

REPORT of the DIOCESAN COUNCIL (2025)

The Diocesan Council works with the Bishop Diocesan, other governing bodies, diocesan staff, and other key stakeholders throughout the Diocese to discern the mission and vision of the Diocese. It also serves as Diocesan Convention in recess. In addition to the bishop, the Diocesan Council is composed of ten elected members who represent each of the ten Regional Ministries of the Diocese, four elected at-large members, and up to six members appointed by the bishop to represent the BIPOC community. Several staff of the Office of the Bishop also support the work of Diocesan Council.

The Diocesan Council has three main focus areas: fiduciary responsibility; public relations, which includes outreach, facilitated conversations, and connectedness; and program administration and support of the Diocesan mission. The Diocesan Council develops an annual operating budget, monitors income and expenses, and oversees budget and program goals. It supports the work of commissions, committees, task forces, and work groups; proposes the annual assessment rate; and prayerfully responds to the needs of congregations. It actively works to move the Diocese from an operations mindset to a missional focus, and it serves as a sounding board for the bishop.

In 2025, the Diocesan Council began to meet more frequently. In addition, Diocesan Council and the Board of Directors began to hold joint sessions together. While each governing body is responsible for a particular scope of work, these joint sessions gave both Diocesan Council and the Board of Directors a shared sense of mission and an opportunity to collaborate on Diocesan-wide projects where both governing bodies have oversight responsibilities. The joint sessions also provided an opportunity for team building across these two groups and to reflect on the Diocesan mission together.

In 2025, during joint sessions, Diocesan Council and the Board of Directors:

- Prayed with each other and shared land acknowledgements, recognizing Indigenous Peoples as traditional stewards of the land upon which members met
- Engaged in connecting activities by reflecting on spiritual disciplines using Bishop LaBelle's Zimzum offering
- Participated in visioning exercises to discern and affirm the missional focus of the Diocese
- Reviewed roles and oversight responsibilities of Diocesan Council and the Board of Directors
- Received reports from Huston Camp and Conference Center
- Received reports from Sacred Waters/St. Andrew's House and discussed formation of a single new entity, Sacred Waters Center for Restoration and Retreat (Sacred Waters)
- Received reports from the Refugee Resettlement Office (RRO)
 - Formed a working group made up of members from Diocesan Council and the Board of Directors to address emerging needs at RRO
 - Received a report from the RRO working group
- Celebrated the ministry of Judith Andrews and James Beckwith upon their retirements as

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Diocesan Chancellor and Treasurer, respectively

- Celebrated the life and ministry of The Rev. Dr. Dennis Tierney following his untimely death

In 2025, during the Council specific portion of their meetings, the Diocesan Council:

- Discussed overarching goals and prioritized program and resource necessary to support the Diocesan mission framework
- Worked with the Budget and Finance Committee of Diocesan Council to prioritize and align 2026 spending with the Diocesan mission framework
- Received a report on the Jerry Shigaki BIPOC Ministry Fund
- Received a report from St. John San Juan Olympia regarding the effect of strategic congregational development grant funds awarded for 2024-2028
- Received a report from the Personnel Commission about their work and proposed resolution regarding the 2026 COLA
- Appointed two members from Diocesan Council to serve on the new Sacred Waters Leadership Council
- Discussed how to support regional sites for the 2025 Diocesan Convention
- Reviewed financial reports and received updates about assessments
- Received reports from the Bishop Diocesan and the Canon to the Ordinary regarding visitations and activities of the Office of the Bishop, including current year priorities and missional realignment and reorganization efforts
- Received reports from the Canon to the Ordinary on congregations in transition
- Recorded 2025 housing allowances as required by the IRS for clergy who work in the Office of the Bishop

Diocesan Council's official actions from November 2024 through August 2025 included:

- Adopting a resolution to fill an open vacancy on Diocesan Council in accordance with Diocesan canons;
- Adopting a resolution to fill open vacancies on the Disciplinary Board in accordance with Diocesan canons;
- Adopting a resolution to establish Sacred Waters by merging St. Andrew's House and Harmony Hill and to approve a new governance structure for Sacred Waters;
- Adopting a resolution to be forwarded to the fall convention recommending the 2027 assessment rate be set at 14.5% of the Net Disposable Income (NDI); and
- Adopting a balanced operating budget for fiscal year 2026 to be forwarded for ratification at the fall Diocesan Convention.

Other work undertaken by Diocesan Council included:

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- Forming a new Diocesan Council Steering Committee to guide and plan the work of Diocesan Council;
- Supporting the ongoing work of the Budget and Finance Committee of Diocesan Council;
- Attending the spring 2025 open house at Sacred Waters; and
- Participating with the other Diocesan governing bodies in two hybrid retreats.

Members of the 2024-2025 Diocesan Council:

The Rt. Rev. Philip N. LaBelle, *Bishop Diocesan*; **Abraham Atem**, *BIPOC–Lay, St. John South Sudanese, Kent*; **Jo Burkholder**, *Be Attitudes–Lay, St. Luke, Seattle*; **The Rev. Annie Calhoun**, *At-Large–Clergy St. Anne, Washougal*; **The Rev. Kay Flores**, *Columbia–Clergy, St. Timothy, Chehalis*; **Karen Fraser**, *Willapa–Lay St. Benedict, Lacey*; **The Rev. Allen Hicks**, *Sno Isle–Clergy Trinity, Everett*; **Lee Holland**, *At-Large–Lay, St. Matthew, Browns Point/Tacoma*; **The Rev. Josh Hosler**, *Evergreen–Clergy, Good Shepherd, Federal Way*; **The Rev. Courtney Jones**, *At-Large–Clergy, Christ Church, Anacortes*; **Sharalyne King**, *Columbia–Lay, St. Stephen, Longview*; **Maitland McKenzie**, *Rainier–Lay, St. Mary, Lakewood*; **The Rev. Malcolm McLaurin**, *BIPOC–Clergy, Holy Cross, Redmond*; **The Rev. Baudelina Paz**, *Mount Baker–Clergy, Resurrección, Mt. Vernon*; **The Rev. Jesús Reyes**, *BIPOC, St. Luke/San Lucas, Vancouver*; **Sharon Simes**, *Eastside–Lay, St. Margaret, Bellevue*; **Karen Sjöström**, *At-Large–Lay–St. John, Kirkland*; **The Rev. Eric Stelle**, *Peninsula–Clergy St. John, Gig Harbor*; and **The Rev. Robert Stevens**, *Holy C–Clergy, St. John the Baptist, Seattle*

Others with seat and voice:

Judith Andrews, *Diocesan Chancellor (January 1-May 31, 2025)*; **Ed Barton**, *Diocesan Treasurer (July 1, 2025-continuing)*; **Jim Beckwith**, *Diocesan Treasurer (January 1-June 30, 2025)*; **The Rev. Canon Cristi Chapman**, *Canon to the Ordinary*; **Heather Irwin**, *Budget & Finance Committee Co-Convener*; **Bryan Krislock**, *Diocesan Chancellor (June 1, 2025-continuing)*; **Dede Moore**, *Canon for Human Resources, Governance & Convention*; **The Rev. Dr. Dennis Tierney**, *Diocesan Property Manager (January 1-May 2, 2025)*, and **Charles Thorne**, *Canon for Finance*

On behalf of Diocesan Council, this report is respectfully submitted to the 115th Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Olympia by The Rev. Canon Cristi Chapman, Canon to the Ordinary