

Report from the Standing Committee to the 2019 Annual Convention

INTRODUCTION

Since last year's Convention was largely focused on the election of our new bishop, this report covers the work of the Standing Committee for the past two years.

These two years have been ones of change for the Episcopal Church in Colorado. We have said a heartfelt goodbye to our Bishop of fifteen years, The Right Reverend Rob O'Neill, and have elected and are welcoming to Colorado our eleventh Bishop, The Right Reverend Kimberly D. Lucas (Kym) and her family. With this change in leadership we are entering a new era.

Bishop Rob entered at a time of great strife. His gift to us has been to help this diocese find a spirit of calm, build a healthy culture, create a renewed sense of community, attract talented clergy, establish a vision of an outward-looking mission-driven church, and implement vital elements of that vision.

In Bishop Kym, as with Bishop Rob, we have chosen a young, yet seasoned member of the clergy. We have been welcoming her as she gets to know the Episcopal Church in Colorado and works with lay and clergy to carry out the work we are called to do.

THE WORK OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE

During the past two years, the Standing Committee spent roughly half its time on matters relating to the Bishop Search, Election, Consecration, and Transition. The remainder of our time was spent on our canonical duties, our role as a Council of Advice to the Bishop, and on our duties as officers of the Diocese as a Colorado nonprofit corporation. In all our work we were helped immensely by our Chaplains, the Rev. Michelle Danson, who served through the election, and by the Rev. Sarah Berlin, who served until this Convention. Their work in guiding our spiritual formation efforts, along with that of their predecessor, the Rev. Elizabeth Randall, helped us build a community of trust that could make necessary and difficult decisions in a timely manner. The Standing Committee was also fortunate in maintaining continuity of membership during this period. We continued our work without needing to bring new members up to speed.

THE BISHOP SEARCH, ELECTION, CONSECRATION, and TRANSITION

With the announcement of Bishop Rob's retirement, the Standing Committee began its search work by engaging the Rev. Canon Rick Callaway, a former Canon to the Ordinary from the Diocese of Atlanta, and one of twelve consultants from the Office of Pastoral Development recommended by the Presiding Bishop to advise dioceses embarking on a search for a new bishop. Canon Callaway shared "best practices" and was very responsive as inevitable questions arose.

We were further aided by the counsel of our Chancellor, Larry Hitt, our Treasurer, Chuck Thompson, Bishop Rob, and members of his staff.

Early on, we created five committees to help with the process: The Profile Committee, the Search Committee, the Election committee, the Consecration Committee, and the Transition Committee. We knew each would need lead time to prepare for the tasks before them.

The Profile Committee was tasked with accurately portraying the Episcopal church in Colorado so candidates would understand the complex nature of our diocese. The Committee was chaired by the Rev. Peter Floyd, then the Rector of St. Michaels in Colorado Springs, and ably aided by Mike Orr, the Communications Director for the Office of the Bishop. The members included Helen Barron, the Rev. Sandra Boyd, the Rev. Rebecca Brown, Lena Sewell, Beckett Stokes, and the Rev. Hollis Wright.

The Search Committee was tasked with identifying and vetting, to the best of their ability, four candidates, anyone of whom should be eminently qualified to lead our diocese in all its diversity. The Committee was chaired by Jay Swope, ably assisted by co-leaders the Rev. Elisabeth Randall and Mr. Jack Finlaw, along with the Rev. John Wengrovius, who served as Chaplain, and Michael Vente, who served as Administrator. The members included Darren Armstrong, Julie Campbell, Carol Gerard, Rev. Wendy Huber, Nancy Jones, Rev. Nicholas Myers, Rick Parker, the Rev. Rich Paul, Angie Thomson, and Rev. Leigh Waggoner.

While the Standing Committee requested four candidates, circumstances late in the process gave us two finalists. With advice from our consultant, we determined that a fully viable election could be held with two candidates, and, in fact, was not all that uncommon.

The Election Committee was tasked with conducting a fair and impartial election. The effort was chaired by the Rev. Mary Kate Rejouis and aided by the Bishop's staff.

The Consecration Committee was tasked with recommending a venue, and designing and carrying out, in concert with Presiding Bishop Curry's staff, the liturgy and logistics of the Consecration. The Committee was chaired by Dean Richard Lawson, and ably assisted by The Rev. Canons Broderick Greer and Katie Pearson. Members included H. Michael Akin, Diane Cast, Elizabeth Cervasio, Tina Clark, The Rev. Cynthia Espeseth, The Rev. Canon Greg Foraker, The Rev. Cesar Hernandez, Alexis Hertel, Durango Jenkins, Dr. Lyn Loewi, Charles Martin, Nancy McClung, Caroline McCormick, Debbie Mead, Mike Orr, Linda Paysinger, Adam Pierson, The Rev. Mary Kate Rejouis, The Rev. Sierra Reyes, Sandie Spurlock, Michael Vente, Mason Whitney, and The Rev. Brian Winter.

