

# The Standing Committee of the Episcopal Diocese of Albany



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

March 14, 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.*

At its meeting on **March 6, 2023**, the Standing Committee took up, among others, the following matters:

- 1. Approved**, on the recommendation of the Election Consultant, the use of SMG Corporate Services as the provider of background investigation services for bishop candidate semifinalists.
- 2. Received updates** on the status of Child Victim Act lawsuits involving former clergy of the diocese.
- 3. Accepted with appreciation** a report of the work of the Administration subcommittee.
- 4. Appointed** the core members of a team to begin planning the consecration of the Tenth Bishop of Albany. The initial team consists of Deacon Brian Nordwick (Election Consultant), Sue Ellen Ruetsch, Dean Leander Harding of the Cathedral of All Saints, and Fr. Tom Malionek. They will work closely with the office of the Presiding Bishop.
- 5. Welcomed** the news that a number of parishes around the diocese have graciously volunteered to serve as “satellite” centers for the 2023 diocesan Convention. Satellite Centers will make reliable internet connection available to clergy and parish deputies, and afford parish deputations the ability to confer. The centers will named when the pre-convention meetings are announced.
- 6. Appreciated** a report on Christ the King Center. Use of the Center is on the rise, work is being completed on the Library, and a \$20,000 has been received from a fund operated by The Episcopal Church to support, through electronic media, educational and training programs that will assist parishes in their work and ministry.

## About communication

The Standing Committee is committed to keeping the congregations and people of our Diocese aware of important developments. To that end, in addition to the work we do to sustain the diocese, not only in biweekly meetings but behind the scenes almost around the clock, we have taken on the additional task of issuing these regular communiqués. Many of you have expressed your appreciation for these regular reports, limited though they must be. We are grateful, in turn, for so many who contact us with information, suggestions, perspectives, questions, and criticisms. God be praised that so many love the Lord Jesus, our diocese, and its people so deeply, and have our diocesan mission of discipleship and discipling so much at heart.

## *Disciples Making Disciples*

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Part of our responsibility is to decide what, and how much, information to release. We certainly weigh the benefits of any disclosure against the need to safeguard confidentiality and to prevent harm. We also have to exercise stewardship of the resources and time and available to us, so as to focus on necessities. We do take all input and feedback seriously; under ideal circumstances, we might also have the luxury of more extensive reporting, or of engaging in detailed conversations and correspondence. (Actually, under ideal circumstances, it would be a Bishop, not a committee, communicating with you!) As it is, each Standing Committee member has multiple pressing responsibilities and a full schedule. Accordingly, we must take care to give priority to ensuring that the worship, discipleship, witness, and business affairs of the diocese continue, while simultaneously preparing for the election of our next diocesan bishop.

The staff of the diocese is likewise small, yet they do everything that needs to get done. They, too, are working beyond capacity. They serve the clergy, congregations, and people of our diocese with impressive dedication, unparalleled professionalism, amazing graciousness, and consummate good humor. Please be considerate of the demands on their time, and be sure to thank and assure them of your unqualified support.

In all that we do, we pray, ask for the Lord's guidance, and rest in faith. Faith that we need not be perfect in order to serve God and his Church responsibly. Faith that the Holy Spirit does, and will, make up what is lacking in our efforts, and will guide our diocese — albeit by ways that might seem less than optimal — in our daily affairs as well as in discerning and voting for a bishop. Faith that God has, in fact, already selected the next bishop. With monastic poet Thomas Merton, we trust that God will lead us by the right road, even when we are unaware of it,\* and with Saint Paul that all things work together for good for those who love God ([Romans 8:28](#)). Ultimately, we trust Jesus' promise to be with us still ([Matthew 28:20](#)) and not to abandon us as orphans ([John 14:18](#)).

Faith and trust beget faith and trust, along with other fruits of the spirit, and serve the common good. For this reason, we consider it our duty and vocation as Christians to exhort and encourage those things that make for peace.

Do not be anxious about anything. Instead, in every situation, through prayer and petition with thanksgiving, tell your requests to God. And the peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is worthy of respect, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if something is excellent or praiseworthy, think about these things. And what you learned and received and heard and saw in me, do these things. And the God of peace will be with you ([Philippians 4:6-9](#))

Please keep these thoughts in mind. They underlie everything we send out.

We make it a point to pray for you daily. We commend ourselves to you, asking that you pray for us in turn.

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\* Thomas Merton, *Prayer of Trust and Confidence*, in *Thoughts in Solitude* (New York: Doubleday Image, 1968), p. 76.

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