

DIocese of the Central States

The Report of Bishop Peter Manto

Bishop Ordinary of the Diocese of the Central States

To: The 58th General Council of the Reformed Episcopal Church (REC) Dear Brethren,
December 7, 2025, marked the 12th anniversary of my consecration to the Episcopate. This report is given in my 7th and final year as Bishop Ordinary of the Diocese of the Central States (DCS). Our Diocese is honored and delighted to serve as hosts for this General Council. We are especially pleased because, as things have worked out, our entire Church family will now be able to share an important and significant day in the life of the DCS: the installation of The Rt. Rev. Jason Grote as our new Bishop Ordinary.

At the REC General Committee Meeting on Saturday, October 13, 2007, Bishop Royal Grote distributed two documents containing the recommendation and procedure for the re-organization of the current three Dioceses in the USA to add a new diocese to be called the Missionary Diocese of the Central States. A motion was made by the Ven. Jon Abboud and Mr. Ron Riches to adopt the recommendations from the bishops. The motion carried.

A motion was then made by the Ven. Abboud and Col. Andrew Bland to make the effective start date for the new diocese to be January 1, 2008. The motion carried; and on January 24, 2008, the Missionary Diocese of the Central States held its organizational meeting in Sevierville, Tennessee, with the Rt. Rev. Daniel R. Morse, Missionary Bishop presiding (Rt. Rev. Daniel Morse, 2008 Synod Report).

Now, 18 and a half years later, I am pleased to report that this fledgling diocese is healthy, growing and eager to continue on in this next season under the leadership of our third bishop, the Rt. Rev. Jason Grote.

Bishop Jason plans to relocate to Ohio in July to begin his work as Bishop Ordinary. I will continue to serve the diocese in a part-time role and assist Bishop Jason with the transition until the end of 2026 when I will retire after 50 years of ordained ministry. I am grateful to our Lord for the strength to have completed this leg of the race as well as to the many co-laborers, family and friends who have helped me in so many ways over the years. I want to especially thank my wife, Janice, for her love for Jesus and for His Church as well as for her never-failing devotion and care for me.

I submit this summary of my activities during the past triennium in the work of the Episcopate. The details of these labors are recorded in full in the Annual Journals of the DCS Synod.

Summary

During my 104 visits within the diocese, I conducted 226 Confirmations, 74 Receptions, 3 Diaconal Ordinations and 4 Presbyterian Ordinations. I participated in 3 Episcopal Consecrations and received 2 mission parishes into the Diocese from outside the REC. Visits outside the Diocese included 8 trips for other REC matters and 6 trips for ACNA matters along with serving as the ACNA Episcopal Observer for an Episcopal Election.

Excerpts from my Episcopal Synod Reports:

2023-2024 Synod Term

During my 36 visits to the parishes and missions within the diocese, 109 individuals were presented to me for the laying on of hands in the ancient rite of Confirmation. During those visits, I also received 11 individuals as new members within the REC and presided over the ordination of three men to the Presbyterate, one to the Diaconate and set apart one woman as a Deaconess. These 36 visits also included preaching and teaching sessions, meeting with clergy and their wives, meeting with vestries and parish members and attending various business meetings. In addition, I participated in the consecration of 2 REC bishops, the biannual ACNA College of Bishops meetings and the ACNA Provincial Council.

2024-2025 Synod Term

During my 44 visits to the parishes and missions within the diocese, 51 individuals were presented to me for the laying on of hands in the ancient rite of Confirmation. During those visits, I also received 35 individuals as new members within the REC and presided over the ordination of one man to the Presbyterate and one to the Diaconate. These 44 visits also included preaching and teaching sessions, meeting with clergy and their wives, meeting with vestries and parish members and attending various business meetings. In addition, I participated in the consecration of an REC bishop, the biannual ACNA College of Bishops meetings, the ACNA Provincial Council and the Conclave to elect the next Archbishop for the ACNA.

