

Episcopal Diocese of Rochester
Standing Committee
Via Zoom conference
9/7/21

Present: The Rt. Rev. Prince Singh; the Rev Cameron Miller (president); the Very Revs Leslie Burkardt, Ruth Ferguson, Kenneth Pepin; Floyd Bayley, Joseph DaBoll-Lavoie, Michael Davis, Carolyn Mok (secretary).

Guests: the Rt. Rev Todd Ousley; Kristy Estey, Todd Rubiano, diocesan staff.

Meeting was convened at 7:02 pm.

Opening prayer was offered by Bishop Singh.

Transition to new bishop.

Bishop Ousley was present as the staff member from the Presiding Bishop's staff working as the bishop for the Office of Pastoral Development. Bp Ousley said that the process started when Prince told the Standing Committee that he was interested in pursuing a new vocation after serving as diocese for the past 13 years. Bp Ousley noted this was within the norm for tenure.

He told us the usual timeline from the announcement to depart to consecration of a new bishop-elect is 18-24 months. He said that the two year process includes time to process Prince's departure before starting the search.

It is now the practice, we were told, to have a Provisional bishop elected before starting the search process. We should plan for 2-3 months from the announcement to Prince's departure and an active beginning of the transition.

Bp Ousley also said a good leave taking leads to good beginnings. Prince should craft his departure narrative, and leave 3-4 months from his announcement to departure. It should include: what's happening, why it happened, and what will happen next. The Standing Committee should review his statement as well as write its own. With luck we will be able to interview and present a candidate for provisional bishop to the next diocesan convention on 10/30/21.

There is an entire recommended leave-taking process that includes an exit interview with Prince that will also serve as data to include in the discernment that will shape a profile for the new bishop. A leadership team will need to be selected by the Standing Committee to put together a formal process of leave-taking culminating in an event both liturgical and social, to celebrate Prince's tenure.

As noted above, it is customary to have a provisional bishop. Bp. Todd will provide us with a single candidate for our approval, he already has a person in mind. Questions we should ask the interim bishop: How he sees his role in the diocese, what did he learn during his own tenure as diocesan bishop. Bp. Ousley can fill the breach if there is a gap between bishops. He can meet with the diocesan staff and deans during the interim as well.

Standing Committee immediate tasks are:
support Prince in this transition;
engage the diocese about Prince's departure,
write letter to the diocese,
interview and approve a provisional bishop for election at convention.

Standing Committee has governance/responsibility to the diocese during the interim. A leadership team can also be recruited which would include some ministry district deans and maybe the diocesan deans. The ideal number of people on such a leadership team would be no more than fifteen, no fewer than eight.

Standing Committee also has a role in looking for a new bishop. The discernment for a new bishop should be led by a consultant appointed by the Standing Committee. A profile committee would then be formed (perhaps also conducted by the Standing Committee), then a separate and independent nominating/search committees.

Immediate Timeline:

Letters to the diocese will be written by the next Standing Committee meeting (tentatively scheduled for 9/22, 4-6 pm).

Prince will inform Trustees, who meet 9/8; diocesan council, who meet 9/22.

Diocesan leadership team will be notified on eve of the letter to the diocese, 9/24.

After Bp. Ousley and diocesan staff left the meeting, it was moved to ask Bp Ousley to commence the process for getting a provisional bishop. Moved Leslie/seconded Ken.

Prince announced that Sarah Butler is getting married. Standing Committee will send card, flowers celebrating her event.

Once around was done.

Meeting was adjourned at 9:03 pm. Next meetings will be: 9/22 at 4-6 pm; dinner meeting at 9/29.

Bp. Todd's contact information: tousley@episcopalchurch.org; 646-983-9445.

Respectfully submitted,
Carolyn Mok