



**EPISCOPAL DIOCESE
OF RHODE ISLAND**
Providence, Rhode Island

Chief Financial Officer
Start Date: January 2022
episcopalri.org



**Carney
Sandoe**
& ASSOCIATES



EPISCOPAL DIOCESE *of Rhode Island*

OVERVIEW

Served by The Right Rev. W. Nicholas Knisely, Rhode Island's 13th Bishop, the Episcopal Diocese of Rhode Island is a gathering of the 52 Episcopal Churches in the state. Bishop Knisely and his staff support congregations as they carry out their mission and ministries. They provide resources and educational opportunities to encourage spiritual development and outreach in the churches of this diocese, as well as in the greater community. Together, the Bishop and churches work to perform large-scale ministry no church could operate alone, such as the Camp@ECC summer camp, Hispanic Ministries, ministries on college and university campuses, and more.

The Diocese is seeking a Chief Financial Officer (CFO) to assume the role in January 2022. The CFO is responsible for overseeing a broad array of business and financial operations of the Diocese. While it maintains a relatively modest budget and lean staff, the Diocese is quite complex in terms of systems and structure. Possessing excellent judgment, interpersonal communication, presentation and critical thinking skills, the CFO ranks as an Executive Staff team member. As such, the CFO plays a key role in strategic planning and exhibits an entrepreneurial and collaborative spirit in problem solving and opportunity management. The CFO reports directly to the Bishop of the Diocese.



HISTORY OF THE DIOCESE

The Diocese was founded in 1790 by two clergy and five members of the laity, representatives of the four charter churches of the diocese. Supported by its bishops, the Episcopal Church in Rhode Island continued to expand in both number of parishes and parishioners. By the end of the 19th century, the Diocese had grown to 35 parishes.

In the first part of the 20th century, the Church focused on urban ministry with a focus on social concerns. The first deaconess was ordained in 1890, and from 1910 to 1914 the number of women serving in this position had grown from one to seven. The number of parishes continued to grow.

From 1955 to 1972, the Diocese was led by John Seville Higgins. Among Bishop Higgins' accomplishments was the establishment of Episcopal Charities. Bishop Frederick H. Belden led the church through the transitions occasioned by the ordination of women to the priesthood and adoption of the 1979 *Book of Common Prayer*. Bishop Belden ordained Patricia A. Smith as the first woman deacon of the Diocese in 1976 and Jo-Ann J. Drake as the first woman priest of the Diocese in 1978. Belden was succeeded by George Hunt, who served as bishop from 1980 to 1994. Hunt led a crusade for accountability by the state government on the issues of corruption, organized crime, and gambling. He also insisted that the process for ordination in the Diocese not discriminate against anyone on the basis of gender or sexual orientation. In 1996, Geralyn Wolf was consecrated, becoming one of the few women serving as a Diocesan bishop.

W. Nicholas Knisely was elected the 13th Bishop of Rhode Island on June 2, 2012, and consecrated and ordained Bishop on November 17, 2012. His initial focus has been on children and youth, appointing a staff person to serve as the full-time director of the Diocesan camp. He has also encouraged the growth and renewal of congregations. Under his leadership, the Diocese has funded the restart of congregations and is starting specialized missions.



THE DIOCESE TODAY

More than 200 years after its founding by the four colonial parishes, the Episcopal Diocese of Rhode Island has grown to 52 congregations with over 15,000 communicants. The Diocese today is more representative of the broad social and economic fabric than is typically the case in the Episcopal Church. There are a few parishes with a sizable percentage of African American parishioners, and some congregations that have become the spiritual homes for people who have fled the civil war in Liberia or come from other African countries. There is a rapidly growing Hispanic congregation in Central Falls and another in Cranston which has just launched a third congregation. Most congregations make a point of openly welcoming gay and lesbian members, some are known for their welcome of the unhoused, and one has started a “street church” in downtown Providence, the Church Beyond the Walls (CBW).

The Diocese is served by [leadership groups](#) of clergy and laity from its congregations who set priorities, establish policies and procedures, monitor finances, and find ways to support congregations and their leaders as they carry out the mission of the church. The Diocese has five regional groups of congregations that work together to perform local ministries and to nominate candidates for Diocesan positions. The Diocesan Convention is the legislative body of 300 which includes bishops, clergy, and elected lay delegates from each of the Diocese churches who assemble annually for the purpose of attending to the business of the Episcopal Church in Rhode Island.



MINISTRIES

The Diocese serves its parishioners and communities through a variety of [ministries](#).

