

Bishop's Senior Staff Report

185th Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Missouri

The Reverend Canon Doris Westfall, Desiree Brattin, Canon for Finance and Administration, and the Reverend Canon Whitney Rice, Canon for Evangelism and Discipleship Development, make up the Senior Staff in the Offices of the Bishop and work together in overseeing the business, legal, property, formation, and other matters pertaining to the Diocese of Missouri.

Ms. Brattin works very closely with the Treasurer of the Diocese in creating a yearly budget, preparing and presenting the draft budget of the Diocesan Council. Other responsibilities include preparing for the yearly outside audit, administering diocesan grants and loans, and working on trust and endowment issues as well as administration of health and benefit plans. She also supports the functioning of Diocesan Council and the Diocesan Investment Trust. She serves on the Diocesan Endowment Committee and as a Vice President of COEDMO as well as assists with convention planning. Her long service is a tremendous gift to the diocese and her knowledge of the diocesan finances is unparalleled. She took half of a very well deserved sabbatical this past summer and will take another eight weeks off this coming summer.

Canon to the Ordinary, the Rev. Doris Westfall, assists the bishop in supporting the clergy and congregations of the diocese. She accompanies the bishop on visitations and makes herself available to parishes in need of supply clergy or who are in need of a senior staff visit to help them think through and address any difficult issues that may arise. Canon Westfall works with clergy and congregations that are in transition and mentors the vestries and discernment teams in the transition and call process. From November 4, 2023 to November 3, 2023 there has been 23 clergy transitions: six newly ordained clergy; there were two clergy new to the diocese, seven new cures in the diocese, four new cures outside of the diocese, two other transitions, two retirements and two clergy deaths.

Canon Westfall is currently working with the congregations of Trinity-Central West End, Trinity-Hannibal, Holy Communion-University City, and St. Mark's-St. Louis in their search and call process. New Rector/Priest in Charge are or will be in place by the end of the year at Grace-Kirkwood, Trinity-Central West End, and St. Barnabas-Florissant. Canon Westfall assists clergy in shepherding the congregations through the transitional time. She works with other canons to the ordinary and transition ministers across the country and plans clergy conferences and retreats as well as educational offerings for the diocesan clergy. She assists the bishop in the pastoral care of the clergy and oversees training for the diocese for the Title IV process. She is also the Chief of Staff and a Vice President of COEDMO.

Canon for Evangelism and Discipleship Development, the Rev. Whitney Rice, oversees the ordination process, diocesan-wide evangelism efforts and training, as well education for life-long discipleship development. Canon Rice chairs the Reimagining the Church Task Force, is the diocesan liaison for Fresh Start-a program for clergy in new cures, and is heading up the work to redesign the ordination process. She oversees experimental ministries and missional communities and is the diocesan liaison for youth and young adult ministries. Canon Rice has also developed the 18 month Requiem or Renaissance program for congregations receiving financial assistance from the diocese. This program has been well received by those who have been working with it and there have been inquiries from several domestic dioceses such as The Diocese of Los Angeles and the Diocese of Louisiana, about how it works and how

to adapt it to their specific contexts. Currently the third cohort of this program is being launched with good participation of new parishes and shepherds. This cohort also includes parishes that have asked to be a part of the program and not just invited or mandated participation.

Ms. Jillian Smith is Executive Assistant to the bishop and canon to the ordinary. Her responsibilities include but are not limited to appointments with the bishop and canon to the ordinary, lay licensing, remarriage petitions and authorizations, setting up virtual meetings for staff and churches, renewal of ministry planning and scheduling, letters dimissory, diocesan convention, and clergy conference assistance. She also has participated in the redevelopment of Safeguarding God's Children, which is now called Safe Church, and tracks canonically required training and continuing education for clergy and laity. She assists Canon Rice with the logistics and forms for the ordination process.

Janis Greenbaum, the diocesan Communications Director, retired in August and AhSa-Ti Tyhimba Ford, the digital projects manager was named as the Interim Communications Director through April of 2025. She is responsible for communicating the bishop's message and vision to the diocese and beyond. She is the primary contact for parish event promotion, social media and website questions. She oversees the livestream production of major diocesan events and handles the technology requirements for convention. She is responsible for the content and production of all print publications for the diocese as well as the weekly Proclaim and Clergy Connections digital newsletters and the filming of the bishop's podcast.

Ms. Tracy Grigsby serves the Offices of the Bishop as Administrator of Diocesan Operations. Ms. Grigsby provides both internal support to staff as well as external support to those who have questions or are looking for information about the diocese. She works with Diocesan Council, convocations, Diocesan Convention, Fresh Start and the different diocesan commissions. Ms. Grigsby is also responsible for the updating and oversight of the diocesan database.

Ms. Rita Benson works with the Canon for Finance and Administration and supports all areas of finance, benefits, and insurance. She is the primary contact for any changes in benefits or insurance plans, pension fund matters, employee status, background checks, UTO grants, parochial reports, and Flexible Spending Accounts. She is responsible for payroll and accounts receivables in the diocesan office. She did an admirable job taking over the Canon for Finance and Administration role this summer as she covered for Canon Brattin while she was on her sabbatical.

A new staff position has been added this year: Finance Administrative Assistant. Ms. Erin Meadows assists the finance department with accounts receivable and is the diocesan liaison for Standing Committee.

This is a knowledgeable, compassionate, deeply committed team that takes great pride in the service they provide to the diocese. It is a privilege to work with them as they serve the people and parishes of the Diocese of Missouri.

Submitted by the Rev. Canon Doris Westfall