



**REPORT OF THE 168TH CONVENTION
OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN MINNESOTA**

**NOVEMBER 14-15, 2025
MAYO CIVIC CENTER
ROCHESTER, MINNESOTA**

The hope that is within us

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 13

On the evening before Convention, the people of St. Luke's, Rochester, welcomed early arrivals to come to their church for social time with refreshments.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 14

WELCOME AND BISHOP'S ADDRESS

Friday began with Morning Prayer, officiated by The Rev. Jeckonia Okoth, with music by a group from St. David's, Minnetonka, who also provided music throughout Convention.

Delegates were asked to meditate on whom they found hard to love, and to "take a moment to visualize Jesus gazing in love at you and then at them. Ask God to enable you to pray for them."

Bishop Loya then offered a prayer for Convention.

Secretary Karen Olson gave the Credentials Report. One diocesan bishop, 121 lay delegates and 108 clergy delegates were in attendance, constituting a quorum.

Bishop Loya then called the 168th Convention of the Episcopal Church in Minnesota to order.

One additional piece of business was introduced. The 2024 parochial report included no line for active baptized members, but Canon 205.1 says that "each Congregation in union with Convention is entitled to be represented by Lay delegates based on its number of Active Baptized Members stated in the parochial report to the Episcopal Church in Minnesota for the previous year." Therefore, for this year, Bishop Loya entertained a motion to ratify the credentials report based on using the 2023 membership for Active Baptized Members as lay delegates. The motion was made, seconded, and passed unanimously. The Bishop added that the Active Baptized Members line would be restored in the 2025 parochial report.

The following were moved, seconded, and adopted:

- Convention Agenda
- Privileges for non-delegates (providing seat to all visitors; and seat and voice for clergy not canonically resident in Minnesota)

Bishop's Address

Bishop Loya joking called this his sixth identical album, referring to a quip from ACDC member Angus Young. The bishop noted that through the long arc of church history, God's people have been just where we are at this moment over and over, and have carried forward what it means to keep covenant with God from one period of stability to another by forming small, remnant communities of practice, witness, and resistance. We are doubtless in such a period now. It is clear that we are not what we once were and what we are to be hasn't been revealed yet.

The bishop outlined what he hopes it will look like for us to live fully into our call, adding examples of how each of these points are being lived out in the diocese today.

- First, it means that we are going to be weird. "Authentic Christianity will always appear strange to the world around it, because Jesus invites us to live in a different story."
- Second, it means we are going to keep digging deep roots. The bishop spoke of the critical role that fires play in preserving the ecosystem of a prairie. Its grasses can survive because they have such deep and interconnected roots. Bishop Loya referred to his first convention address, in which he outlined four core priorities to shape our life together: discipleship, justice, faithful innovation, and congregational vitality.
- Third, it means we are going to embrace our limits. Gardening in exile meant embracing limits of what we can and cannot do. Like our ancestors in Babylon, we will have to set some things down.
- Finally, it means we are going to live with a bold and contagious hope. The healing the world needs will not come from winning a shouting match or political victory, but from the power of love. The world is starving for hope, and the Good News of Jesus Christ is made from a moment just like this one. We do not face hard times and death with despair but by shouting defiant alleluias that rise from the hope within us.

In the years to come, Bishop Loya concluded, we will be setting some things down and planting a new root system. We will be weird. What God, and the world, need desperately, is for us to look like the cross of Jesus, meeting all the hard forces that assault and crush God's children with a fierce and gentle love, joining the Spirit in gathering all of it into God's perfect embrace in the one light.

[View Bishop Loya's address here.](#)

Following the address, delegates discussed the following questions at their tables:

1. What stands out to you?
2. Choose one of the four commitments for this remnant moment (we will be weird, we will dig deep roots, we will live within limits, we will live with bold and contagious hope), and discuss what that might look like in your own context.

The rectors of the two Episcopal churches in Rochester: Beth Royalty of Calvary Church ("St. Calvary's in the Construction Zone" in the midst of nearby Mayo Clinic expansion) and Justin Chapman of St. Luke's welcomed delegates to the city. Beth thanked all who had brought non-perishable food items, which would be taken to the Salvation Army that afternoon.

