registrar, Rebecca Brooks, trained by Nancy Lafontaine before she retired, has thrived in her role. Our new program directors, Dylan McCavitt and Lindsey Dill, were both summer staff members that applied for year-round employment. They now live on site and work for camp in the late spring/summer season and support our retreat center the rest of the year. Their

enthusiasm and love of camp is evident in their fantastic customer service and a willingness to learn, grow, and help wherever needed. Currently we are seeking a full-time retreat director to replace our wonderful part-time retreat manager, Julie Emery. We look forward to filling this integral position as we continue to grow our nine-month retreat season.

Our summer camp program was a great success this year. We filled 1,428 camper slots with 1,341 unique children over six sessions. We provided financial support of over \$40,000 to 67 children through the generosity of contributions from our camp's scholarship fund, parishes, foundations, and individuals. We were almost fully staffed this summer and expect this upward staffing trend to continue. The 2024 Christian Education theme was "Wrapped in Friendship," evidenced by a colorful homemade friendship chain that grew all summer, wrapping over 1,500 links throughout the rafters of our chapel. Many thanks to our clergy friends that came to celebrate Eucharist with us this season and deepest gratitude to Doreen Raub, our christian education director who has given us decades of dedicated service. Another highlight of our summer included the extremely popular Competition Central. This season's theme was "Olympics" and featured spirited, fair, and friendly competition among the four teams.

To support our commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI), we continue to host campers from organizations such as the Lighthouse for Broken Wings, Trinity Latino Ministry, and the Boy's & Girl's Club. We also hosted our third annual Indigenous Youth Camp that served 20 campers from the Nanticoke Tribe and Lenape Tribe of Delaware, and the Nanticoke Lenni-Lenape Tribe of New Jersey. Getting to host this week of camp is an amazing experience for us all as we learn together about Nanticoke language, culture, and traditions.

Our retreat groups represented a wide range of visitors, consisting of many organizations that have been coming for years. Some of our new attendees included large community groups such as Delaware Center for the Inland Bays and Sussex Family YMCA, as well as smaller groups of local skaters, line dancers, and yoga lovers. By year end, we will have hosted five weddings, a large baby shower, an anniversary party, and a celebration of life. Some of our diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) groups included Urban Promise and Delaware Futures. While most of our weekends are booked throughout the fall and spring season, we are focusing on school groups and others that can fill our weekdays and winter weekends to allow for consistent year-round use of our facilities. Please remember that we offer discounts to our diocese groups and would love to host your meeting, event or retreat!

Many may remember Terry Carmine, the longtime beloved property manager of Camp Arrowhead who passed away this past January. With the help of generous donations, we were able to complete much-needed renovations of the exterior of the Carmine Environmental Center, one of Terry's many legacies, built in 1996. We were honored to host his wonderful celebration of life at Camp Arrowhead in May.

Thanks and gratitude for Teri Valente – director, Rick Hollingsworth – property manager, Sean Martelli – food service director, Julie Emery – retreat manager, Rebecca Brooks – summer registrar, Lindsey Dill – program director, and Dylan McCavitt – program director. Thanks also to our Mission Support Staff, summer staff, part time workers, volunteers, and amazing alumni for their commitment and love of Camp Arrowhead. We are truly blessed to be able to spread the love, warmth, and caring of camp to make a difference in the lives of our campers, staff, and visitors.

### **CHURCH PERIODICAL CLUB (CPC)**

Mary Morgan, CPC Diocesan Coordinator

The Church Periodical Club (CPC) is the only organization in The Episcopal Church dedicated solely to providing free literature and related materials, both religious and secular, through grants to people all over the world who need and request them and who have no other source for obtaining them. Prayer books, books for seminarians, educational materials, medical textbooks, agricultural manuals, and books for those in local and global mission are some of the publications the Church Periodical Club supplies. The Miles of Pennies fund is supported by the pennies that children collect and is used to provide materials to children through schools, libraries, etc. The administrative costs of the CPC are carried by endowments.

This year, 2024, it is our hope going forward that we will be able to continue with fundraising to increase our grant values and that we will be able to help secular classrooms and libraries as well. In the current year from January 1, 2024, to June 30, 2024, the CPC for the Episcopal Church in Delaware has a balance of \$250.73. The Episcopal Church Women (ECW) board of directors for the diocese encourages all parishes to support the Church Periodical Club. Every dollar helps, and together, we can make a difference. Please send checks (made out to ECW-DE with CPC in memo line) to ECW Treasurer, 3717 Philadelphia Pike, Claymont, DE 19703.

### **COMMISSION ON MINISTRY (COM)**

The Rev. Jeffrey A. Ross, Chair

**Scope & Purpose:** In accord with the Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church in Delaware: “There shall be a Commission on Ministry consisting of five or more members, ordained and lay persons, who shall be appointed by the bishop for a term of office not to exceed four years and confirmed by the Annual Convention. The Commission on Ministry (COM) shall perform those duties specified by the Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church.” The COM’s role is to:

- make provision for the development and affirmation of the ministry of all persons in the Church
- assist the bishop in providing for the ministry needs of the Episcopal Church in Delaware

- support baptized lay persons for the exercise of their respective ministries
- advise the bishop regarding the suitability of persons for the ordained ministry
- support the preparation of such persons for ordination
- support all ordained persons in the continuation of their respective ministries

Accomplishments and current projects:

- 1) Met in retreat at Memorial House to plan the year ahead and respond to bishop's request for recommendations on a number of matters
- 2) Approved the ordination of one person for ordination to the priesthood and began work with several aspirants for the diaconate and the priesthood
- 3) Held a diocesan discernment day in October at St. Andrew's School
- 4) Continued to explore options for formation, particularly for Spanish-speaking aspirants

Members: The Rev. Jeffrey A. Ross, chair, Jonathan Barrett, Peggy Boyd, Valerie Brunson, Diane-Louise (DL) Casson, the Rev. Charles Lane Cowen, the Ven. Patricia Malcolm, the Rev. Deacon Chris Miller-Marcin, Jon Rania, the Rev. Deacon Paula Waite

#### **COMMITTEE ON THE ADVANCE AND DEVELOPMENT FUNDS**

Arnold Morris, Chair, and Teri Quinn Gray, Chief Operating Officer

The Advance and Development (A&D) Funds Committee's mission is to support parishes located within the Episcopal Church in Delaware by providing loans, grants, and challenge grants (matching loan reductions to help with fundraising) for new structures, repairs, and in some cases fixed equipment. During July 2023 - July 2024, the committee approved the following:

- Loans/Line of Credits - St. Thomas's Parish \$46,446;  
St. James Church, Newport \$23,000
- Grants - St. Thomas's Parish \$15,000;  
St. James Church, Newport \$10,000
- Challenge Grants - St. Thomas's Parish \$28,750;  
St. James Church, Newport \$5,000

The outstanding loan receivable balance as of July 31, 2024, was \$550,502.

Information on the Advance & Development Funds can be found on the Episcopal Church in Delaware website at <https://delaware.church/advance-and-development-funds/>.