2025-2026 Synod Term

During my 24 visits over the 8 months from October to May to the parishes and missions within the Diocese, 66 individuals were presented to me for the laying on of hands in the ancient rite of Confirmation. During those visits, I also received 28 individuals as new members within the REC and presided over the ordination of one man to the Diaconate. These 24 visits also included preaching and teaching sessions, meeting with clergy and their wives, meeting with vestries and parish members and attending various business meetings.

In addition, I attended the first of the biannual ACNA College of Bishops meetings and currently serve as a juror on the court for the trial of a bishop now in progress.

Additional Activities

I assisted in the process leading to the election of our Diocesan Coadjutor in anticipation of my retirement. I received 2 mission parish transfers from other jurisdictions into the DCS. I participated via Zoom in many meetings related to both REC and ACNA issues. I attended the funerals of Bp. Leonard Riches and Bp. Al Gadsden and presided at a wedding.

For the last triennium I functioned as Vice President of the REC General Council and Vice President of the Board of Foreign Missions and served on several other committees and national church projects.

Conclusion

There are 22 parishes and missions served by 2 bishops, 31 presbyters, 3 deacons and 3 deaconesses. There are currently 6 postulants. The diocesan finances are strong, and the Diocese maintains a generous scholarship fund to assist those studying towards ordination. Average Sunday attendance has risen from 915 in 2023 to 1,013 in 2024 to 1,140 in 2025.

Respectfully submitted,

The Rt. Rev. Peter Manto Ordinary
Diocese of the Central States

Summary of the Standing Committee

The Diocese of the Central States

2023-2024 Composition

Clergy Members - The Rev. Jonathan Kell (2024), The Rev. Josiah Jones (2025), The Rev. Davidson Morse (2026)

Lay Members - Mr. Jeff Brown (2024), Mr. Tom McConnell (2025), Mr. Steve Mouton (2026)

Ex Officio Members –Bishop Peter Manto, Archdeacon Scott Thompson, Treasurer The Rev. Ken Mills, Secretary The Rev. Keith Boettner

2024-2025 Composition

Clergy Members - The Rev. Josiah Jones (2025), The Rev. Davidson Morse (2026), The Rev. Paul Edgerton (2027)

Lay Members - Mr. Tom McConnell (2025), Mr. Steve Mouton (2026), Mr. Paul Harris (2027)

Ex Officio Members –Bishop Peter Manto, Bishop Jason Grote, Treasurer The Rev. Ken Mills, Secretary The Rev. Keith Boettner

2025-2026 Composition

Clergy Members - The Rev. Davidson Morse (2026), The Rev. Paul Edgerton (2027), The Rev. Wayne MacNamara (2028)

Lay Members - Mr. Steve Mouton (2026), Mr. Paul Harris (2027), Dss. Shelly Fleming (2028)

Ex Officio Members –Bishop Peter Manto, Bishop Jason Grote, Treasurer The Rev. Ken Mills, Secretary The Rev. Keith Boettner

ACTIONS

Postulancy:

1. On 6 December 2022, the Committee approved the application of Mr. Jonathan McGill to the postulancy. Mr. McGill attends Christ the King Anglican Church in Dayton, OH.
2. On 13 September 2023 the Committee approved the application of Mr. Kevin Gottlieb to the postulancy. Mr. Gottlieb attends Holy Trinity REC in Chantilly, VA.
3. On 1 November 2023, Mr. Lukas Stock was approved as a postulant at All Saints Church in Lynchburg, VA.
4. On 26 January 2024, Mr. Noah Elkins was approved as a postulant at Christ the Redeemer in Owensboro, KY.
5. On 29 April 2024, Mr. Sean Reeves was approved as a postulant at Church of Our Saviour, Oatlands, VA.
6. On 9 May 2024, Mr. Andy Kuniholm was approved as a postulant at Church of Our Saviour, Oatlands, VA.
7. On 18 June 2024, Mr. Thomas Caucutt was approved as a postulant at St. John's Church in Birmingham, AL.
8. On 12 July 2024, Mr. John Bush was approved as a postulant at Holy Trinity REC in Chantilly, VA, pending the completion of his background check.
9. On 5 December 2024, Mr. Tegan Truitt from Holy Trinity, Chantilly VA was approved as a Postulant.
10. On 5 December 2024, Mr. Tucker Holmes from Church of Our Saviour, Oatlands, VA was approved as a Postulant.
11. On 15 February 2025, Mr. Mason Sawyer from All Saints', Raleigh, NC was approved as a Postulant.
12. On 12 March 2025, Mr. Jacob Harris from Christ the King, Dayton, OH was approved as a

Postulant.

