

PRAIRIE SPIRIT



Spring 2026

FROM THE BISHOP



Earlier this year, the Most Reverend Sarah Mullally became the 106th Archbishop of Canterbury. But before she was installed in her chair at Canterbury Cathedral (or before she was enthroned in her *Cathedral* if you are fancy), Archbishop Mullally went on a pilgrimage. She recreated the pilgrim's journey from London to Canterbury. This is the medieval pilgrim journey made famous in *The Canterbury Tales* by Geoffrey Chaucer.

A group of 24 of us from around the diocese, together with some friends and neighbors, witnessed Archbishop Mullally leave St. Paul's Cathedral in London as she embarked on this journey. You see, we were also recreating the pilgrim's journey to Canterbury, (more or less) at the same time as the spiritual leader of the Anglican faith. What a wonderful coincidence!

As it turned out, we took a coach to Canterbury and beat her there. Before you think we are wimpy for not walking, please keep in mind that we had limited time in England whereas the Archbishop lives there. Besides, this is 2026, and as Archbishop, she is an important figure in the church and in the government. As such, her people had to retrieve her almost daily from her journey and drive her back to London for business or for a vote in the Houses of Parliament.

But journey to Canterbury we did! This diocese has been recreating this pilgrimage to Canterbury for over 20 years, usually taking youth across the pond. This time we took adults. There were youngsters and oldsters and some inbetweensters. We spent 9 days in England. We saw palaces and pubs, museums and musicals, castles and cathedrals.

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Diocese of Western
Kansas



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We ate strange British cuisine at open markets and Mother Mash. We drank local ales and even had our faces painted on St. Patrick's Day. We also had some excellent guides, and we learned a thing or two.

I have been lucky enough in my life that I have visited Canterbury many times. I enjoy spending time at the Cathedral and in the medieval town surrounding it. I have visited a pub there called The Bishop's Finger, but I never knew the origin or meaning of the name. That is, until I learned a thing or two on this trip.

Canterbury Cathedral was the most popular medieval pilgrimage destination in England. But the number of pilgrims increased dramatically because of St. Thomas whose shrine was in Canterbury Cathedral and whose benison the pilgrims sought.

Thomas Becket was made Archbishop of Canterbury in 1162AD. He served in that capacity until his death in 1170AD. Archbishop Becket died when 4 knights murdered him in the Cathedral because they thought King Henry II wanted him dead. (The king said he didn't but he may have.) After the murder, Becket was discovered to be wearing a hairshirt under his archbishop's vestments as a sign of penance, and people began venerating him as a Christian martyr almost immediately.

Becket was buried under the floor in the crypt of the Cathedral. Many people came to pray at his graveside, and to request that Thomas intervene with our Lord on their behalf. Miracles began to happen. Becket was canonized as St. Thomas of Canterbury in 1172AD.

St. Thomas was so popular that in 1220AD the chapel in the Cathedral was enlarged and a shrine built for St. Thomas was installed behind the high altar. This ceremony in which St. Thomas was relocated (called the *translation* of the body) from the crypt to the more prominent shrine upstairs was the place to be and many dignitaries and celebrities attended. The King of England was there. The King of France too. Bishops, cardinals, priests, monks, and abbots and well as many nobles and officials. The then archbishop, Stephen Langton, was so pleased to have so many important people in his cathedral that just before St. Thomas was placed in his new shrine, Archbishop Langton broke off St. Thomas' left arm at the wrist and distributed to the church officials and dignitaries pieces of St. Thomas to take home with them. (Have you ever considered how people got relics of a saint?)

After that, St. Thomas rested in the shrine peacefully for 300 years despite the large and constant requests for intercession. But in 1538AD, King Henry the VIII ordered the dissolution of the monasteries and the destruction of St. Thomas' shrine. Henry also ordered that St. Thomas' bones be destroyed. Sadly, the bones were broken up and cast into the river. And that was the end of St. Thomas in Canterbury.

Or was it?

Remember the bits and bones and parts distributed at the translation ceremony in 1220AD?