A variety of children and youth ministries are offered by the Diocese. Most congregations offer Christian formation programs for children, and several have active youth ministry programs. Happening sessions, a spiritual retreat for young people, are held twice a year at ECC. Nightwatch is an overnight spiritual retreat held for middle and high school age students.

College-age and young adults are served through college chaplaincies at the University of Rhode Island and Rhode Island School of Design, and through a new young adult ministry.

Hispanic Ministries include an education program for laity who will serve in the congregations and help expand reach to other Spanish speaking community members.

The Center for Reconciliation (CFR) helps program participants learn about the history of slavery, the slave trade, and its legacies. Its mission is to equip people for the practice of racial reconciliation.

The Episcopal Conference Center (ECC) situated on 189 acres in Pascoag, Rhode Island is available for retreats, meetings, weddings, and events. The ECC features a main house with meeting rooms, a kitchen, and bedrooms; cabins; and Grant House, with three bedrooms and a small kitchen.

Camp@ECC offers a variety of camp sessions over the summer for children, teens, families, and people with special needs. Camps include offerings designed specifically around music and creative arts, young leaders, and celebrating summer's end, in addition to age-specific camps.

Episcopal Charities solicits funds and provides grants to programs and agencies that serve those in need, children, youth, and the elderly.



CATHEDRAL OF ST. JOHN

The parish was originally organized in 1722 as King's Church, a wooden structure that was renamed St. John's Church in 1794, after the American Revolution. That wooden building served Providence until 1810 when work began on what would become the Cathedral of St. John. The Episcopal Diocese of Rhode Island was formed in 1790, but it was not until 1929 that St. John's Church was designated the Episcopal seat and was renamed the Cathedral of St. John.

In 2012 the congregation suspended services due to increasing deterioration of the building and a lack of funds to address the building's needs. After a series of meetings, the diocese decided to make the Cathedral the home of the Center for Reconciliation (CFR). Shortly thereafter, the Church Beyond the Walls (CBW) made the Cathedral its home. In 2018, the diocese re-opened the office wing and lower level which serves as the Exhibit Hall for the Center for Reconciliation. Rhode Island for Community and Justice joined the CBW and CFR, sharing the offices, conference room, kitchen, etc.

The building still needs significant renovations, especially to the main church on the second level and the Sunday School rooms and library on the East side of the building. The Cathedral Preservation Fund has been established to raise funds for this effort. Meanwhile, four groups are now using the space for their programs and to invite the community in. The Cathedral is becoming a true cathedral — the place where the sacred and secular meet.

PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND

Providence is the capital and most populous city in the state of Rhode Island, the country's "Ocean State" known for sandy shores and seaside Colonial towns lining its winding coastline. Home to approximately 180,000 people, Providence is the third-largest city in the New England region. Founded in 1638, it is also one of the oldest cities in the country.

The city is home to two very prominent educational institutions, Brown University and the Rhode Island School of Design (RISD). Brown is consistently ranked by U.S. News and World Reports as a top university in the country, and both attract students and professors from around the world. The result is a city filled with rich cultural and ethnic diversity.



Most of Providence’s attractions are organized into four neighborhoods: Downcity, which includes the core of the downtown area; Federal Hill, a neighborhood known for its nightlife and Italian dining; and College Hill/The East Side, site of Brown University and RISD, featuring smaller neighborhoods with some of the city’s oldest homes, eclectic shops, and restaurants. South Providence is home to many restaurants that feature cuisine for every taste, especially Spanish and Chinese. The neighborhoods are walkable and great to spend a day in on foot enjoying the city’s historic charm.

Providence’s many museums, including the Museum of Natural History and Planetarium, Providence Children’s Museum, RISD Museum, and two historic mansions (John Brown House Museum and Governor Henry Lippitt House Museum), provide further enrichment opportunities for tourists and residents alike.

While it is an urban capital city, Providence boasts an impressive array of green space and recreational opportunities. Nationally recognized for its outstanding design, Waterplace Park is the focal point of Providence’s revitalized downtown. This four-acre urban park surrounding a tidal basin features an amphitheater, landscaped terraces, and boat landings. Roger Williams Park, with more than 430 acres to enjoy, is comprised of outdoor gardens and the Roger Williams Park Zoo. India Point is perfect for water lovers where the Community Boating Center offers sailing lessons and recreational boating opportunities. Newport and other beautiful beaches and seaside towns are only a short drive from Providence.



OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

The next Chief Financial Officer of the Episcopal Diocese of Rhode Island will report directly to Bishop Knisely and be a member of the Executive Staff of the Diocese. Charged with overseeing all financial operations of the Diocese, the CFO will also play a central role in building and property management and human resources. The new CFO needs to be a strategic thinker and a problem solver, dealing with complexity and historical context with any number of issues.

