



Episcopal Diocese of Pennsylvania
MEETING of the STANDING COMMITTEE
Minutes

Meeting of Feb. 23, 2021

APPROVED

Call to Order at 5:00 p.m. by Jones.

Clergy Present: Hilary Greer, Jo Ann Jones, Michael Ruk

Laity Present: Ron Francis, Colin Johnstone, Eric Rabe, Pat Smith

Also present: Bishop Daniel Gutierrez

The Agenda was adopted unanimously.

Opening Prayers were offered by the Bishop and by Francis.

Minutes/Notes: Minutes of the Jan. 26, 2020 meeting were approved by unanimous vote.

Election of clergy member to replace The Rev. Michael Rau:

Rev. Rau has accepted a call from outside the Diocese and under the Canons Standing Committee elects a new clergy member. Last month the election was postponed when several members expressed a desire to use the opportunity to increase the representation of smaller churches on Standing Committee.

Hillary Greer presented a study of representation on Standing Committee by church size. The study showed that although 76% of the parishes of the Diocese have an Average Sunday Attendance (ASA) of fewer than 100, only 14% of Standing Committee members come from these small parishes. Greer said that that smaller parishes face unique challenges and require different management from larger ones. This has been recognized nationally, she added. Discussion ensued. Johnstone noted that even small parishes are not necessarily homogeneous and an individual parish may easily include people of various classes, races, economic situations, etc. Rabe commented that it is important that governance represent the broad diversity of the people in the pews across the Diocese besides church size. Jones noted that a Nominating Committee annually proposes governance members for election and, therefore, that body is best positioned to address representation.

After discussion, Ron Francis nominated The Rev. Jill LaRoche-Wikel, of St. John's Concord to serve out the remainder of the term of Rev. Rau that expires in November 2021. Rev. Wikel has served 17 years in the Diocese. Francis said that Wikel served in a parish with an ASA of 50 before being called to St. John's which has an ASA of about 100. Francis and Greer believe that Wikel will seek nomination to Standing Committee at the next Convention.

Jo Ann Jones nominated the Rev. Sean Mullen, St. Mark's, Locust St., a former member of Standing Committee to fill the unexpired Rau term.

Rev. Wikel was elected by secret ballot.

Interview of The Rev. Jeremiah Musterd

Deacon Jeremiah Musterd is a candidate for the priesthood. Related paperwork has been circulated. Jeremiah is serving as an interim Deacon-in-charge, St. Pauls, Oaks. He conducted Christmas services and has been holding Sunday services via Facebook Live. He has conducted two funerals. He reported that the parish is reconnecting with the Diocese, and expects a visit from the Bishop and also to attend the next Diocese Convention. Jeremiah hopes to be ordained at the parish.

It was **moved and seconded** that Standing Committee consent to the ordination of Jeremiah Musterd to the priesthood. **Approved unanimously.**

Bishop's Report :

- Canon Arlette Joseph's husband died on Feb. 17, 2021. Canon Joseph is in the prayers of all.
- Thirty Churches have expressed interest in using the media facility being developed at Diocesan Center in Norristown. The Board of Trustees has allocated funds for the media center construction and for technology grants to parishes. Grants of up to \$2500 will be available to support improved Internet access or needed equipment.
- Bishop plans to prepare videos focusing on individual churches of the Diocese. Recording will begin within the next few weeks.
- Clergy and staff COVID-19 vaccinations are scheduled for the next several weeks.
- Churches are moving to adopt new protocols from the Diocese that allow in-

person worship services as COVID-19 statistics improve in Southeastern Pennsylvania.

- Our endowment is growing with the recent strong performance of financial markets, and the Diocese is financially secure.
- The Diocese plans to broadcast Easter and Pentecost services via commercial television (CBS, Philadelphia).
- An annual report of activity and accomplishments in the Diocese will be published.
- Listening sessions are planned for parishes beginning this winter and spring.
- Budget meetings will begin in May.
- The Church of the Crucifixion is reopening. Funds are being raised to make building repairs. A feeding program is serving about 400 meals per week at the church.
- The Diocese plans a book on Blessed Absalom Jones and a statue of Jones at the African Episcopal Church of St. Thomas to commemorate his life and work.
- The Loving Presence program on anti-racism will be held in the Diocese over the next several years.
- Bishop plans Evensong services that will be recorded and broadcast.

Chancellor's Report: The Chancellor could not attend and there was no report.

Communications: None

Old Business: None

New Business:

- **Church of the Holy Spirit, Approval of Easement:** The church seeks permission to grant a trail easement through church property. The easement has been requested by the local government in conjunction with approval of a building project at the Church. The Property and Finance committees recommend approval. A motion to approve the easement was **made and seconded** (Smith/Francis) and was **unanimously approved**.

Diocesan Commission/Committee Reports (as necessary)

- Commission on Ministry: No report
- Episcopal Elections: No elections.

Greer requested that the next meeting agenda include a discussion of balance of membership of Standing Committee and other governance committees in regards to parish size and demographic issues.

Adjournment : The meeting was adjourned at 6:19 PM.

Closing Prayer offered by Rabe.

The **Next Meeting** of Standing Committee will be held on **March 23, 2021 at 5:00 PM** via Zoom Conference.

Submitted, Eric Rabe, Secretary.

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