## DISASTER PREPAREDNESS REPORT

The Rev. Deacon Larry Norfleet, Disaster Preparedness Officer

### Mission Statement:

The mission of the Disaster Preparedness Team is to assist and support parishes across the Episcopal Church in Delaware (ECD) by providing essential training, resources, and guidance to prepare for potential disasters. Our goal is to empower our community through relationship-building, open communication, and coordinated efforts with local, state, and federal agencies. We are committed to serving with compassion and integrity, promoting disaster preparedness and awareness throughout the diocese.

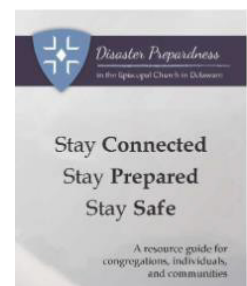
### ECD Disaster Preparedness Team members:

- Diane-Louise Casson - Church of Sts. Andrew & Matthew
- The Rev. Deacon Peter Cornell - St. Paul's Church, Georgetown
- Minnie Shorter - St. Peter's Church, Lewes
- The Rev. Deacon Dottie Vuono - Sussex County, Delaware
- The Rev. Deacon Larry Norfleet - Disaster Preparedness Officer

### Major On-Going Projects:

1. ECD Disaster Preparedness Website
  - Developing a comprehensive online resource for disaster preparedness, accessible to all parishes
2. Educational Video
  - Producing an instructional video to educate parish members on disasterpreparedness best practices
3. Diocesan Communications
  - Enhancing communication efforts through various channels, including The Net newsletter, brochures, and other outreach materials
4. Grant Applications
  - Identifying and applying for grants to fund disaster preparedness initiatives and resources
5. Parish Awareness Training
  - Offering training tailored to specific disaster risks, including but not limited to floods, hurricanes, tornadoes, active shooter events, etc.
6. Assisting parishes in developing comprehensive disaster preparedness plans
  - Promoting family disaster preparedness planning within congregations
7. Memorial House and Camp Arrowhead Communication
  - Ensuring consistent and effective communication with Memorial House and Camp Arrowhead to integrate them into the broader disaster preparedness efforts

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## **DISCIPLINARY BOARD**

Paul C. Hurdle, III, President

The canons of the General Convention of The Episcopal Church regarding the clergy disciplinary process are known as Title IV. These make clergy discipline first and foremost a process of discernment, mediation, and pastoral response. Each diocese is required by canon to create a court of not less than seven persons known as the Disciplinary Board. The membership of the board must include laity and clergy, with a majority by one of ordained clergy. In the Episcopal Church in Delaware, the board consists of nine persons elected at convention for staggered terms of four years. Annually the board elects a president from its members, and Bishop Brown appoints a church attorney and a clerk.

Under the canons, all matters regarding clergy misconduct must be reported to an intake officer. Intake officers are appointed by the bishop. If the complaint is determined to have merit, a reference panel, consisting of the intake officers, the bishop, and the president of the board, considers the complaint and decides next steps. Matters may then be resolved through pastoral care, mediation, an agreement with the bishop, an investigation, or any combination of these. An investigation may result in formal mediation, and, if necessary, a hearing. Two panels to advance this process – a conference panel and a hearing panel -- are drawn from the membership of the board.

The Title IV process allows for resolution through whatever means will move those affected toward justice, restitution, amendment of life, repentance, healing, forgiveness, and reconciliation. This can include a variety of interventions and, when necessary, the suspension or removal of the cleric from ordained ministry.

In the Episcopal Church in Delaware, the board meets at least four times a year for formation and training, including theological reflection, case studies, and study of Title IV. Periodically the board invites outside experts to facilitate training, and members participate in Province III Training when available. On February 10, 2024, our board members participated in the most recent Province III training in Maryland. In addition, the reference panel meets monthly and as needed. All meetings are in the context of prayer.

An important component of the process is support for the complainants, the clerics, and the parish. Advisors are made available for each party to help with process. Pastoral care is provided by the bishop and others he assigns as needed.

In 2024, three cases were processed under Title IV in the Episcopal Church in Delaware. In all three cases, the complaints were ultimately dismissed. The parties involved received appropriate pastoral responses.

More information and details on how to file a complaint and be found on the Episcopal Church in Delaware webpage <https://delaware.church/disciplinary-process/> and at [www.TitleIV.org](http://www.TitleIV.org).



Intake Officers:

The Rev. Ruth Beresford	Christ Church Christiana Hundred
Dr. Guy Mitchell Edmondson	Christ Church, Milford

Members of the Board:

The Rev. Glenn Duffy	St. Martin's in the Field Church	2026
James Evitts	Immanuel Church, New Castle	2027
The Rev. Canon Mark Harris	St. Peter's Church, Lewes	2024
Paul C. Hurdle, III, President	All Saints' Church & St. George's Chapel	2026
The Rev. Marta Illueca	Brandywine Collective Ministries	2026
Consuelo Miller	Christ Church, Dover	2025
The Rev. Rita Nelson	St. Peter's Church, Lewes	2024
Dan Bennett	Church Attorney	
Kathleen Moore	Clerk	

**EPISCOPAL CAMPUS MINISTRY (ECM)**

The Rev. Dr. Howell Sasser, Jr.

The Episcopal Campus Ministry (ECM), St. Thomas's Parish, and the rest of the diocese have a longstanding association. When St. Thomas's began in 1842, the founding priest/classics professor at Newark College and Bishop Alfred Lee had one goal: to minister to Episcopal students. Over the many decades since, students, professors, and staff have been well represented in St. Thomas's membership. Ministry with students has varied between robust and modest, and has reconfigured and renewed as times have changed and the church and the world have moved from one social era to the next. Today the University of Delaware (UD) is an enormous, but complex, mission field, with nearly 24,000 students, as well as professors, instructors, and staff numbering in the thousands.

The 2023-2024 program year saw the continuation of our discussions with the Methodist and Presbyterian campus ministries about collaboration. As plans advanced toward a more concrete agreement, our Methodist partners chose to not go forward with us, and we are now working on a bilateral basis with the Presbyterian group. At the time of writing this report, organizational steps are still in the works, but by the time of the convention, we hope to have more progress to report.

To summarize, our collaboration is aimed at opening an ecumenical ministry center in commercial space on Main Street in Newark. The location is deliberately not "churchy," with the goal of providing a safe place to grow spiritually that may be enough for some and may lead to deeper involvement in traditional religious activity for others. Office and meeting space (always at a premium around UD) can host counseling, small groups, classes, and special events. A café may help to defray operating costs as well as offer additional hospitality. Your prayers and good wishes for this work are most appreciated.

BLUE HEN BOUNTY (BHB): Religious organizations on many campuses take part in helping feed the hungry. However, unique to the University of Delaware is the Blue Hen Bounty program, a food and personal hygiene pantry open to anyone with a University of Delaware ID, and also to those attending other Delaware colleges and universities. BHB began in 2016 and is still going strong eight years later. An estimated ten customers per week were served in the 2023-2024 program year, upwards of 500 trips to the grocery store at a time when that became a much more expensive part of life. This year, we were pleased to continue to offer eggs and a small but steady variety of fresh fruits and vegetables. BHB also continued to collaborate with University of Delaware offices that maintain stocks of food. Parish staff and parishioner and community volunteers have kept the pantry open on an expanded basis. As in past years, BHB received large donations from UD food services, campus student groups, and individuals and groups in the community. Parishioners also did much with targeted donations to keep popular items on the shelves. BHB continues to look for opportunities to get the word out and to make food available where students can have easiest access to it.

