

DIOCESAN STANDING COMMITTEE
OF THE DIOCESE OF CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA
MINUTES OF MEETING DECEMBER 5, 2023

Present at the meeting, via zoom, were members Greg Welin, Kevin Bacon, Barb Cross, Eric Hillegas, Rick Breach, Jennifer Matson, Bob Davis and Bishop Audrey Scanlan and guest Drew Dorgan

Greg Whelen led opening devotion drawing from Matthew, Chapter 21.

Bob Davis was appointed acting secretary for this meeting.

Minutes of the November meeting of the Committee were approved.

There were no interviews or approvals on the agenda; the Committee proceeded with a 4-point agenda.

I. Report of the Reunification Discernment Committee

Drew Dorgan, Chair of the Committee, reported the work being done by the Committee and expressed thanks for the support being given the effort by the Diocese of Central PA.

She reported that in a meeting of her Committee last week they worked on actions to make for further progress in the Committee's task, including planning a website to serve as link for feedback from all levels of clergy and lay members of both Dioceses, down to the parish level. Committees focusing on financial issues, Canons, the Episcopate are being formed. They plan to collect information from other Dioceses which have also investigated unification issues as well.

In response to Committee question about time lines for her Committee's work, Chair Dorgan expressed her Committee's hope to have a "go, no go" recommendation by next year's Diocesan Convention, including recommendations on the organizational model of the combined Diocese if combination is recommended.

The Committee membership extended its thanks and encouragement to Chair Dorgan and the Reunification Discernment Committee.

II. Discussion about Candidacy and Ordination Interviews and Testimonial Letters

A brief discussion involved review of the procedures followed by the Committee in conducting candidacy and ordination interviews. There was agreement that more thorough reviews done in the most recent candidates and approvals done in November was a positive improvement in the Committee's procedures.

A brief discussion of the issuance of testimonial letters as part of the Committee's process was held. It was determined that the Committee will use the approved format for such letters and take advantage of the opportunity of prompt signature of such letters by Committee members via use of docusign.

III. Recruitment of Members to Fill Open Committee Positions

The Committee discussed candidates to fill a vacant 3-year clergy position and a 1-year lay position on the Committee. After consideration of eight persons, 4 clergy and 4 lay, recommended by Committee members it was decided by consensus that Greg Whelen would take the initiative to contact the candidates for the clergy position and to inquire of their interest in the clergy position. In the event the first person nominated by the committee is unable to serve, Greg is to inquire of the person named second choice as to interest in serving. Jennifer Matson was tasked similarly to contact lay nominees to inquire as to interest in the 1-year lay position.

The Committee will schedule a final vote to fill both positions at its January meeting.

IV. Bishop Scanlan's Report to the Committee

Bishop Scanlan reported on a number of issues she has dealt with recently:

- The sale of St Luke's Parish building in Altoona continues. The parish desires to remain a viable parish and plans to continue to use the space after its sale, using clergy as available.
- Bishop Scanlan announced she is prepared to designate a Canon to the Ordinary responsible for the Northern area of the Diocese. That selection was announced on December 6th. Rev. Veronica Donohue Chappell has accepted the Bishop's invitation to serve as Canon to the Ordinary, Northern Region.

- The Bishop is conducting formal annual reviews of Diocesan staff currently. She reported there were also monthly reviews done of staff.
- A revision and update of the employee's handbook for the Diocese is proceeding.
- The Bishop has recruited a Personnel Committee of Harry Snell, Barbara Cross and Amanda Coffey to aid her with employee issues that arise.
- The Bishop reported less than full clergy compliance with the Safe Church Program training and outlined positive steps she has taken and additional steps to be taken to achieve full clergy compliance with the requirement. Such actions may include, if necessary, notice of possible restrictions on ministry of priests and deacons who have not complied by early 2024. The discussion produced a strong consensus of the Committee in full support of the efforts of the Bishop to achieve full compliance.