



E3 Diocesan Council Report

The Diocesan Council works with the Bishop Diocesan, other governing bodies, diocesan staff, and other key stakeholders throughout the Diocese to discern the Diocese's mission and vision. It also serves as the Diocesan Convention during recess. In addition to the Bishop, the Diocesan Council comprises ten elected members representing each of the ten Regional Ministries of the Diocese, four at-large members, and up to six members appointed by the Bishop to represent the BIPOC community. Several staff members of the Office of the Bishop also support the work of the 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. With the Finance & Budget Committee, the Diocesan Council develops an annual operating budget, monitors income and expenses, and oversees budget and program goals.

The Council supports the work of commissions, committees, task forces, and work groups; proposes the annual assessment rate; and prayerfully responds to congregations' needs. 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 2026, the Diocesan Council met monthly. Each meeting began with a combined session with the Board of Directors, giving both bodies 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 together on the Diocesan mission.

In 2026, during joint sessions, Diocesan Council and the Board of Directors:

- Prayed with each other;
- introduced a new method of land acknowledgment: each week, one person provided a “mini lesson” on the particular tribe where that person lives;
- engaged in connecting activities by reflecting on spiritual disciplines using Bishop LaBelle’s Zimzum offering; and
- received reports from Episcopal Retirement Communities, Camp Huston, Sacred Waters, Refugee Resettlement Office (RRO), and the Office of the Bishop.

In 2026, the Diocesan Council's solo sessions stand alone sessions included the follow highlights:

- Each session began and ended with prayer.
- We responded to two resolutions from the 2025 Diocesan Convention. One addressed the decolonization of the Diocesan Seal and how it represents the Diocese today. The second addressed the use of LLM (large language model - AI) in the Diocese. The Council appointed two working groups, both of which will report on their work at the 2026 Diocesan Convention.
- We worked with the Budget and Finance Committee of the Diocesan Council to prioritize and align the 2027 Diocesan Operating Budget with the Mission & Vision of the Diocese.
- We received routine reports from the Budget and Finance Committee and the Office of the Bishop staff on the Diocese's financial performance; the Canon Missioner on Transitions; Saint John/San Juan, Olympia on the status of their congregational redevelopment grant; the Personnel Commission; and the Canon to the Ordinary.
- We approved a resolution for submission to the 2026 Convention recommending continuation of the 14.5% Assessment rate for 2028.
- We adopted a balanced budget for fiscal year 2027 for the diocese.
- We began exploration with the Office of the Bishop on ways to improve communication and cross-support within and among the ten Regional Ministries of the Diocese.
- Members of the Diocesan Council served on the Diocesan Council Steering Committee with staff from the Office of the Bishop.

Members of the 2026 Diocesan Council and Others with Voice:

At-Large

- The Rev. Annie Calhoun | St. Anne's, Washougal | Clergy
- The Rev. James Thibodeaux | St. Christopher's, Olympia | Clergy
- Lee Holland | St. Matthew, Browns Point/Tacoma | Lay
- Stephanie Butler | St. David's, Friday Harbor | Lay

BIPOC

- Abraham Atem, St. John's, South Sudanese, Kent | Lay
- Simon Mabior Dau Angok | St. Michael's, South Sudanese, Auburn | Lay

Regional Ministries

- Be Attitudes: Jo Burkholder | St. Luke's, Seattle | Lay
- Columbia: The Rev. Kay Flores | St. Timothy, Chehalis | Clergy
- Eastside: Sharon Simes | St. Margaret's, Bellevue | Lay
- Evergreen: The Rev. Ruth Anne Garcia | St. James, Kent | Clergy
- Holy C: The Rev. Robert Stevens | St. John the Baptist, Seattle | Clergy
- Mount Baker: The Rev. Paul Price | St. Stephen's, Oak Harbor | Clergy
- Peninsula: The Rev. Eric Stelle | St. John's, Gig Harbor | Clergy
- Rainier: Christina Johns | St. Andrew's, Tacoma | Lay
- Sno-Isle: The Rev. Allen Hicks | Trinity, Everett | Clergy
- Willapa: Karen Fraser | St. Benedict's, Lacey | Lay

Others with seat and voice

- Ed Barton | Diocesan Treasurer
- The Rev. Canon Cristi Chapman | Canon to the Ordinary
- Bryan Krislock | Diocesan Chancellor
- Karen Petersen | Governance, Special Projects
- Charles Thorne | Canon for Finance

On behalf of the Diocesan Council, The Rev. Eric Stelle, Vice President of the Diocesan Council, respectfully submits this report to the 117th Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Olympia.