The ministry to higher education is grateful to St Thomas's and the diocese for the support it continues to receive. We are confident that this ministry will remain strong and important in the lives of the students it serves. Please keep the ministry to higher education and Blue Hen Bounty in your prayers.

## **EPISCOPAL CHURCH WOMEN (ECW)**

Beth FitzPatrick, President

### **Spring Board Meeting**

Our spring board meeting was held on April 20, 2024. Items for discussion and action included new by-laws, the Province III Synod, the Triennial meeting, and the annual meeting. The new by-laws will be adopted at the annual meeting in October.

### **Province III Synod**

The Province III Synod, held in Martinsburg, West Virginia on May 5-6, is a preparation meeting for General Convention and Triennial. We viewed The Philadelphia 11, a documentary film about the first 11 women ordained as priests in the Episcopal Church. Episcopal Church Women (ECW) delegates to the meeting were Beth FitzPatrick, Sue Ann Backus, Joyanne Murphy, and our Distinguished Woman of the Triennium, Stumpy (Bernice) Moore.

### **Triennial Meeting**

Triennial meeting was held concurrently with General Convention, in Louisville, Kentucky on July 21-28. Delegates to Triennial were Beth FitzPatrick, Sue Ann Backus, and Stumpy Moore. The week of events included The Revival, featuring a lively sermon by Presiding Bishop Michael Curry. Bishop Curry blessed the Triennial crosses, which were distributed to the delegates. Stumpy Moore received her Distinguished Woman

award. National ECW officers were elected. We joined General Convention for eucharist, and celebrated the election of our new Presiding Bishop, Sean Rowe.

Our summer board meeting, held on August 3, included reports on Synod and Triennial., editing of the new by-laws, and plans for the annual meeting.

The annual meeting of ECW Delaware will be held at McGlynn's Pub in Dover on October 12. The outreach project will be personal supplies for the women at Baylor Women's Correctional Institution and the Chaplain Lisa Johnson will be the speaker. The meeting will include Taizé worship and the annual business meeting.

The Province III ECW annual business meeting will be held in Martinsburg, West Virginia, on October 26-27, 2024. ECW of Delaware will send as many as 4 delegates to this meeting.

The members of the ECW of Delaware board of directors are:

Honorary President	Caroline Brown
President	Beth FitzPatrick
Vice-President & CPC Coordinator	Mary Morgan
Secretary	Joyanne Murphy
Treasurer	Vacant
Chaplain	Catherine Maguire
UTO Coordinator	Vacant
At Large members	Sue Ann Backus
Stumpy (Bernice) Moore	

## **INSURANCE COMMITTEE**

John Davis, Chair

The Insurance Committee's goals and priorities are to assist the diocesan chief operating officer in analyzing the options available for the July 1, 2024, renewal of the property/liability insurance program, and to help review the renewal offering for the 2025 medical and dental insurance plans. Additional objectives include risk management/life safety support for our parishes as well as to provide educational resources and guidance on matters relating to all aspects of the church's insurance programs.

### **Property / Liability Insurance Program**

Renewal of the property/liability insurance program on July 1, 2024, resulted in an average premium increase for the diocese and covered parishes of 13.7% with individual parish rate increases ranging between 10% and 38%. The largest increases went to parishes exceeding a 5-year loss ratio of 55%. Other than for reasons of loss ratio, premium increases were also due to parishes with coastal exposure. Continued adjustments in insured property values (averaging 5% across the diocese) as well as overall upward industry rate pressures driven primarily by the re-insurance property

market have also had an impact on rates. As is customary, the committee has continued its ongoing detailed review of the terms and conditions contained within the diocesan master property and liability insurance program, advocating, as necessary, for changes it deems appropriate. Church Insurance Company continues to provide a high level of service response.

### **Risk Management / Life Safety**

The committee continues to review safety surveys that have been conducted by Steve Brillhart on a three-year rolling basis for each parish in the diocese. The objective is to identify pressing life safety issues highlighted by those surveys and to provide support to those parishes needing assistance complying with the recommendations. The committee is also available to assist in providing proper insurance and indemnification language for parishes hiring contractors to do work on their premises. The committee is currently looking for a replacement for Steve who recently announced his retirement.

### **2025 Proposed Active Employee Medical and Dental Insurance**

The Medical Trust released its 2025 plan year rates in late August 2024 for the Anthem BCBS plans offered to diocesan and parish eligible employees, coming in with a proposed average increase across all plans of 5.50% with the base plan (PPO 80) renewing with a 2.54% increase. The Medical Trust will continue to offer dental coverage through Delta Dental with a proposed average premium increase across all plans of 2.68%. The 2025-year plan proposal is subject to the approval of Diocesan Council.

### **2024 Medical Plan Description**

Standard/Base Plans:

- 1) Anthem BCBS BlueCard PPO 80 and
- 2) CDHP/HSA's - 20.

The cost-sharing/buy-up plans are the Anthem BCBS BlueCard PPO 90 and PPO 100. Also available are comparable plans for over sixty-five qualifying employees. The Insurance Committee continues to recommend that the employing organization pay 100% of the premiums for the Standard PPO 80 and the Standard CDHP-20/HSA. In the case of the Optional PPO 90 plan and the Optional PPO 100 plan, the premiums would be shared between the employer, which will contribute the same amount as for the PPO 80 plan, and the employee who would contribute the additional amount needed to reach the premiums of the PPO 90 or 100 plans. When Consumer Directed Health Plans are used, most employers contribute some amount to the employee's Health Savings Account (HSA) to encourage initial enrollment. The contribution often is based on some percentage of the annual deductible for medical expenses. The Insurance Committee recommends a standard contribution of 50% of the annual deductible. This with the understanding that an employer might want to make a larger contribution initially as long as it is reduced to 50% over a two or three-year period.

## **2024 Dental Plan Description**

In 2024, the Medical Trust offered three dental plans underwritten by Delta Dental. The Basic Plan where premiums are paid 100% by the employing organization. Also offered was the Comprehensive Plan including Orthodontia which is an optional plan where the employer pays the same amount as for the basic dental plan and the employee pays the amount needed to reach the premium for this plan. A third plan (Premium) was also offered with the same buy-up option as the comprehensive plan.

## **2025 Proposed Medical and Dental Plan Descriptions**

There are no proposed changes in the medical or dental plan offerings for 2025. Both medical and dental plans are subject to approval of Diocesan Council.

For 2025, the Insurance Committee's goals and priorities will remain consistent with those established for 2024 with the added objective of recruiting new members with some insurance industry experience (both health and property / casualty) to the committee.