Storyteller: The Rev. Patricia Benson, Deacon at St. Paul's, Duluth

Patricia spoke of the reawakening of her spiritual practice. She told of a time two years ago when she had been in the habit of awakening to the alarm on her phone, and then scrolling news headlines first thing in the morning. She realized that seeing these headlines sucked all hope out of her Morning Prayer practice. Patricia found help in a video series called Practicing the Way by John Mark Comer. She invited all to take a spiritual health survey as well as a time survey, and to identify what they wanted to work on. For her, this meant starting with Morning Prayer instead of empire “to see the world through Jesus-colored glasses”. “Be transformed and it will transform the world,” she concluded, adding the advice to get an alarm clock instead of using your phone.

[View Patricia’s talk here.](#)

Bishop Loya welcomed those clergy present as guests and not canonically resident.

- Bishop Regina Hassanally, ELCA-SE Synod, preacher at the Convention Eucharist
- Bishop Betsey Monnot of Iowa
- Mark Olson (ELCA)
- Rachel Toombs, transitional deacon from Texas, serving at Ascension, Stillwater
- Pam Williams, retired from Nebraska, living in Winona

Basic Concepts of Parliamentary Procedure

The Bishop and staff presented a skit showing how a meeting with parliamentary procedure might appear in the Hundred Acre Wood, home to Winnie the Pooh and friends. Then Mark Kelm, Parliamentarian, provided his usual entertaining tour through Robert’s Rules of Order.

The morning session closed with prayer from Kelsey Schuster.

LUNCH

BUSINESS MEETING

Bishop Loya introduced the others at the head table: Karen Olson, Secretary; Sally Johnson, Interim Chancellor; and Mark Kelm, Parliamentarian.

The Standing Rules of Order were adopted unanimously.

Storyteller: Cyara Carabarin Carretero from Casa Maria at St. Nicholas, Richfield

Cyara talked about the development of Casa Maria and its ministry. She is manager of Casa Maria, but can remember from growing up what it means to need help. She spoke of how Casa Maria began with afternoons of packing bags of produce and delivering them to people’s homes. Those who began this mission could never imagine that those simple afternoons would grow to what Casa Maria means today – a place that feeds, clothes, and heals entire families.

Casa Maria is housed at St. Nicholas, but a number of other Episcopal churches volunteer and support its program. In addition, Good Courage Farm shares its harvest, and local Hmong farmers share fresh produce during the summer months. All of this is a reminder that caring for one another extends beyond city limits. Cyara noted that Casa Maria is not just a program but a family, built by

families for families.

Cyara expressed the hope that when people leave the convention, they will carry this story of the power of showing up and showing people that they matter. This needn't be big, she said, adding that we become the hands and feet of hope. "God has put us in a place where, even with the little that we have, we can still give," she said. "We can still help others, and through that, He continues to bless us."

[View Cyara's talk here.](#)

Bishop Loya announced that the offering from the Convention Eucharist would go in its entirety to Casa Maria.

Consent Calendar

The following Consent Calendar was presented and adopted

Secretary of Convention (Canon 209.1)

Ms. Karen Olson

Treasurer (Canon 309.1)

The Rev. Christopher Rogers

Chancellors (Canon 306.1)

Chancellor (*Interim*) – Ms. Sally Johnson

Vice Chancellors – Ms. Rebecca Bernhard, Mr. Graham Kerr van der Leeuw

Disciplinary Board (Canon 405(d)) – *For a three-year term ending at 2028 Convention*

Ms. Kerry Childe, Mr. Terry Heyl, The Rev. Cindy Hillger, The Rev. Lisa White Smith,
The Rev. Lisa Wiens-Heinsohn

Commission on Ministry

(Canon 113.5.a) *Chair, for second two-year term, ending 2026*

The Rev. Margaret Thor

(Canon 113.4.b) *Bishop Appointments – For three-year terms, ending 2028*

Ms. Cathy Rude, The Rev. Mary Anderson

Council (Canon 219.2) *Vice-Chair*

The Rev. Jennifer McNally

Bishop Loya introduced Scott Tambour remotely from Vistacom (the electronic voting system). Karen Olson gave information to delegates on logging in to the system, and several whimsical practice votes were taken.