Well in 1875AD, a new Roman Catholic church was built in Canterbury just outside the precincts of the Cathedral. This new church was dedicated to St. Thomas of Canterbury. The Roman Catholic church had been gone from England for a long time. But by the mid 1800's, most people were willing to let bygones be bygones and Catholic churches were built in England again. When the St. Thomas of Canterbury church was built, a group of French monks came across the English Channel for the dedication. These monks brought with them a finger bone and a piece of burial cloth that had been in their keeping since that translation ceremony in 1220AD. They brought St. Thomas' finger back to Canterbury! It is now displayed in St. Thomas of Canterbury Roman Catholic church and the faithful can go see both it and the bit of burial cloth relics.

And we did! On our last day in Canterbury, after viewing the bishop's finger come home and saying a quick prayer, we dined at The Bishop's Finger pub finally understanding its name.

The next youth pilgrimage is during Spring Break, 2028. If you see some youth around the diocese, ask them if they are going. See if you can be a sponsor. Perhaps they, too, will learn something new.

On March 28, the Chrism Mass was held at Christ Cathedral. Chrism Mass is a special liturgy during Lent in which the Bishop blesses the sacred oils used in sacraments throughout the diocese and priests renew their commitment to ministry. Mother Christine Seaton from the Cathedral was the preacher. There were also two members confirmed into the Episcopal Church, David Miller and Faith Wolf. Congratulations to them and welcome to the Episcopal Church!



You can see all the pictures on our Flickr Page at: [Crism Mass 2026 | Flickr](#)

Prayer for Our Country

Almighty God,

Giver of all good gifts, we thank You for this land, rich in beauty, history, and promise. Bless our nation with wisdom, compassion, and justice.

Guide those who govern, that they may serve with integrity, seeking not their own gain, but the welfare of all people.

Grant us courage to face our divisions with honesty, and grace to listen to one another with humility.

Strengthen the bonds of peace among us, that we may honor the dignity of every human being.

Protect those who labor for the common good— teachers, healers, farmers, builders, and all who serve.

Defend the vulnerable, lift up the oppressed, and inspire in us a spirit of generosity and mercy. In times of trial, make us steadfast; in times of blessing, make us grateful; and in all times, keep us faithful to Your call to love our neighbor as ourselves.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.



Youth Lock-in

The Youth around the diocese gathered at Christ Cathedral for a lock-in on April 11- 12. ***Light in the Darkness - We are Lit by God's Love*** was the theme. They enjoyed games, arts & crafts, and did a special service project (assembled food bags). They experienced Bible study and reflection time, toured the Cathedral and on Sunday participated in Youth Sunday serving in the roles of readers, intercessors, ushers, acolyte, chalice bearer, and choir members. You can see all the photos on our FLICKR Page at: [Youth Lockin | Flickr](#)



Bishop Kemper School for Ministry Seeks Director of Communications and Engagement

Bishop Kemper School for Ministry seeks a part-time Director of Communications and Engagement to begin July 1. Hours vary by week, average 10-16 hours per week; salary is commensurate with experience.

The Director of Communications and Engagement is responsible for developing and implementing the communications and fundraising activities as directed by the dean and the Board of Directors. These activities include, but are not limited to, executing fundraising appeals, updating the BKSM website and social media accounts, distributing special notices from the dean, publishing a quarterly e-newsletter, creating print materials that promote BKSM programs, and distributing press releases.

To apply, send a cover letter and resume to Dr. Lynne Moss Bahr, Dean, at lynne.bahr@bishopkemperschool.org. Learn more about Bishop Kemper School at bishopkemperschool.org.



Canon Wanderings

Canon Theologian of the Diocese, The Rt. Rev Ashley Null, as the Anglican Bishop of North Africa, was present at the King's Advent Service of Witness for the Persecuted Church, held at Westminster Abbey on Dec. 10, and was then presented to His Majesty afterwards.



Pictures are used with kind permission of the Dean & Chapter of Westminster

In addition, on Dec. 27, he officiated at the wedding of Adam Peaty, a famous Olympic Breaststroke Gold Medalist and World Record Holder and his bride, Holly Ramsay, the daughter of Gordon Ramsay, at Bath Abbey in western England. The wedding made the pages of British Vogue. You can read the article in Vogue here: [Holly Ramsay Wore Elie Saab – And Her Mum Tana's '90s Wedding Dress – On Her Big Day In Bath | British Vogue](#)



Diocesan Office Summer Hours



The Diocesan office hours from May 26—September 30, 2026 will be from

9:00 a.m.—3:00 p.m. Monday through Thursday and closed on Friday.

