

Report of the Standing Committee to the 134th Annual Convention of the Episcopal Church in Colorado - October 7-9, 2021

Purpose: The Standing Committee serves three primary purposes: 1) It has canonical functions and responsibilities per the national canons of the Episcopal Church as well local canons; 2) It functions as the legal Board of Directors of the non-profit Colorado corporation known as “The Bishop and Diocese of Colorado;” 3) It serves as a council of advice for the Bishop regarding the life and ministry of the Episcopal Church in Colorado.

In its canonical capacity, the Standing Committee serves as an arm of the Episcopal Church charged with consenting to the election of Bishops, and it interviews every candidate for ordination as part of its responsibility to certify to the Bishop their completion of the requirements for ordination.

In its corporate capacity, the Standing Committee approves the annual budget and recommends it to the Convention, approves Diocesan policies and compliance, approves requests for property alienation and encumbrance, approves board appointments to Diocesan Institutions, and communicates with congregations as needed.

As the council of advice to the Bishop, the Standing Committee participates in both strategic planning and ongoing review of policy and finance for the Episcopal Church in Colorado.

Current Membership: Officers:

The Rev Terry McGugan, High Plains Region, Christ Church, Denver, President
The Rev. Amy Lythgoe, Front Range Region, St. John’s, Boulder, Vice-President
Mr. Rick Parker, Front Range Region, All Saints, Loveland, Secretary
The Rev Kim Seidman, Chaplain (Non-member)

Members:

Ms. Jan Johnson, NW Region, St. Peter’s, Basalt.
The Rev. Jeremiah Williamson, Sangre de Cristo Region, Grace, and St. Stephen’s Colorado Springs
Mr. Rick Parker, Front Range Region, All Saints, Loveland.
Mr. Darren Armstrong, High Plains Region, Church of the Redeemer, Denver.
The Rev. Caitie Green, NW Region, St. Paul’s, Steamboat Springs
The Rev. Debbie Shew, SW Region, St. Mark’s, Durango
Ms. Nancy Jones, Sangre de Cristo Region, St. Michael’s, Colorado Springs
Mr. Ken Rodgers, SW Region, St. Patrick’s, Pagosa Springs

Members ending terms:

The Rev. Terry McGugan, High Plains Region, Christ Church, Denver
Mr. Ken Rodgers, SW Region, St. Patrick’s, Pagosa Springs

Structure: Each of the five regions of the Diocese elect two members, one clergy and one lay, to serve a term of three years, with the possibility of re-election to one additional term. After a second consecutive term, a member must serve a year’s hiatus before being eligible to run for any additional terms.

In addition to the ten elected members, The Standing Committee includes two ex-officio members: the Bishop and the Diocesan Treasurer, Jay Swope. The Diocesan Chancellor, the Director of the Colorado Episcopal Foundation, and members of the Bishop's Office attend meetings as their expertise and experience are needed.

Each year, the Standing Committee elects a President, Vice-President, and Secretary from among its members, who serve, along with the Bishop and the Diocesan treasurer, as an Executive committee to respond to corporate needs and undertake delegated duties between regular meetings.

The Standing Committee typically meets five times a year for a day and a half, usually in January, March, May, August, and November. In October, we also participate in the Annual Convention and conduct an annual two-day planning and visioning Retreat during the Spring. Meetings include time spent in spiritual formation as inspiration and guidance for the deliberations that follow. The Standing Committee has been meeting through Zoom over the past year and hopes to resume in-person meetings in 2022.

Summary of the work of the Standing Committee: Since the last Convention, the Standing Committee has continued to act as a Council of Advice to the Bishop as she and her office have managed the church's ongoing response to the Covid-19 pandemic. During this past year, the Standing Committee has embarked on several initiatives for the benefit of the church. First, a parish vitality study has been initiated to identify parishes in the Diocese that might need assistance and support to address issues brought on by the pandemic. This Vitality Study will further assist those parishes most impacted to address any problems identified. The by-laws of the Standing Committee were reviewed and were found in need of revision. The by-laws were repealed and replaced with new by-laws that better equip the Standing Committee to do its work effectively and efficiently. A study of how Healthcare benefits are managed by parishes has been conducted. The objective of this study was to see how the General Convention resolutions addressing Healthcare benefits were being implemented on the parish level, how parishes were managing their Healthcare benefits cost, and how these practices on the parish level compare with the practice of the office of the Bishop. Our findings were mixed and varied and will be used to inform best practices for how Healthcare benefits might be managed in the Office of the Bishop and in parishes. A subcommittee was formed to study the barriers to diversity on the Standing Committee and other leadership positions in the Diocese. The subcommittee on diversity is continuing its work by compiling suggested strategies that the Standing Committee could adopt to remove barriers to diversity and make leadership positions in the councils of the church more accessible. Finally, a subcommittee was formed to study and assess regional grant guidelines. The subcommittee has worked with the regional executive teams and missionaries to draft new regional grant guidelines to bring clarity, unity, and consistency to this vital work. The Standing Committee, as an extension of the Diocesan Convention composed of regionally elected lay and clergy representatives, has been hard at work this past year to make the church stronger and more resilient. It has been good work, hard work, but not without its pitfalls and struggles. The members of the Standing Committee have taken on their work with dedication, energy, and faith. The hope is our work will continue to empower the Episcopal Church in Colorado to be a beacon of light for the gospel in the world.

Submitted by The Rev. Terry McGugan, Standing Committee President