Nominations Report and Elections

The nominations were read by Karen Olson, Secretary of Convention.

Standing Committee (*elect 2 clergy and 2 lay for three-year terms*)

Lay:

John Gappa – Messiah, St. Paul
Minnie Steele – St. Mark’s Cathedral, Minneapolis

Clergy:

Jon Spinillo – St. Paul’s, Winona
Dana Strande – Church of the Nativity, Burnsville

Commission on Ministry *(elect 1 clergy and 1 lay for three-year terms, and 1 clergy for two-year term)*

Lay:

Mary Dragich – St. Paul’s, Duluth

Clergy:

Dave McEachron – St. Matthew’s, St. Paul
Lisa White Smith – Church of the Epiphany, Plymouth

Trustees *(elect 3, clergy or lay, for three-year terms; elect 1, clergy or lay, for two-year term)*

Beth Royalty – Calvary, Rochester
Steve Schaitberger – Diocese of Minnesota
Dan White – St. Matthew’s, St. Paul
Heather Worthington – St. Clement’s, St. Paul

General Convention (2027) *(elect 4 clergy and 4 lay deputies and 4 clergy and 4 lay alternates)*

Lay:

Liza Anderson – St. John’s, St. Cloud
Christopher Johnson – St. Anne’s, Sunfish Lake
Heidi Kim – St. John the Evangelist, St. Paul
Katie Madsen – St. John the Evangelist, St. Paul
Olivia Morin-Swanson – St. Paul’s, Duluth
David Niles – St. David’s, Minnetonka
Minnie Steele – St. Mark’s Cathedral, Minneapolis

Clergy:

Cody Maynus – All Saints, Northfield
Ramona Scarpace – St. Paul’s on Lake of the Isles, Minneapolis
Christy Stang – St. Stephen’s, Edina
Chelsea Stanton – Christ Church, Woodbury
Rick Swenson – St. Paul’s, Duluth
Margaret Thor – St. John in the Wilderness, White Bear Lake

There were no nominations from the floor. The non-contested elections were approved unanimously by acclamation. Following the elections, clergy ratified lay order elections, and lay delegates ratified clergy order elections.

Election results

Standing Committee *(3-year terms)*

Lay

John Gappa
Minnie Steele

Clergy

Jon Spinillo
Dana Strande

Commission on Ministry

Lay

Mary Dragich (*3-year term*)

Clergy

Dave McEachron (*3-year term*)

Lisa White Smith (*2-year term*)

Trustees

3-year terms

Beth Royalty

Steve Schaitberger

Heather Worthington

Filling out 2-year term

Dan White

General Convention 2027 Deputies

Lay Deputies

Heidi Kim

Minnie Steele

Katie Madsen

Liza Anderson

Lay Alternates

Olivia Morin-Swanson

David Niles

Christopher Johnson

Clergy Deputies

Cody Maynus

Margaret Thor

Ramona Scarpace

Christy Stang

Clergy Alternates

Chelsea Stanton

Rick Swenson

Bishop Loya expressed his gratitude to those rotating off the various bodies; these were thanked with applause.

2026 Financial Statement of Mission

Kelsey and incoming Treasurer Christopher Rogers presented the Financial Statement of Mission. They thanked outgoing treasurer David Holmberg, who was not present, and commended Jennifer Gamberger, Director of Finance. Christopher noted that the productive tension in creating this is healthy, noting that they hoped to make sure we don't continue to keep building bigger and bigger barns for ourselves, and speaking of how the budget is developed, starting from input from around diocese.

Christopher moved adoption of the 2026 Financial Statement of Mission; it was adopted unanimously.

Canonical Amendments

Sally Johnson, Interim Chancellor, presented recommendations from the Committee on Constitution and Canons for the following:

- **Revision to Canon 113**, removing redundancies and providing greater clarity around expectations to govern general membership and ex-officio members of the Commission on Ministry. These changes remove references to outdated and non-existent committees, and

clarify expectations for how members will be selected and serve.

