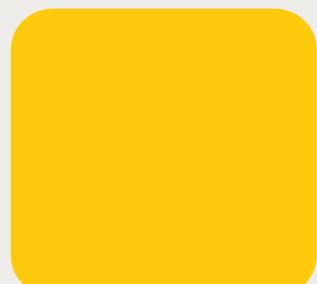
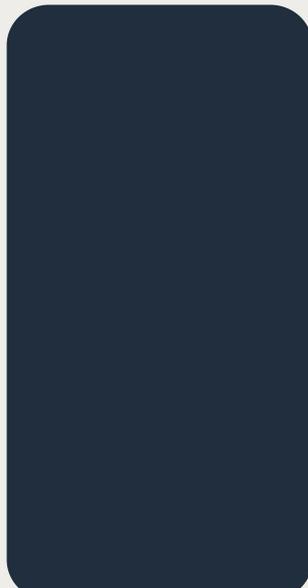




2026 diocesan profile

THE SEARCH FOR THE FIRST BISHOP OF THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF THE GREAT LAKES



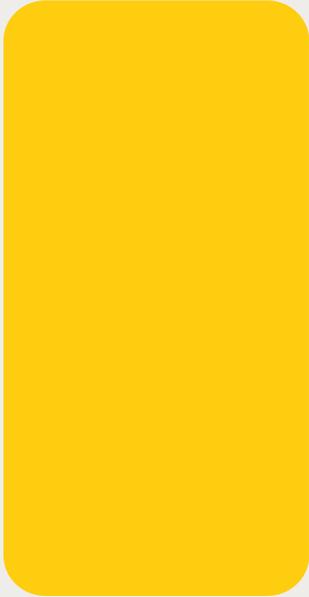
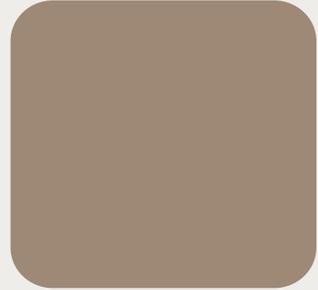
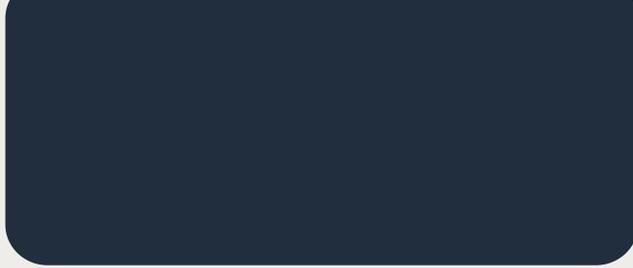


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a brand new diocese

AN INTRODUCTION & AN INVITATION

Dearly Beloved of God throughout the Church:

Greetings in the name of our Savior Jesus Christ, and in the power of the Holy Spirit!

The Episcopal Diocese of the Great Lakes welcomes you to join the process of electing our first bishop diocesan. Whether you are discerning a call to ministry as our bishop, considering nominating someone, or expecting to learn more about our new diocese, your interest and participation are greatly appreciated. We believe this profile, which was developed by the Search Committee, will help you understand the unique character and calling of our diocesan community, and convey the hopes and dreams of our people.

...we wish to follow the Spirit's lead into the public square with the transforming power of God's love.

As a community of God's people in the newly constituted Diocese of the Great Lakes, we are firmly rooted in the richness of our Anglican traditions, while we also embrace the Spirit of innovation as we witness to the Gospel. We cherish the bonds of affection which we enjoy in our congregations, while we also wish to follow the Spirit's lead into the public square with the transforming power of God's love. We appreciate and honor the history of the two dioceses from which our new diocese has

emerged, and we offer a diocese that is on a path of Becoming. Our praise and worship for the God we know and have come to understand is, in our shared experience, making all things new (Is. 43:19, Rev. 21:5).

We have now embarked on a journey of discernment, trusting that God is already moving among those who may feel called to walk with us as our first bishop diocesan, and to journey with us as a compassionate pastor and inspired leader as we travel along this road toward greater thriving. We engage in this process of prayerful discernment, particularly mindful of St. Paul's enduring summation of our life together as the Body of Christ – a life rooted in faith, hope, and love (1 Cor. 13:13).



A service of Confirmation, Reception, and Reaffirmation at St. Mark's, Coldwater.

The person God will call to walk with us is someone whose faith is nourished through deep prayer, who deliberately and intentionally cultivates a life of spiritual practice and direction, and who is actively engaged with the liturgical traditions of **The Episcopal Church**. We trust that the one whom God will call to live among us will exhibit a contagious hopefulness for the future of the church, and especially its witness to the role of religious practice for the common good, in a society standing in urgent need of mending. We are confident that God is calling someone to serve in this new diocese who will love us into new life, and who will also help us extend the love of Christ into the wider world, inviting others to join us on this good road toward a world of peace with justice. And we are assured that the one who will be called to serve, will join us in the joy of building up the Kingdom of God here and now and for all.

We are confident that as we live out our call to be **God's people in the world**, we bear witness to the **transformative love of the Gospel as it mends the world**. We believe that this embodied discipleship will attract others, young and old alike, and will enable us to grow in both numbers and resources.



Clockwise from top: Eucharist at Emmanuel, Petoskey; two campers pose at Episcopal Youth Camp; a young Episcopalian heralds the sun.

We trust that the one whom God will call to live among us will exhibit a contagious hopefulness for the future of the church in a society standing in urgent need of mending.



the journey we have taken

A BRIEF HISTORY OF OUR DIOCESE

Congregations and clergy in the western part of the Episcopal Diocese of Michigan voted to form the Diocese of Western Michigan, largely due to their belief that the distances between them and the seat of the diocese made supporting their ministries too difficult. Transportation was a challenge in the late nineteenth century. The new diocese held its first convention in 1874, electing the Rt. Rev. George Gillespie as their first bishop.

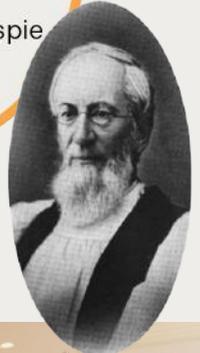
The Episcopal Diocese of Eastern Michigan formed when it separated from the Diocese of Michigan in 1995, led by Assistant Bishop William J. Gordon, who helped to articulate the vision of a diocese formed on the values of shared leadership and an empowered laity. They held their first convention in 1996, electing the Rt. Rev. Edwin M. Leidel, Jr., as bishop. Bishop Leidel helped give shape to a diocese that blessed experimentation and the ability to take bold steps without fear of failure.

1836

Diocese of Michigan became a part of The Episcopal Church, one year before Michigan became a state!

1874

Diocese of Western Michigan is founded, electing the Rt. Rev. George Gillespie as its first bishop.



1995

Diocese of Eastern Michigan is formed, electing the Rt. Rev. Ed Leidel as its first bishop the following year.



Oblation bearers at the 141st Convention of the Diocese of Western Michigan in 2015.

Worship at the 19th Convention of the Diocese of Eastern Michigan in 2013.

In 2018, the Episcopal Dioceses of Eastern and Western Michigan began a formal process, and engaged various leadership bodies in exploring whether to become one diocese through juncture. Eastern Michigan was in a period of discernment between diocesan bishops, and was identifying hopes and priorities for their future. Our dioceses were sharing a staff person and there was overlap and already a robust collaboration in developing a few areas of ministry. Clergy and lay leaders began to wonder aloud if we could be better together, functioning as one diocese rather than two. Among other steps taken during this phase, our Standing Committees met with the Rt. Rev. Sean Rowe who was leading a shared discernment process in the Dioceses of Northwestern Pennsylvania and Western New York. Bishop Rowe offered encouragement, support, and guidance in our very initial stage of discernment.

