

*Episcopal Diocese of*  
Eastern Oregon

Diocesan Council  
Minutes  
November 17-19, 2023  
Ascension School, Cove

**Present:**

The Rt. Rev. Patrick Bell, Bishop

**Class of 2024**

The Rev. Aletha Bonebrake (SC)

Betty Palmer

The Rev. Ray Jeff Spreier

Angela Pursel

**Class of 2025**

The Rev. Kelly Mahon (SC)

David Kosar

Cory Bradshaw

Ellen Nesbitt (SC)

**Class of 2026**

Barbara Reynolds (SC)

Beth Spell

Holly Hendricks

The Rev. Roy Green

**Ex Officio**

Patty Olson-Lindsey, Treasurer

The Rev. Charlotte Wells, Secretary of Convention

**Seat and Voice**

Amy Jayne, Ascension Executive Director

Lisa Boquist, Secretary to Council

**Absent:**

Cory Bradshaw

**Guests:**

Megan Cox (Cove)

Nathan Cogsdale (Cove)

George Nairns (Heppner)

Diane Adams (The Dalles)

Patti Knollman (Sunriver)

Joel Bigelow (Baker City)

Najaria Esty (La Grande)

The Rev. Jan Kozak (Madras)

Kelly DiCicco (Hood River)

The Rev. Joann Dickson (La Grande)

The Rev. Marilyn Roth (The Dalles)

Karley Witten (Cove)

The Rev. Joyce Atchley (Canyon City)

**Friday, November 17, 2023**

## Call to Order

Bishop Pat called the meeting to order at 5:02pm. Beth offered a prayer. The agenda was approved as presented.

**M/S/C**            *Motion to approve the agenda as presented. (Angela Pursel, Kelly Mahon)*

## Approval of Minutes

**M/S/C**            *Motion to approve the minutes from July 28-19, 2023 (David Kosar, Betty Palmer)*

## Introductions

Holly Hendricks and the Rev. Roy Green, the newly elected members of Diocesan Council, were introduced. Megan Cox and Nate Cogsdale were also introduced as the new Program and Operations Directors at Ascension School.

## Standing Committee Vote

The Rev. Kelly Mahon was incorrectly voted in as a member of Standing Committee at the 2023 Diocesan Convention. He was already serving on Standing Committee.

**M/S/C**            *Motion to nullify the Standing Committee Clergy vote from the 2023 Diocesan Convention. (Angela Pursel, David Kosar)*

## Standing Committee Report

The Rev. Kelly Mahon gave a report on the following items that the Standing Committee has been working on:

- Standing Committee voted to appoint Jan Uffelman, Prineville to replace the late Terry Rahmsdorff as a General Convention Deputy. They also voted for Patty Lindsey to serve as a Lay Alternate.
- The Klamath Falls property has been listed and has been shown to potential buyers. Kelly is working on hiring a plumber to fix the leak issue but is having trouble tracking someone down. The realtor is assisting with property upkeep.
- Kelly is working with Lisa to obtain a title report on the Sumpter property. While there is record of EDEO owning the property based on a deed that was found in a file it is unclear whether the deed was ever recorded. Lisa will contact Baker County to figure the issue out.

## EFM Update

There is currently no active EFM group within EDEO. The 2024 budget was approved with an EFM line item, and a motion is needed to remove that amount. There was a brief discussion about the merits of the EFM program. If there is an interest in reenrolling with EFM in the future Diocesan Council will consider it.

**M/S/C**            *Motion to amend the 2024 EDEO Budget to remove the designated EFM line item and to allow that to reduce the projected deficit. (Ray Jeff Spreier, Charlotte Wells)*

## Bishop Housing Allowance

### **M/S/C**

*WHEREAS, section 107 of the Internal Revenue Code permits a minister to exclude from gross income a church-designated allowance paid to him or her as part of his or her compensation for services as a minister, to the extent used by him/her for actual expenses in owning or renting a home; and*

*WHEREAS the Rt. Rev. Patrick Bell is employed as a minister of the Gospel by the Episcopal Diocese of Eastern Oregon which does not provide a residence for him, Diocesan Council resolves that of the total compensation received during 2024, \$2400.00 per month shall be designated a parsonage allowance within the meaning of that term as used in Section 107 of the IRS Code of 1986.*

*The Diocesan Council also resolves that the amount designated as housing allowance shall apply to 2024 calendar year and all future years unless amended by the Diocesan Council.*

- *(Aletha Bonebrake, Betty Palmer)*

## Bishop Report

Bishop Pat reviewed some of the process for the retreat weekend, and the work that would be done around planning for the next steps with regards to the future of the Episcopate in Eastern Oregon. He noted that there may be some issues that could come up around finances and transparency but discussion about funds will not be a part of this weekend's agenda. That will be a further discussion at another meeting.

