



TO: Active Clergy, Wardens and Parish Administrators  
FROM: The Rev. Canon Augusta Anderson  
RE: Resources for the 101st Annual Convention of the Diocese

Bishop José and I are grateful for the many ways you serve Jesus in your parish and the wider Church. We appreciate you taking the time to read this letter and follow the provided links in preparation for our Annual Convention in November.

The 101st Annual Convention, November 10–11, will be held in Hendersonville at St. James Episcopal Church. Two prelude to convention gatherings, which are open to all in the diocese, will be held at St. John in the Wilderness, Flat Rock, on November 9–10. We are deeply grateful for the clergy and lay leadership of St. James Episcopal Church and St. John in the Wilderness for helping host our annual convention gatherings later this fall.

We are thrilled to share that our keynote speaker will be the Rev. Becca Stevens, chaplain at St. Augustine's Episcopal Chapel in Nashville, TN, since 1995 and founder and president of Thistle Farms in Nashville. Becca Stevens is a speaker, justice entrepreneur, and author. She has been featured on PBS NewsHour, The Today Show, CNN, ABC World News, named a CNN Hero, and White House Champion of Change, holds five honorary doctorates, and raised over \$75M in funding for justice initiatives. Drawn from 25 years of leadership in mission-driven work, Becca leads important conversations across the country with an inspiring message that love is the strongest force for change in the world. Thistle Farms has worked with survivors of prostitution and exploitation for over 25 years to create communities where women can heal. The model provides housing, healthcare, and employment; a network of sister organizations across the United States; and a community of advocates who believe that love heals. For more information, visit [www.thistlefarms.org](http://www.thistlefarms.org).

We are also excited to share that ***we are expanding convention this year by offering two optional prelude to convention gatherings***. Both prelude events are open to everyone in the diocese, not just lay delegates and clergy. You are invited to join Becca Stevens for Savor and Share, a dinner and keynote conversation Thursday, November 9. You are also invited to Prior Ponderings on Friday, which includes two workshops and lunch. One workshop will be with Becca on Friday morning, followed by lunch, then an afternoon workshop will be with a diocesan team who will facilitate a conversation on the biblical ethic of creation care and offer a toolkit of practical steps for communities of faith. We hope these gatherings will be an opportunity for both fellowship and deeper learning. [Registration](#) for both Thursday evening

dinner and Friday workshops are on our convention website and will be limited to the first 100 people.

We also want to share that we will host a ***Pre-Convention Virtual Budget Road Tour*** by Zoom on Tuesday, September 12, at 6 p.m., and Thursday, September 28 at 6 p.m. The Treasurer of the Diocese and other members of Bishop José's staff will present the proposed 2024 budget. This will be a time for clergy and lay leaders, especially lay delegates, to offer feedback and suggestions to the funding of our mission in the next year. Two weeks prior to the event, we will share the Zoom link in a separate, diocesan-wide email as well as in the Events page on our website.

The ***New Delegate Orientation*** meeting will be held virtually on Wednesday, November 8 at 6:30 p.m. New delegates will need to register for this orientation event, and we will then email all new delegates the Zoom link. More information is on our website.

Bishop José looks forward to gathering with everyone on Friday, November 10 for our Convention worship service at 6 p.m. at St. James Episcopal Church, where the bishop will offer his Convention Address. Convention convenes on Saturday morning promptly at 9 a.m. sharp at St. James, and we will conclude all business by Saturday afternoon at 4 p.m.

This year, we continue to simplify both the process and all platforms used to prepare for Convention, including registration, communication, and delivery of any convention materials. This year we will once again use the ***Whova*** App for communication, voting, and posting documents or other media presentations. Likewise, information and materials will be located on the designated [convention page](#) of our diocesan website. One of the essential documents that your parish will need to complete in order to send delegates is the [Vestry Certificate of Election](#); **this will be due no later than October 27, 2023.**

On the convention web-page you will find [the primary registration link](#) for anyone who attends Convention (clergy, delegates, spouses, non-voting visitors). You will also find all secondary registrations on the diocesan website. Please know there is a fee for each person attending Convention; this fee helps defray the costs associated with hosting this important event. You will also find links to area hotels that are providing a convention rate for those who need to make reservations for lodging. You will need to reserve hotel accommodations prior to October 1, 2023, when the hotels will release the reserved rooms to the general public.

Likewise, on the convention web page is information and the form for nominating persons to elected positions. We encourage everyone to prayerfully discern qualified and passionate individuals who are willing to serve and actively participate in the ministry of our diocese.

Again, thank you for your ministries. If you have questions, please feel to contact me at the Diocesan Offices (828-265-6656).

In Christ,

*Augusta Anderson*

The Rev. Canon Augusta A. Anderson  
Canon to the Ordinary & Chief of Staff