

Minutes of the Standing Committee of the Episcopal Diocese of Rochester

September 28th, 2022

6:30pm via ZOOM

Present: Mr. Michael Davis, Mr. Joseph DaBoll-Lavoie, The Very Rev's Leslie Burkardt, Ruth Ferguson, Kenneth Pepin; Mr. Floyd Bayley, The Rev. Nita Byrd;The Rt. Rev Steve Lane,

Absent: Mr. Jeremy Cooney,

Michael read through the document of "**Covenantal Practices**"

Leslie began us with **prayer** on Openness by Thurman.

Previous minutes were approved with noted correction of our consultant Gary being referred to as Bruce. Moved by Leslie and Seconded by Joe approved by all present

Consent for the Bishop of Virginia was moved by Nita and seconded by Floyd. All present were in agreement.

Bishops report: Bishop Steve brought to our minds and hearts some pastoral concerns of the diocese. Clergy having experienced the loss of loved ones. Other clergy having left the diocese specifically Josh Barrett, Jimi Sue Deppe. New clergy Columbo Salome in Penn Yan.

He offered us an update on our seminarians and our deacons expressing concern and some structural changes that will be necessary in the months and years ahead. He spoke of the amount of stress that many of our seminarians are under causing some to take a leave and others to pull out all together. He concluded that our seminary education no longer fits the needs of our church. He related to us some of the struggles that COM is dealing with educational expectations of deaconate candidates requiring full seminary programs and CPE without any real financial support. Such conditions leave the ministry only open to retirees. Other topics such as parochial scholarships etc were discussed.

He updated us on recent Title IV concerns.

He filled us in on staff changes that go into effect October 1st Debs will continue to oversee the Discernment process, Virginia will be hired part time as Overseer of Transitions and J Ross will be the chaplain for the retired clergy. Keisha Stokes and Gretchen Ratterree will head up the youth ROC the diocese program.

Bishop Steve also informed us of a culture change reflecting that some of our churches are not holding Sunday services every Sunday and reminded them that as a church we legally need to be open on Sunday . He noted that these churches are considered rather fragile. He is proposing we begin looking at providing these worship communities the status of mission rather than parish which would allow the trustees of the diocese to oversee the financial assets etc.. Perhaps thinking in these terms we may be

looking at a Missioner position to oversee a cluster of these small churches as many are too small to afford a full time and in some cases a part time clergy person.

There is a new structural change to our Safe Church training that has gone into effect September 1st. Apparently it requires that individuals need to first contact the diocese for the code to begin and the videos are shorter in length.

There are two pre-convention meetings October 4th Budget concerns October 20th Opportunities for the SC to reflect our progress.

Finally, Bishop Steve informed us that the SC got glowing reports on our recent retreat with leadership and that our spirit of collaboration was felt.

Discussion on next steps for the Sub Committee and the Listening Sessions

The sub committee brought to us what was included in reports in our shared folder which concluded the following

We are intending to begin our Listening session in October. We will begin with the Southern Tier. We will take the lead on the sessions and welcome the supportive role of leadership from COM, TRUSTEES and the Council. We will seek support from Sarah and Kristy to engage these communities. The Sub Committee agreed to meet soon to come up with a plan of action to get the ball rolling.

Transition Process for Electing a New Bishop

We have begun the transition process for electing a new bishop by entering into an extensive period of discernment which includes intensive listening sessions throughout the diocese. These sessions will be organized by the previously formed sub-committee of the Standing Committee.

The motion was moved by Nita and seconded by Leslie and all present were in favor.

Elections: Following some discussion we agreed to postpone elections until the first meeting of the new Standing Committee which I believe will take place immediately following the Convention via zoom.

Nominees however were voiced.

Having no further business we reflected on how our meeting went. Adjectives such as honest, transparent, productive, respectful, healthy, appreciation, gratitude, a bit long, could be more efficient.

Nita closed us with a meditative prayer on water and wisdom.

Our next meeting will be October 26th. We will meet in person at St Peter's Henrietta in the Diocesan Office suite. We will celebrate our outgoing members following our business session. Given this we will be meeting at 4:00pm. This will be our last meeting prior to convention.

Your not so secretly suffering page, Ken