Episcopal Church Women's Retreat



Talitha Koum - Little Girl, I say to you, get up! was the theme of women's retreat on May 2nd. The retreat was held at the Heartland Center for Spirituality, in Great Bend. The Rev. Dr. Christine Kass was our keynote speaker. Rev. Kass is the pastor of First Presbyterian Church of Hutchinson. "Talitha Koum" was a detailed look at Jesus' relationship with women in the gospels. Despite women being told by the patriarchal church for centuries that they are to remain quiet in church, to not speak, to not even ask questions (until they get home at which point they can ask their husbands whatever questions they have), Jesus does not treat women with such censorship. In fact, a closer look at the gospels shows that Jesus actually empowers women to not only find their own voice but to share his gospel. It was a fabulous presentation!



[You can see all the photos on our FLICKR Page](#)

PNK – Lay Ministry Training Program – Commissioned Lay Pastor Path— Pastoral Care

WHO SHOULD SIGN UP?

Spots are SAVED for **anyone enrolled in the CLP program AND anyone that has completed the APS program** and is interested in continuing their education.

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN ENROLLING in the CLP program? – contact office@pnks.org TODAY and we'll be in touch with you right away and save a spot for you.

Session Members, Deacons, other leaders in the congregation: you are welcome to register! This will be an excellent course for lay leaders providing visitation in your own congregation.

Note: all participants are required to fully participate and complete all assignments.

SESSION TIMES & DATES & FORMAT & LOCATION

Beginning session in person – Saturday, June 27th

Salina – First Presbyterian Church, 308 S. 8th

10:00 – 2:00, lunch provided

Subsequent sessions on July 6, 13, 20, 27 and August 3

Monday evenings – 6:00 – 9:00 via Zoom (video conference)

Note: you will be required to join via either a computer or notebook - using both video and audio (smart phones will not work well for this as you will need to be able to see participants and notes, etc. on your screen at the same time)

COST

\$300 (Scholar Ships Available)

REGISTER ONLINE

<https://www.cognitofrms.com/PresbyteryOfNorthernKansas/PastoralCareCourse>

REQUIREMENTS AND REQUIRED TEXTS:

Students will need to have access to congregants/people for whom she/he/they can provide pastoral care

Listening and Caring Skills, John Savage – Abingdon Press 2010

Pastoral Care in the Small Membership Church, James L. Killen, Jr. – Abingdon Press 2005

Recalling Our Own Stories, Edward P. Wimberly – Fortress Press 2019

Students should secure copies of the texts now.

PRE-ASSIGNMENT: Read Listening and Caring Skills and Pastoral Care in the Small Membership Church before our first session.

For additional information regarding this course, contact:

Rev. Marc Giedinghagen – (785) 640-8637; marcusg55@yahoo.com

Or Rev. Tim Maguffee – (785) 493-5032; timmaguffee@gmail.com



The Episcopal Diocese of Western Kansas

156th Annual Diocesan Convention

October 16-17, 2026

Dodge City, Kansas

WHO DO YOU SAY THAT I AM?

Matthew 16:15



In a world filled with noise, distraction, and uncertainty, the question still echoes across centuries: “Who do you say that I am?” It is not simply a question asked of the disciples long ago. It is a question asked of each of us today.

The Diocese will gather in mission and fellowship, and this question becomes more than personal reflection; it becomes our shared calling. If Jesus is truly Lord of our lives, then our communities should reflect His compassion, mercy, justice, and hope. We are called to be His presence in Western Kansas and beyond — welcoming the lonely, feeding the hungry, healing divisions, and proclaiming the good news with courage.

“Who do you say that I am?” may be the most important question we will ever answer. Not because Jesus needs our response, but because our answer shapes who we become.

CONVENTION OPPORTUNITIES

Once again we will have the Convention Choir for the Opening Eucharist on Friday, the 17th. Bring your voices and join. Sign-up information will be coming soon!

