

The Standing Committee of the Episcopal Diocese of Albany



The Very Reverend Tom Malionek, *President*
Janet Papa, *Secretary*

March 1, 2023

The Standing Committee of the Episcopal Diocese of Albany is the Ecclesiastical Authority of the Diocese while the office of Bishop is vacant. Visit <https://albanyepiscopaldiocese.org/standing-committee/> for a list of Committee members.

These are highlights only. Some matters and details are sensitive, personal, or not ready to report. We do not comment on deliberations. We welcome communication from around the diocese. Please view us as people of good will, and trust the Holy Spirit to guide us all.

Today's Standing Committee highlights were unavoidably delayed. Thank you for your patience and understanding.

At its meeting on **Monday, February 20, 2023**, the Standing Committee took up, among others, the following matters:

1. Accepted with reluctance the resignation of John Hyde from the Standing Committee. John has served the diocese with distinction in many capacities over the years. We are grateful for his service on the Standing Committee and pray that the Lord will continue to prosper him in his life, work, and ministry.

2. Appointed Debbie Bisner (Christ Church, Schenectady) to fill the lay seat vacated by John Hyde.

As with all interim appointments and elections, the incumbent serves only until the next diocesan Convention, when the seat will be open and a successor elected to fill the remainder of the term of the vacated seat.

3. Appointed Standing Committee member Chris Cassidy to represent the Standing Committee the Albany Diocese Investment Trust (ADIT) Task Force. The Task Force, convened by the Trustees of the Diocese, includes representatives of all of the relevant governing bodies of the Diocese, will research options and make recommendations to the Trustees.

4. Welcomed a report from Bishop Smith on the monthly Life in Christ series being co-taught via simulcast at the Christ the King Center and the Stanton Center in the Diocese of Dallas. The class has been so successful that it will be repeated next year, along with a second-level, follow-on class for those who have completed the first year.

5. Considered proposals regarding vacant diocesan staff positions.

6. Approved an updated Renewal Application for Licensed Clergy.

7. Consented reluctantly to the granting of letters dimissory for canonically resident clergy departing the Diocese.

Disciples Making Disciples

8. Initiated a process of identifying potential satellite sites for the upcoming Diocesan (business) Convention on Saturday, June 10, 2023. These sites, located around the diocese, will make it possible for deputies without reliable broadband internet connectivity or who require technological assistance to work from a location with wi-fi. The satellite centers will also afford parish deputies who do not have other alternatives to confer in votes by orders as required.

As noted on the [Convention page of the diocesan web site](#), each deputy and canonically resident clergy person must have a unique personal device for use during the Convention webinar, and must have a unique e-mail address (not shared with other clergy or deputies)

A number of satellite sites have already been identified; locations will be announced when the Pre-Convention meetings are scheduled.

Parishes are reminded to submit their [Certificates of Election of Delegates](#).

Clergy are reminded to [register](#) separately.

9. Determined not to entertain resolutions involving amendment or alteration of the canons of the diocese at the upcoming Convention.

In 2021, the Standing Committee, as Ecclesiastical Authority of the Diocese, sought, obtained, and accepted the legal opinion of the Chancellor on the question of whether an Ecclesiastical Authority other than a Bishop may decide whether or not to allow canonical amendment or alteration resolutions to the Diocesan Convention.

On that basis, at the past two Conventions, virtual in 2021 and in person in 2022, the Standing Committee did permit such resolutions, on the supposition that Convention debate would move the diocese toward consensus, and that actions of Convention would be graciously received.

We recognize the significance attached by some to the alteration of diocesan canons, and by others to their retention. We have also listened to forecasts that failure to repeal the canons jeopardizes the election or consecration of the next Bishop. Still, we are encouraged by positive developments: the Profile & Search Committee has worked for the common good of the Diocese despite opposing views on a range of questions. The Task Force on Communion Across Difference has begun to build a community of mutual respect and trust.

The decision to limit Convention resolutions to those needed for the conduct of regular business is based on a conviction that more widespread informal efforts akin to these — person-to-person listening and prayer that will enable us to move toward generous mutual understanding and reconciliation — seem to us a critical prerequisite if debate and legislative action at a convention are to build unity and a renewed sense of common purpose.

This decision will also allow us to use this time to focus resources, efforts, and prayer on the far more demanding and resource-intensive special convention to Elect a bishop who, with God's help, will shepherd us toward reconciliation and healing.

In the absence of clear and obvious certainties, let alone agreement, faith in God's love and in the power of the Holy Spirit must guide us all. We trust that the Lord loves our Diocese better than any of us can. We pray, and urge prayer: for peace; for healing; for God's blessing on one another; for humility; and, especially in this season of Lent, for the gift of our own repentance.

Please continue to use the Prayer in Time of Transition, and watch for news of the Election Process on Thursdays.