

# The Standing Committee of the Episcopal Diocese of Albany



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

September 19, 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.*

Owing to the press of preparations for the electing Convention this past September 9, the Standing Committee has not been able to publish regular highlights of its meetings. Our commitment to keeping the Diocese informed remains, however, and we are glad to return to sharing news with you.

At its meeting on **Monday, September 18, 2023**, the Standing Committee took up, among others, the following matters:

1. **Prayer.** We always make it a point to surround everything we do in prayer. This is no mere, perfunctory formality. In order to perceive, think, listen, deliberate, decide, and act with integrity requires us to make a sustained effort to stand under the guidance and judgement of the Holy Spirit. Prayer reminds us that anyone in authority is also under authority, and of our need to be humbly submissive, docile and willing instruments in the hands of God for the sake of the diocese and salvation of the world.
2. **Welcomed Bishop-Elect Fr. Jeremiah Williamson**, who joined us for part of the meeting. The process of introducing Fr. Jeremiah systematically to diocesan leadership bodies, such as the Standing Committee, Diocesan Council, Trustees, and other committees, commissions, and boards, and their current incumbents, has begun. This process will ramp up gradually.  
Amid great rejoicing at the successful completion of the Election, it is natural to be eager to begin sharing not only congratulations and expressions of support, but also concerns, ideas, and information. Out of respect for his and his family's time during a very demanding season of transition (planning for the Consecration ceremony, making arrangements to find housing and schools, moving to New York State, orientation to the House of Bishops, and lots and lots of paperwork), we ask our brothers and sisters to exercise restraint to allow him to complete the immediate tasks confronting him. We expect that Fr. Jeremiah will have completed the geographic transition by early 2024. Welcome, Bishop-Elect Jeremiah!
3. **Welcomed Deacon Justine Guernsey** to the Standing Committee. Deacon Justine was appointed to fill the seat formerly occupied by Mother Jean DeVaty, whose resignation at an earlier meeting was accepted with reluctance and gratitude for her service on the Committee. As with all interim appointments, Deacon Justine will serve until the next regular annual Convention of the Diocese, at which time the seat will be filled by election for the remainder of the term.
4. **Adopted minutes** of the meetings of September 5 and September 9, 2023. Both of these were concerned almost entirely with matters pertaining to the Election.

*Disciples Making Disciples*

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5. **Heard a report from Diocesan Treasurer Terry Mumby** regarding increased insurance premiums and coverage. She will work with the Trustees and Diocesan Council to develop approaches to optimize our insurance coverage and expenses.
  6. **Designated** SMG Corporate Services to conduct required background investigations of staff and volunteers at both the Diocesan and parish level. Parishes can expect a seamless transition from the former provider. The arrangement to forward reports to the diocese (to save parishes the expense, burden, and liability of compliance with strict Federal security regulations) will continue. Information will be disseminated to Deans soon, who will then distribute it to their deaneries.
  7. **Approved cost reimbursement** to General Convention Deputies and (eventually) Alternates for mandated anti-racism training.
  8. **Approved a Diocesan Development Fund grant** to Trinity Church, Gouverneur.
  9. **Instructed the Standing Committee's Administration Subcommittee** to review funding for The Albany Episcopalian.
  10. **Heard a report from the President of the Standing Committee** regarding:
    - the consent process to the election of Fr. Jeremiah
    - planning for the Consecration ceremony
    - preparation of briefing materials for Fr. Jeremiah to bring him on board
    - Community of Hope International training undertaken by the Deans
    - ongoing developments and progress in Child Victim Act lawsuits
    - progress of audits
  11. **Accepted with regret** the resignation of Fr. Alistair Morrison as chair of the Commission on Ministry, and expressed great appreciation for his dedication to that work as the postulants and candidates remaining in the process completed requirements and were ordained.

In the absence of a Bishop, there is always a moratorium on applications for discernment of a vocation to Holy Orders. The Commission has no business before it at this time. Appointment of a new chair will be left to the next Bishop.
  12. **Accepted with regret** the resignation of Fr. Tom Papazoglakis as Interim Director of Deacons, Director of Deacon Formation, and member of the Christ the King Oversight Board. We are grateful to Fr. Tom for his many important contributions to the diocese through service on these bodies, and keep him in prayer for refreshment and reinvigoration.
  13. **Appointed the Rev. Justine Guernsey** Interim Director of Deacons. She will serve as the principal point of contact for all deacons and deacon deployment matters. Bishop Smith remains responsible for all clergy (deacon and priest) disciplinary matters; Fr. Brad Jones remains intake officer for all matters involving deacons and priests.
  14. **Appointed the Rev. Alistair Morrison** Project Manager for work on the South Swan Street properties as identified by a task force composed of representatives of the Standing Committee, Diocesan Council, and Trustees. Fr. Alistair is well qualified for this work by training and many years of experience with property management and historic restoration. We are grateful to him for serving in this capacity.
  15. In his opening remarks, Bishop-Elect Jeremiah spoke of the need to “develop trust” for the sake of “unity within the diocese.” To that end, the Standing Committee has **instructed Bishop Smith to open an ongoing conversation with the Bishop-Elect** to share his perceptions of us over the almost three years he has served as our Assisting Bishop, so that Fr. Jeremiah can become aware of needs and begin praying for inspiration, creativity, and guidance in bringing that about.
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