The Bishop’s Cup will be on Thursday, October 15, at 1:00 p.m. Be watching for the information and registration.

We can always use some help with our ECW basket auction. Selling tickets and manning the table.



Congratulations to Josiah Smiddy for being awarded Teacher of the Year at Eisenhower Middle School in Liberal! Josiah is a postulant in our Diocese and is a member of St. Andrew's Episcopal Church in Liberal. Job well done!



Congratulations to St. John's Episcopal Church - Great Bend, Kansas, for receiving a \$1K Sharing Success Grant from Wheatland Electric for their Feeding the Children Program. They have also recently been awarded a second Grant, the Golden Belt Community Grant, in the amount of \$3,591.00.



On May 14, St. Thomas' Celtic Ascension Day service brought together two vibrant congregations, St. Thomas Episcopal Church - Garden City and First United Methodist Church, Garden City, Kansas, along with the musicianship of Dodge City High School's Chamber Violins. The Rev. Jim Akins, pastor of FUMC, preached. He was baptized at St. Thomas 74 years ago. Pictured are the Rev. Canon Cameron Randle and The Rev. Jim Akins



Pictured are the Rev. Canon Cameron Randle. and The Rev. Jim Akins





On April 19, Elmer Robert Miller was welcomed into the faith through baptism by Fr. Jeff Mitchell of St. Andrew's in Liberal. Elmer's parents are Zac and Ashley Miller.



DIOCESAN CALENDAR

- June 6: Trustees/COM Meeting, Larned
- June 7: Bishop Visitation to Trinity, Norton
- June 21: Father's Day
- July 2-6: Youth Trip to New Jersey
- July 4: Independence Day
- July 12: Bishop Visitation to St. Mark's, Lyons
- July 29-Aug 18: Bp. On Vacation
- Aug. 21-23: Youth Convention, Camp WAJATO, Lyons
- Aug. 29: Clergy Education, Grace Church, Hutchinson
- Sept. 5: Trustees Meeting via Zoom
- Sept. 6: Bishop Visitation to St. Mark's, Medicine Lodge
- Sept. 23-28: House of Bishops
- Oct. 4: Bishop Visitation St. Andrew's, Liberal
- Oct. 15: Bishop's Cup, Dodge City
- Oct. 16-17: Diocesan Convention, Dodge City



Photo Credit: Dn. Shane Schneider

On Pentecost, Sunday, May 24, Bishop Milliken was at Grace Church, in Hutchinson to confirm and receive new members. Confirmed were Bill Anshutz, Chris Behrens, Ellie Cruz, Ryan Dancosse, Debbie Gibson, Riley McRae, Tina Morris, and Ryleigh Spears. Those who were received were Kris Anshutz & Jay Morris. Congratulations to all! Also pictured is The Rev. Ted Blakley and The Rt. Rev. Michael Milliken. After the service they shared in fellowship at their picnic.

SAVE THE DATE

grace
UPON
grace
Seeking
Unity in Difficult
Conversations

Province 7 Fall Gathering
With Dr. Diane Millis
September 25-26, 2026

St. James Episcopal Church, Alexandria LA

Clergy Continuing Education: Pastoral Care/ Mental Health

August 29, 2026

Mental health is an essential aspect of overall well-being, impacting individuals, families, and communities. Clergy play a vital role in supporting the spiritual and emotional needs of their congregations, but they may also face unique mental health challenges themselves. Educating clergy about mental health—both for their personal care and the care of their congregants—can foster healthier, more resilient faith communities.

Workshop Facilitator

The Rev. Kris Paul | Missioner for Wellness and Mental Health in the Diocese of Western Louisiana

On May 2, Grace Episcopal Church had their 2nd Annual Kentucky Derby Fundraiser, Derby Delight. All funds benefitted their Garden Fund, which maintains their beautiful Gardens. They had Southern Cuisine, Mint Juleps, a silent auction, a photo booth and the 152nd Kentucky Derby Race, live. It was a thriller! Golden Tempo came from the last position to edge out the favorite, Renegade. Golden Tempo's odds were 30-1 to win. A little over \$2,000.00 was raised for their gardens.



[You can see all the photos on our FLICKR Page](#)





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