## **INVITE WELCOME CONNECT**

Sandy Criscimagna, Chair

The Invite Welcome Connect Team continues to be an influencing force in the Episcopal Church in Delaware. We are a team that is meant to be a resource for each parish in the diocese to continue to develop growth, discipleship, and service – our diocesan mission priorities for the next five years.

The following is our updated Mission Statement:

The Invite Welcome Connect Support Team (IWCST) of the Episcopal Church in Delaware will champion the spiritual practices of Invite (evangelism), Welcome (Hospitality), and Connect (belongingness), through education, guidance, and resources to nurture and transform One Church Delaware into a gospel-driven mission culture.

In June, the Invite Welcome Connect Support Team met at Memorial house for a three-day retreat which included exploring our mission and an ambitious agenda exploring areas we would like to prioritize for this year. This includes improving our webpage to make it a valuable resource for all parishes. One addition will be a toolkit for greeters where we can reinforce their vital ministries in our congregations. An area we will prioritize is evangelism which will also be a theme at our diocesan convention. A member of our team is scheduled to take the evangelism certification course at Stevenson School for Ministry.

Please stop by the Invite Welcome Connect booth at convention this year and learn more about this ministry which is becoming an integral part of the life of parishes in our diocese. There will be resources available to help in all areas.

We continue to invite people to serve on our team for a two-year commitment. It is a team that has transforming potential for our congregations. Our current team members are Jonathan Barrett, Donna Cain, Suzanne Crager, Sandy Criscimagna, Beth Engler, Teri Quinn Gray, the Rev. Howie Sasser, Lachecha Sheppard and Nancy Talmo. Please consider joining our team as we move forward making Invite Welcome Connect a ministry that enhances the mission priorities of the diocese. Please reach out via [iwc@delaware.church](mailto:iwc@delaware.church).

### **THE LATINO CONGREGATION - LA CONGREGACION LATINA**

The Rev. Patricia Downing, Rector and the Rev. Marta Illueca, Associate Rector

The past 12 months have shown an inspiring and gradual growth in engagement and social outreach from within the congregation. The mission of Trinity Parish is to be a community of faith in the city, manifesting God's love through inspiring worship in two locations and languages, unconditional acceptance of all, education for faith and life and striving for justice in practical ways. We pray the city and state benefits from the ministry of Trinity Church. The Latino community of greater Wilmington is the primary beneficiary of our work.

#### **Governing Bodies - The Vestry and the Junta Parroquial**

Vestry persons and clergy persons include: the Rev. Patricia Downing, rector, the Rev. Marta Illueca, associate rector, Elizabeth Hukill (senior warden), Catherine Dean (junior warden), Jerry Lucas, Michael Redmond, Andrew Dinsmore, Robbie Smith, Rachel Berninger, Daphne Arrindell, Brenda Demanczyk, James Maxwell, Bob Emeritz (secretary), and Don Copson (treasurer). The Junta Parroquial includes Trinidad Carranza, Alberto Carranza, Sergio Carranza, Carlos Dominguez, Ana Martinez, Angelica Morales (president), Gerardo Plasencia, the Rev. Patricia Downing, rector and the Rev. Marta Illueca.

#### **Summary of Activities:**

We offer Episcopal liturgy and baptisms in Spanish every Sunday and at special events such as first communions, weddings, funerals, quinceañeras, and baby namings. We provide pastoral support to the congregation and members of the wider community. This past year, we continue to create opportunities for fellowship, education, and service between our several congregations. We will be participating once again with the Hispanic Heritage Month activities across the city.

We hold a monthly "Junta Parroquial," and we are encouraged by the relative stability of the noon service (average attendance 40-50) with their ethnic foods and fellowship time post-service. A record-breaking attendance of over 100 people is becoming the rule when celebrating baptisms or weddings. We are looking forward to celebrations in the fall and early winter, of Our Lady of Guadalupe as well as the Three Kings (La Epifanía) celebration in January. In between that time, we will host nine nights of Posadas. It is then that we walk with Mary and Joseph as they make their way to Bethlehem. The organizers of the posadas and Holy Week's Passion play are very involved and have

asked for dedicated space for their costumes and regalia, another sign of their devotional commitment.

Another innovation implemented on Sunday's noon service is the placement of an image of Our Lady of Guadalupe on one side of the altar where the congregants bring flowers or candles, and a second image adorning their meals in the Parish Hall. The images are installed/ deinstalled before and after the service, in a way that does not overlap with the other services.

We offer pastoral care to home bound or hospitalized Latino parishioners and continue to address the ever-changing needs of the Latino community in our area: social, educational, and legal. Our youth are a still small group, and a handful attended a summer session at Camp Arrowhead. In the spring, we offered confirmation classes to eight youth and celebrated 325 years in Old Swedes Church with the confirmation service. We also administered special "Primera Comunion" for ten children. in Advent. We strive to be a strong voice in the community for equality, justice, and economic opportunity. One logistical change is the suspension of the van services for local transportation to Sunday services. In lieu of the van, a Junta consensus was that, when needed, parishioners can request a reimbursement for taxi or Uber transport to church.

Early this year we identified three persons considered to have the gifts and skills to be lay or ordained leaders. After conversations to consider their sense of call, we met with Bishop Brown with the goal of identifying a suitable program to help advance them in their discernment and development.

Our dreams for the future remain. Our noon service is live streamed via YouTube and Facebook. A WhatsApp chat group has been set up and is being built up as an additional channel of informal communications. We are struggling with how to implement our congregational leadership development program, including the training of eucharistic ministers and visitors.

## **MEMORIAL HOUSE**

Dina Hollingsworth, Managing Director

The Episcopal Church in Delaware is surely blessed to have been gifted a wonderful retreat center from the Felix DuPont family, which is situated in Rehoboth Beach on beautiful Lake Gerar. This small conference center and summer retreat house has come to be loved by many. The house is a special place for groups to gather for many purposes, including worship, prayer retreats, planning meetings, men's and women's retreats, church, business training sessions, crafting retreats, and many other events. Many come to gather and be together in this special place. We provide a space of warmth, comfort, hospitality, and wonderful food, which keeps people coming back year after year.

## **Conferencing**

As we gear up for the second half of our conference season, our schedule is brimming with diverse events. We are thrilled to host the Province III Bishops' Retreat, along with two new retreats from St. Martha's Church and several new groups, including a large youth retreat and an LGBTQIA retreat. We have also opened some new weekend dates to cater to more Delaware retreats. If you are interested in organizing a retreat for your church, we're here to help.

## **Summer**

Once again, we have booked every guest room with families and individual guests, with 258 guests and 11 clergy host families. So many of our summer friends and families are returning guests who have been coming for many years, and some are two and three generations who have raised their families at Memorial House. The House continues to be a place where people are spiritually comforted, meet new friends, and enjoy Rehoboth Beach's beauty.

Don't forget summer registration opens each year on January 1st!

## **House updates**

We have completed our first ensuite renovation, and another is scheduled for December, with two more for 2025. We have continued to improve the aesthetics of our grounds and parking area. Plans are also underway to repair and update the outside of the house and add security cameras along with new blinds and furniture.