In early 2020, the Joint Standing Committees appointed a discernment committee which became known as the “Building Bridges Steering Committee,” and tasked them with coordinating a discernment process across both dioceses and advising the ecclesiastical authorities (bishop or Joint Standing Committee) regarding “opportunities for collaboration and proposed canonical changes to the structure, governance, and episcopal oversight of the Dioceses of Eastern and Western Michigan.” Over the course of several years the two dioceses collaborated in a variety of ways. The ultimate question with which they were tasked was “Could we be better as one diocese?” And their discerned answer was **“YES! We are BETTER TOGETHER.”**

In March of 2024, a special joint convention was held to vote on juncture, and we became the Episcopal Diocese of the Great Lakes. Together, we are 33,050 square miles across 58 counties with 98 active congregations.

2020

The dioceses of Eastern and Western Michigan form a steering committee to discern ways the two dioceses might collaborate.

2024

The legacy dioceses vote to become one, which is approved by the General Convention. The Diocese of the Great Lakes is officially formed at its primary convention.

2026

After two years of careful stewardship to create a unified diocese, we hope to elect our first bishop diocesan at our third convention in October.

Deputies from each legacy diocese hold hands before the House of Deputies at the 81st General Convention just after it approved the vote to juncture.

Delegates at the Special Joint Convention to vote on juncture in March 2024.

Banner bearers line up to process for the Eucharist for the Fourth Joint Convention of the Dioceses of Eastern and Western Michigan in 2023.

becoming God's people in michigan

A GOSPEL VISION FOR THE DIOCESE OF THE GREAT LAKES

The whole of God's creation and life itself is in the process of *Becoming*. Stars are born in dust clouds, while other stars explode as supernovas. Galaxies spin like pinwheels as they move through space; some collide with each other over hundreds of millions of years to form new ones. The Universe — that "vast expanse of interstellar space" — expands continually in all directions, approaching the speed of light (186,000 miles per second). The universe itself is always *Becoming* something new.

In our own lives, we uncover the influences which have shaped us, the genetic predispositions we have inherited, and the dynamics of our families of origin. We participate in educational systems which help heal and form us for life in community. And we are further shaped by the whispers of the Holy Spirit and the love of Christ. We too are always in the process of *Becoming*.

The Spirit is always inviting Christians everywhere to engage in this ongoing process to become something new while we also honor all that we have been together on this journey of faith. As Episcopalians who value an Anglican approach to Christian life, we look to the past so we can protect those values and practices which withstand the tests of time; and we look ahead with the help of Scripture, tradition, and reason to identify and integrate new understandings, new ministries, and new ways to bear witness to the Gospel in a troubled world.



During a Eucharist in the lake, a camper is baptized in Lake Esau at Camp Chickagami while other campers look on from the swimming dock.

See, I am making *all things new*.

John the Divine heard a loud voice in Heaven declare, “See, I am making all things new” (Rev. 21:5). Episcopalians in the former Dioceses of Eastern and Western Michigan have heard that voice as well, we have responded to the leading of the Holy Spirit, and after working together since 2018, we are becoming something new, too.

As we continued down a path as the new Diocese of the Great Lakes without a bishop diocesan, we adopted a working vision to guide our ongoing process of new birth. It served us well for a time, giving structure to our relationships and our work and we include it here as a way of illustrating the trajectory we took.

We have rooted ourselves in a Gospel vision of abundant life that we anticipate will undergo revision as we continue to become the people God is calling us to be in our congregations and in the wider world.

As we engage in our shared ministry along that path, we feel clearly called to:

nurture deep and lifelong spiritual growth,

build up vibrant and inclusive worshiping communities,

respond compassionately to the needs of our neighbors, and

honor and care for creation.

Nurture Deep & Lifelong Spiritual Growth



Campers and staff during a youth session at Camp Chickagami.

Children process to the nave for Eucharist at St. Mark's in Coldwater.



A young person is confirmed at Sudanese Grace Episcopal Church.

In our first year as a new diocese, 270 campers and 53 young adult counselors grew in their faith together in our diocesan camping ministry at Camp Chickagami and Stony Lake.

Our parishes engage in formation for all ages through programs like Education for Ministry, Bible studies, youth programs, and confirmation and reception preparation. In 2025, more than 70 adults and youth were confirmed, received, or reaffirmed in our diocese.

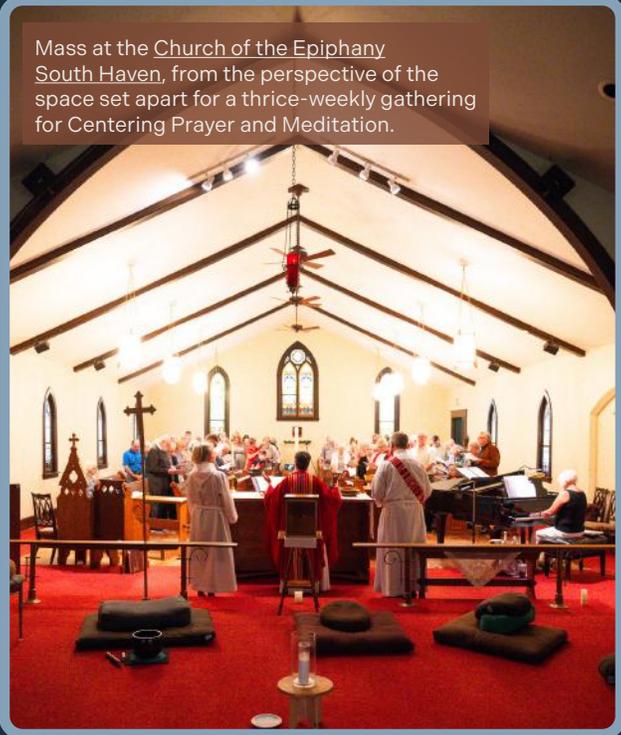


Episcopal Youth Camp campers and staff at Stony Lake.



Retreatants work on projects during a group formation time at the Contemplative Fiber Arts Retreat at Camp Chickagami.

Build Up Vibrant & Inclusive Worshiping Communities



Mass at the Church of the Epiphany South Haven, from the perspective of the space set apart for a thrice-weekly gathering for Centering Prayer and Meditation.



Parishioners share the Peace of Christ at St. Paul's Elk Rapids at the Celebration of their new ministry with their rector.

Our parishes of every size are creating cultures of joy and faithfulness, offering meaningful worship experiences and spaces.

They are finding ways to come together in partnership with other parishes and organizations in their communities - even if just for one service a year - to expand their worshiping communities. Our parishes foster a sense not only of every person being welcomed and accepted, but of deep belonging and community.



Pride Eucharist at Trinity Bay City, in partnership with Great Lakes Bay Pride's Harmony Diversity Choir.



Maundy Thursday at Holy Trinity Manistee.



Several congregations along the southern Lake Michigan shore come together at a city park on the lake for Sandy Mass each year.

Respond Compassionately to the Needs of our Neighbors

The durable medical equipment pantry at St. Mary's in Cadillac, a small parish which supports 700-800 people each year across three counties.



The AuSable Inclusion Center maintains a stocked Hygiene Closet on site with open access hours, in addition to offering a number of Pop-Up Hygiene Closets all across the rural north.



Our parishes of all sizes are tuned in to the needs of their neighbors, doing all they can (and often more than what their ASA would suggest they can!) to meet those needs compassionately in the love of Christ.

