



**Wednesday, Feb. 5, 2025**

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NEWS and INFORMATION for the clergy and leadership of

**The Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts**

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**Upcoming online series  
explores new models of  
evangelism**

Join the Evangelism Working Group of Diocesan Council on Zoom for its “**New Models of Episcopal Evangelism Series**”—monthly presentations that celebrate creative examples of evangelism happening in the congregations and worshiping communities of the Diocese of Massachusetts. These ministries are “real, not ideal,” and are being shared to inspire, encourage and connect the people of God in the collaborative work of evangelism. There will be time for questions and discussion with presenters in each session.

• **New Wine, New Wineskins: A New Model for Collaborative Ministry Partnerships**, Monday, Feb. 24, 5:30-6:30 p.m.:

St. Peter’s Church in Dartmouth is striving to redefine the Christian experience for the contemporary world with a collaboration between the Episcopal Campus Ministry at UMass-Dartmouth and the parish counseling center, The Bridge: A Center for Hope and Healing. A new shape for God’s church is being born in this time and space—and it looks different from the traditional church. Presenter will be the Rev. Scott Ciosek. [Register here.](#)

• **Small Church as a Laboratory for Experimentation**, Wednesday, March 26, 5:30-6:30 p.m.:

The Church of Our Saviour in Arlington is small, with a sanctuary that seats fewer than a hundred people. But they’ve discovered that their small size enables them to experiment and offer custom-tailored ministry in ways that would be difficult if they were large. Come and hear about how they began a Eucharist service tailored to the needs of toddlers and their families, which has now grown into a youth group that can support tweens and teens with different needs and gifts. Presenter will be the Rev. Malia Crawford. [Register here.](#)

To learn more about or join the Evangelism Working Group, e-mail the Rev. Joyce Scherer-Hoock ([jlshoock@gmail.com](mailto:jlshoock@gmail.com)) or the Rev. Dr. Regina Walton ([rwalton@hds.harvard.edu](mailto:rwalton@hds.harvard.edu)).

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**Immigration and  
advocacy resources  
available**

With changing federal immigration policy causing uncertainty and concern in communities and congregations, a list of informational and advocacy resources has been compiled to help the people of our diocese respond. It includes how to join **weekly advocacy/policy update Zoom calls** with The Episcopal Church Office of Government Relations and Episcopal Migration Ministries; **know-your-rights resources** from the Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy (MIRA) Coalition; and **worship and study materials** from Episcopal Migration Ministries. The list is available at [www.diomass.org/immigration-resources-and-advocacy](http://www.diomass.org/immigration-resources-and-advocacy).

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### **Regional Confirmation service schedule set**

A schedule of five regional Confirmation services has been set, listed below and available [here](#). Bishop Whitworth is very willing to confirm and receive people in their congregations during visitations. Regional Confirmations offer the gift of being with the wider church, experiencing our unity in Christ. People from any worshipping community in the diocese are welcome at any service:

- *Sunday, April 27, 5 p.m.* at Trinity Church in Concord;
- *Sunday, May 4, 4:30 p.m.* at the Cathedral Church of St. Paul in Boston;
- *Sunday, June 15, 4:30 p.m.* at Grace Church in New Bedford;
- *Saturday, June 21, 10:30 a.m.* at St. Anne's Church in Lowell (bilingual service in Spanish and English); and
- *Saturday, June 28, 10:30 a.m.* at St. Mark's Church in Foxborough.

Please note that for the regional services, clergy should register their confirmands, and those being received, through Brad Rothrock, Cathedral Administrator ([brothrock@diomass.org](mailto:brothrock@diomass.org)), not the host churches.

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### **NEWS & EVENT NOTES:**

- The Bishop John M. Burgess Massachusetts Chapter of the Union of Black Episcopalians and the diocesan Office of Immigration and Multicultural Ministries invite all for this **special service commemorating the Feast of Absalom Jones**, on *Sunday, Feb. 9 at 4 p.m.* at the Cathedral Church of St. Paul in Boston. The celebrant will be Bishop Julia E. Whitworth, with the Rev. Will Mebane, Rector of St. Barnabas's Church in Falmouth, preaching. A reception will follow. All are welcome.