All are welcome at Memorial House.

## **THE PAIN AND PRAYER PROJECT**

The Rev. Dr. Marta Illueca

In 2024, the Pain and Prayer Project ([www.painandprayer.com](http://www.painandprayer.com)) led by the Rev. Dr. Marta Illueca continued its ongoing phase of outreach and dissemination of the Bedside Prayer Tool.

On May 14-15, the project was formally presented at the American Academy for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) for their Dialogue on Science, Ethics and Religion (DoSER) in Washington, DC. There were 15 invited opinion leaders on the area of Science and Religion, out of which our project was one of only five chosen to present.

Another groundbreaking milestone is the collaboration of Rev. Illueca as part of the proposed core faculty of the Theology of Medicine course at the Hispanic Latino Pastoral Initiative (HLPI), established by the Hispanic House of Studies at Duke Divinity School. Rev. Illueca's course component will address specific content to train pastoral students on the Pain-related Prayer Scale (PPRAYERS) and the application of the Bedside Prayer Tool. The full program has a three-year curriculum in their academic calendar. The course faculty consists of physicians and physician-pastors who



have collaborated for over a decade in Central America, and with Hispanic/Latino/Latinx populations in the U.S. The students are from diverse sites in Latin America, and the U.S., and from a breadth of denominations. (<https://sites.duke.edu/hlpi/en/who-are-we/>) The Rev. Illueca was selected as faculty specifically for her ministry work focused on the Theology of Pain, which is at the heart of the Pain and Prayer Project. This new collaboration also sees the role of Rev. Illueca as a supervisor-mentor of Duke Divinity School's Hybrid-M.Div. Field Education Program, focused on ministerial outreach in Latin America and closely connected to the work of the HLPI.

The past year also saw the successful roll out and completion of a social media campaign focused on the Bedside Prayer Tool, launched last fall through Research Outreach, a British communication agency specializing in disseminating innovative research news internationally. The metrics from the campaign are available upon request, and include the following highlights:

X (formerly Twitter) post – 450,452 impressions, 5,918 engagements  
(<https://x.com/ResOutreach/status/1735887479994032206>)

Facebook post – 36,163 impressions, 8,922 engagements  
(<https://bit.ly/3NGfqYZ>)

For the full online article, click here <https://researchoutreach.org/articles/the-church-and-academia-model-a-powerhouse-for-harnessing-pain-related-prayer-research/>

Lastly, a team of clinical researchers is close to finalizing the work of the translation of the prayer scale and bedside prayer tool in Spanish. While additional funding has been hard to secure, the team is dedicated to continuing the work, pro bono, for now. The goal is to publish the initial version in the months to come, in the hopes of attracting potential funding sources to conduct a Spanish validation study on par with the original English validation completed in 2020.

Of note, the United Thank Offering Exhibit at the 81st General Convention, showcased the Pain and Prayer Project for a day, creating dedicated take aways (a first aid pocket size box with a QR code directly connected to the project's website).

The Pain and Prayer Project is a diocesan ministry that is part of an innovative "Church and Academia Model" of research created by the Rev. Dr. Marta Illueca. Her role as Clergy Medical Liaison and the Pain and Prayer Project were initially funded by the 2020 United Thank Offering Grant with additional support from the Episcopal Church in Delaware.



**PRIMEROS PASOS, INC.**

Casey Christophel, Executive Director and Dr. Susan Bunting, Board President

2024 has been another busy year for Primeros Pasos Early Learning Center. We continue to stay appreciative for all the wonderful things that come our way.

As the State of Delaware continues to increase its early childhood teacher requirements, we continue to move forward. Last year we had two teachers complete their Child Development Associate (CDA) with five in progress. This year, those five staff

completed their CDA, and we have an additional five staff working towards their CDA, and three enrolled in college.

We were able to complete 98.5% of all the children's hearing/vision screenings this year. Screenings are more difficult than they may seem due to families remembering and keeping their appointments and then remembering to bring the documentation back.

All of the teachers were able to attend the Making a Difference Conference, Mandatory Reporting Training, School Readiness Workshop, Coworker Dynamic Workshop, Understanding Autism Training, and Focus of the Family Conference this year. We believe these trainings were impactful.

Again this year, we were able to help several low-income families receive free car seats and Delaware State Park passes.

This summer, the children enjoyed two field trips, one to Freeman Arts Pavilion for a live performance of "Ada Twist" and the other to Killens Pond's water park. The kids had a great time!

We replaced all of our older windows throughout our building which so desperately needed to be done.

We raised enough money to install a bike track for the children. Biking allows them to work on their coordination and balance skills and gives them the full bike riding experience (since most of them live in apartments). The children were ecstatic about this!

Thanks to your contributions, we were able to bring in Soccer Shots, which offers three core programs to meet the developmental needs of children ages 2 to 8. It's way more than just learning the game of soccer. They aim to build character, skills and confidence while also having a whole lot of FUN, and they did just that!

Two administrators were able to attend a Let's Go Outside training, which was so much fun and was filled with tons of new ideas. After the training, it inspired us to add a large outdoor magnetic chalk board and a new mud kitchen that the children love.

We added a notary service for the families because we learned this year most of our families use "online" banks such as 'Chime" instead of banks with a physical location, such as M&T Bank, which presents a barrier to having documents notarized.

A few of the many things we offered to the families this year were: free haircuts, a clothing closet on site (Harry K. Pantry), muffins for moms, donuts for dads, trunk or treat, spring egg hunt, Stand by Me came to help with financial assistance, blessing bags were handed out along with winter coats (St. Peter's Church, Lewes), as well as all the children were "adopted" for Christmas by St. Peter's Church, Lewes.

Through it all, the Episcopal Church in Delaware, and St. Peter's Church, Lewes have been our constant support companions in serving our bilingual families. Financial support and volunteers have been crucial to our success.

Currently, we have 63 children enrolled, of which only two are unsubsidized. Our ECAP enrollment has remained at 16 slots. We also continue to have 21 Early Head Start (EHS) slots. Our population consists of one-third White, one-third Hispanic, one-third Black students. Most of our students come from Georgetown and Millsboro, while a few others come from Laurel, Seaford, and other western Sussex County communities.

The attraction and retention of qualified bilingual staff has continued to remain difficult, more so than in the past. Although we tried last year, we hope to focus on this hiring issue.

Once again, the Board and staff express our sincere appreciation to the Episcopal Church in Delaware and to St. Peter's Church, Lewes for your continued support of Primeros Pasos Early Learning Center and to our Mission – to provide quality education to the children and families in our surrounding communities.



## **RACIAL JUSTICE AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION (RJRC)**

The Rev. Donna Jean Kiessling, Chairperson

### **Commission Members**

The Rev. Canon Lloyd Casson, Dr. Suzanne Donovan, the Rev. Deacon Cecily Sawyer Harmon, Mr. Robert J. Irwin, Dr. Sheridan Quarless Kingsberry, Mr. Shawn Li, Ms. Ashley McIntosh, the Rev. Ted Olson, Dr. Maria Perez, Ms. Charisse Rodgers, and the Rev. Kije Rwamasirabo.