Meals for hungry college students. Diaper banks and baby supply pantries. Coat closets. A durable medical equipment pantry. Food banks and boxes. Burying unclaimed human remains with dignity. Weekly hot meals for unhoused neighbors. Free access to basic medical care. Space for meetings. Back to School supplies. Food drives for children on school breaks. Vegetable gardens which anyone is welcome to harvest.

You name it, and at least one of our parishes is quietly and faithfully doing it for and alongside their community.

A small portion of the diapers - purchased and donated - to stock the shelves of the diaper bank at St. Luke's Kalamazoo and St. Stephen's Diaper Ministry in nearby rural Plainwell.



Each week, St. Mark's Grand Rapids provides a hot meal and space for community during Open Table, a ministry of the United Campus Christian Fellowship.



Trinity West Branch hosts a collaborative food pantry which distributes food to 60 families each week.



Honor and Care for Creation



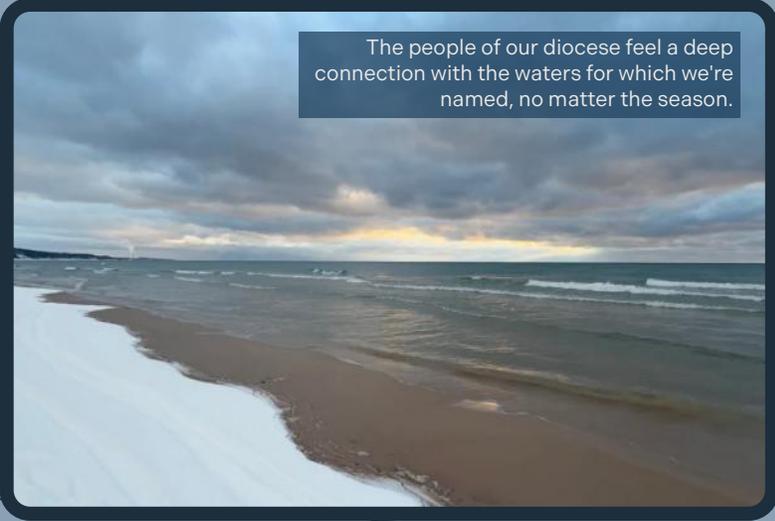
In partnership with a local college and a local conservation group and with the support of grant funding, Grace Grand Rapids added a native plant bioswale to their parish land to filter runoff water before it reaches a creek.



Staff and volunteers at Plainsong Farm work together for spring planting prep at its annual Earth Day Birthday gathering.

From the two Lakes Huron and Michigan which hem us in to the countless inland lakes and waterways, forests, farmland, and dunes, we are blessed beyond measure with beautiful and diverse natural surroundings.

Our diocese is growing into creation care in a number of ways, from the work of Plainsong Farm and Holy Ground for Whole Communities, to Good News Gardens, bioswales, compost collections, recycling programs, and efforts to identify, plant, and protect native plants on our properties, including endangered species. Our Creation Care Commission is charged with guiding parishes into more intentional creation care efforts, including by offering guidance for reducing the size and impact of our carbon footprints.



The people of our diocese feel a deep connection with the waters for which we're named, no matter the season.



The Ram's Head Lady's Slipper is one of at least three endangered plant species which are thriving across the nearly 100 acres of Camp Chickagami.



Vegetables from this Good News Garden at Camp Chickagami, planted and tended by volunteers from St. Dunstan's Davison, are harvested and added to the meals served to campers each summer.

a glimpse of who we are now

INTRODUCTION

We worship and minister on land originally stewarded by the Odawa, the Peoria, the Mississauga, the Anishinabewaki, the Bodwéwadmi (Potawatomi), the Kaskaskia, the Myaamia, the Kiikaapoi (Kickapoo), the Meškawahki-aša-hina (Fox), and the oθaakiiwakihinaki (Sauk) tribes, all of whom lived here at various times over many centuries, and who are among the twelve federally recognized indigenous nations in the state of Michigan. As a community of God's people, we support and advocate for the full sovereignty of these nations, and for all historic indigenous communities in the Americas; and we seek prayerfully to create and sustain pathways of healing between indigenous people and the descendants of white settlers for the sake of caring for the land we share with all other creatures of the same God.

Northwest

Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians
Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and
Chippewa Indians
Little River Band of Ottawa Indians

Northeast

West

Match-E-Be-Nash-She-Wish Band of
Potawatomi Indians (Gun Lake Tribe)

East Central

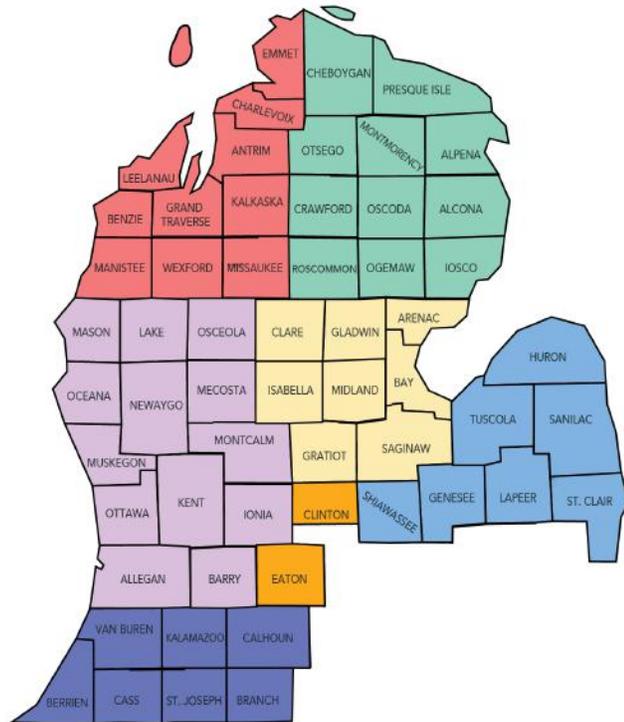
Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe

East

South Central

Southwest

Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians
Nottawaseppi Huron Band of Potawatomi Indians



A simplified reference map illustrating the ancestral and contemporary homelands of seven federally recognized Tribal Nations in relation to the geographic area now encompassed by the 58 counties of the Episcopal Diocese of the Great Lakes. This map is intended for contextual reference and does not represent Tribal boundaries or sovereignty. Adapted from the Michigan Economic Development Corporation.

As we continue on the path of *Becoming*, the stepping stones on which we stand are also relevant to our story. Knowing where we are now provides the context we need to continue to discern our next steps.

We are hungry for healthy leadership, clear communication, and a deep sense of a shared life.

Participants at one of the on-site listening sessions gather in the nave of St. Martin of Tours Kalamazoo for an introduction before breaking into small groups.



Over the course of the autumn of 2025, the Search Committee conducted sixteen listening sessions across the diocese, both in person as well as virtually; and it was with joy that we heard parishioners from every corner share their apprehensions, proclaim their dreams, and imagine what we are *Becoming*.

There is a consistent theme of our being in a **liminal time**, as newly formed through merger, and still integrating different cultures, systems, and identities. We are **learning what it means to be one diocese** while living across a wide geography and varied contexts. We are **honest about our wounds** and **hungry for healthy leadership, clear communication, and a deep sense of a shared life**.

Yet, having been without a bishop diocesan for some time, we realize that **we are resilient, creative, and adaptive**. Our strengths lie in the clergy, lay leaders, diocesan staff, and parishioners who have continued to show up for each other and our communities through instability, trauma, and prolonged transition. To paraphrase, “We went through a lot, but we held on to each other and kept being church.” **The successful formation of our new diocese itself is evidence of our courage and creativity.** Our faithfulness has carried us through crisis and change, but faithfulness alone is no longer sufficient without renewed leadership and systems.

