

Diocese of Missouri
Diocesan Council Report to the 185th Convention – 2024
Prepared by Joyce LaFontain, Vice-Chair

The Diocesan Council is made up of six lay persons elected at-large for staggered terms of three years and one lay and one clergy representative elected to two-year terms by each of the Convocations. The bishop also appoints three members of the Council subject to ratification by the elected members. The bishop serves as chair of the Council and appoints a vice chair to serve in his or her absence. Our diocesan Canons require that the Council meet no fewer than six times between the annual meetings of Convention and at least once each quarter.

The Diocesan Council does the work of the Diocesan Convention on when Convention is not in session, including:

- development of the program budget
- oversight of the programs and offices funded by the budget
- oversight and interpretation of diocesan policies
- service as members of the Corporation of the Episcopal Diocese of Missouri

Appointments and Elections

Diocesan Investment Trust: elected Maryann Vognild and Ron Webb to serve two-year terms as co-trustees of the Diocesan Investment Trust.

Diocesan Council: Vice-Chair (Joyce LaFontain - Trinity CWE) and Secretary (Michael Reiser, Christ Church Cathedral).

Diocesan Council Standing Teams – selected Convenors: Stewardship (Michael Rieser - Christ Church Cathedral, St. Louis), Vital Communities (Dr. Robert Lowe - Christ Church Cathedral, St. Louis), Property & Facilities (Chad Templin - Church of St. Michael and St. George)

New Ventures in Community Ministries: Joyce LaFontain (Trinity CWE), Dr. Robert Lowe (Christ Episcopal Church - Cape Girardeau), Ezra Smith (Church of St. Michael and St. George)

Church Assistance Endowment Fund: Harry Leip (Trinity – CWE), Alice (Christ Church Cathedral – St. Louis), Chad Templin (Church of St. Michael and St. George).

Resolutions

Passed 2024 Clergy Housing Allowance resolutions for Bishop Deon Johnson and seven diocesan clergy staff.

Submitted Resolution A-185 setting Clergy Compensation for the 184th Diocesan Convention.

Grants

Campus Ministry Fund: \$10,000 to fund the expenses of 2 lay missionaries/evangelists from Faith Christian Church of India for the work they are doing in the Asian Indian communities around the campuses in Cape Girardeau and Rolla. \$53,000 to partially fund a full-time clergy position at Christ Church Cape Girardeau for one year. \$50,000 to continue partially funding a full-time clergy position at Calvary in Columbia for one year.

Church Assistance Endowment Fund: \$52,100 for 8 grants (priorities of safety and need.)

Clergy Medical Assistance Fund: \$28,298.35 in response to 16 requests to cover out-of-pocket medical expenses for clergy in our diocese.

Future Mission/Property Fund: \$8,100 to the Church of St. John and St. James in Sullivan for the installation of an accessible bathroom. \$100,000 for mold remediation expenses at the Deaconess Anne House. \$50,000 for necessary repairs at the Grace Hill property.

WAJ Fund: \$65,000 to be used for the continuing ministry of Grace African Christian Connections.

Theological Education Fund: \$3,000 to six non-residential seminarians.

New Ventures in Community Ministries: \$143,742 in grants to fund new ministries across our diocese.

Other Actions

Participated in the two-day Joint Leadership Conference in February 2024 at St. Timothy's – Creve Coeur.

Regularly reviewed the diocesan Strategic Visioning Plan and collaborated with our Bishop and staff, standing teams and committees to help facilitate, support, and receive updates on Plan initiatives.

Received reports and updates at each meeting from:

- Bishop Deon re: life and ministries of our Diocese including clergy transitions, properties, diocesan staff, community outreach, and national church matters.
- Convocations about their activities, accomplishments, and challenges.
- Financial reports of the Diocese's Operating Budget, funds, and investments.
- Diocesan Council's Standing Teams: Facilities, Stewardship, and Vital Communities.

Received and accepted the audit of the books of COEDMO and unanimously approved the audit.

Reviewed and approved a policy related to “A Letter of Covenanted Agreement for Conditional Attendance” for congregations to implement should a registered sex offender desire to become a member of the congregation.

Drafted a balanced 2025 Operating Budget for the Diocese of MO, shared it with Convocations for consideration and input, and approved a final budget for adoption at the 185th Diocesan Convention.

Diocesan Council Members

(Terms expire at 2024 Convention)

Angela Breeher - St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Carondelet/St. Louis

The Rev. Nancy Emmel Gun - St. John's Episcopal Church, Tower Grove/St. Louis

Liz Yount - St. Peter's Episcopal Church, Ladue

(Terms expire at 2025 Convention)

Larry Cornelius - St. Martin's Episcopal Church, Ellisville

The Rev. Amy Fallon - Trinity Episcopal Church, Kirksville

Dr. Robert Lowe - Christ Episcopal Church, Cape Girardeau

The Rev. Michael Nchimbi - Trinity Episcopal Church, St. Charles

Michael Reiser - Christ Church Cathedral, St. Louis

Sheila Thiele - Christ Episcopal Church, Cape Girardeau

The Rev. Dr. Warren Crews - St. Vincent's-in-the-Vineyard

David Heise - Grace Episcopal Church, Jefferson City

The Rev. Clive Samson - Faith Christian Church of India

Alice Stanley - Christ Church Cathedral, St. Louis

(Terms expire at 2026 Convention)

Joyce LaFontain - Trinity Episcopal Church, St. Louis

Ezra Smith - Church of St. Michael and St. George

Sherine Paul - Faith Christian Church of India

Krista Tinney - Trinity Episcopal Church, Kirksville

The Rev. Jessica Wachter - Journey Episcopal Church, Fulton

Ex-officio members:

Vice-Chancellor Hal Burroughs - St. Peter's Episcopal Church, Ladue,

Chancellor Al Ludwig - Emmanuel Episcopal Church, Webster Groves, Vice-Chancellor & Treasurer

Offices of the Bishop:

The Rt. Rev. Deon Johnson - Bishop / Council Chair

The Rev. Canon Doris Westfall - Bishop's Canon to the Ordinary

Canon Desiree Brattin - Bishop's Canon for Finance and Administration