

# Annual Convention Report

## The 132<sup>nd</sup> Annual Convention of The Diocese of West Missouri



THE *Episcopal* CHURCH IN  
WEST MISSOURI

The purpose of the Christian Formation ministry is to encourage and nurture spiritual growth, Christian practices, and theological reflection. This is based on the belief that actively engaging in Christian formation is a transformative experience which affects our understanding of morality, politics, economics, labor, family, the environment, hospitality, justice, friendship, and forgiveness. In short, *everything* is a spiritual matter.

As formation takes place *within* our hearts and minds; the fruits of awareness and spiritual growth are directed *outward* into our communities. Ultimately, what we *inwardly* digest as we follow The Way of Jesus encourages active, visible faith that values people and relationships, naturally moving us *outside* the walls of the church building in form of mission, outreach, inclusiveness, and evangelism.

Our diocese hopes to be a source of support, resource, and opportunities to households. To fulfill this purpose and advocate for intentional Christian formation, the following are available to individuals, households, and congregations on an ongoing basis:

- Curated traditional and experiential resources for people of all ages on the diocesan website to organize the wealth of online information and simplify the search process.
- The companion presence of support, consultation, and encouragement on request.
- Virtual Coffee Hour is offered weekdays for anyone to come ask questions, explore formation resources, and share experiences.
- Newly formed quarterly Children and Family Ministry meetings focus on preparing for upcoming seasons as well as provide an opportunity to share challenges and sharing ideas.
- The Christian Formation Commission is focusing on making infographic formational material on ways in which people can explore, deepen and grow their faith; determining helpful responses to the needs of congregations, discovering new resources, and recommending best practices.
- Formation-related weekly posts through the New Spirit Update and Diocesan Facebook page highlight educational, liturgical, fellowship and service-oriented resources and reflections.

In January 2021, **Everything Holy** was introduced as a monthly, experiential, Christian formation resource for households of all shapes and sizes. Those opting-in receive a packet woven around a theme with multiple learning styles in mind. Everything Holy aims to be an experiential, fun way to explore, grow, and deepen an experience of God

within the home. The packet is a tool for households to use throughout the month; doing a little bit *every day* has a greater impact than doing a lot on one day, and a little bit every day is enough to grow into a lifelong foundational habit.

Missional in nature, *Everything Holy* encourages spiritual growth, and has great potential to involve many West Missouri households in a formational experience. The project has been developed by a Creative Team: Josh Trader (Assistant to the Bishop for Youth Development), Kat Mercer (Children's Ministry and Christian formation), and Kim Snodgrass (Assistant to the Bishop for Christian Formation). Anyone can be involved, and everyone is welcome to collaborate. Opt-in information, as well as digital copies of monthly packets and suggestions to explore music, stories, poetry, or video options, can be found on the diocesan website.

Everything Holy monthly packages are being shipped to -

- Well over 500 individuals representing over 280+ households
- Members of 37 churches within our diocese
- 65 cities (both rural and urban)
- 6 states

An additional seasonal project, *At the Table*, was well received by households and congregations throughout the diocese, also going abroad to both England and Mexico. Fourteen congregations and five households proposed using the materials to reach nearly 170 people.

2022 Plans for Ministry

- Advocate for the promotion of Christian formation through liturgy, education, service, fellowship, and evangelism within households and faith communities, including the application of beneficial short and long-term strategies.
- Topic Presentations on Prayer & Temperament, Experiential Stations, Stewardship, Empowering People to Facilitate; Lay Reader Training, Retreat Planning, Intergenerational and Milestone Ministries, etc. can be held virtually or in person.
- Continuation of the Everything Holy Project to offer hope, encouragement and new perspectives that support self-discovery and awareness, healthy routines and habits, and creativity through small steps.
- Continuation of regular online posts promoting healthy spiritual practices, relationships, self-discovery, upcoming formational opportunities, and Fruits of the Spirit.
- Seasonal projects and Wellness Gatherings that offer continuing education and relationship-oriented opportunities.
- Build human resources through internship and ministry consultants, the former being specifically regarding children, family, intergenerational and youth ministries.

Beginning with our youngest members, understanding how church is relevant to our life is vital to the health of our diocese, our communities, and the world.

God's hands are always busy at the potter's wheel; Jesus himself "increased in wisdom and in years, and in divine and human favour."<sup>i</sup> The Christian Formation ministry is here to walk with the people of West Missouri as we seek to become authentically engaged in hospitality, worship, prayer, learning and mission; a people who "live out the values of the kingdom of God in the presence of the kingdoms of the world;"<sup>ii</sup> a people becoming human beings made in the likeness of Christ.

Sincerely,  
Kim Snodgrass  
Assistant to the Bishop for Christian Formation

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<sup>i</sup> Luke 2:52

<sup>ii</sup> *The Dream of God: A Call to Return* by Verna Dozier