In the listening sessions, participants were offered the opportunity to dream and to imagine what we are becoming. **People imagine a future marked by trust, reduced anxiety, and genuine affection across parishes, especially between small and large congregations.** There is an implicit hope that the diocese will no longer be known primarily for its past wounds but for a renewed common life.

Our most recent experiences with bishops diocesan and provisional, Bishop Wayne Hougland and Bishop Prince Singh, created significant harm and trauma for all concerned in our diocese. **We acknowledge that healing is a continuing journey.** What we heard in listening sessions is that most recognize that the journey to wholeness is not complete, but feel that we have traveled far. We are ready to put these experiences behind us, seeking a bishop diocesan who will continue to walk with us.

We dream of a diocese where *justice, creation care, & reconciliation* are woven into our vitality, not merely optional ministries or an afterthought.



Participants described a dream of a diocese that is publicly present, locally engaged, and unmistakably oriented toward God's mission beyond church walls; where justice, creation care, and reconciliation (including Indigenous relationships and racial healing) are woven into dreams of vitality, and are not merely optional ministries or an afterthought.



Another desire of many is stability, of wanting a bishop diocesan who will love us and stay with us for many years; and financial sustainability, clear systems of organization, and new models of communication. We appreciate stability, not as an end in itself, but as the condition that allows courage, creativity, and trust to grow, to take risks in responding to God's call to us.



From top to bottom:

Clergy and lay people from our diocese joined together with Michigan gun safety advocacy groups and clergy and lay people from our sister dioceses of Northern Michigan and Michigan for the [2025 End Gun Violence Michigan](#) legislative advocacy day. Participants met with leaders from the offices of state senators and representatives to advocate for common sense gun reforms and engaged in a press conference which included Governor Gretchen Whitmer.

Not even a cold January day could keep these clergypersons in our diocese from attending and participating in a [Trans Unity Rally](#) in Lansing in 2025.

Clergy and lay people from parishes from all corners of our diocese participated in listening sessions with the Bishop Search team. There were general sessions, lay-only sessions, clergy-only sessions, youth sessions, and young adult sessions.

Two new initiatives are examples of our continued movement toward these dreams, despite the challenge of having been without the leadership of a bishop diocesan:



Holy Ground for Whole Communities, with funding from The Lilly Endowment and in collaboration with Plainsong Farm and the nationwide nonprofit Partners for Sacred Places, exists to assist parishes in imagining how they can use their property to make a difference in their communities and engage new people in new relationships and partnerships. Funding will be used in 2026, 2027 and 2028 to help at least thirty churches in our diocese across three, year-long cohorts find new ways to use their land and buildings as sacred assets for the common good.

Through a Lilly Endowment regranting from the Iona Collaborative at Episcopal Seminary of the Southwest, **The Academy for Vocational Leadership** in 2026 will embark on a new initiative, **“Becoming a Catalyst for Spiritual Renewal, Empowerment and Transformation.”**

Through more than a decade of training and supporting students being formed for part-time, bi-vocational ministry in the church, we have seen the need of our ordained to rely on good, strong, well-grounded participation from the lay people alongside whom they serve. Put another way, helping everyone in the congregation live more deeply into their baptismal covenant by sharing their God-given gifts and skills both within and outside of the church is essential for congregations. This vital work will have a multi-streamed approach focused on strengthening congregations’ ability to empower and equip strong leadership grounded in baptismal ministry.



Students learn and are formed in community at The Academy for Vocational Leadership. The new re-granting from the Iona Collaborative will allow the lessons learned through forming new clergy at the Academy to inform a new intentional diocesan formation focus, including for equipping and empowering lay leaders.

NON PAROCHIAL MINISTRIES



Recognizing that Christian ministry transpires in all sorts of locations and beyond the walls of traditional church buildings, we have structured our new diocese in ways that honor "non-parochial" ministries while also acknowledging the innovations that happen within congregations. These are distinctive models for living out the promises of our baptismal covenant. Among the many possible examples, two in particular illustrate the growing reach of our Gospel witness into the wider community; they also inspire and help to equip the rest of the diocese for our ongoing service.



The first is **Plainsong Farm** in Rockford, a living laboratory for farm-based environmental education and Christian discipleship. It is a Cooperating Ministry of the diocese, and its mission is to cultivate connections between people, places, and God. It's a place that nurtures belonging and the radical renewal of God's world. Volunteers and staff grow local, healthy food for their neighbors and those who can't afford to buy it; and they learn how our food connects us all to the earth and one another.



The second is the **AuSable Inclusion Center**, a thriving, Emerging Community of Faith and community resource center in Mio. The Center provides education, advocacy, and support to people who are marginalized, based on gender identity and sexuality (especially LGBTQ-identified people), and/or socio-economic status through social, emotional, material, and spiritual help. The Center provides online and in-person support groups, education modules, community events, shared meals, arts programs, and a hygiene closet offering personal care and household cleaning products.



In every season, Plainsong staff, volunteers, Episcopal Service Corps fellows, friends, and neighbors gather to cultivate connections between each other, the land and watershed, and God.



The AuSable Inclusion Center is an Emerging Community of Faith in our diocese that exists for and ministers to and in a rural northern area. It has a special emphasis on providing for the needs of people who are marginalized.



The 2026 budget of the Episcopal Diocese of the Great Lakes reflects a maturing diocesan structure, a commitment to equitable stewardship, and a shared vision for sustaining ministry across a newly unified diocese. Endowment practices have been standardized across legacy dioceses. Both Legacy Eastern and Legacy Western endowments will draw 5% from a rolling twelve-quarter average, with endowment draw decisions now based in the framework of a “prudent draw” approach under the guidance of the Episcopal Church Foundation. Revenue incorporates a progressive apportionment model designed to distribute financial responsibility according to congregational capacity, lowering the burden on our smaller congregations by ensuring those congregations with more resources contribute slightly more. To support the transition to a progressive system—one that is new to Legacy EDEM congregations—the apportionment-reduction reserve has been doubled from the amount allotted for last year, allowing for pastoral flexibility as congregations adapt. Total projected revenue is \$3,237,644, a 9.38% increase over the prior year.

On the expense side, the budget totals \$3,306,258, a 1.31% decrease from the prior year. Staffing lines reflect the new, unified diocesan staff structure and include a 3% cost-of-living adjustment based on the Midwest CPI-U. Several long-standing but outdated commitments—such as the 1% Millennium Development Goals fund—have been responsibly concluded. Other areas, such as Province V assessment and diocesan convention costs, have been recalibrated based on updated needs and reserves. Strategic decisions were made in ministry funding. Diocesan Council had not yet approved new designations for companion ministries, so we sought to keep most funding for these partner entities close to the prior year. New agreements for companion ministries will specify funding commitments as well. Social Service Networking Grants, the largest non-endowment-backed grant pool, increase by 25%, balancing diocesan growth with financial prudence. The diocese also added a new line to reimburse volunteer mileage at the IRS rate, strengthening support for lay leaders across a geographically broad region. Children, Youth, Young Adult, and Campus Ministry requests approached \$90,000, but the absence of a diocesan campus ministry strategy made equitable allocation impossible. Applicants will instead be directed to existing grant mechanisms unless or until a unified diocesan strategy emerges. Congregational Development continues to be a major investment: \$66,217 in endowment income supports ongoing programs, including the College for Congregational Development. Remaining funds—\$47,563—are available for Congregational Development Grants. Digital Community Grants and unused networking events budgets were eliminated to streamline resources.