The diocese and commission are grateful to the Rev. Ted Olson and Ms. Charisse Rodgers for their work and leadership in serving as co-chairs as well as their continuing as members of the Commission and to Mr. Shawn Li who graduated from St. Andrew's School and has moved on from Delaware to attend college. In August, Bishop Brown appointed the Rev. Donna Jean Kiessling, who joined the commission in 2023, to serve as the next chairperson.

Several projects/events related to racial justice and reconciliation that took place during 2024 are:

- Supported the Poor People's Campaign in their Mass Assembly at 33 state capitals on March 2, from noon - 2:00 p.m. Because it rained, Delaware's gathering was held at the Wesley United Methodist Church in Dover. The Rev. Patrick Burke, rector, and Mr. Anthony Jones, a vestry member, both from the Church Sts. Andrew and Matthew, spoke at the gathering in Dover. The purpose was to call state legislators to address the issues that cause people to be poor and live with low wealth. Poverty is the fourth leading cause of death in this country. At least one Episcopal Delawarean attended a similar gathering later in Washington, DC.
- Co-sponsored the Benevolent Community Summit held in Dover on Wednesday, March 20 from 9AM to 6:30PM. The keynote speaker was Dr. Eddie Glaude, Jr. who is a distinguished scholar of African American Studies at Princeton University. Eight members from the Episcopal Church in Delaware were among 100 people who attended this Summit, which used the Circle of Trust© approach created by Parker J. Palmer and the Center for Courage. Attending the Summit provided the opportunity to meet Ms. Lori Yadin who is the director of [createsafespace.org](https://createsafespace.org), an organization that helps create Benevolent Communities. Lori is guiding several commissioners to be Circle of Trust guides. The commission members will begin meeting in a Healing Circle of Trust, and then form groups within the Diocese in 2025.
- Sponsored a presentation on the life of Harriet Tubman presented by Mr. Sylvester Woolford, a native Delawarean, on Monday, March 25 on Zoom. This was in recognition of Tubman's Commemoration in Lesser Feasts and Fasts on March 10.

- The Episcopal Church in Delaware and the New Castle Presbytery co-sponsored an Ecumenical Civil Rights Pilgrimage to Montgomery and Selma, Alabama from September 22 through 26. We thank Dr. Sheridan Kingsberry, the principal coordinator for the Episcopal Church in Delaware, for her dedication, organization, and determination that formed this visit into a pilgrimage that would be life-changing for the participants. Thirty people attended representing five Christian denominations as well as no declared religious affiliation. Four facilitators joined to have participants meet in small groups each day to share and listen to one another's experiences. The group visited historical sites, memorials, and museums, including the Equal Justice Initiative's Legacy Museum. The commission thanks Bishop Brown and the Mission Support Office for their support and help in making this event possible. We also thank Ms. Cyndi Bimbi, director of communications and public relations, who attended the pilgrimage to document this pilgrimage through photos, videos, and interviews. We hope you were able to see them on Facebook.
- Several parishes have sponsored activities related to racial justice and healing. For example, the Church of Sts. Andrew and Matthew held First Friday Walks for Justice where parishioners prayerfully walked through the center of Wilmington to raise awareness of racial and social injustices within the city. Parishioners of Christ Church, Dover made a visit to the Harriet Tubman Museum as well as attended a service at the African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas in Philadelphia. The diocese and many parishes recognized significant contributions and achievements of African Americans throughout Black History Month and did service projects honoring Dr. Martin Luther King. The commission thanks all the parishes and parishioners who participated in any racial justice event, activity, learning, or conversation that generated positive energy in building and strengthening our one church in Delaware to be in fellowship with one another as a beloved community and to be a beacon of hope for justice and reconciliation of all of God's people.

In 2025, we have two plans we want to mention:

- First, the commission wants to highlight and support the important racial justice conversations and events that parishes are doing. To help parishes, we have budgeted monies to provide small grants up to \$200 for up to ten parishes doing social justice ministry. Parishes can apply by emailing the chairperson with your request at [smyrnarector@gmail.com](mailto:smyrnarector@gmail.com). We also want to help get the word out on events parishes are holding where other parishes or parishioners may be able to participate.
- Second, we hope to have many book studies throughout the diocese on Bishop Steven Charleston's book *We Survived the End of the World: Lessons from Native America on Apocalypse and Hope*. The Season of Epiphany is the ideal time as lessons and hope are light for the world, and the number of chapters and Sundays in the season work. We also see this as an opportunity to meet during

the week where multiple parishes can come together. Since the Epiphany Season is right around the corner, please stop at the Racial Justice and Reconciliation's table for more information or contact Mo. Donna Jean Kiessling at [smyrnarector@gmail.com](mailto:smyrnarector@gmail.com) or 302-670-3800.

## **ST. ANDREW'S SCHOOL OF DELAWARE, INC.**

Joy McGrath '92, Daniel T. Roach, Jr., Head of School

St. Andrew's School (SAS) is an Episcopal, co-educational 100% boarding school in Middletown, Delaware for grades 9-12 and was founded in 1929 by A. Felix du Pont and colleagues including the Rt. Rev Philip Cook, then-Bishop of Delaware. As du Pont wrote then,

"The purpose of St. Andrew's School is to provide secondary education of a definitely Christian character at a minimum cost consistent with modern equipment and highest standards."

To this day, SAS seeks to continue to facilitate this access to excellence in all things.

Especially as it relates to our Episcopal roots, SAS is excited to share the appointment of an entirely new chaplain team starting this 2024-2025 academic year:

- The Rev. Dr. Michael "Mike" Giansiracusa (he/him) most recently served as both vicar at St. Gabriel's Church in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and chaplain at Doane Academy in Burlington, New Jersey.
- The Rev. Thomas Becker (he/him) most recently served as associate rector at Christ Church Cathedral in Lexington, Kentucky.

Mike and Thomas ("Reverend G" and "Reverend B" as the students call them) have brought an infectious energy, deep sense of joy, and loving commitment to the Chapel Program at SAS and have quickly become community fixtures. They succeed the Revs. David "Dave" DeSalvo and Elizabeth "Liz" Preysner who have transitioned to new roles outside of Delaware. We are exceedingly grateful to them for their many contributions to the spiritual formation and care of our community over many years!

From its inception, SAS has enjoyed an especially close relationship with the Episcopal Church in Delaware. The sitting Bishop of Delaware serves as an ex-officio member of the school's Board of Trustees and visits at least twice each year to engage the community and preside at baptisms and confirmations. We are actively seeking to engage even more with our colleagues and partners in ministry within the diocese, both hosting meetings and events on campus as well as traveling around to foster even more meaningful connections.

Joining SAS is a highly competitive venture: this school year opened with just under 320 students from across the country and the globe. SAS is proud to have a highly selective admission rate of under 20%. The school remains appealing because of the strength of

its faculty, its academic program, its strong community ethos, its religious and co-curricular focuses, its diversity, its financial aid program, its commitment to the local community, and the beauty of its campus. Admission to SAS is based on academic ability, character, motivation of the applicant, and the suitability of the school to the needs of the candidate. Thanks to generous donors and wise stewardship, SAS continues to be able to meet 100% of demonstrated financial need for all admitted students.