Questions may be directed to the Rev. James Hairston ([hairstoj@bc.edu](mailto:hairstoj@bc.edu)).

- The annual **Parochial Report** has been modified extensively, and clergy and lay leaders may want guidance before the March 1 filing deadline. To that end, a series of sessions offered by the diocesan Congregational Consultants is underway.

The second of two Zoom sessions on how to fill out the **financial portion** of the Parochial Report, presented by diocesan CFO Debra Thomas and consultant Terry Robinson, will be held on *Saturday, Feb. 8 at 9 a.m.* ([register here](#)). The **non-financial portions** of the Parochial Report will be presented by Debra Thomas and consultant the Rev. Cynthia Hubbard in a one-hour Zoom call on *Thursday, Feb. 13 at 9 a.m.* ([register here](#)) and again on *Saturday, Feb. 15 at 9 a.m.* ([register here](#)). These sessions will be recorded for later access, and they will join other useful webinar recordings available under "Learning Opportunities" on the Congregational Consultants webpage, [here](#).

*FOR INFORMATION: Betsy Blagdon and Edward Rewolinski, Congregational Consultants coordinators ([diiconsultants@diomass.org](mailto:diiconsultants@diomass.org)).*

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● **Leadership Reports due by March 1:** The Leadership Report and Lay Delegate Certification Form are distributed annually to collect updated church and lay leadership contact information. Congregations are asked to submit the Congregational Leadership Report within 10 days of their annual meeting as required by diocesan canons ([Canon 2.2](#)) and no later than *Saturday, March 1*.

The information provided through this process is critical to make sure that important diocesan information reaches congregations' current leaders in the upcoming year. Diocesan communications lists will reflect the information updates from this report.

To submit the Leadership Report, which includes a link to the 2025 Diocesan Convention Lay Delegate Certification Form, please click [here](#).

*FOR INFORMATION: The Rev. Margaret Lias, Coordinator for Governance and Grants ([mlias@diomass.org](mailto:mlias@diomass.org) or 617-482-4826, ext. 229).*

● **Assessment statements and electronic assessment payments:** In late January, congregations should have received their 2025 assessment invoice in the mail, along with a statement(s) of outstanding prior year balances (if applicable). If the invoice was not received, contact Amal Armanyous in the diocesan Treasurer's Office at [aarmanyous@diomass.org](mailto:aarmanyous@diomass.org).

Congregations can now sign up to make their assessment payments electronically. This will reduce delays associated with sending payments by check through the mail. The diocesan Treasurer's Office is asking all congregations to sign up to make electronic payments by completing the encrypted online form available [here](#). Those who are interested in also receiving diocesan payments electronically (such as grant payments) can check a box on the form to indicate that preference.

*FOR INFORMATION: Tom Hamel, Controller ([thamel@diomass.org](mailto:thamel@diomass.org) or 617-482-4826, ext. 307).*

● **Electronic submission of annual financial audits:** Diocesan audit submission procedures have been updated, and only electronic copies of congregations' annual financial audits are now being accepted. Audit packages should be e-mailed to [audits@diomass.org](mailto:audits@diomass.org). The package should include the auditor's report, findings and recommendations, completed audit checklist, the fiscal year balance sheet and income and expense statement, along with the written response from the vestry to the audit comments and recommendations. Audits are due on *Sept. 1*. It is recommended that congregations schedule their audit now so that it can be completed on time.

*FOR INFORMATION: Tom Hamel, Controller ([thamel@diomass.org](mailto:thamel@diomass.org) or 617-482-4826, ext. 307).*

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- Registration is now open for all sessions of the **2025 Clergy Professional Development Day**, offered in two parts, with each part held four times. Sessions are scheduled for *Thursday, Feb. 27* at St. Peter's Church in Weston; *Tuesday, March 25* at St. Andrew's Church in Marblehead; *Saturday, May 17* at Grace Church in New Bedford; and *Tuesday, Sept. 23* and *Wednesday, Sept. 24* on Zoom. Find the schedule and registration [here](#).

