

Annual Report of Standing Committee

2018

For the Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Central Pennsylvania, the Rt Rev. Audrey Scanlan, Bishop

In actions this year, the Standing Committee

- Affirmed candidacy and ordination of 7 people brought forward in the ordination process
- Affirmed 4 bishops-elect
- Appointed the interim diocesan treasurer
- Appointed a co-convenor for Southern Convocation
- Appointed a member of the apostolate to fill a vacancy on Standing Committee
- Sent to the 2018 Diocesan Convention a resolution to research gender equality in the search and hiring of priests and rectors in our diocese

The Standing Committee organized itself this year to intentionally cover the 4 areas of responsibility canonically given to it—matters in The Episcopal Church, primarily affirmation or refusal of affirmation for bishops-elect; the Ordination Process; Diocesan Property, and Counsel to the bishop. This clarity of organization is seen in the Standing Committee's current monthly agenda, and also in the appointed representatives from Standing Committee to the Commission on Ministry and Finance Committee, detailed below.

In a new practice meant to keep pace with our Bishop's vision for this diocese, Standing Committee has completed its third year of study to develop a leadership sense of missional focus on the changing church. Each year for the last 3 years, SC has studied a book together. This year, the committee studied Participating in God's Mission, a Theological Missiology for the Church in America, by Craig van Gelder and Dwight Zschelle. Meetings now include 20 minutes of leader development spent in discussion of missional formation in congregations and levels of a church's judicatory.

The main work done by Standing Committee this year has focused on recognizing the appropriate boundaries of SC responsibilities

- In the ordination process
- In affirmation of bishops-elect
- In approval of requests to encumber church property
- In support of Bishop Scanlan's initiatives for the health and growth of the diocese

Our most significant work clarified Standing Committee's role and responsibilities in the ordination process. The Committee engaged in an intensive study of what is appropriate,

necessary and good, and what work is NOT appropriate to Standing Committee when engaging in the ordination process . A methodical overview of every step in the ordination process required by canons and as practiced currently in the Diocese, accounting for all responsibilities, all exchanges of required information and all documentation, is now on record for all three diocesan entities involved: the Standing Committee, the Bishop and her office, and the Commission on Ministry.

The fruitfulness of this work so far is a new level of relationship between Standing Committee and the Commission on Ministry. The two groups now exchange questions asked of postulants, candidates and ordinands. In addition, the SC representatives who attend COM meetings, report on people in the process before they come to SC for interviews, acquainting SC members with people in the process, and giving insights into the gradual formation of each, so that no person comes to an ordination interview cold and without background. In the coming months, COM and SC will have a retreat together, the aim of which includes deepening the understanding and trust between both groups, and effecting an improved rhythm of work in the process overall. Standing Committee is particularly concerned with the need in this diocese for clergy with an appropriate focus on the changes in the church and our emerging diocesan missional identity.

Articulating the actual canonical responsibilities and role of Standing Committee over the past 3 years has, this year, resulted in Standing Committee adding tasks of representation to its work. A representative attends Finance Committee meetings, another 2 representatives rotate attendance at all COM meetings, and a member of Standing Committee studies and reports on the progress of all TEC bishop resignations, diocesan Search Committees, and candidates prior to electing conventions. The SC representatives attend Finance and COM meetings with voice but not vote. They report to SC at their next meetings, so that SC members will be fully informed and prepared when matters, or in the case of the COM, postulants and candidates come to them for affirmation. Besides this, 2 members of Standing Committee are charged with preparing and conducting the time in the meetings devoted to the ordination interviews themselves.

Through trial and revision this year, Standing Committee has been reaching for an effective interview process for postulants, candidates and ordinands, one that makes for considered inquiry, still leaving time in each meeting for prayer, silence, and timely address of regular Standing Committee business.

This year, Standing Committee changed from meeting 6 times a year, to meeting 11 times a year, the better to accommodate the actual progress of postulants, candidates and ordinands, and to give the Bishop the flexibility she needs for ordaining those who have reached that point in the process.

Standing Committee now meets on the 1st Tuesday of every month but August, in the Diocesan House, starting at 1 p.m., lasting 2-3 hours.

Respectfully submitted,

Charlotte Weaver-Gelzer, President of Standing Committee