

Report of the Standing Committee to Diocesan Convention

September 19, 2011

Several years ago, when I was first elected the Standing Committee, the work of the group was described to me as being a little like serving on a volunteer fire department—most of the time things are quiet, and you hope they stay that way, but once in a while things are very busy. For most of this past year, things were quiet. Since the announcement of our bishop's coming retirement in June, things have been busy indeed.

The Standing Committee, following the canon law of the Episcopal Church, is composed of lay persons and clergy of the Diocese, working in partnership with the bishop of the Diocese. The Standing Committee also serves as a council of advice to the bishop.

The primary canonical responsibilities of the Standing Committee are: overseeing Title IV of the canons with the bishop (clergy discipline and misconduct); review and approval of any sale or encumbrance of property by the parishes or the Diocese; giving consent to all elections and consecrations as bishop in the Episcopal Church; consent to candidacy for ordination, and for ordination to the diaconate and priesthood.

The Standing Committee takes on additional responsibilities in the event of a vacancy in the office of bishop in our diocese. The President of the Standing Committee serves as vice-president of Diocesan Council.

Normally, there are eight members of the Standing Committee, four priests and four lay persons. The present members with their area of responsibility and term of office are as follows: Joseph Allen – Title IV, (2013), Paul Croteau – Property (2012), the Rev. Thomas Damrosch – Secretary (2011), the Rev. Janice Ford –Commission on Ministry (2012), Nancy Lowry – Commission on Ministry (2014), the Rev. Catherine Munz – Commission on Ministry (2014), Judith Phillips – Title IV (2011), and the Rev. Meredyth Ward – President (2013).

Standing Committee attorneys are Donald J. Allison, Hamilton Doherty and Vincent F. O'Rourke, Jr.

Between September 2010 and September 2011 the Standing Committee took the following actions:

- accepted, with deep regret, the announcement of the coming retirement of our bishop in December of 2012.
- created a time line for the events leading up to the ordination of our ninth bishop
- recommended to the Diocesan Council revised rules for the election of our ninth bishop
- selected The Rev. Dr. Richard Simpson as chair of the Search Committee, The Rev. Tanya Wallace as chair of the Transition Committee, and Mr. Milton Barnes as Chaplain to the election committees
- selected members of the Search and Transition Committees
- hired Ms Lynn Schmissrauter as consultant to the election process
- held a retreat for all members of the Standing Committee and Search and Transition Committees
- approved the sale of property by St. James, Great Barrington; St. Georges, Lee; Good Shepherd, West Fitchburg; and Trinity, Ware
- approved the request for loans by Trinity, Milford; and St. Andrew, Longmeadow

- affirmed the agreement by St. Mark's , Adams and St. John's, North Adams to consolidate their congregations as All Saints Church
- consented to the ordination of Elisabeth Tunney to the diaconate and priesthood
- consented to the ordination of Robert Williams to the transitional diaconate
- consented to the election of a bishop coadjutor for the dioceses of New York and New Hampshire
- consented to the election of a bishop suffragan for the dioceses of Haiti and Virginia
- consented to the episcopal elections of Daniel Hayden Martins, Ralph William Franklin, Michael Pierce Milliken, George Dibrell Young, Joseph Scott Barker, and Marian Edgar Budde

Respectfully submitted,
The Rev. Meredyth Wessman Ward
Standing Committee President