13. In April of 2025, Mr. Noah Elkins from Christ the Redeemer, Owensboro, KY withdrew from the Postulancy to pursue membership in another Communion.
14. On 3 September 2025, Bishop Manto released Mr. Tegan Truitt from the Postulancy at his request. Tegan has moved out of the Diocese to take a job teaching at Grove City College in PA, and may pursue Postulancy in the Diocese of Pittsburgh.
15. On 4 May 2026, Mr. Tyler MacDowell from St. Jude's, Richmond, VA was approved as a postulant.

Holy Orders:

1. On 9 February 2023, Fr. Michael Lewis was received into the REC from the ACNA.
2. On 19 August 2023, Fr. Andrew Costa was ordained a priest at Christ the King, Dayton.
3. On 20 November 2023, Mr. David Heng was approved to be made a Deacon.
4. On 9 May 2024, the Rev. Dcn. William Barto was approved for ordination to the presbyterate.
5. On 30 July 2024, the Rev. Dcn. Tim Kline was approved for ordination to the presbyterate.
6. On 4 November 2024, the Rev. Dcn. Jameson Lowery at Church of the Redeemer in Wilson, NC was approved for ordination to the presbyterate.
7. On 23 January 2025, the Rev. Robert Hudson was received as a retired Presbyter. He transferred from the now defunct International Diocese of the ACNA, and serves at St. Luke's in Maysville, KY.
8. On 15 February 2025, the Rev. Alex Marlowe was received as a Presbyter into our Diocese to serve as the church planter at the Extension Work in Johnson City, TN (Johnson City Mission). He transferred from the APA.
9. On 20 May 2025, the Rev. Dr. Gerald McDermott was approved to transfer his Orders from the Diocese of Christ our Hope (ACNA) to our Diocese. Dr. McDermott will continue to worship at an ACNA parish in Crozet, VA.
10. On 21 July 2025, the Committee was informed that a letter dimissory was issued by Bishop Manto to the Rev. Dominic Taranto from NC, transferring him to the UECNA.
11. On 25 July 2025, the Committee was informed by Bishop Manto that he had licensed the Rev. Michael DuCharme to serve as Assistant Clergy at the Extension Work in Johnson City, TN (Johnson City Mission). The Rev. DuCharme is an ACNA priest resident in the Jurisdiction of the Armed Forces and Chaplaincy.
12. On 25 November, the Committee voted to receive Fr. Dan Hardin from the Jurisdiction of the Armed Forces and Chaplains.

Parish Matters:

1. On 10 February 2023, the Standing Committee voted to approve the beginning of an Extension Work in Johnson City, TN, which will be conducted under the auspices of the REC100 program.
2. On 2 August 2023, upon reception of The Article of Association and Conformity of a New Mission or Parish, the Committee voted to approve the reception of Christ the Redeemer, Owensboro, as a Mission Parish in the Diocese.
3. On 25 November 2023, Darke County Anglican Mission was approved as an Extension Work in our Diocese.
4. On 31 December 2023, the Standing Committee affirmed the closing of St. Andrews Anglican Church in Asheboro, NC, as the mission voted to merge with All Souls Anglican (APA) in Asheboro.
5. On 25 March 2024, Mrs. Shelley Fleming was approved to be set apart as Deaconess.
6. On 23 September 2024, St. Luke's Church in Maysville, KY, was approved to be enrolled as a

member mission parish of the Diocese.

