

Minutes of the Standing Committee
May 5, 2020

Present: Veronica Chappell+, Drew Dorgan, Kathy Hettinga, Susan Landin, Michael Nailor+, Nicolette Norris, Jeff Packard+, Patrick Pierce+, Jim Strader-Sasser+, Greg Welin+, and John Wolgemuth

Absent: Anthony Alexander, +Audrey Scanlan

Opening Reflections and Prayer: Drew

Bishop Elections:

Dr. Glenda S. Curry was approved by the Committee by roll call vote; Greg moved and Kathy seconded the motion. The motion passed 11-0 unanimously.

Report from the Task Force regarding reopening the Diocese:

The document “Returning to our Buildings” was created with much input from around the diocese including legal experts, medical experts, and disaster planning experts. These are guidelines but broad enough to meet the needs of various parishes. Local plans are needed outgrowths of this effort. We see that this is an opportunity for creative possibilities in ministry. Jim moved and Veronica seconded the motion that the Standing Committee endorse this document and approach. A statement of endorsement was drafted (attached to these minutes) and made a part of this motion. The motion passed unanimously 11-0.

Candidacy Interview

- Initial report: Jeff – Kevin Barron is seeking candidacy.
- Kevin introduced himself.
- Kevin detailed his gifts for ministry with accompanying stories.
- Standing Committee affirmed Kevin’s gifts. Motion was made to pass him to candidacy by Jim, seconded by John. Motion passed.
- Kevin was informed of our decision and our session ended with prayer for his future ministry by Jeff.

Closing prayer and blessing: Jim

Our next meeting will be held on Tuesday, June 2 at 1 p.m. via Zoom.

Standing Committee Statement in Support of the Diocese of Central Pennsylvania's Task Force on Operations

The Standing Committee of the Diocese of Central Pennsylvania unanimously supports Bishop Scanlan and the Diocese's Task Force on Operations Returning to our Buildings Guidance and Direction for Worshipping Communities in the time of COVID-19.

We comprehend and appreciate the significant amount of input from around the diocese in this process. We recognize the support of legal, disaster management, and medical subject matter experts who are advising the bishop and task force – especially as conditions change. Thus, we are confident that the task force's work in such stressful circumstances is well-reasoned. We commend them for completing these tasks so efficiently.

We note that these guidelines are broad enough to meet the needs of various parishes. This document prompts parochial lay, and ordained leaders to be aware of, and responsive to, their congregation's needs for well-being and safety, as well as for opportunities to learn and resist returning to the status quo prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. The task force's Socratic approach for raising questions is significant. Congregations who are returning to our buildings for our missional, educational, and liturgical lives need to contemplate and act upon our theological, spiritual, and pastoral reasons for gathering within church walls as well as continuing virtual communal activities, too. Local plans are needed outgrowths of this effort. Leaders should be well prepared and have plans prior to speaking with Bishop Scanlan or the task force's appointed officers.

In conclusion, we suggest that this "re-entry" is an opportunity for creative possibilities in ministry. It also essentially demands that each parish understands the necessary work to be done throughout the process. We offer this prayerful basis for going forward:

O God, you prepared your disciples for the coming of the Spirit through the teaching of your Son Jesus Christ: Make the hearts and minds of your servants ready to receive the blessing of the Holy Spirit, that they may be filled with the strength of The Spirit's presence. Create in us inspired and calm hearts, bodies, and souls as we seek to return to our shared baptismal responsibilities with a renewed sense of our connections to you and one another. We humbly ask for this wisdom through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.