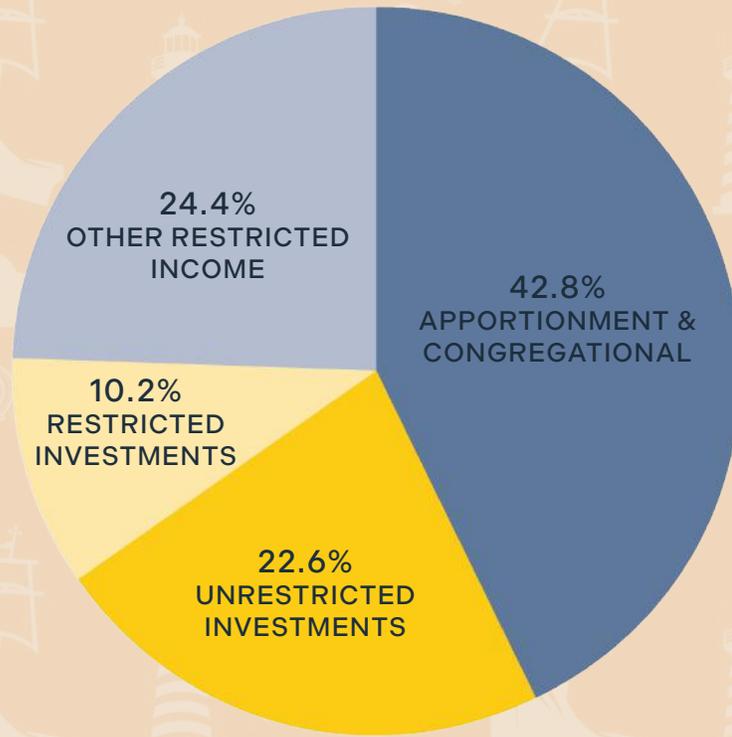
The resulting deficit of \$68,615—roughly 6% of net assets and an 82% reduction from the prior year’s \$390,000 gap—is a deliberate, manageable investment in diocesan health during a transitional period. Overall, the 2026 budget demonstrates careful stewardship, transparency, and a strategic vision for shared mission. It embodies a diocese that is stabilizing financially, investing in equitable systems, and positioning itself for strong, collaborative leadership with its first bishop.

The Rev. Dr. Jared C. Cramer

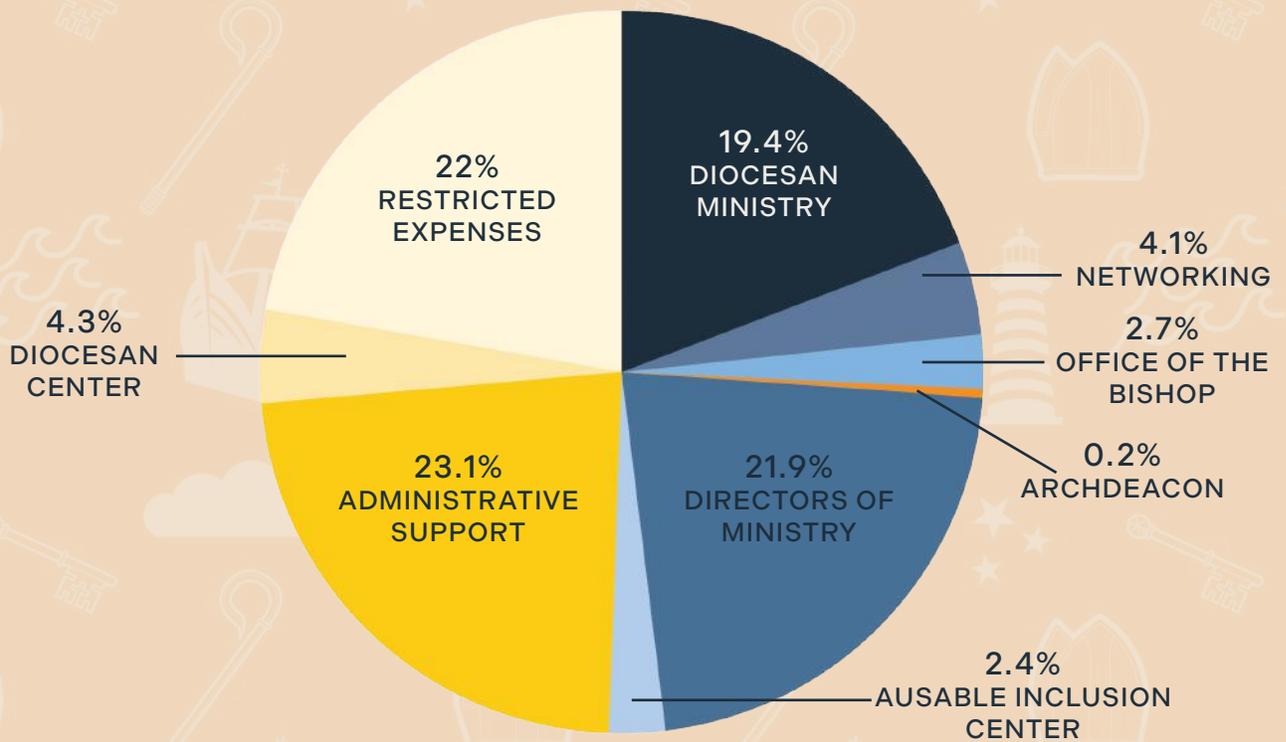
Rector, St. John's Grand Haven

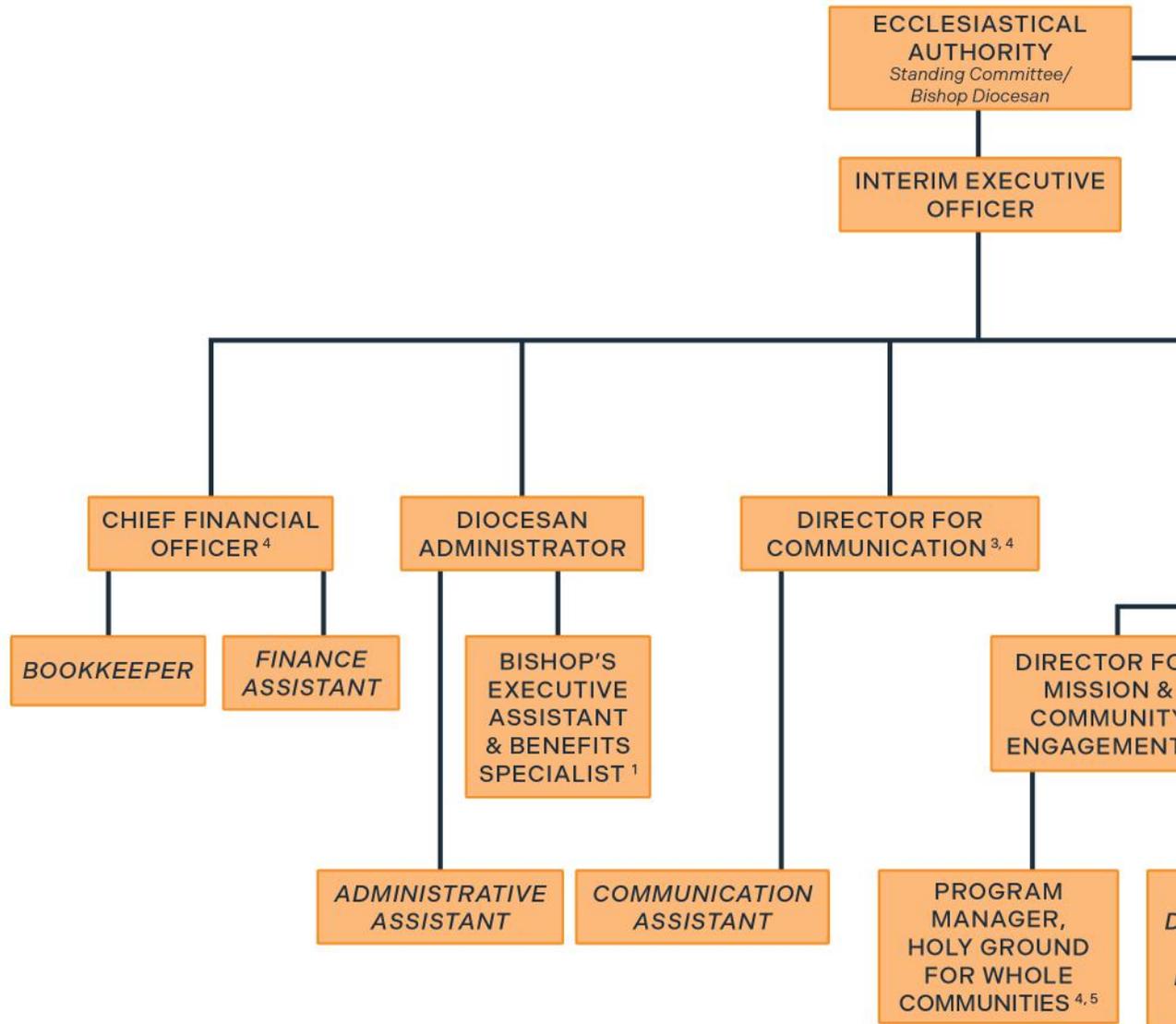
Treasurer, Episcopal Diocese of the Great Lakes