After thoroughly researching venues, it became clear that the Cathedral was the most appropriate setting for the Consecration. Their efforts yielded a deeply majestic, moving and meaningful liturgy.

The Transition Committee was given a huge list of tasks aimed at helping our new Bishop and her family move to Colorado and take up their new life with as little stress as possible. Carolyn McCormick chaired the effort. A separate Walk-About Committee was appointed to design and conduct the week-long visit by the candidates and their spouses to the Diocese. Nancy Jones chaired that effort with the aid of many volunteers from the visited parishes.

NATIONAL CANONICAL RESPONSIBILITIES

The Standing Committee reviews each candidate for Holy Orders to ensure that all requirements for ordination have been met. We also make time to meet each candidate to get a sense of who they are and what gifts they bring to the Diocese.

The Standing Committee votes to approve or withhold approval of the results of elections for Bishop in the Dioceses of the Episcopal Church. Only when the results appear to arise from some failure in the process, do Standing Committees withhold approval. Somewhere between ten and twenty Elections for bishop are voted on each year.

DIOCESAN RESPONSIBILITIES

Financial and Budgetary Matters: The Standing Committee each year reviews with the Treasurer a proposed budget for presentation to the Annual Convention. In recent years, the Standing Committee has worked with the Bishop's Staff and the Treasurer to prepare a five-year financial plan that is reviewed periodically.

3The Standing Committee met with the President of the Colorado Trust to review the relationship between the Diocese and the Trust. Since the Trust disburses funds to the Diocese, maintaining a healthy relationship is important. The Standing Committee also approved a redirecting of the proceeds from the Trust to go directly to the diocesan budget, from which disbursements are made to the Office of the Bishop and to the endowment managed by The Colorado Episcopal Foundation.

Cathedral Ridge: The Standing Committee received the report of consultants to the Diocese describing the condition of the institution. The consultants reported that there is a sound basis for carrying forward the work of Cathedral Ridge. Based on this report and the five-year plan presented by the President of the Board of Cathedral Ridge, the Standing Committee approved the five-year plan for Cathedral Ridge, including the level of funding that will be provided by the Diocese.

Property Matters: The Standing Committee is asked at almost every meeting to approve changes in church property. Prior to that approval, the Property Advisory Committee, made up of professionals working in the field, plus the Chancellor, reviews proposals, requests clarifications and changes, and submits completed requests to the Standing Committee for final review and approval.

Committee and Board Membership Approvals: The Standing Committee is asked to approve new and returning members to Committees and Boards of Diocesan Institutions.

COUNCIL OF ADVICE

The Episcopal Church in Colorado is one of the few dioceses to add the functions of a Council of Advice to its Standing Committee. This approach enables the policy-making Standing Committee to broadly explore issues with the Bishop upon which it will later be asked to act. The Bylaws of the Diocese outline seven tasks for the Standing Committee in its role as a Council of Advice: 1) To assist in supporting the Bishop in framing and implementing shared sustainable vision; 2) To establish appropriate policies and guidelines in response to Diocesan and General Convention resolutions, and for other needs as they arise; 3) To allocate an appropriate level of funding to accomplish the mission and vision of the Episcopal Church in Colorado; 4) To implement a process of helpful reflection and dialogue with and among Diocesan Staff and all advisory commissions and committees established by the Bishop; 5) To foster open communication and dialogue among all members of the Episcopal church in Colorado, especially the clergy, laity, parishes, and regions in order to seek a greater sense of unity, growth, and well-being; 6) To model healthy organizational behaviors among ourselves based on values of Christian love, healing, respect, restraint, and reformation; and 7) To encourage supportive and healthy relationships between ourselves and all members, groups, and organizations of the Episcopal Church in Colorado.

This past year, the Standing Committee went on retreat with Bishop Kym to concentrate on the issue of racism and how we will act to be a welcoming community. We explored the many ways, both overt and hidden, that racism arises, and promised to equip ourselves to be ambassadors of racial reconciliation by identifying and confronting racial bias within ourselves and our Committee.

CONCLUSION

These two years have encompassed great activity and change. This Convention marks the resumption of change in the membership of the Standing Committee. Delegates will elect three new members to the Standing Committee and elect in her own right an interim appointment from last year. We have new issues facing us and we have those tenacious matters that require continuing effort. Let us all, on the Standing Committee and throughout the Diocese, do everything in our power to know each other and take part in shaping the next work to be done.