Our school community is wonderfully diverse and embraces many different faith traditions and spiritual practices, and the Chapel Program is at the foundation (both metaphorically and literally – it’s home to the pillars that hold up the main building of the school!) of all that we do and aspire to be at SAS. Over 35% of all students participate in the chapel as acolytes, lay eucharistic ministers, lectors, ushers, Sunday School teachers, musicians, Vestry members, communion bread bakers, and sacristans. We offer chapel services thrice weekly (two compulsory and one voluntary) and facilitate the celebration of numerous Christian and non-Christian observances reflective of the beautiful variety of traditions held by our student body and the neighborhoods they represent. In particular, student affinity groups are heavily involved in creating Wednesday services throughout the year to share sacred aspects of their cultures. The partnership with inclusion and belonging activities in the school is an important aspect of chapel and worship.

We are called to be a community that practices inclusivity, grace, and generosity. SAS endeavors to be a private school with a public purpose. It is our mission to inspire students to enter college and the professional world with habits of heart and mind that will promote peace, social justice, and compassion.

## **ST. ANNE’S EPISCOPAL SCHOOL**

Justin L. Smith, Head of School

St. Anne’s Episcopal School (SAES), in Middletown, Delaware, is in its twenty-second year. The school’s 2024-2025 opening day enrollment was 295 students, serving students in preschool through eighth grade, with families commuting from Delaware, Pennsylvania, and Maryland.

The mission is to “enhance the intellectual, spiritual, physical, social, and artistic growth of its students so that they may realize their potential for good as citizens of local and world communities.” In essence, we strive to open the hearts and minds of young people so that they can make a difference in the world. The majority of our teachers have a master’s degree or state certification, and all faculty and administrators have a passion for working with students with a growth mindset to further their craft in this noble profession. St. Anne’s is a place where children are known, loved, challenged, and inspired for their future.



SAES recently installed its fourth Head of School Justin L. Smith, who is in fourteenth year of serving Episcopal schools. This is Mr. Smith's third headship, having previously served Southfield School in Shreveport, Louisiana, and St. Mark's Episcopal Academy in Cocoa, Florida.

Within our sprawling 125-acre campus, we recognize that our outdoor education and learning opportunities are endless. This past summer, St. Anne's summer campers enjoyed the outdoors and also participated in learning summer projects that include outdoor STEM education.

Currently, SAES is in the process of developing its next strategic plan. Within the tenets of the plan are ideas for defining the portrait of future graduates, enhancing and more intentionally utilizing our robust outdoor spaces, strengthening the school's generous endowment, and investing in the school's ability to attract and retain top tier teachers to the benefit of our students.

The spiritual foundation of the school is deeply woven through our inclusive Episcopal identity. This year, preschool through eighth grade will continue to regularly hold devotions, as designed by Chaplain Rev. Kije Mugisha Rwamasirabo. Additionally, religion classes for middle school, and chaplain visits to primary and lower school, are an integral part of the school's Episcopal character education for students. Additionally, the school hosts all-school chapel every seventh academic day. During our chapels, we invite, welcome, and celebrate all faiths to educate our community and recognize the pluralistic student body.

SAES continues to have a fundamental commitment to being an inclusive community grounded in respect for each of its members, valuing and promoting the variety of ways people seek and develop a deep, long-lasting relationship with God that constitutes an essential part of the human experience.

SAES is accredited by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools and is a member of the National Association of Independent Schools (NAIS), the Association of Delaware Valley Independent Schools (ADVIS), and the Delaware Association of Independent Schools (DAIS).

An integral part of St. Anne's mission is to promote and maintain socio-economic diversity among our student population and provide need-based tuition assistance to families who are accepted to our school. In order to ensure affordability, St. Anne's founders created an endowment that allows the school to award a percentage of its yearly budget to financial aid. Last year, St. Anne's awarded \$1.4 million in tuition assistance to qualifying families. St. Anne's families are expected to pay tuition based on what their household can afford.

Please call (302) 378-3179 or visit our website at [www.stannesde.org](http://www.stannesde.org) for more information.

**ST. MICHAEL'S SCHOOL AND NURSERY, INC.,**  
Lucinda Ross, M.Ed., Executive Director

St. Michael's is excited that our major capital renovation project is in the home stretch! As many of you know, St. Michael's physical footprint now encompasses more than 30,000 sq. feet at the corner of 7th and Walnut Streets in Wilmington, including the purpose-built facility completed in 1967, the adjacent former St. Matthew's Episcopal Church built in the 1940's and the 2003 addition connecting the two buildings.

Given the ages of these buildings, major capital issues threatened the safety and well-being of our program. For the past three years, we have fundraised for a \$6.7 million campaign to address critically needed interior and exterior renovations, replace major systems that were beyond life expectancies, expand and better utilize infrastructure spaces and to add classrooms to increase enrollment. The project will also strengthen our role as an essential community hub by designating space for educational programs and family supports.

Renovations were divided into multiple phases, so we have been able to remain open and fully operational during construction. This was particularly important to our families given the repercussions of the pandemic.

The final construction phase, Phase II, commenced in June 2024. It includes adding one more pre-K classroom (in addition to two new classrooms in the previous phase), a new staff lounge and designated staff workspace, meeting areas and renovations to our second-floor library, which was the original foyer and worship space of St. Matthew's Episcopal Church. This 2,240 sq. ft. space is being transformed into a multi-purpose community center where families can access on-site, personalized guidance to navigate social services and educational programs; and those advancing their careers will have opportunities for mentoring. There will also be a newly designed early childhood library, highlighting best practices in early literacy. With the renovations, we are so thrilled that the beautiful original stained-glass windows from St. Matthew's are once again exposed and will be overlooking the children's library space.

Renovations are slated for completion at the end of October 2024. After construction is complete, St. Michael's will eventually be able to serve up to 193 students as the que continues to build from enrollment of infants and toddlers. To date, we have raised \$5.5 million toward our \$6.7 million fundraising goal, primarily through foundation and federal grants, from our board and campaign committee members, and from dedicated community donors.

We are so grateful to all who have helped make this project come to fruition and would welcome a visit from parishioners to see the renovations!

## **STANDING COMMITTEE**

Michael Wood, President

The members of the Standing Committee (TSC) are:

- The Rev. Dr. Jack Anderson, St. Philip's Church
- The Rev. Russell Bohner, Saint Anne's Church
- Joanna Carty, All Saints' Church & St. George's Chapel
- Beth Maurer, St. Martha's Church
- The Rev. Shelley D. McDade, All Saints' Church & St. George's Chapel
- The Rev. Sarah Nelson, St. James Church, Newport
- Vernon R. Proctor, St. Mary's Church
- Michael Wood, Trinity Parish

The Standing Committee offers thanks for the contributions of Jack Anderson and Beth Maurer for their work in our midst. They will finish their work with us at the end of the year.

