

The Shepherd's Staff Newsletter

The Right Reverend D. M. Ashman

May 2026

Diocese of the Western States Synod

The Synod opened at Saint Joseph of Arimathea Theological College on April 21st with a noon mass celebrated by the Very Reverend David Nepier assisted by Father Glenn Karcher.



After mass, we were all treated to sumptuous lunch in the back house which was hosted by the ladies of Saint Joseph's. We then moved to the Morse House library and lecture room where Carol Karcher led a group of about twelve of us in a discussion of the whys and wherefores of an efficient altar guild including her own Sunday altar duties.



We later moved to a smaller lecture room adjacent to the stacks where we “explored” old scrapbooks of the early days of our diocese and province, most of which was compiled by Archbishop Morse’s wife Nancy. The day concluded with a service of Solemn Evensong led by Canon Matthew Weber and Father Glenn Karcher.



On Wednesday at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Walnut Creek Bishop Peter Hansen and Bishop Ben Jones (of the Atlantic States’ Diocese) celebrated a 8:00 a.m. mass. At 9:00 a.m. Father Rick Gregory gave a talk on *The Journey of a New Rector*. At 10:00 a.m. the Standing Committee (Bishop Hanson, Bishop Mitchell, Bishop Ashman, Elaine Moal, Canon Shaddix, Canon Dart, Father Hines (acting secretary), Gillian Golden and Erin Salazar (via zoom)) met and interviewed men for potential ordination. After a lunch break, at 1:00 p.m. the Board of Directors (Bishop Ashman (ex officio), Bishop Hansen (chairman), Father Gordon Hines (vice chairman), Dr. Mary Collier, Colonel Willam Canda and Patsy Ronat) met to assess the finances of the Diocese and create a budget). At 3:00 p.m. the Synod formally opened with a formal reception given by the Anglican Church Women culminating in the annual Bishop’s Auction (hilariously emceed by Archdeacon Mautner) the proceeds of which are used to help clergy attend Synod.

Wednesday also saw Synod Delegate Registration begin under the care of Nona Gourley, Gillian Golden (both at right), the Las Vegas Ladies, and Anne Figge with Fr. Rick Gregory both from St. Barts. (There were also a lot more helpers who came by)



On Thursday, April 23rd, an 8:00 a.m. mass was celebrated by Father Hines and Seminarian Colin O’Conner. At 10:00 a.m. Canon Shaddix gave a lively and remarkable survey of the *Apocryphal Books of the Old Testament*. At 11:30 a.m. the ACW-Clergy luncheon was enjoyed followed by Anglican Churchwomen conference at 1:00 p.m. during which a great idea was put forward by Christine Sunderland who volunteered to interview one of our ACW members each month to be published in the *Shepherd’s Staff*. [The first one is in this edition]



The Clericus began at 1:30 p.m. and Bishop Ben Jones of the Atlantic States spoke for a few minutes about his work in his diocese. Bishop Scott Mitchell then led a lively discussion of how we might appeal to the unchurched and especially the youth. At 3:00 p.m. they were joined by the ladies of the ACW and Fathers Charles Newcomb and Andrew Harrah led Evening Prayer. That evening the clergy dined out and most laity dined at the hotel or at nearby restaurants.



On Friday, April 24th, Synod Delegate Registration began at 8:30 a.m. and the Synod business meeting began at 9:00 a.m. with Morning Prayer led by Canon Steven Dart and Father Benjamin Brown. The business meeting lasted a little under two hours. Canons were modified or adopted; officers were elected and appointed and resolutions were adopted. Lunch was on our own.





The Pontifical Mass (below) began at Saint Martin of Tours in Concord at 3:00 p.m. The preacher was Bishop Scott D. Mitchell who consecrated sacred oils for the clergy (above).



After the Pontifical Mass everyone returned to the Embassy Suites. There was a reception at 6:00 p.m. and the Synod Banquet and ACW Drawing followed at 7:00 p.m. On Saturday morning, April 25th, Father Shaddix celebrated an eight o'clock Eucharist assisted by Father Ory Schultheis



Synod had ended See you next year.

A Report: Women's Lenten Bible Study 2026

Christ Anglican Church; Carefree, Arizona

The women of our Parish and community had the opportunity to study and reflect on Bishop Hansen's book *I Was There: Eyewitnesses at the Foot of the Cross*.

God time, Girl Time and a wee bit of coffee! In the nine-week series we explored: Who is the Dreamer? Who is the Younger Sister? Who is the King of Nowhere? Who was told "What do you want with Him?"

Bishop Hansen zoomed in twice during the nine-week series. He read to us, reflected with us, engaged us with meaningful questions, and ministered to each lady! Bishop also told us the origin of the book and felt inspired in many passages.

Comments from the Group: [The] Bishop writes with such emotion; We feel like we were right there with the people; We felt what the people felt; We didn't know some of these characters; This could be an opera; I never thought of it from this perspective; Will Bishop write more books like this? We will buy them!

Bishop Hansen has agreed to do a book study for anyone from the Province. More details to follow soon! You won't want to miss this opportunity!