There has been some talk that the diocese has not been transparent with how funds from property sales are being managed. The information is contained in the minutes from Diocesan Council, and those are available on the website, but many people don't seem to realize that they are there. It was decided a link to the minutes will be included in future Connections newsletters to make them more accessible.

## Financial Report

Patty gave a brief financial report that included the following:

- EDEO will complete the change from QuickBooks to Shelby Financial by January 1<sup>st</sup> if all goes according to plan. This switch will also help dispel some concerns regarding transparency as reports that can be run will be more tailored to non-profit organizations and will allow for a Statement of Financial Position that will show the state of the finances in a much clearer manner than the current 50-page document that we currently need.
- Ascension School is still projected to have a significant deficit at the end of 2023. Patty pointed out that this is not uncommon, most camps and conference centers operate in a deficit unless they have significant diocesan support or an endowment that supplements their budgets each year. This is why it is so important that the focus remains on building an endowment for Ascension School's future.
- Lisa is asking that a special meeting be held in early 2024 to review the finances with Diocesan Council so that they have a clear understanding of the state of the funds that they are responsible for managing. Once the new software is up and running and staff are comfortable with it, she will send out a poll to schedule that meeting, which will likely be on ZOOM.

## Recess

Diocesan Council recessed at 5:49pm. Dinner was served at 6:00pm

## Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:00pm.

## Co-Chair

**M/S/C**      *Motion to elect Beth Spell as Co-Chair of Diocesan Council (Acclamation)*

## Welcome and Retreat Overview

Bishop Pat welcomed the following guests into the meeting:

George Nairns (Heppner) – Ascension School Advisory Board, Cursillo

Diane Adams (The Dalles) – Commission on Ministry

Patti Knollman (Sunriver) – Eastern Oregon Episcopal Foundation

Joel Bigelow (Baker City) – Eastern Oregon Episcopal Foundation

Najaria Esty (La Grande) – Eastern Oregon Episcopal Foundation

The Rev. Jan Kozak (Madras) – Truth and Conciliation Commission

Kelly DiCicco (Hood River) - Guest

The Rev. Joann Dickson (La Grande) – Faithful Innovation Commission

The Rev. Marilyn Roth (The Dalles)- Faithful Innovation Commission, Transition Officer

Karley Witten (Cove) – Ascension School Advisory Board and Camp Director

The Rev. Joyce Atchley (Canyon City) - Commission on Ministry

+Pat discussed that the purpose of the retreat was to discuss the future of the Episcopate. He will turn 72 on January 1<sup>st</sup> and the pension fund requires that he step down as Diocesan Bishop. Once that happens the canons of the Episcopal Church allow Standing Committee to negotiate with him to become an Assisting Bishop. Standing Committee will enter into a contract with +Pat within 3 months of his turning 72, and that contract will need to be reviewed and renewed each year and can be terminated at any time. EDEO will operate under this model, with Bishop Pat, until 2026 at which time he will retire, and the diocese will need to decide what path to take next.

The four options that will be open to EDEO in 2026 will be:

1. Elect a Diocesan Bishop, which is the current model that EDEO is operating in. This process is time consuming and costly.
2. Continue operating with the Standing Committee/Assisting Bishop model.
3. Go back to the Provisional Bishop model that was used with Bishop Nedi.
4. Explore a new way of being that Bishop Todd Ousley presented to Diocesan Council in April that is currently being called Team Episcopate. This would spread out the work of the Episcopate and Diocese and create a new model. The details are not fully formed but EDEO would be a testing ground for this idea, but the current Presiding Bishop is in favor of EDEO exploring this path.

## Compline

Ray Jeff led the group in Compline and the meeting recessed until the morning.

Saturday, November 18, 2023

### Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 9:00am.