**Part I is a workshop from Braver Angels** on how to understand the values and concerns of those who differ politically, consistent with the call to be ambassadors of reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:19-20). The goal is build bridges across divides and share beliefs in ways that support community and promote transformation. **All clergy are encouraged to take advantage of this workshop.**

For clergy who are due (or overdue) to refresh Safe Church requirements in 2025, **Part II is a Safe Church Review** which fulfills the refresher requirement, along with attendance at a Part I workshop and assigned online training. Clergy may choose to attend the segments in any order and in any combination.

Clergy for whom Part II is also a requirement have been notified individually via e-mail of their status. Those unsure if they are due for Safe Church Training renewal this year may contact Jennifer Garrett ([jgarrett@diomass.org](mailto:jgarrett@diomass.org)).

Some clergy may have attended one or both of the Professional Development Day segments in a past year without completing the other steps to renew requirements and are now not considered clergy in good standing with the Diocese of Massachusetts. Partially completed requirements from a previous year are not transferrable; all requirements are to be completed within the same calendar year for renewal. Those who are due for renewal in 2025, or were due in a prior year but did not complete all requirements in that year, should attend both the workshop and the review segment as well as complete other requirements. Questions about this policy may be directed to Canon Bill Parnell ([bparnell@diomass.org](mailto:bparnell@diomass.org)).

*FOR INFORMATION: Jennifer Garrett, Administrator and Event Coordinator* ([jgarrett@diomass.org](mailto:jgarrett@diomass.org)).

- The Clergy Professional Development Committee is pleased to share that the featured speaker at the annual diocesan **Clergy Conference**, which will take place *Monday, April 28-Wednesday, April 30* at the Devens Common Center in Devens, will be [the Rev. Becca Stevens](#), chaplain at St. Augustine's Chapel at Vanderbilt University and a social entrepreneur dedicated to fostering holistic healing for women survivors of human trafficking, prostitution and addiction. She is founder and president of [Thistle Farms](#) in Nashville, and author of 12 books including *Practically Divine* published in 2021. Details and registration will be announced soon.

*FOR INFORMATION: Jennifer Garrett, Administrator and Event Coordinator* ([jgarrett@diomass.org](mailto:jgarrett@diomass.org)).

● The **Diocesan Chaplains to Retired Clergy, Spouses and Survivors** are available for pastoral care as well as help and information about the Church Pension Fund. They are, by deanery:

● **Boston Harbor, Neponset River, South Shore:**

The Rev. Robert Edson (781-749-2488) / Nina Leek (781-812-2181)

● **Mt. Hope-Buzzards Bay, Taunton River:**

The Rev. Billie Mae Gordon (617-584-2737)

● **Cape & Islands:** The Rev. Bill Heuss and Margaret Anne Heuss (508-423-0188 / 774-208-1945)

● **Charles River, Concord River:**

The Rev. Maureen Kemeza (617-869-1125)

● **Merrimack Valley, Mystic Valley, North Shore:**

The Rev. Cliff Cutler (978-878-8942) / Edna Shirley (978-683-1636)

The Alewife Deanery position is temporarily vacant.

*FOR INFORMATION: The Rev. Bill Heuss (508-423-0188).*

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## **CHURCHWIDE:**

● **Province I Acolyte Festival:** All young people in grades 4-12 from the seven Episcopal dioceses of New England, both active acolytes and those wishing to explore this ministry, are invited to join for this day of formation and fellowship, hosted at Christ Church in Needham, on *Saturday, March 1, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.* Please note that attendees must come with a Safe Church-certified adult from their community.

For more information and registration details, contact the Province I Formation Network co-conveners, Bird Treacy ([birdinthebellfry@gmail.com](mailto:birdinthebellfry@gmail.com)) and Emily Keniston ([ekeniston@episcopalmaine.org](mailto:ekeniston@episcopalmaine.org)).

● **Episcopal Church Lenten resources:** Episcopal Church Lenten resources for use by congregations, groups and individuals are being compiled online [here](#), and include study series, lesson plans, bulletin inserts and more.

● Communities for Spiritual Vitality, a ministry for interparish formation born from a collaboration between the dioceses of Vermont and Massachusetts, is offering a second **interdiocesan Lent-Easter Devotional**.