7. On 25 July 2025, Christ Church in Florence, KY was received into our Diocese as a Mission Parish from the APA.

Calls of Rectors:

1. On 9 February 2023, Fr. Michael Lewis' call as Rector to Christ our Hope in Fairborn, OH was approved.
2. On 1 December 2023, the Rev. Jeffrey Hubbard's call as Rector to Trinity Church in Mason, OH was approved.
3. On 26 January 2024, the Rev. Aaron Rowley's call as Rector to All Saints Church in Raleigh, NC was approved.
4. On 25 July 2025, the Committee affirmed Bishop Manto's appointment of the Rev. Damien Grote as vicar of St. Paul's in Lexington, VA.

Affirmation of Episcopal Election:

1. On 8 December 2022, the Standing Committee provided consent to the election of the Rev. William Jenkins to be the Bishop Coadjutor of the Diocese of the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic.
2. On 3 October 2023, the Standing Committee provided consent to the election of a missionary Bishop for Cuba, in keeping with Canon 12 of the REC Canons.
3. On 8 December 2023, the Committee provided the canonically required affirmation of the election of the Very Rev. Charles Camlin as Bishop Suffragan in the Diocese of Mid-America.
4. As required by Canon 11, the Standing Committee obtained the required consents from the Standing Committees of the Dioceses of the REC after the election of the Rev. Canon Jason Grote as our Bishop Coadjutor. These consents were obtained after providing the required testimonials of the election, and were sent to the Presiding Bishop and Secretary of the General Council on November 20, 2024.
5. On 25 July 2025, in keeping with Canon 16 Section 1 of the REC's Canons, the Committee voted to approve Bishop Grote's absence from the Diocese until he moves here in July 2026. This was a condition discussed before the election last fall, but the Canon makes clear that the SC must take action to approve the absence of any Bishop from his Diocese that is longer than 3 months.

Duties as Assigned:

1. On 9 February 2023, the Standing Committee agreed to a proposal to send a letter of disaffiliation to St. Andrew's Anglican Church in Appomattox, VA.
2. On 2 April 2023, the Committee voted to approve the holding of a Zoom Diocesan Synod.
3. On 25 September, the Committee approved a set of Model Parish Bylaws that had been created by the Constitution and Canons Committee for the Diocese. These can be provided to new or existing parishes.
4. On 24 October 2023, the Rev. Josiah Jones was voted as President.
5. On 26 October 2023, the Rev. Barton Gingerich was voted a board member of St. George's School.
6. The Standing Committee met via Zoom on 8 February 2024, 25 April 2024, 25 June 2024, and 5 September 2024, mainly to discuss issues related to the Episcopal Search and to fulfill canonically mandated duties related to the list of candidates for Bishop Coadjutor.
7. On 5 September 2024, the Committee certified the list of The Rev. Canon Jason Grote, The Rev. Dr. Gregory Peters, and the Rev. Gregory Miller.

8. On 25 February 2025, the Committee approved the Diocesan Clergy Wellness Handbook.
9. On 9 April 2025, the Committee agreed to the plan to have Bishop Manto appoint the Delegates to the ACNA's Provincial Council.
10. On 22 April 2025, Fr. Jones submitted to the national Constitution and Canons Committee five proposals related to Canon 11 of the REC's Canons. This was submitted on behalf of the Standing Committee. These proposed edits reflect the experience of our Diocese in the election of Bishop Grote, and contain recommendations regarding the number of candidates required by the Canon, moving and deleting sentences which are out of place or no longer relevant, clarifying the Standing Committee's duties after the Search Committee has passed on its recommended candidates, revising the voting process, and deleting or moving other material.
11. On 25 July 2025, the Committee affirmatively rejected Bishop Manto's canonically required resignation. Canon 19 Section 5 (a) and (b) stipulate that upon attaining the age of seventy-five, a Minister is considered to have tendered his resignation on his birthday, unless "affirmatively rejected by a majority of the Vestry, Standing Committee, or General Committee to which the resignation must be offered." By God's Grace, Bishop Manto will serve as Bishop Ordinary until Bishop Grote is installed as Bishop Ordinary at General Council 2026.
12. On 16 February 2026, the Committee voted to Incorporate the Diocese of the Central States.

Respectfully submitted,

The Rev. Davidson R. Morse, President of the Standing Committee, Diocese of the Central States