Rooted and Rising

Newsletter of the Episcopal Diocese of South Dakota · July 2026

Thunderhead Is Open and Rocking Along!

Summer 2026 at Thunderhead Episcopal Center is underway, and there is still time to register for every remaining session! Whether your young people are stepping into leadership for the first time or returning to the Black Hills for another summer rooted in creation and community, there is a place for them at TEC.

2026 SESSIONS

June 28–July 3	Middle School Camp	rising 6th–8th grade
July 5–10	High School Camp	rising 9th–12th grade
July 12–17	Environmental Camp	rising 7th–12th grade

Register at thunderheadec.org. Campership assistance is available — no family should hesitate because of cost!

From Canon Sierra

"Summer camp at Thunderhead is back and thriving! Through paper chains of daily gratitude, silly "repeat-after-me" songs, and holy moments of wonder in God's creation, we are in a resurrection summer! I'm blown away by the leadership of the staff, the curiosity of the campers, and the willingness to help with anything from the chaplains. There is still time to sign up for High School and Environmental Camps. And follow along on Thunderhead's Facebook page for more photos!"









































Questions? Contact Canon Sierra Kacher at sierra@episcopalchurchsd.org.

Save the Date — Fall Youth Retreat

This fall, Thunderhead Episcopal Center will host the Diocese of South Dakota's inaugural youth retreat — a weekend gathering for middle and high school youth from across our diocese. Details and registration will follow. Watch for more information at thunderheadec.org and in future issues of *Rooted and Rising*.

Niobrara Convocation: June 25–28, 2026

NIOBRARA CONVOCATION UPDATES

The Oyate of the Pine Ridge Episcopal Mission is excited to welcome you to Batesland June 25–28! We are hoping to be outside, but if inclement weather occurs, we have access to a gym just across the road.

THINGS TO BRING

- Your own plates, utensils, and water bottles.
- Your own chairs for your comfort.
- Your own prayer book and Dakota/Lakota hymnal.
- Baptism list for your church/mission for the past year.
- Necrology.
- Children.
- Joy!

HOSPITALITY & REGISTRATION

Hospitality checks to: Niobrara Convocation 2026, Pine Ridge Episcopal Mission, P.O. Box 207, Martin, SD 57551, memo: "2026 Niobrara Convocation." And again – please register online using this form — there is no cost.

LODGING OPTIONS

Crossroads Motel — Martin, SD · (605) 685-1070 · $140/$150	**Western Sands Motel** — Gordon, NE · (308) 282-1795 · $70/$80
Jefco Inn — Gordon, NE · (308) 282-2935 · $85/$96	**Pine Ridge Reconciliation Center** — limited shared rooms at $35/night · director@pineridgereconciliationcenter.org

CAMPING & OTHER OPTIONS

O'Neill Cabins, Martin — (605) 685-4598	**Pilgrim's Rest, Martin** — (605) 685-1230
5th wheel rental, Martin — (605) 441-0806	**Airbnb, Martin** — (605) 685-4733
Batesland Powwow Grounds (no hookups) — (605) 441-0899	

Questions? Contact The Rev. Michelle Dayton at revmichelledayton@gmail.com.

Reminder: Building Grants Are Available!!

We are hard at work giving out grants to help diocesan churches fund much needed repairs so that our parishioners are safe and able to attend church.

We would like to highlight the grants that have been approved so far and more importantly, the dedication and hard work of the following churches:

BUILDING GRANTS

- St. Julia's, Porcupine: ADA-Compliant Handicap Ramp
- Gethsemane Episcopal Church, Wanblee: ADA-Compliant Handicap Ramp
- Church of the Mediator, Kyle: ADA-Compliant Handicap Ramp
- Church of the Advent, Calico: New Roof
- Church of the Holy Comforter, Lower Brule: New Sidewalk
- St. Luke's Episcopal Church, Hot Springs: Bat Remediation Project
- St. John's Episcopal Church, Crow Creek: New Front Door
- St. John's Episcopal Church, Eagle Butte: New Front Door
- St. Mary's Episcopal Church, Promise: Repairs to Church Interior
- St. Katharine's Episcopal Church, Martin: Repair to Rectory Garage

TRIENNIAL GRANTS FOR HEATING

- St. James Episcopal Church, Enemy Swim: New Windows and New Boiler
- St. Mary's Episcopal Church, Promise: New Windows
- Church of the Holy Comforter, Lower Brule: Insulation
- St. James Episcopal Church, Bear Creek: Repairs to Allow Electrical Connection
- St. John's Episcopal Church, Crow Creek: Repair work to Prepare for Refurbished Stained-Glass Window
- St. John's Episcopal Church, Browns Valley: New Furnace

As a reminder, Building Fund Grants prioritize major issues with roofs, windows, and foundations and pressing safety issues, though other issues may be considered. Triennial Grants prioritize block-grant-funded churches that have trouble meeting in the winter because they are unable to or can't afford to heat their church, but also can be used to help with energy efficiency to bring heating bills down.

We will soon be meeting to approve MORE GRANTS, so get your grants to us ASAP! If you have questions about how the grant system works, please call Maggie Riley, Canon for Finance and Property at 605-494-2020 or email her at maggie@episcopalchurchsd.org. She can email or snail mail you a copy of the grant application form.

