

Bishop's Senior Staff Report

183rd Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Missouri

Canon Westfall, Desiree Brattin, Canon for Finance and Administration, and the Reverend Canon Whitney Rice, Canon for Evangelism and Discipleship Development, make up the Senior Staff in the Offices of the Bishop and work together in overseeing the business, legal, property, formation, and other matters pertaining to the Diocese of Missouri.

Ms. Brattin works very closely with the Treasurer of the Diocese in creating a yearly budget, preparing and presenting the draft budget of the Diocesan Council. Other responsibilities include preparing for the yearly outside audit, administering diocesan grants and loans, and working on trust and endowment issues as well as administration of health and benefit plans. She also supports the functioning of Diocesan Council and the Diocesan Investment Trust. She serves on the Diocesan Endowment Committee and as a Vice President of COEDMO as well as assists with convention planning. Her twenty-eight years of service are a tremendous gift to the diocese and her knowledge of the diocesan finances is unparalleled.

Canon to the Ordinary, the Rev. Doris Westfall, assists the bishop in supporting the clergy and congregations of the diocese. She accompanies the bishop on visitations and on virtual town hall meetings. She works with clergy and congregations that are in transition and mentors the vestries and discernment teams in the transition and call process. New rectors are in place at St. Timothy's-Creve Coeur and St. Peter's-Ladue. The following churches currently have interims in place-Trinity-Hannibal, Grace-Kirkwood, St. Stephen's-Ferguson, and St. Barnabas-Florissant. There are Deacons-in charge at Calvary-Louisiana/St. John's Eolia and St. Alban's/St. Mark's. With the retirement of the Rev. Carol Wesley at St. John and St. James they now have Rev. Sally Weaver as long-term supply clergy. Trinity-Central West End will have supply clergy until such time as an interim can be in place after the first of the year. Canon Westfall assists interim clergy in shepherding the congregations through the transitional time. She works with other canons to the ordinary and transition ministers across the country and plans clergy conferences and retreats as well as educational offerings for the diocesan clergy. She assists the bishop in the pastoral care of the clergy and is a Vice President of COEDMO. She attended General Convention in July and was pressed into service as an alternate, and then as the senior deputy with the illness of the both co-chairs of the deputation who came down with Covid. Canon Westfall accompanied Bishop Johnson to Scotland to meet with five other bishops from the US and preached at St. Mary's Pro-Cathedral at the invitation of the Bishop of Aberdeen and Orkney, Rt. Rev. Anne Dyer. She also had the blessing of a sabbatical this fall.

Canon for Evangelism and Discipleship Development, the Rev. Whitney Rice, oversees the ordination process, diocesan-wide evangelism efforts and training, as well education for life-long discipleship development. Canon Rice chairs the Reimagining the Church Task Force, Fresh Start-a program for clergy in new cures, and is heading up the work to redesign the ordination process. She also oversees experimental ministries and missional communities and is the diocesan liaison for youth and young adult ministries. Canon Rice has led Cohorts One and two of her Requiem or Renaissance program for congregations receiving financial assistance from the diocese. Canon Rice will be on sabbatical from January 3 through April 3, 2023.

Ms. Jillian Smith is Executive Assistant to the bishop and canon to the ordinary. Her responsibilities include but are not limited to appointments with the bishop and canon to the ordinary, lay licensing, remarriage petitions and authorizations, setting up virtual meetings for staff and churches, renewal of ministry planning and scheduling, letters dimissory, diocesan convention, and clergy conference assistance. She also oversees the redevelopment of Safeguarding God's Children, which is now called Safe Church and tracks canonically required training for clergy and laity. She assists Canon Rice with the logistics and forms for the ordination process.

Janis Greenbaum is responsible for communicating the bishop's message and vision to the diocese and beyond, and is the primary contact for parish event promotion, social media and website development. She oversees the livestream production of major diocesan events. She is responsible for the content and production of all print publications for the diocese as well as the weekly iSeek and Clergy Connections digital newsletters. She plans diocesan-wide communications conferences and oversees a diocesan communications board. Ah-SaTi Tyehimba-Ford is the diocesan Digital Projects Manager responsible for social media content. They are both involved with a communications audit led by the communication director of the Diocese of Atlanta.

Ms. Tracy Grigsby serves the Offices of the Bishop as Receptionist and Administrative Assistant. Ms. Grigsby provides both internal support to staff as well as external support to those who have questions or are looking for information about the diocese. She works with Diocesan Council, Standing Committee, convocations, Diocesan Convention, Fresh Start and the different diocesan commissions. Ms. Grigsby is also responsible for the updating and oversight of the diocesan database.

Ms. Rita Benson works with the Canon for Finance and Administration and supports all areas of finance, benefits, and insurance. She is the primary contact for any changes in benefits or insurance plans, pension fund matters, employee status, background checks, UTO grants, parochial reports, and Flexible Spending Accounts. She is responsible for payroll, accounts payable, and receivables in the diocesan office.

Two new positions are being added after the first of the year. The Rev. Erin Pickersgill has been hired as the new Director of Child and Youth Ministries. She will start on January 1, 2023 and will help develop and coordinate programming as well as be the diocesan liaison for youth ministry and Camp Phoenix.

The diocesan staff has been seriously understaffed for quite a few years. A new administrative assistant will be hired after April 1 to assist Canon Rice and the Finance Department in the day to day operations of the staff in these areas.

This is a knowledgeable, compassionate, and deeply committed team. It is a privilege to work with them as they serve the people and parishes of the Diocese of Missouri.

Submitted by the Rev. Canon Doris Westfall