BUDGETED INCOME (2026)



BUDGETED EXPENSES (2026)





¹Bishop's Executive Assistant could report directly to Bishop Diocesan and Diocesan Administrator when

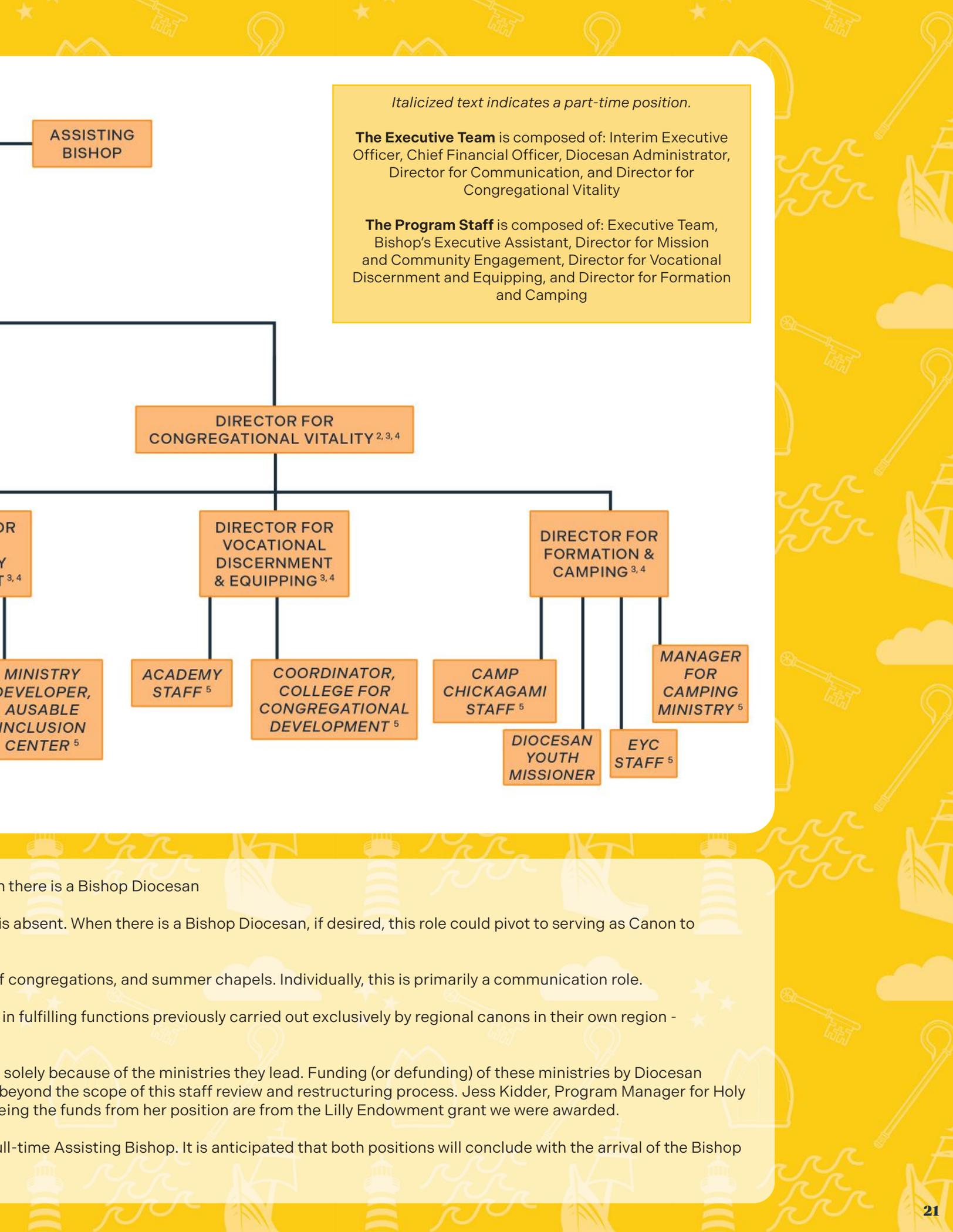
²Director for Congregational Vitality functions as first among equals when the Interim Executive Officer is the Ordinary without other changes to the overall structure.

³In addition to portfolio responsibilities, these staff members would serve as liaison to a specific group of

⁴Congregational Support Team led by Director for Congregational Vitality. Collectively this group shares supporting and strengthening our congregations and summer chapels.

⁵These positions, while funded by the diocesan budget and supervised by diocesan staff members, exist because the Council is the determining factor in their continued role in the diocese. Therefore, they were considered Holy Ground for Whole Communities, is in a similar relationship to diocesan staff overall with the difference being