This year's devotional focuses on the prophet Isaiah and features individual reflections from members of all seven Episcopal dioceses in New England, as well as artwork from Christian artists. The devotional spans Ash Wednesday through the second Sunday of Easter but can be used in future years or at other seasons. It is hoped that this resource will be a benefit to individuals or to congregations seeking a text around which to ground adult formation.

The devotional will be available online by the beginning of March [here](#) and in print (at cost) by request [here](#).

In addition to the daily readings and reflections, the Communities for Spiritual Vitality will hold nine weekly gatherings via Zoom to reflect on the devotional and the spiritual journey through Lent

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and in Easter. An introductory session will be *Thursday, March 6*. Subsequent gatherings will take place on *Wednesday evenings, March 12 through April 30, 6-7:45 p.m.* The sessions will take place via the [Vermont Green Mountain Online Abbey](#), and participants are welcome to join the Abbey's Compline at 8 p.m.

All are welcome to participate. Attendance at each gathering is not necessary, but registration is helpful. E-mail [communities@diovermont.org](mailto:communities@diovermont.org) to register for the series.

- The next **Province I Indigenous Peoples' Justice Network book discussion** will be held on *Wednesday, March 19, 7-8:30 p.m.*, on Zoom. The group will be discussing the novel *Ceremony* by Leslie Marmon Silko. All are welcome to participate. Register to receive the Zoom link [here](#). Questions may be directed to the Rev. Vicki Ix at [communications@diocesewma.org](mailto:communications@diocesewma.org).

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## GRANTS & LOANS:

- **Congregational Development Grants** are one way the diocesan budget supports worshipping communities in strengthening community vitality and deepening relationships with God. The program challenges congregations to try new programs and prayerfully reflect on current and proposed programs that nurture and reimagine congregational life.

The 2025 guidelines are available [here](#). **Letters of intent are due by March 15** via [this online form](#), with **completed applications (here) due by May 3**.

The diocesan committee entrusted with the stewardship of these funds seeks to ensure that recipients have followed through with the plans that served as the basis for receiving a grant; **2024 recipients are asked to complete, by March 14, the grant report form** found [here](#). Recipient congregations become eligible for further funds upon submission of this report.

*FOR INFORMATION: The Rev. Margaret Lias, Coordinator for Governance and Grants ([mlias@diomass.org](mailto:mlias@diomass.org) or 617-482-4826, ext. 229).*

- The Church Home Society has launched a three-year pilot grant program, allocating up to \$40,000 a year to support **youth ministries in Episcopal churches**. Grant awards will be between \$1,000 and \$2,000. Applications (form available [here](#)) are due the last day of the month, through April 2025, and they will be reviewed at the following monthly board meeting.

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## DIOCESAN COUNCIL ACTIONS:

### At its Dec. 19 meeting, the Diocesan Council:

Heard an update from Bishop Julia Whitworth.

Heard updates from Dean Amy McCreath about the St. Paul Center for Theology and Prayer.

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Heard an update from Canon Bill Parnell about the 2024 Parochial Report process.

Voted to approve 2025 diocesan staff clergy housing allowances.

Voted to approve a 2024 assessment adjustment for St. Paul's Church in North Andover.

Voted to approve 2025 assessment adjustments for Trinity Church in Stoughton and Trinity Church in Haverhill.

Heard a report from a member of Executive Committee.

**At its Jan. 25 meeting, the Diocesan Council:**

Heard an update from Bishop Julia Whitworth.

Voted to approve Diocesan Council member Betsey Anderson as a member of the Executive Committee.

Voted to approve a 2025 diocesan staff clergy housing allowance.

Endorsed the bishop's appointment of the Rev. Joyce Scherer-Hoock to Diocesan Council.

Voted to approve 2025 assessment adjustments for St. John's Church in Holbrook, Grace Church in North Attleboro and Trinity Church in Randolph.

Heard a report from a member of Executive Committee.