### Ascension School Report

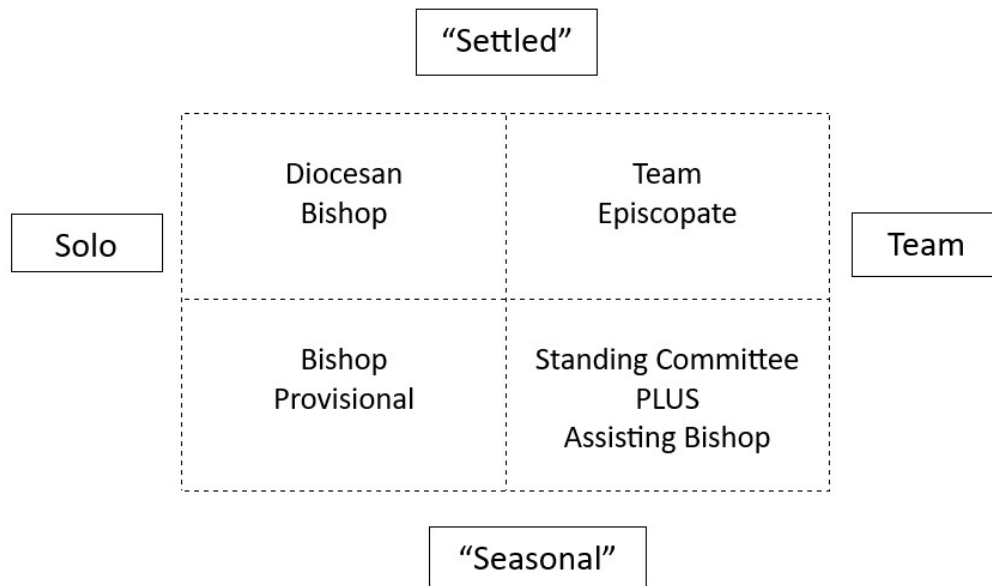
Amy gave a detailed report on the Master Plan that the Ascension School Advisory Board has been working on over the last year. A pdf of the report will be sent with these minutes.

After the report was finished, she conducted a tour of the campus, highlighting the recent projects that have completed and pointing out those areas that are included in the Master Plan.

Amy detailed the steps that will take place in preparation for the upcoming 2024 Capital Campaign, some of which are already happening. A feasibility study is being conducted by the Vandersall Collective which will help inform the purposes of the campaign.

### Episcopate Models and EDEO

Kelly reviewed the different models of the Episcopate that Bishop Pat had discussed on Friday evening and explained each with more detail. He also shared this model of the Episcopate that Bishop Ousley had shared in April:



The diocese has operated with several different models for the Episcopate:

- Prior to 2006 EDEO had a full time Diocesan Bishop.
- Bishop Nedi served as a part time Provisional Bishop from 2007 until 2015.
- Bishop Pat is currently serving as a part- time Diocesan Bishop and will move to Assisting Bishop in 2024.

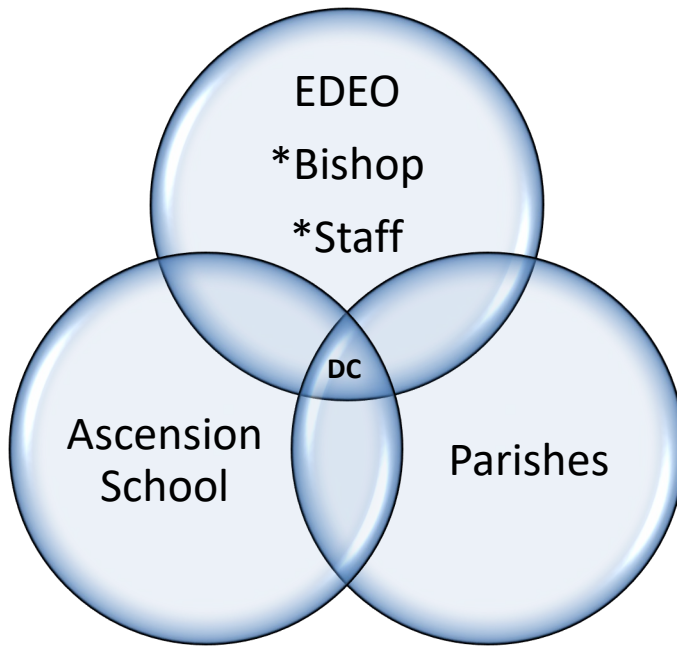
He also listed some "Elephants in the Room" that needed to be addressed:

- EDEO will not be merging with another diocese or going away.
- EDEO is not replacing Bishop Pat.
- The future will be figured out together.
- The only constant is that things change.
- The current model is probably only sustainable for approx. 10 more years.

