



## Action Steps to Strengthen the Upper Midwest

Over the last four years, diocesan leaders have taken multiple steps to strengthen our diocese and equip churches to protect vulnerable populations. The Upper Midwest has partnered with outside experts and organizations, hired staff, ratified new governing documents, and developed policies and practices that seek to help better prevent, identify, and respond to abuse. These diocesan policies are not intended to undercut churches' previous policies, but to ensure that every diocesan church follows the same minimum standards.

### **Governance 2021-2023**

Following a comprehensive review of the diocesan Constitution and Canons by the American Anglican Council and two diocesan Task Forces, delegates at our annual meeting voted to adopt a new Constitution. Changes to the Constitution require a majority vote at two consecutive annual meetings (Dec 2022). A year later delegates ratified the Constitution and voted to adopt the revised Canons (Dec 2023). These are a few of the many revisions that were adopted:

- Diocesan Assembly restructured into Synod,
- Bishop's Council restructured into Standing Committee,
- Synod and Standing Committee have increased powers and duties,
- Restructuring of Deaneries and the Deans roles,
- A new canon distinguishing between congregations and missions,
- A canon on protection of the vulnerable, and
- Title IV clarifications and strengthening of the process for handling accusations against priests or deacons,

**Dec 2023-2024** Based on the restructuring in the Canon for Congregations and Missions, action was taken to clarify the status of the two remaining churches that are connected to the Greenhouse Movement, and a Wisconsin mission work.

### **Safeguarding 2022-2025**

New safeguards created and Safeguarding Coordinator position developed to protect vulnerable parishioners and attendees

- Safeguarding Coordinator hired
- Ministry Worker Handbook & Policy for Protection of Children and Adults approved (May 2025)
- Safeguarding Coordinator chairs new & ongoing Safeguarding Committee
- Registered Sex Offender policy review by third-party experts (May 2025)



### **Accountability/Catholicity 2024-Present**

The Standing Committee voted to become a member Diocese of [ACNA West](#)

- UMD became the seventh diocese to join this group of partnering dioceses

“In the early days of the ACNA, many dioceses were formed without regard to their capacity to function with all of the necessary components of diocesan life and mission....the vision of building dioceses collaboratively has emerged, and the result is a stronger partnership in the gospel for participating bishops and their dioceses.” (ACNA West Accord 2024)

- ACNA West initial initiatives: Misconduct Office, Church Planting, Replication, Equipping Lay Leaders, Examining Chaplains, Theological Formation, and Bishop Collegiality.
- **Abuse Response - ACNA West Misconduct Office:**  
The people of the Upper Midwest gained full access to [ACNA West](#)'s Misconduct Office, overseen by an Intake Officer with more than 20 years of experience in misconduct reporting, procedures, care, and policy creation.
  - The Misconduct Office has female or male reports receivers available for anyone with complaints concerning clergy, staff, or laity within member dioceses.
  - View the diocesan misconduct reporting page [here](#).
- **Board of Examining Chaplains:**
  - Assists Dioceses to assess candidates for ordination
  - Canon Stephen Gauthier and Canon John Clark participate
- **Bishops Collegiality:**  
Bishops support one another in meeting the challenges of mission and ministry.
  - Monthly meetings for prayer and discussion
  - Annual week-long retreats that include prayer, relationship development and shared biblical vision for the church.
- **Advisory team for investigations:**
  - Serves as resource for member dioceses with any needed internal investigation
  - Canon Brenda Dumper serves on this team
- **Annual ministry reviews:**
  - Bishop, Canon to the Ordinary, rectors, and all active clergy

### **Communication**

Newsletters to the Diocese

- **Stories** Encouraging ministry highlights from around the Diocese
- **Leaders' Latest** Interviews to introduce you to laity and clergy in the Upper Midwest
- **News Roundup** Updates from the Standing Committee and Task Forces