- **Repeal and delete in its entirety Canon 611**, because the subject of when clergy are required to resign is fully covered in the churchwide Canons, and putting anything in ECMN Canons risks it being inconsistent with the churchwide canons.

Both were passed unanimously.

Resolutions

Two resolutions were proposed.

Dignity: Not Hate, Not Mass Deportation, Not Silence

PASSED AS AMENDED

Becoming a Sanctuary Church

PASSED AS AMENDED

There was considerable discussion of both resolutions. After lengthy consideration, both were passed in their final amended forms. [Read final resolutions here.](#)

ORDINATIONS, TRANSITIONS, MILESTONES, CLERGY NECROLOGY

Ordained Priest in 2025

Nathan Black
Matthew Roberts
Beth Rose

30-Year Priesthood Anniversary in 2025

Mary Rowe
Wanda Copeland

50-Year Priesthood Anniversary in 2025

Grant Abbott

65-Year Priesthood Anniversary in 2025

Ben Scott

Letters Dimissory Received to ECMN in the past year

Robert (R.C.) Laird
Matthew Roberts

Congregations Closed

Church of the Redeemer, Cannon Falls

Clergy Released and Removed from Ordained Ministry

Philip Schaffner

Clergy Necrology

Barbara von Haaren

Rick Todd

Anthony Morley

Melanie Mattsen

Courtesy Resolutions

Cody Maynus read the following list of courtesy resolutions:

- Presiding Bishop Sean Rowe
- Dame Sarah Mullally, Archbishop of Canterbury designate
- Bishop Loya & family
- Bishop Brian & Staci Prior
- Bishop Jim Jelinek
- The team of Canons and Missioners
- Storytellers: Pat, Cyara, and Randy
- Guests: Bishop Regina Hassanally, ELCA-Southeast MN Synod; Bishop Betsey Monnot, Bishop of Iowa
- Musicians: Roger Stratton and team
- City of Rochester and Rochester rectors Beth Royalty and Justin Chapman
- Volunteer staff, coffee wranglers, etc.
- Rochester construction
- Mayo Clinic and connection to church basement potlucks with “mayo” salads
- All people of this diocese who decided to be weird

Concluding Business

Bishop Loya then declared that the 168th Convention of the Episcopal Church in Minnesota was adjourned. The 169th Convention of the Episcopal Church in Minnesota will be held on October 22-24, 2026, in Minneapolis.

CONVENTION EUCHARIST

Convention Sermon: Bishop Regina Hassanally, ELCA-SE Synod

Bishop Hassanally spoke fervently of resistance to fear and of the power of a “mustard seed-sized faith”. Fear has always been a tool of the oppressor, she said, and fear as a weapon is nothing new. Into this arc come the words of I Peter to the persecuted church: ‘Do not fear what they fear, and do not be intimidated’ — a recurring theme in her sermon. “So what then shall we say, and will it be enough?” she asked. It takes mustard seed-sized faith, she said, which in the hands of the risen Christ is more than enough, as such faith will grow large and provide protection. The bishop frequently returned to the mustard seed theme, and spoke of advocacy, courage, action, hope, generosity, and resistance — all as small as a mustard seed. She again urged all not to be intimidated, but to hold on and scatter that mustard seed-sized faith in the face of fear. If God can do so much with so little, she emphasized, then imagine what God can do if every mustard seed-sized faith in this room rises up.

Fear only works on those who are afraid, but we are not to be afraid, because “what we have in Jesus Christ is more than enough”.

[View Bishop Hassanally’s address here.](#)

DINNER

Recognition and Awards

Bishop Loya expressed his gratitude to Doug Franzen, who retired as chancellor this past year, after serving two bishops over 14 years. He presented Doug with a Diocese of Minnesota tippet seal.

Blair Pogue presented a “mustard seed” T shirt to Nancy Dyson, a person who has walked a missional path of talking to people who might not normally go to church, by starting a laundry ministry in St. Cloud.

Bishop Loya recognized Karen Olson, who will celebrate 25 years on the staff early next year. Karen is now on her third bishop! Video tributes were shown from Bishops Prior and Jelinek, and Karen was presented with a GOAT (Greatest of All Time) trophy.