The question is what EDEO will do next. He used the following process to explain what the goal is:

Who: All of us working together  
 What: To formulate a plan for a Model of Leadership for EDEO  
 Where: EDEO, perhaps modeled elsewhere  
 When: Between now and 2026 when Bishop Pat will retire.  
 Why: The Gospel  
 How: Using the Canons and possibly partnering with other diocese in a similar situation to formulate a new way.

Kelly used the following model to explain the current configuration of the diocese and Bishop Pat noted that the very center is where Diocesan Council operates:



Participants were divided into groups of 4-5 and asked to discuss the proposed Episcopate models and come back with a short report on their questions, concerns, and any other things that came up during their discussions. The following is a list of those items. These minutes also include a list of questions and concerns that the clergy came up with during Collegium which preceded the retreat.

#### Discussion Notes:

- Will the roles of Diocesan Council and Standing Committee change?
- Job descriptions need to be outlined.
- Are roles fluid based on hired staff?
- Where will all the volunteers come from?
- Who is going to provide the pastoral care to clergy currently provided by the bishop?
- Will the Diocesan Administrator/Executive Assistant's role change?
- How will we know when we are ready to move to a Team Episcopate model from the Standing Committee/Assisting Bishop model?
- Standing Committee/Assisting Bishop model give EDEO more time to transition to a Team Episcopate model.
- Congregational Connections.
- The Diocesan Bishop model is comforting.
- Do we still want to consider sharing a bishop?
- What is the potential within the diocesan budget?
- Under the Standing Committee/Assisting Bishop model a bishop can be changed if they aren't a good fit.
- Would there be a relationship with a "pinch hitter" on the Episcopate Team?
- Where does the buck stop?
- What if Standing Committee is headed by a lay person? Would they have the skills to resolve conflict?
- Understand that there may be a more "floating bishop" as needed.
- More work on clergy, staff, and volunteers.
- Like the idea of consistency of relationship, no matter what model is followed.
- Cost of a search is expensive.
- Diocesan Bishop model is scary.
- Fine tune Standing Committee – perhaps have a longer term, or a president that serves for more than one year.
- Hybrid Bi-Vocational Bishop.
- Who are the lay in our parishes that could assume some bishop, diocesan, or canon responsibilities?
- Need well defined responsibilities.
- Do we need another staff person?
- Lay Canons? Who might have potential or is Canon to the Ordinary?
- What diocese is currently using the Team Episcopate approach?
- What are our expectations of our bishop?
- How much of a bishop do we need?
- How do we keep from losing our context and flavor?
- Would a seasonal bishop be able to connect with us?
- How do we avoid the trauma of a bad fit?
- Bishop can't be a figure for only doing sacramental work.
- Big Work = Big Satisfaction

- Team Episcopate could be exciting for folks who feel church rule-bound/hide-bound. Most young people are familiar with short-term, contract work, so that might be attractive.
- Where does the Team model come from?
- How do we keep Team Episcopate from breaking down, becoming chaos?
- Can we afford to experiment with a team model and also strategize the Ascension Master Plan at the same time?
- Do we have enough active, willing, and able people to do Team Episcopate now and in the future?
- Relational vs. Drive By
- Who serves as Icon and Compass for mission, purpose, and identity?
- Standing Committee and Diocesan Council are canonical forms but we can leverage anyone for critical roles and functions.
- Advocacy and representation to larger church and House of Bishops.
- Sacramental Functions. Active Bishop? Retired? Good Standing or Assigned? 1-800- HEYPAT
- The process is prescriptive not descriptive.
- Fear of losing work that has already been done under Bishop Pat.

Clergy Concerns/Thoughts based on model:

#### DIOCESAN BISHOP

- ½ time shared bishop
- Hospital Chaplain or other work (Bi-Vocational)
- Retired bishop
- Prefer someone who is a resident or at least in the Pacific Northwest.
- Benefits would be that they are a member of the Eastern Oregon community and would have a pastoral relationship with the clergy and parishes.

#### BISHOP PROVISIONAL

- This worked for EDEO before and could probably follow the Standing Committee/Assisting Bishop period.
- Non-Resident, not part of the Eastern Oregon community.
- Who is responsible for the pastoral care of clergy and parishes?
- If we had a canon this might be helpful.
- Who is responsible for transitions?

