



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE *of* SPOKANE

News & Notes | April, 2026

ARTICLE FROM THE BISHOP'S PEN

Hello Friends,

Before you dive into this month's article from Bishop Gretchen, a quick note from your diocesan communicator: this partial article was written before her recent surgery. In fact, the portion below was being written as she received the call from The University of Washington letting her know to grab her things and go get those new lungs!

As she focuses on rest and recovery, Bishop Gretchen is not currently working or receiving visitors. She also is not attending to her phone right now. If you'd like to encourage her, cards are warmly welcomed and can be

sent to the diocesan office. We'll make sure she receives them! (We kindly ask that no other gifts be sent at this time.)

We're so grateful for your continued prayers and support. You can follow along with updates on her recovery via the CaringBridge link below. Her sister, Dorothy, mentioned that she would be making weekly updates on Fridays.

Without further ado, I invite you into Bishop Gretchen's reflection on the power of music. How it shapes our worship, stirs our souls, and connects us to memory, meaning, and one another.

Tiffany Bade

Communications Director

[Bishop's CaringBridge Link](#)

One year long ago when I was serving a congregation back east and it was Holy Week, I received a phone call. The person on the other end started the call by asking if the church was going to sing "Welcome happy morning" as the opening hymn on Easter. I was surprised at the question but was able to say "yes, actually we are." "Good," they responded, "I will come then." And then they hung up.

I sat there a bit stunned by this encounter, growing first irritated and then amused. Someone was basing their whole attendance at church on Easter on the opening hymn choice! It totally seemed wrong. And yet it was a

powerful reminder of the importance of music, and especially the role of music in provoking emotional responses. It is one of the reasons why old favorite songs are so important at sacred high points such as Christmas and Easter, funerals, and weddings. Music plays an important role because it gets beyond our mind and into our soul.

It is well known that singing something helps us remember it. People with dementia often can join in the singing of an old familiar hymns. This is because the part of the brain that processes music is separate from that part impacted by dementia. How many of us still sing the alphabet song to remember the order of the letters? The power of music is one reason why people sing as a form of celebration, as lament, as resistance, as expressions of love. It is why our hymns are part of our worship. And it is why this year we offered the diocesan prayer in a form to be sung...

This was where she was cut off due to her long awaited phone call. As we find ourselves in the heart of Holy Week, with Easter just days away, may these words invite you to listen closely for the songs that anchor our faith and point us toward hope.

Follow this link to our [Diocesan Prayer](#).

Faithfully,

+Gretchen

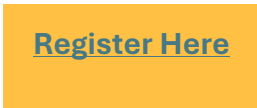
(With help from your Diocesan Communicator!)

IMPORTANT THINGS COMING!



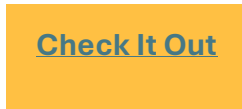
Clergy Conference

Join us for a time of rest, renewal, and connection as we gather under our diocesan theme, “Sing to the Lord a new song,” and welcome +Rob Wright as our guest speaker!



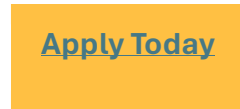
Grants available

Could your congregation use a little extra money for growth and development?! Applying is easy! Click the box below.



Applications OPEN!

Join in the opportunity for your congregation to begin or enhance their work in building bridges and healing divides in their communities. The deadline to apply is April 15th.



Lay Leaders

Join Lay Leaders from across the diocese for



Camp Cross

Registration for Camp Cross 2026 sessions are now open! There's



DIO CON | Pasco, WA

Save the date for Diocesan Convention in Pasco, WA and make

a weekend of rest and worship!

a camp for everyone so make sure you sign up.

sure to book your room ahead of time!

[Register Today](#)

[More Info Here](#)

[Learn More Here](#)

HERE'S THE NEXT 3 MONTHS

APRIL

2 - Wardens and Treasurer's Zoom Meeting

5 - EASTER

17 & 18 - BB;HD Coaches Team Training

20 to 23 - Clergy Con. IHRC

MAY

7 - Wardens and Treasurer's Zoom Meeting

15 & 16 - BB;HD In Person Training

29 & 30 - Council Meeting

JUNE

4 - Wardens and Treasurer's Zoom Meeting

5 to 7 - Lay Leaders Retreat IHRC

13 - Spokane Pride

All Bishop Visitations have been cancelled until further notice.