The successful candidate will succeed Dennis Burton, who is retiring. Dennis has been with the Diocese since 2014. The CFO oversees an operating budget of \$4.8 million and an endowment of roughly \$60 million, which holds many funds that are restricted. Forty-two percent of Diocesan revenues come from apportionments from the parishes (15% of parish revenues); other revenues come from investment income, rentals, and camp fees. Dennis initially turned his attention to cash management and creating a rolling five-year forecast. Subsequently, he has been a central figure in strategic planning, tracking risk, and shifting investments into more socially responsible equities.

Key issues for the Diocese and the CFO going forward include deciding how best to utilize the buildings located on the Diocesan Block in Providence, the solar farm project at the Episcopal Conference Center (ECC) in Pascoag, Rhode Island, and, to lesser extents, the future of the Center for Reconciliation and the Cathedral building itself. Additionally, there is a need to firm up the human resources function, and the Diocese recently retained an HR consultant to assist in this area.



The Diocesan Block includes the office building that houses the Bishop and his staff; Hallworth House, a former skilled nursing facility that was ceased operations during the COVID-19 pandemic; the Cathedral itself, which suspended operations in 2012 and has a significant amount of deferred maintenance; and the Edwards Homes, five houses located on the eastern side of the block that contains 20 low-income rental units. The solar farm project at the ECC is proceeding, albeit slowly due to regulatory considerations. The Center for Reconciliation has temporarily suspended its in person operations, but the Diocese will be looking to secure its proper niche within the state going forward.

Although leaving the Diocese, Dennis will assist with the new CFO transition and training and continue to consult solutions for the Diocesan Block and its future as well as the solar farm that will become a key financial driver for the Episcopal Conference Center.

The next CFO will supervise a full-time Finance Director and part-time bookkeeper and collaborate with the Diocesan Treasurer in meeting all accounting and finance responsibilities. In addition to Bishop Knisely, the CFO will work closely with The Rev. Canon Dr. Dena Cleaver-Bartholomew, Canon to the Ordinary. The successful candidate must have a full commitment to the mission of the Diocese and a humble, systematic, and curious approach to the challenges at hand. In sum, the next CFO must be the ultimate multitasker, willing to get his or her hands dirty and take on, and solve, significant challenges.



KEY DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Diocesan Accounting and Finance

- Lead the Diocesan financial team consisting of a full-time Finance Director and part-time bookkeeper and work closely with the Diocesan Treasurer (a separate, governance-related position) in fulfilling Diocesan accounting, financial management, analysis, budgeting, forecasting, reporting, audit, and banking responsibilities.
- Serve and consult with Diocesan Investment Committee trustees responsible for oversight of the Diocesan Investment Trust.
- Serve as liaison to Diocesan churches as a resource to support financial analysis, including hosting occasional church treasurer workshops, and help resolve financial and accounting issues.

Building and Property Administration

- Envision and collaboratively develop solutions for building and property use and administration.
- Lead responsibility for Diocesan buildings and property maintenance, repairs, and improvements, including a maintenance team of five.
- Supervise the leasing of Diocesan property as well as the sale of property designated for liquidation.
- Maintain appropriate and cost-effective insurance coverage for all Diocesan properties.



Executive Staff

- Provide ongoing, strategic counsel and guidance to the Bishop for emerging entrepreneurial opportunities as well as crisis management.
- Participate in a variety of ongoing Executive Staff meetings and Diocesan management meetings and committees.
- Prepare and deliver the Diocesan budget and forecast presentation at the annual Diocesan Convention.
- Collaborate in managing various human resources issues on a Diocesan level, including compliance with State and Federal HR regulations, as well as in helping to resolve HR issues on a parish level.
- Assume additional responsibilities as deemed appropriate.

DESIRED QUALITIES AND QUALIFICATIONS

- At least 10 years of experience (reflecting advancing responsibilities) in business and financial management, including budget preparations, forecast preparation, audit process, and financial reporting.
- Demonstrated skills in team building, project management, and communication.
- Ability to lead and motivate others, exhibiting an open mind in a highly dynamic evolving environment and complex business model.
- Degree required in business, accounting, or finance. Master's degree and CPA certification preferred.
- Experience in faith-based, non-profit organizations advantageous but not required.



TO APPLY

Interested and qualified candidates are invited to contact the consultant in confidence. Candidates will ultimately need to submit the following materials as separate PDF documents:

- A cover letter expressing their interest in this particular position.
- A current résumé.
- A list of five professional references with name, relationship, phone number, and email address of each (references will not be contacted without the candidate's permission) to:

John Clark

Senior Consultant

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