

## **THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF VIRGINIA**

### **THE STANDING COMMITTEE**

*Every Diocese in The Episcopal Church (TEC) has both a Bishop and a Standing Committee. Bishops have primary responsibility for the continuity and integrity of the Holy things while the central mandate of the Standing Committee is to maintain organizational continuity and integrity within and across the Dioceses of The Episcopal Church.*

#### **WHO**

The Standing Committee of the Diocese consists of twelve members, six of the Clerical order, and six of the Lay order, each of whom must be a *'confirmed communicant in good standing'*, which is defined by General Convention Canon I.17 as, 'All communicants of this Church who for the previous year have been faithful in corporate worship, unless for good cause prevented, and have been faithful in working, praying, and giving for the spread of the Kingdom of God'. Two members of each order are elected at each Annual Convention for a term of three years.

#### **COMMITMENT, ACCESSIBILITY AND BUDGET**

The Standing Committee meets monthly, generally on the first Thursday of each month, and the meetings typically last approximately six hours. Several hours of preparation between meetings may also be required, especially in those months where the Committee will be in conversation with those seeking ordination. The Bishop may also, upon occasion, call a special meeting of the Committee to address time-sensitive or urgent matters.

Since the onset of the COVID pandemic, the Committee have met via Zoom. Having this technological capability has been a blessing and has allowed members to continue their service to the Diocese and the Church at large. While it isn't the ideal, this experience has confirmed that some of the Committee's work can be done virtually, and that technology can be one tool that the Committee employs to enhance accessibility.

Accessibility around Standing Committee service will look different for each new Committee; and, indeed, each year brings a new Committee, given that one third of its members are elected at each Convention. The current Committee recommends taking an annual assessment of the factors that drive accessibility to them as a group. The current Committee further recommends that the new Committee consider how it might set aside a portion of its modest budget to be used as scholarship funds to help offset expenses that may prevent a person from considering Committee service.

Examples might be:

- Expenses that would come with the resumption of in-person meetings
  - income replacement for those who work but do not have paid-time-off
  - Child or elder care
  - Mileage reimbursement
  - Car rental
- Expenses for continuing virtual meetings
  - Hotspot fees

The Standing Committee's budget is also available to offset, or pay for, expenses like an annual retreat, attendance at Annual Convention, in-person meeting working lunches, etc.

***It is the desire of the current Committee that anyone who is interested in Committee service will prayerfully consider putting themselves forward for nomination without worrying about whether s/he can 'afford' to serve.***

#### **MORE ABOUT WHAT**

- Serve as a Council of Advice to the Bishop of the Diocese
- Interview those seeking Candidacy for ordination in the Diocese
- Approve applications to encumber or dispose of property by a Church of the Diocese
- Consent to election of a Bishop in The Episcopal Church
- Submit a Report of Proceedings at Annual Convention

#### **MORE ABOUT WHEN / WHERE**

Members of the Standing Committee begin their term immediately upon election at Convention of the Diocese and attend a meeting immediately following the Convention close.

Meeting are generally held at St. George's in Fredericksburg on the first Thursday of each month.

The Standing Committee also typically holds an in-person, overnight retreat during early December for familiarization and to establish priorities and plans for the following year.