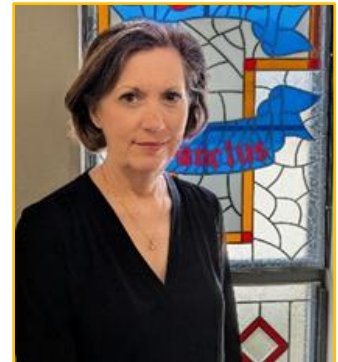
Shalom-Deaconess Jocelyn Obermeyer

Anglican Church Women (ACW) Profile:

Alysa Newcomb

by Christine Sunderland

Alysa and her husband, Fr. Charles Newcomb, have been serving at the Anglican Church of the Holy Cross in Oklahoma City, a parish in the Anglican Province of Christ the King, during a season of exciting growth. She recently became Anglican, coming from a Baptist background, and she's helped shape a culture of welcome as new faces join their church family.



Christine: What first drew you to the Anglican tradition (or what has kept you here)?

Alysa: I followed my husband although I have come to love and appreciate our tradition.

Christine: If a friend from your Baptist days visited on Sunday, what would you want them to know before they walk in?

Alysa: Don't sit by yourself on the front row, for you will not know when to sit or stand. I'm kidding! I would encourage them to keep an open mind and look for similarities (not differences) our approach to worship. I would also encourage them to use the Prayer Book and notice how much of the material is directly quoted from scripture. The Prayer Book may not cite the chapter and verse, but much of it is pulled directly from the Bible.

Christine: What do you love most about your parish community?

Alysa: The people.

Christine: Do you have a favorite hymn, prayer, or collect? What makes it special?

Alysa: My current favorite hymn is "The King of Love My Savior Is." The first time I really heard it was at Synod last year. There was a pause in either morning or evening prayer and someone just started singing. It was very moving. My 2nd favorite (currently) is "Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silent." I think it is based on a passage from the Old Testament, in the book of Habakkuk. It is a beautiful hymn.

Christine: What's been the most joyful part of watching a small parish grow?

Alysa: The most joyful part has been watching our parishioners welcome guests and newcomers. It is very rewarding to see people greeted and welcomed and to know the church embraces them.

Christine: What's been the hardest part (or the biggest learning curve) that you didn't expect?

Alysa: Great question. Not sure I will answer this one but would love to hear other answers.

Christine: Is there a ministry, outreach, or community partnership you're excited about right now?

Alysa: Some of the ladies from our church are reading through the Bible in a Year. We started in April and would welcome any other women who would like to join us. I am passionate about reading scripture and believe it should be part of our daily practice as believers. This is not about reading the Bible so we can say we have done it. Rather it is about incorporating this into our daily lives for the rest of our lives so we can begin to truly know God.

Christine: Tell us a little about your background (where you're from, work, interests)—whatever you'd like to share.

Alysa: I grew up in Oklahoma City and have lived here most of my life. I am a CPA and work with Charley in our small business, Newcomb Solutions LLC. We have a very cute dog named Wednesday (aka Winnie).

Christine: Who has been an important influence in your life of faith?

Alysa: My parents (especially my mother) were probably the most important influence in my faith along with many teachers and church leaders. My parents loved the church, valued scripture and taught us the importance of giving. Bishop Ashman recently asked a very similar question at the clergy and wives dinner at Synod, and many of the men answered that Bishop Morse was most influential. I never had the pleasure of meeting him, but I am extremely grateful for my parents and believe he and my parents are worshiping together today.

Christine: What is your favorite church tradition:

Alysa: Weekly Coffee Hour and snacks at Holy Cross.

Christine: What book (or devotional) do you recommend?

Alysa: Knowing God by J.I. Packer.

Christine: Thank you, Alysa, for contributing this great interview to "The Shepherd's Staff!"

If you would like to be interviewed for The Shepherd's Staff ACW page, please contact Christine at CSunderland47@gmail.com.

Bishop Mitchell visits and Confirms at St. Peter's



ACW-DWS Notes, May 2026

The 35 th Synod and ACW meeting has come and gone! So much was accomplished in those three short days. ACW raised almost \$2,000.00 in the Drawings, with \$620.00 of that coming from Carol Karcher's beautiful cross-stitch picture of Peonies. The "Peonies" money will go to St. Joseph of Arimathea Seminary Student Support, with the remainder going to the Diocese of the Western States for 'as needed' projects, including Bishop Morse Youth Camp and Student Support at the Seminary. A heartfelt 'Thank You' to all those who provided items for the drawings, and to all who bought tickets!

ACW had a very successful annual meeting, with much discussion and brainstorming. Plans are being made to have regular Zoom sessions to keep members in touch so that we can exchange ideas and plan fund-raising and other topics. Watch Shepherd's Staff for more news!

Thank you to those parishes which have already sent in their Lenten Mite Box money, and a gentle reminder to those who have not yet done so. Please collect the boxes, count the money and have the treasurer of your church make out a check for the final amount to Provincial ACW, with a notation Lenten Mite Boxes, and send it to: Gillian Golden, P.O. Box 558, Selma, OR 97538-0558. The money goes to St. Joseph of Arimathea Seminary Student Support, and your church will be remembered at the altar at St. Joseph of Arimathea Chapel.

Gillian Golden, ACW-DWS President