The Members of the Standing Committee are elected at the annual diocesan convention and serve staggered four-year terms. The committee meets most months of the year to fulfill the various constitutional and canonical responsibilities entrusted to us. Chief among these are:

- Participating in the consent process for bishops elected in various dioceses in the Episcopal Church
- Granting approval to local diaconal and presbyteral candidates for ordination
- Approving candidates for rector and associate clergy seeking to serve in Delaware
- Reviewing ministry plans for parishes in transition as well as providing prayerful support and encouragement for the bishop and the canon to the ordinary, who oversee and guide these processes
- Reviewing parish requests for the sale of property
- Filling vacancies for diocesan trustees, members of Constitution and Canons, and deputies to General Convention when these occur between conventions
- Confirming the bishop's nominees for chancellor, vice-chancellor, convention registrar, convention secretary, and members of the Disciplinary Board when vacancies occur between conventions

In all matters the Standing Committee seeks to be a council of advice to the bishop and an able partner in the shared governance of the church.

## **STEWARDSHIP RESOURCES**

Helen Spence, Resource Team Leader

Our year began with the decision to hold a workshop, done in a hybrid fashion, in person and on Zoom. Financial Resources joined forces with the Rev. Martha Kirkpatrick, and we discussed stewardship of creation, in addition to stewardship of our budgets. We had representatives from 14 parishes and considered the morning a great success. Many thanks to Christ Church, Dover for providing the facilities for our gathering.

The Episcopal Church Foundation (ECF) program for financial work (ecf360) was going well and Helen Spence had been invited to join a cohort of professional Diocesan Stewardship workers for quarterly meetings. This cohort spans the continental U.S. from Massachusetts to Northern California, and from Chicago to Texas. The information sharing has been helpful. However, with the retirement of the president of ECF, and the job change for the ecf360 coordinator (he now works for Episcopal Relief and Development), all financial stewardship content is being shared through ECF Vital Practices ([www.ecfvp.org](http://www.ecfvp.org)) and is now free. The diocese will re-subscribe to The Episcopal Network for Stewardship for the upcoming year, so that those resources are available to you all. Helen's work with the cohort will continue, and we hope to have additional information to share with you along the way.

Most importantly, please know that we are working to bring you resources you can tailor for your own use as you move through your financial giving needs – be they annual giving, planned giving, or capital campaigns. We hope to hold another workshop this year, so if there is something you need that is not being provided, please let us know. We hope that, as one church in our many buildings, we will reach out and share our experiences with one another helping our one church to grow together.

## **TRUSTEES**

Richard W. Harra, Trustees Vice-President

Teri Quinn Gray, Chief Operating Officer

The Trustees of the Episcopal Church in Delaware serve staggered six-year terms with the purpose of advancing the religious and educational work of the Episcopal Church by:

- Oversight of Master Fund A, the common investment fund containing restricted and unrestricted trust funds in use by congregations and the diocese
- Oversight of the annual distribution of the income from Master Fund A
- Oversight of the receipt and sale of real property gifts to the diocese or a parish
- Provide advice, when requested, about financial matters and investments to parishes and other organizations of the church
- Aid, support, and maintenance of the bishop

- Aid, support, and maintenance of other necessary ministers and missionaries of the diocese
- Respond to duties authorized and required by the convention of the diocese
- Respond to requests from the bishop and Diocesan Council to support the program and mission of the church

To accomplish these responsibilities, the Trustees maintain a perspective, view, and scope of review that considers a 100-year arc while considering a shorter-term vision when circumstances call for it. This shorter-term view was evidenced during the pandemic by the deployment to each parish of a one-time stipend from the 2022 surplus of unrestricted funds.

In the period August 1, 2023 through July 31, 2024 the Trustees exercised their responsibilities specifically by:

- Financial support for the Camp Arrowhead Carmine Environmental Center
- September approval of the MFA distribution for 2024
- Support of the Church of the Nativity property after it reverted to the Trustees when the congregation disbanded
- Participation in the ad hoc committee formed to study and evaluate the Mutual Ministry Review
- Hired a new property manager to handle oversight and maintenance of diocesan properties and abandoned church cemeteries
- For the second year, offered Wellness grants to clergy
- Participation in the newly formed committee to evaluate the efficacy of the current governance bodies
- An extended contingency meeting held in October to determine the scope of current and future use of Trusteed held properties
- Welcomed Teri Quinn Gray and Breakwater Accounting to partner with the Trustees on fiscal issues

For fiscal year 2024 (Jan - Dec 2024), revenue of **\$1,247,209** from the Trustee/ diocesan funds in Master Fund A was allocated as follows:

- \$639,400 (51%) for Diocesan Council in support of the bishop's ministry, diocesan mission and ministry programs, growth of congregations, clergy training and care, and Trustee admin services
- \$185,024 (15%) for retiree health care, lay and cleric continuing education, grants/assistance to parishes, organizations, and individuals
- \$422,785 (34%) for property, mission support operations, and future ministries

## YOUTH MINISTRY

Cana Hartman, Advisor and Communication Liaison

This year, the Diocesan Youth Advisors met monthly, bringing together representatives from all three counties to discuss and enhance youth ministry across the diocese. Our meetings fostered collaboration, shared insights, and strengthened our collective mission to support and nurture the spiritual growth of our youth. Representatives from various parishes included Jessica Potter from St. Peter's Church, Lewes; Miggy Hernandez from Christ Church, Dover; Cana Hartman from St. Thomas's Parish; and the Rev. Kenn Katona. We were also thrilled to welcome Mason Cruz to the diocese, the new youth leader at Christ Church Christiana Hundred, who joined us for a few meetings and expressed his enthusiasm for supporting diocesan youth events. Our most significant impact this year was our strong presence at the 2024 Delaware Pride Festival in Dover. For the second consecutive year, the Youth Ministries of the Episcopal Church in Delaware, along with the Rev. Canon Brad Hinton, clergy, and faith family members, hosted a double booth at the festival at Legislative Mall in Dover. This year exceeded all expectations, becoming even more memorable than our first year. The sun shone down upon us, casting a rosy glow through our red tents. We had many beautiful conversations about Jesus' love as friends and families strolled through the tents, enjoying the candy, fans, and dog treats we distributed. We also provided a refreshing watering station for our furry companions. The pet parade, a delightful spectacle of wagging tails and colorful costumes, added to the festive atmosphere. Our fans were adorned with messages of love and affirmation that fluttered through the crowd like confetti. We also crafted over 450 pins at our pin-making table, each one a tiny emblem of unity and acceptance. Bishop Brown arrived on his motorcycle; he walked up to the booth helmet in hand, ready to celebrate alongside us. Christ Church, Dover generously offered us a home base, welcoming festivalgoers seeking solace and prayer. Throughout the day, the Daughters of the King prayed over the entire event. As the field cleared out at the end of the day, we started making plans for next year, eager to continue spreading love and hope.

Join us – make 2025 even more magical! We remain committed to supporting your church's youth ministry and leadership. Please join our [Facebook group](#) to stay connected and join in the conversation. We are here to assist in any way we can to ensure the success and growth of youth ministry across the diocese.