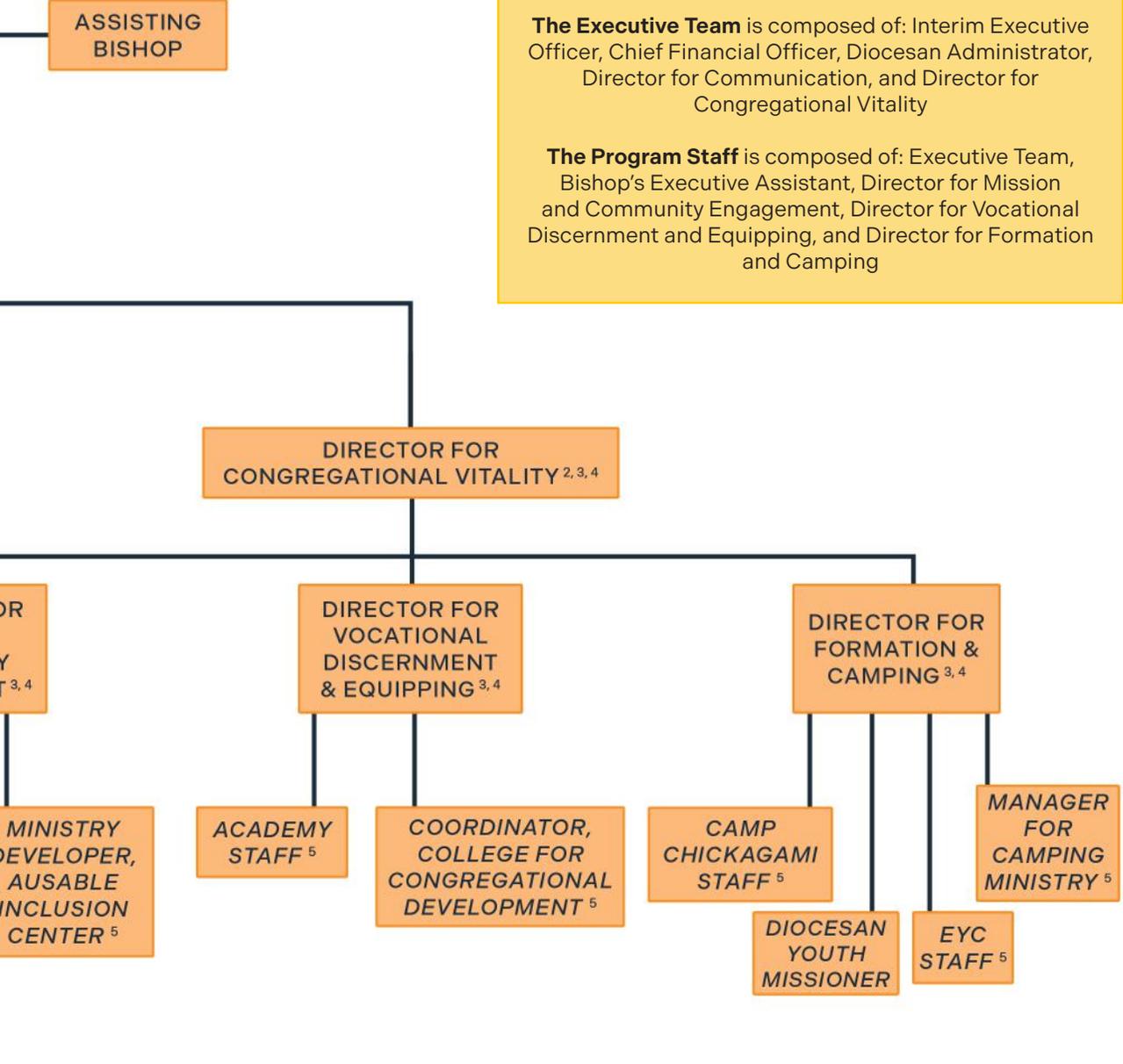
⁶Part-time Assisting Bishop and Interim Executive Officer positions are created and funded in lieu of a full-time Diocesan-elect, or following a short period of overlap and transition.



Italicized text indicates a part-time position.

The Executive Team is composed of: Interim Executive Officer, Chief Financial Officer, Diocesan Administrator, Director for Communication, and Director for Congregational Vitality

The Program Staff is composed of: Executive Team, Bishop’s Executive Assistant, Director for Mission and Community Engagement, Director for Vocational Discernment and Equipping, and Director for Formation and Camping



When there is a Bishop Diocesan is absent. When there is a Bishop Diocesan, if desired, this role could pivot to serving as Canon to

of congregations, and summer chapels. Individually, this is primarily a communication role.

in fulfilling functions previously carried out exclusively by regional canons in their own region -

solely because of the ministries they lead. Funding (or defunding) of these ministries by Diocesan beyond the scope of this staff review and restructuring process. Jess Kidder, Program Manager for Holy being the funds from her position are from the Lilly Endowment grant we were awarded.

full-time Assisting Bishop. It is anticipated that both positions will conclude with the arrival of the Bishop

to guide & accompany

THE BISHOP WE SEEK



It could very well be that God is stirring in the hearts of those who have never imagined serving as a bishop, who could not have foreseen being so called, and yet who already live and serve in a way that would catalyze the Spirit's presence among us for the road ahead — someone who not only maintains the church but builds it; who not only preaches social and economic justice but lives it; who knows our Prayer Book intimately and is equally fluent in liturgical language and idioms.

Having learned to trust in the faithfulness of God in our respective histories as separate dioceses — and particularly in the multi-year process we undertook to become a brand new diocese — we are now stepping out in some new ways of being in God and living with each other, not only for the sake of building the Diocese of the Great Lakes, but for the sake of sharing the creative, saving, and healing power of God with the wider world. And as this path offers no pre-set milestones, we yearn for a leader who can walk with us both bravely and humbly and who is willing to experiment and create, to start over and try again, and to tap into our traditions and innovate fresh approaches.

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This person will not only encourage and nurture individual spiritual practices, but model and teach them.

They will show us how and why spirituality truly matters for the common good – and for the good of the church and of the world. Their joy and warmth will be the evidence of a life rooted in prayer; and their spiritual grounding, rooted in deep discipleship and humility, will enable them to **live out publicly what is practiced inwardly.**

We believe that leadership failures of the past were failures of character and self-awareness, not just judgment or skill and that who our bishop is will matter at least as much as what our bishop can do. Given that, **ethics, accountability and transparency in leadership, as well as personal behavior, will be paramount in our new bishop so that trust can be rebuilt.** Living and leading with integrity and honesty, honoring appropriate boundaries and setting clear processes are non-negotiable. Administrative and strategic competence is assumed, but **character is a decisive factor in this process.**

The bishop we seek will be someone who has not only spent time developing their own spirituality, but someone who has also worked through their own personal issues and has become **emotionally mature and effectively self-differentiated.** This does not mean that their journey towards wholeness is over, but it means that they will know “who owns what.” And it means that they are rounded and will be **able to regulate their own emotional landscape** when others in their orbit are unable to regulate their own.

We seek a person who understands organizational systems, strategy, and adaptive change models, especially in a diocese such as ours that has and continues to navigate merger, demographic shifts, and new ministry models. Desired skills include visioning, long-range thinking, and the **ability to help the diocese to continue to adapt as the world continues to change.**

We have begun, in other words, to imagine new models of what it means to be “church” in a world that is both wounded and hungry; which is alive with the Spirit and also still trapped in cycles of despair and violence. We live with gratitude for the work God has already inspired and equipped us to do in such a world, and we are eager for a pastor and shepherd, a leader and visionary, who can accompany us along into the next phase of this journey.

As we embark on this journey, we consider the kinds of periodic shifts which are described in Phyllis Tickle’s book *The Great Emergence*. She suggests that every 500 years or so, the church and society hold a kind of rummage sale, and discard those attitudes or beliefs which no longer serve the common good, or which are in opposition to the Gospel and no longer bring us closer to each other and to God.

We are determined to bring along with us those traditions and ineffable qualities which withstand the tests of time and which aid us on The Way. As we reflect on a changed and changing cultural landscape, we seek a bishop who will be able to assist us in living into what Presiding Bishop Sean Rowe intended when he wrote these words:

“Once the church of Presidents, The Episcopal Church must now be an engine of resistance. The reckoning, if we are honest, is long overdue.”

As Bishop Rowe so clearly suggests, it is now time for The Episcopal Church to bear a transformative witness to the Gospel in a counter-cultural fashion. As our listening sessions indicated, we are eager for a bishop diocesan who can call us to this shared work, this outward focus with a spiritual clarity. The wider world is clearly hungry for a vision of “church” that is not only rooted in prayer, but also — and because of such prayer — is committed to justice-making, inclusion, and effective care of God’s creation in every respect.

The “engine of resistance” we imagine Bishop Rowe urging us to fuel would lead us more deeply into the work we heard many in the listening sessions embracing: the work of LGBTQIA+ inclusion, new and authentic forms of racial healing that include our indigenous neighbors, and ministries that reflect the urgent need for ecological renewal in an era of climate chaos.