Karen Olson and Kelsey Schuster presented Honorary Lay Canon awards to Jay North and Heather Worthington.

Bishop Loya presented the Bishop Whipple Cross to Jim Huber.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 15

Morning Prayer was led by Paul Johnson.

Morning Prayer was followed by a “Dwelling in the Word” table discussions on the Gospel about the true vine.

1. What words, phrases, and images capture your imagination?
2. What questions does this passage raise for you?
3. What do you think God might be wanting to say to you and to us through this passage?

Storyteller: Randy Pastorius from Christ Church, Red Wing

Randy told “a short story about a long life” and how he had been blessed to have been able to witness several miracles. Randy is a Vietnam veteran from a military family. His grandfather served in World War I, and his father served in World War II and Korea. Randy grew up Roman Catholic, and his father had passed on his grandfather’s Bible and scapular to him when he went to Vietnam. Randy was paralyzed from the neck down when a rocket hit his jeep. He prayed God would let him

die was punishment violating the commandment against killing, but he did recover his mobility. He told of his own road to healing and of his assistance to other soldiers in a Japanese hospital during his recovery, which eventually led him to nurse's training. He spoke of many recoveries he has witnessed that could only have happened by the will of God.

"I decided God had saved me for a reason for whatever he wanted me to do," Randy said. He also spoke of how an episode of the series "Chosen" made Jesus come to life for him. "I still have the Bible and scapular," he said, "and thankfully have not had to pass them on to my son."

[View Randy's talk here.](#)

Keynote Address: Betsey Monnot, Bishop of Iowa

Bishop Monnot spoke of transforming a cornfield church into a prairie one, and becoming pollinators of the faith. She showed a slide of a field in Iowa with a cultivated cornfield on the left and restored prairie on the right. There is beauty in a cornfield, she noted, but it takes a lot of work to maintain. A prairie is sustainable, interdependent, needs nothing besides the natural weather cycle. If you want conformity, she said, grow a cornfield; if you want sustainability, grow a prairie. It takes a lot of work to restore a prairie from a cornfield, as it takes time for the ecosystem to be set up. However, after a prairie is established, then it is self-sustaining. It can be flexible and still maintain its life and growth.

The Church can be seen as a cornfield, Bishop Monnot said, noting that when we spend so much time propping up the institution, we tend to lose track of the purpose of church, which is Jesus. We are to gather the people God is calling together and to send them out into the world to be Christ's body.

Bishop Monnot spoke of some things being done in Iowa to change from a cornfield church to a prairie model. She referred to the story of the storm at night on sea, when Jesus comes walking on water, noting that the disciples are frightened until they see who it is. Peter starts walking as well, but then falters and Jesus reaches out a hand to him. We are in that boat, Bishop Monnot said. We see something scary, but it might be Jesus. We must know when to step out of boat and in which direction. She gave several examples of practices and projects being done by churches in her diocese.

One of integral parts of prairie is the pollinators. For us, Bishop Monnot said, the love of Jesus is the pollen, and we are God's pollinators. Bishop Monnot showed a photo of a bee turning itself upside down and assuming new position or perspective in order to gather pollen. Let us be like this bee, she said, gathering and sharing the love of Jesus supporting and sustain the prairie version of church that God longs to raise up in place of that cornfield.

[View Bishop Monnot's address here.](#)

Open Space Activity

Bishop Monnot led attendees in an activity in which they were asked to propose topics or questions that they wanted to discuss (Gospel questions instead of church or political ones), write them on poster paper at a side of the room, and stand next to them as others came to join in each conversation.

At a halfway point, people could choose to go to another conversation area. Following the conversations, a person from each group shared some of the things they heard with the entire assembly.

Closing

Bishop Monnot thanked all for being willing to share.

Bishop Loya thanked Bishop Monnot for her presence, noting that we all have to work together and own reclaiming a landscape that's been turned into monoculture with the diverse ecology of the prairie, and that we are exactly the people that God needs to do this work.

Bishop Loya gave a final blessing.

Karen Olson, Secretary of Convention
Report prepared by Susan Barksdale