CANON'S CORNER

Camp Cross Cabin Furniture Campaign!

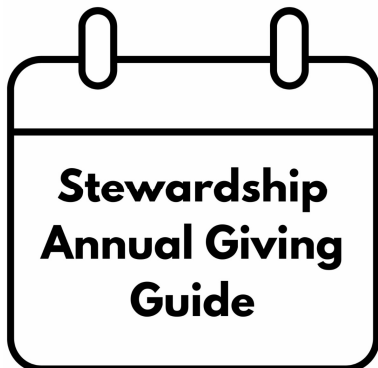
Cn. Alex Flannagan

Camp Cross is building a new retreat center and you're invited to be part of bringing it to life! Each of the 16 cabins will be thoughtfully furnished to create a comfortable, welcoming space for all who come seeking rest and renewal. From sponsoring a room to volunteering your time, there are many ways to get involved. Read more from our Camp Director, Alex Flannagan, about this exciting project and how you can help make it possible.



[Full Article Here](#)

ANNUAL GIVING GUIDE 2026



Find monthly ideas for approaching your annual giving campaign throughout the entire year.

In **April**, it's a great time to plan out the annual giving calendar for the remainder of

the year and think through what considerations and work this involves.
Consider the following:

- Open staff and lay leadership input and creative conversation on theme, content, and schedule of the annual giving plan.
- Design the calendar, goals, and materials that will be needed throughout the year.
- Send thank yous to congregants who have made annual pledges.

THINGS HAPPENING AROUND THE DIOCESE

Welcome Our New Diocesan Employees, Mitchell and Elmarie!

Please join us in welcoming Mitchell Palmquist as our new full-time Office Administrator! He brings a wealth of administrative experience, with a background that includes work in the Catholic Church as well as running his own business. Outside of the office, Mitchell enjoys woodworking, hiking, reading, and spending time with his six kids.



Mitchell will be your go-to for diocesan administrative needs, including diocesan reports, database support, directory updates, and Paulsen House operations. We're so glad to have him on the team!

Help us welcome Elmarie Oberholzer, our new part-time Program Assistant! She'll be helping us out with diocesan events, specific oversight for the Building Bridges; Healing Divides grant program, and a variety of behind the scenes administrative work that keeps things running smoothly.

Elmarie will be in the office later this month after a visit to her home country of South Africa. When she's not working, she enjoys spending time with her seven year old daughter and her cats. We're excited to have her on the team and look forward to the gifts she will bring to this role!

Congregations Receiving Names

St. James', Pullman, is currently receiving names for a full-time Rector. Applications will be accepted through May 1, 2026.

Interested candidates are invited to submit a cover letter addressed to the Vestry (highlighting their interest in St. James' and how their gifts align with the parish), along with an OTM portfolio (PDF format) and resume to [The Rev. Canon Susan Cleveley](#).

Check out the Parish Profile below or head to our [website](#) for more info!

[Parish Profile](#)

Good Friday Offering

The Good Friday Offering began in 1922, following World War I, as The Episcopal Church sought to build relationships with Christians in the Middle East through relief work and shared ministry.



For over a century, Episcopalians have supported the dioceses of the Province of Jerusalem and the Middle East, helping sustain vital ministries in pastoral care, education, and healthcare. These efforts continue to serve as a powerful witness of peace, compassion, and reconciliation in the region.

Your participation in the Good Friday Offering helps carry this important work forward. For more info, please see this [letter from Presiding Bishop Rowe](#)

[Give A Gift Today](#)

Invitation: Join the Vocational Discernment Team

The Commission on Ministry of the Episcopal Diocese of Spokane invites lay members of our parishes to consider serving on the Vocational Discernment Team. This vital ministry walks prayerfully alongside individuals discerning a call to ordained ministry, offering guidance, listening, and support throughout the process. Team members commit to confidentiality, unbiased listening, and prayer, and will receive training and ongoing support. Serving on the VDT is a meaningful way to nurture emerging leaders, support the life of the Diocese, and deepen your own faith journey. To learn more, contact the Diocesan Office, a member of the Commission on Ministry, or your parish priest.

[Apply Here!](#)