#### TEAM EPISCOPATE

- What does the structure need to be?
- How will continuous leadership be maintained?
- Conflict: What happens when push comes to shove?
- Who are the team members? Roles? Relationships? Authority?
- Could a Team Episcopate include an Asst. Bishop or auxiliary Bishop or a full time Canon to the Ordinary?
- Benefit: Standing Committee maintaining current EDEO vision.
- Why does this have to happen immediately?

#### STANDING COMMITTEE PLUS ASSISTING BISHOP

- Would an Assisting Bishop be able to be held to greater account because the relationship would be contractual?



- Could this model develop/explore the Team Episcopate model?
- National and Diocesan Canonical requirements?
- Who is responsible for pastoral care of clergy and parishes?
- Who is responsible for transitions?
- New. Unique. But is it better? How is better defined?
- Benefit: Standing Committee maintains current EDEO vision.

## Recess

The retreat adjourned at 5:00pm until Sunday morning.

## Sunday, November 19, 2023

### Call to Order

Bishop Pat called the meeting back to order at 9:00am.

### Check In

Bishop Pat ask everyone to share how they were feeling about the discussions that happened on Saturday and if having a break had brought anything to the surface. Here are some of the thoughts that were shared:

- It seems apparent that we are willing to move away from the Diocesan Bishop model and to explore something new.
- It feels brave to move forward. The reality may not be much different that how we are operating now.
- Hopeful
- There is a possibility that we could draw talent from the larger church – people may be excited about trying something new.
- How can we utilize people’s gifts moving forward in a new direction?
- Scarcity vs. Abundance. Followers of Jesus are called into abundance. This is a choice.
- Relationships are paramount, not processes or titles.
- Trust building will lead to trust in decisions.
- Choose words carefully when presenting this to parishes. Words can cause anxiety. How about Collaborative Episcopacy?
- Focus on what we are doing right now and get feedback on how it is working.

**M/S/C**      *Diocesan Leadership resolves to explore collaborative models of the Episcopacy, commencing in January 2024 with Bishop Pat’s transition to Assisting Bishop. (Affirmation)*

This group will gather again on April 12-14, 2024, at Ascension School.

### Ascension School Master Plan

**M/S/C**      *Motion to accept the Ascension School Strategic Master Plan as presented. (Angela Pursel, Holly Hendricks)*

## Approval of Minutes

M/S/C        *Motion to approve the July 2023 Diocesan Council minutes as presented. (David Kosar, Betty Palmer)*

## Faithful Innovation Commission Report

Marilyn Roth reported on what the Faithful Innovation Commission has been working on and what it hopes to achieve.

- The goal of the commission is to bring attention to Evangelism and to bring descriptive language to the people of EDEO in how to share our story of God.
- The commission is working with Tom Brackett's model/idea of starting with the people. Currently they are searching for people from parishes who are willing to participate in the Genesis II: Revision and Renew Project. More information can be found at this link: <https://www.episcopalchurch.org/genesis-ii-revision-and-renew/>
- The Commission members are :
  - The Rev. Marilyn Roth
  - The Rev. Joann Dickson
  - The Rev. Joyce Atchley
  - Margaret Green
  - The Rev. Sean Rogers

## Truth and Conciliation Commission Report

Jan Kozak gave a brief report on the work that the commission has been doing:

- They are recruiting people to be a part of groups that will be having 5 Zoom meetings with Sarah Augustine to continue the work that was started at last year's convention.
- They are encouraging everyone to read Sarah's two books.
  - Along with Bishop Pat, they are standing in solidarity with Apache Stronghold and the situation at Oak Flats. You can find out more about the issues that they are facing on this Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/SaveOakFlatArizona>

## Commission on Ministry Report

Diane Adams, Chair of COM, reported that COM is struggling to uphold their canonical requirement to further the ministry of all baptized believers. The group lacks the people, and skills, to do some of the work required. She is asking that Diocesan Council consider funding to help address the need. The commission has been discussing creative ways that council might help. For instance, a clergy person could be hired as an employee of the diocese, rather than a parish, and could do the work of training parishes in lay leadership. Or perhaps the diocese could rely more on the IONA Collaborative, or EFM, to assist with this work.

The issue will be on the Winter Diocesan Council meeting agenda for further discussion.

## Adjourned

The meeting adjourned at 10:12am and was followed by Eucharist in the Ascension Chapel.