Our first bishop diocesan will be someone who has already exhibited a heart brimming with missional energy and a heart broken by the world’s suffering, but who is devoted to holding the church together with tenderness. This person will likewise hold the church accountable for its divine calling. In a world of pain, we do not expect or seek to be happy people; but we do trust the Spirit will grant us the gift of joy for the world’s healing and for our own flourishing. We understand this path as the one blazed by Jesus in the Spirit’s power to transform people into disciples and reshape the world as a genuine sanctuary for the poor and marginalized, and the heavy-laden and weary.

We stand confident in the church's solidarity with all those whom the wider world has forgotten or ignored, and which unites us with a Great Cloud of Witnesses who have journeyed along similar paths before us, and who now encourage us as we follow the road ahead (Heb. 12:1).

The church, like aging eyes, struggles to focus on both the past and future, losing its ability to hold two perspectives in tension. This struggle reflects a competition between Enlightenment and postmodern worldviews, which seem irreconcilable. However, a Godly worldview is exemplified by integrity and the ability to see both lack and possibility, allowing for a deeper understanding of reality and the potential for blessing and transformation.

In the ongoing process of becoming the Diocese of the Great Lakes, we have found fresh vision and new life for the ministries to which God has called us; not because the path has been easy or trouble-free, but precisely because the challenges have brought us closer together in genuinely authentic ways of "being church." The one to shepherd this shared sense of ministry as our bishop will take delight in nurturing that new life, and show us how to trust ever more deeply that the Great Shepherd of the sheep has come so that all might have life, and have it in abundance (John 10:10).

We seek a person who listens deeply, who shows up consistently, and who wants to know the people of this diocese, especially those who feel peripheral or unseen across this geographically wide region. We look for someone who is a pastor and companion first, not as a fixer; who will exercise authority transparently and collaboratively, and is also willing and able to live into a leadership role that is decisive when needed, but never unilateral; accountable without being punitive; strong without being dominating. We want a new model for our diocese that is not top-down, but is led by a bishop who knows how to empower others, trusting in the God given gifts of lay and clergy leaders within their own staff and beyond.

This pastoral and relational presence will be necessary for the work of building trust as we seek a bishop who will inspire courage for our world-changing witness to the Gospel.

invitation to discernment

APPLICATION & NOMINATION PROCESSES

We invite priests and bishops of the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion to discern with us, through prayer aided by the wisdom of the Holy Spirit, whether this is your call. And we invite others to prayerfully consider nominating someone known to you who might be the person God is calling to be the first bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of the Great Lakes.

As an applicant will be asked to submit responses to three essay questions and should have the following documents and information ready when submitting the application form:

- current résumé,
- call letter (written statement outlining what calls the applicant to apply for this position along with their strengths and growing edges),
- current Office for Transition Ministry (OTM) profile,
- the names, email addresses, and phone numbers for three references (ecclesiastical authority, colleague in ministry, and lay person), and
- links to two of the applicant's sermons.



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If you are nominating someone else for this call, you will need to:

- ensure the person you are nominating accepts your nomination before you submit it,
- forward the link to the application form to the nominee for their completion, and
- complete the nomination form.



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- Completed applications must be submitted by 11:59 p.m. on Wednesday, March 18, 2026.
- The Search Committee is for all applicants and nominees. Applicants and nominees will be notified of their status by April 14, 2026.
- Interviews with the search committee will begin in April 2026, along with reference and background checks. A retreat for the shortlist of candidates, after which the "slate" will be discerned, will be held in July 2026.

timeline

OF THE BISHOP SEARCH PROCESS

2025

June 3 - July 7

Nomination Period for Search and Transition Committees

August 18

Standing Committee announces members of Search and Transition Committees

September 5 - 6

Leadership Development and Retreat for Standing, Search, and Transition Committees

October 24 - 25

II Diocesan Convention

October - December

Search Committee conducts listening sessions across diocese

2026

February 18

Diocesan profile published and four-week application window opens

March 18

Application period ends

March - June

Search Committee in discernment and conducting ministry and background checks on semi-finalists; Transition Committee starts planning events later in the process

July

Discernment retreat with semi-finalists

July

Search Committee submits slate to Standing Committee for approval
Standing Committee announces slate followed by a two-week petition period, after which Standing Committee announces final slate

August - September

Meet and Greets around the diocese with candidates on the final slate

October 23 - 24

Electing Convention at III Diocesan Convention; election is followed by a 120-day consent period

2027

January

Bishop-elect begins work in the Episcopal Diocese of the Great Lakes

April 10 - 11

Bishop Consecration Weekend and Diocesan Convention

search, transition, and standing

SEARCH COMMITTEE

The Rev. Jennifer Frechette, Co-Chair
Deacon, Church of the Mediator Harbert

The Rev. Michael Spencer, Co-Chair
Priest, St. Thomas Battle Creek

The Rev. Mike Wernick, Chaplain
Priest, St. Andrew's Grand Rapids

Mr. Don DeWalt
Lay Person, St. Paul's Elk Rapids

The Ven. Beth Drew
Deacon, Trinity Three Rivers

Dr. Nancy Foster
Lay Person, St. Mary's Cadillac

The Rev. Micheal Hueschen
Deacon, St. Luke's Kalamazoo

The Rev. Dr. Jay Johnson
Priest, All Saints' Saugatuck

Dr. Elizabeth Jordan
Lay Person, St. Paul's Flint

Ms. Betsy Lawrence
Lay Person, Emmanuel Petoskey

The Rev. Matt Roney
Priest, Trinity Alpena

TRANSITION COMMITTEE

Ms. Catherine Cameron-Heldt, Co-Chair
Lay Person, Grace Grand Rapids

The Rev. Beckett LeClaire, Co-Chair
Deacon, AuSable Inclusion Center

The Rev. John Wakefield, Chaplain
Priest, Epiphany South Haven

Ms. Becky Bennett
Lay Person, St. Paul's Flint

Ms. Bethany Cramer
Lay Person, St. John's Grand Haven

The Rev. Linda Crane
Deacon, Grace Port Huron

Mr. David Hawley-Lowry
Lay Person, Grace Holland

Ms. Barbara Ilkka
Lay Person, St. John's Saginaw

Ms. Sonia Jacobson
Lay Person, Grace Traverse City

Ms. Laura Rozeboom
Lay Person, Grace Holland

ABOUT THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF THE GREAT LAKES

The Episcopal Diocese of the Great Lakes is a young diocese with deep roots. Formed in 2024 through the union of the former dioceses of Eastern and Western Michigan, we are a community of Episcopal congregations stretching across 58 counties in Michigan's lower peninsula, from state border to bridge and sunrise shore to sunset shore. We are formed from two dioceses with distinct histories and charisms and a shared commitment to following Jesus in this place. We carry forward more than 150 years of Episcopal presence in Michigan, embracing the possibilities of becoming, grounded in the woods and the waters from which we take our name.

committees

STANDING COMMITTEE

The Very Rev. Dr. Derek J. Quinn, Co-President
Priest, St. Paul's Elk Rapids

Ms. Ellen Schrader, Co-President
Lay Person, Grace Traverse City

The Rev. Pam Lenartowicz, Secretary
Priest, St. Andrew's Gaylord & St. Mark's Atlanta

The Rev. David Blank
Priest, St. James Pentwater

The Rev. Jedediah Fox
Priest, St. Mark's Grand Rapids

Ms. TaMara Oertel
Lay Person, St. Paul's Flint

Ms. Dana Philips
Lay Person, St. Paul the Apostle Greenville

Mr. Luke Stefanovsky
Lay Person, Trinity West Branch

The Rev. Sr. Diane Stier
Priest, St. John's Mt Pleasant



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