

The Standing Committee of the Episcopal Diocese of Albany



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The Reverend Scott Garno, President
Janet Papa, Secretary

Communiqué № 002 January 18, 2021

Grace to you, and peace in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Bishop Love has asked the Standing Committee to begin communicating with you about our ongoing mission and ministry as a diocese through the coming months.

We want to assure the people, clergy, and friends of the Diocese, and all who live within our geographic limits, of our love and prayers as we enter a new year, facing new challenges but also drawn to new hope. As Bishop Love noted in his letter of Thursday, January 14, our public health crisis, the strains of political transition, economic repercussions, and many other factors have placed strain on all of us and on our relationships. Now more than ever, the supernatural character of faith in God, of hope for life-giving change, and our love — not just for one another, but extending even to enemies — must be manifested to the world. We give thanks to God for you and ask God to give us all the healing we need, and an extra measure of consolation.

We know that you have many questions, and that there is much uncertainty about what will happen in the coming weeks. Bishop Love and Bishop Herzog both followed their predecessors without interruption; few of us, if any, will remember the last time our Diocese was without a Bishop. Still, as new and unusual as our situation appears, it is far from unprecedented or irregular in the life of the church.

The important thing to remember is that **established, proven, orderly processes are in place** to enable us to stay the course of our mission and ministry and to move ahead calmly and with confidence toward the discernment and election of Bishop Love's successor.

The Standing Committee also met today with Bishop Todd Ousley, head of the Office of Pastoral Development of the House of Bishops. Using the information we received, we will determine how best to serve the parishes, people, and clergy of our Diocese. Responsibilities and authority are well defined. Decisions must be made about details, and further news about episcopal ministry within the Diocese will be forthcoming, but we will continue to operate in accordance with our own Constitutions and Canons (accessible [here](#)) and those of the Episcopal Church (accessible [here](#)).

Going forward

Three principles have long guided the Diocese of Albany:

- fidelity to God in Jesus Christ and to his teachings;
- unity within the Diocese; and
- communion with the Episcopal Church and the wider Anglican Communion.

Bishop Love kept these commitments with integrity and at great cost to himself. They are a precious legacy to us, and worth keeping in mind during this time of transition.

Disciples Making Disciples

Transfer of Ecclesiastical Authority to the Standing Committee on February 1

With God's help, this will occur seamlessly and smoothly.

Subcommittees of the Standing Committee will ensure that diocesan responsibilities are met. Parishes, clergy, and people of our diocese will have uninterrupted access to the same diocesan guidance and support they have always had. Subcommittees will also handle routine executive details. You can find more details below.

Formal, official decisions and actions will be taken by the Standing Committee as a whole. The President of the Standing Committee, Father Scott Garno, will serve as official point of contact for all communication with the diocese and diocesan offices. He, or someone designated by him or the Standing Committee, will represent the Diocese for official purposes.

If any need arises for duties and sacramental offices reserved to a bishop, the Standing Committee is responsible for ensuring that such needs are met.

Subcommittees

THE ADMINISTRATION SUBCOMMITTEE oversees the executive and business affairs of the Diocese, including staff, finances, and coordination. Financial decisions continue to be made by Convention and Diocesan Council. The Standing Committee as a whole will be kept informed of Diocesan finances.

THE BISHOP SEARCH SUBCOMMITTEE prepares and organizes the process for electing the Tenth Bishop of Albany ("Albany X"), and will execute or oversee the various steps, culminating in an election to be held at a regular or special Convention. It is too early yet to know the timing of such an election. We will have more to say as time goes on.

THE TRANSITION SUBCOMMITTEE. The Rev. Dr. Elizabeth Papazoglakis will continue to work with parishes through the various stages of clergy search. This subcommittee will conduct preliminary interviews and will also be available to help in relationships between parishes and clergy, and will oversee the deployment of vocational deacons.

THE DIOCESAN LIFE SUBCOMMITTEE arranges for Parish Leadership Conferences, retreats, and other events and activities to benefit the formation and spiritual development of the clergy and people of the diocese.

Other Diocesan Structures

DIOCESAN CONVENTION. The date of the 153rd Convention in 2021 is being researched and will be announced soon. This year's Convention will again most likely take place later in the year.

The **DEANS** of the diocese (Regional deans and the Dean of the Cathedral) are an important resource for the pastoral care of clergy and leaders, and also serve as first points of contact for interaction with the Diocese. With Bishop Love's blessing, the current deans have taken the initiative to begin preparing for greater availability and a more active role. They will also serve their respective deaneries by providing leadership assistance and as a resource to the clergy and parishes. Canon Bob Haskell, currently Canon to the Ordinary (i.e., the Bishop) will continue to be available as well for clergy pastoral care, consultation, and liaison with diocesan offices.

HOLY ORDERS. It is customary, whenever a Bishop leaves office, to impose a moratorium on new applications for Holy Orders. Individuals already granted postulancy or candidacy will continue to progress by decision of the Standing Committee, with input from the Commission on Ministry.

OTHER DIOCESAN STRUCTURES, COMMISSIONS, AND COMMITTEES will continue to operate as usual, and will report to the Standing Committee through its President.

COVID-19

COVID-19: Bishop Love has spelled out his guidance to the churches of our Diocese in his January 14 letter; that guidance will remain in place and will be reviewed periodically and modified as warranted.

Contacting the SC

We are committed to keeping you informed during this time. We will issue communiqués at least monthly, or more frequently as appropriate. In the meantime, we welcome your questions and input. Please contact us by e-mail to SCPresident@albanydiocese.org, or by calling the Diocesan Office at (518) 692-3350. You should hear back within 24 hours.

Call for Prayer

Once again, we call on the parishes, people, and clergy of the diocese to redouble prayers at this time, giving thanks in all things and maintaining steadfast faith in God's solicitous care. We ask that the prayer below be used regularly in every parish and service in the Diocese of Albany.

May the blessing of God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, be among you now, and remain with you always.

Yours in Christ,

The Reverend Scott Garno
President, Standing Committee of the Diocese of Albany

Janet Papa
Secretary, Standing Committee of the Diocese of Albany

Prayer in a Time of Transition

Heavenly Father, we praise and thank you for this, your diocese of Albany.
Inspire and sustain us in this time of transition.

Incline our hearts to do your will, and so direct us in your ways
that the leader you are raising up to be our Bishop will find here
joyful disciples, making disciples,
united in faith,
unflagging in hope,
and steeped in mutual charity.

In your mercy, accept our repentance, and grant us peace;
look with patience on our enthusiasms;
and pour rich gifts and grace upon all who are entrusted
with the ongoing work of your church;
so that, with diligence and charity, we may discern correctly
and walk righteously in your ways.

This we ask in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever. Amen.