**Next Council Meeting:** *Thursday, Feb. 20, 6 p.m., via Zoom*

*FOR INFORMATION: The Rev. Margaret Lias, Coordinator for Governance and Grants ([mlias@diomass.org](mailto:mlias@diomass.org) or 617-482-4826, ext. 229).*

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**CLERGY SEARCH & CALL REPORT:**

*Please direct inquiries about this report to the [regional canons](#).*

**Central Region**

*Alewife and Charles River deaneries: Contact Regional Canon Gregory Perez [gperez@diomass.org](mailto:gperez@diomass.org)*

*Boston Harbor and Neponset River deaneries: Contact Regional Canon Kelly O'Connell [koconnell@diomass.org](mailto:koconnell@diomass.org)*

**CLERGY CHANGES:**

**The Rev. John Clarke** began serving as the interim rector of the Parish of All Saints, Ashmont in Dorchester on Jan. 1.

**The Rev. Jennifer Zogg** will begin as the rector of St. Christopher's Church in Chatham on June 4.

**CHURCHES INITIATING DISCERNMENT PROCESS:**

BEDFORD, St. Paul's Church

**RECTOR SEARCHES**

**CHURCHES IN SELF-STUDY:**

ROXBURY, St. Cyprian's Church

SHARON, St. John's Church

**CHURCHES COMPLETING PROFILE:**

*None at this time.*

**CHURCHES RECEIVING NAMES:** *(Apply directly to parish.)*

**NORWOOD, Grace Church** *40 percent time*

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**CHURCHES NO LONGER RECEIVING NAMES:**

DORCHESTER, Parish of All Saints, Ashmont

**PRIEST-IN-CHARGE APPOINTMENTS:** Contact the regional canon.  
BURLINGTON, St. Mark's Church *part-time***INTERIM PRIEST APPOINTMENTS:** Contact the regional canon.  
*None at this time.***Northern and Western Region**  
Regional Canon Gregory Perez  
[gperez@diomass.org](mailto:gperez@diomass.org)**CHURCHES INITIATING DISCERNMENT PROCESS:**LAWRENCE, Grace Church (*bilingual: Spanish/English*)  
SOUTHBOROUGH, St. Mark's Church**RECTOR SEARCHES****CHURCHES IN SELF-STUDY:**LYNN, St. Stephen's Memorial Church  
ROCKPORT, St. Mary's Church**CHURCHES COMPLETING PROFILE:***None at this time.***CHURCHES RECEIVING NAMES:** (*Apply directly to parish.*)[READING, Church of the Good Shepherd](#) 3/4 time**CHURCHES NO LONGER RECEIVING NAMES:***None at this time.***PRIEST-IN-CHARGE APPOINTMENTS:** Contact the regional canon.  
DANVERS, All Saints Church of the North Shore 1/2 time**INTERIM PRIEST APPOINTMENTS:***None at this time.***Southern Region**  
Regional Canon Kelly O'Connell  
[koconnell@diomass.org](mailto:koconnell@diomass.org)**CHURCHES INITIATING DISCERNMENT PROCESS:***None at this time.***RECTOR SEARCHES****CHURCHES IN SELF-STUDY:**

SWANSEA, Christ Church

**CHURCHES COMPLETING PROFILE:***None at this time.***CHURCHES RECEIVING NAMES:** (*Apply directly to parish.*)[BUZZARDS BAY, St. Peter's Church](#) 1/2 time**CHURCHES NO LONGER RECEIVING NAMES:***None at this time.*

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**PRIEST-IN-CHARGE APPOINTMENTS:** *Contact the regional canon.*

ATTLEBORO, All Saints' Church 1/4 time

FALL RIVER, St. Luke's Church 1/8 time

**INTERIM PRIEST APPOINTMENTS:** *Contact the regional canon.*

*None at this time.*

**Clergy Supply List:** To request a copy of the most up-to-date Clergy Supply List, or to be added to it, e-mail Jocelyn Collen, Administrator for Congregations and Development, at [jcollen@diomass.org](mailto:jcollen@diomass.org).

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**NEXT fyi:**

**fyi** is published the first Wednesday of the month. The deadline for the March issue is **Wednesday, Feb. 26 at noon**. E-mail submissions to [tjs@diomass.org](mailto:tjs@diomass.org).

Find the newsletter deadline schedule for 2025 [here](#).

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