HOW TO APPLY: Email or snail mail a copy of a Building Fund Application Form along with supporting documents (including specific details outlining why your congregation would be unable to afford to make the repair without help, a copy of your current year's budget, a copy of your financial report for last year, and the amount (if any) that your congregation has been able to raise toward the repair).

IMPORTANT: If you have any trouble with the application, or don't have the requested supporting documentation, please call our office at 605-494-2020, and we can help gather the needed information. We don't want difficulties with the application process to keep a church from applying!

Five Tips to Prepare for a Better Financial Future, from the Church Pension Group



As a financial education specialist with the Church Pension Group (CPG), Larry Dresner, ChFC®, has spoken with thousands of participants in retirement plans sponsored by The Church Pension Fund (CPF). Drawing on those conversations, he offers five practical tips—along with his favorite resources—to help participants build long-term financial security.

1. SAVE EARLY AND SAVE STEADILY.

Many people are just starting out in their careers and feel they don't yet have the discretionary income to save for retirement. But even contributing as little as 1% of your paycheck to one of our retirement savings plans* can make a meaningful difference over time—and you're unlikely to miss it in your day-to-day budget.

"If you're skeptical about the power of compounding," Larry says, "watch the videos of Church employees reflecting on what they wish they'd known earlier in their careers. You may be inspired."

2. BUILD ON YOUR MOMENTUM.

Once you start saving, look for opportunities to make increases. For those using only defined contribution plans for retirement savings, Larry noted that Fidelity Investments suggests individuals set aside at least 15% of their pre-tax income. That includes taking advantage of any employer match. "You don't want to leave money on the table," he said.

3. TRACK YOUR PROGRESS.

Fidelity provides simple yet powerful tools that show how even modest changes to your savings can bring you closer to your retirement goals. Larry encourages participants to explore the Contribution Calculator on NetBenefits, which estimates your ending account balance if you increase your contribution rate.

"Try modeling a hypothetical 2% increase," Larry suggests. "You may be surprised by how much of a difference it can make over time."

Participants in the Clergy Pension Plan*** or Lay DB Plan** can review their accumulated pension benefit through MyCPG Accounts. The pension calculator tool allows you to see what your benefit may be at different retirement ages, assuming you continue to earn Credited Service. Those without access to MyCPG Accounts can contact Client Services at 866-802-6333, Monday to Friday, 8:30 AM to 8:00 PM ET or benefits@cpg.org.

4. PAY ATTENTION TO HOW YOUR BENEFITS CHANGE OVER TIME.

Understanding when key benefits become available can help you make more informed decisions. Larry often refers to a milestone timeline when speaking with participants in the Clergy Pension Plan. For example, participants must earn at least 10 years of eligible Credited Service to qualify for the post-retirement health subsidy. The subsidy can be used to help purchase retiree medical and/or dental coverage through plans offered by The Episcopal Church Medical Trust.

"Knowing these milestones in advance can be an important part of planning your next steps," Larry says.

5. TAKE ADVANTAGE OF EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES.

"I consider myself an ambassador for CPG's Learning Center. Every time I visit, I discover new tools to support participants' financial wellness and help them get the most from their CPG benefits," Larry says. "I also urge our

In addition, Larry recommends taking advantage of Fidelity's educational content, which includes concise articles on budgeting, avoiding common financial pitfalls, and other foundational topics. Some resources are publicly available; others require a Fidelity account and can be accessed through the NetBenefits mobile app.

PERSONALIZED SUPPORT

CPG financial education specialists understand the unique decisions clergy face when planning for retirement. To schedule a complimentary conversation, clergy can visit cpg.org/letschat. Conversations are available in English and Spanish.

Fidelity experts are also available to help participants in the Lay DC Plan and RSVP improve their retirement readiness and make informed investment decisions. Call 877-208-0092, Monday through Friday, 8:00 AM to 8:30 PM ET.

July Diocesan Events

Full online diocesan calendar available at episcopalchurchsd.org

7/2	Clergy Zoom Meeting, 10:00–11:00 am CT
7/4	Diocesan Offices Closed for Holiday
7/5–10	High School Camp (Rising 9th – 12th graders)
7/9	Clergy Zoom Meeting, 10:00–11:00 am CT
7/9	Standing Committee Meeting, 5 pm MT / 6 pm CT
7/11–12	Bishop Visitation at Santee/Yankton Mission
7/12–17	Environmental Camp (Rising 7th – 12th graders)
7/15	Investment Committee Zoom Mtg 10:30 am CT
7/16	Clergy Zoom Meeting, 10:00–11:00 am CT
7/18–19	Bishop Visitation at Mni Sose Mission
7/23	"Faith in Action, Love Without Limits" Zoom Mtg, 10:00–11:00 am CT
7/25–26	Bishop Visitation at Rosebud Mission East
7/29–31	Diocesan Staff Retreat at TEC
7/30	NO CLERGY ZOOM MEETING

Episcopal Creation Care Gathering 2026

September 23–26 · Procter Center, London, Ohio

Lay and clergy leaders invited for conversation, learning, and practice. Keynote: the Rt. Rev. Cathleen Chittenden Bascom. Scholarships available. Registration deadline: September 1.

Register at this link or contact jgreer@proctercenter.org.

THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF SOUTH DAKOTA

Faith in Action ❖ Love Without Limits ❖ Disciples in Action

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