



FROM: The Standing Committee of the Diocese of Virginia
TO: Our family in Christ in the Diocese of Virginia

August 20, 2018

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

Bishop Shannon Johnston has announced that he will resign as our Bishop Diocesan during our Annual Convention in November 2018, and he will fully retire on June 30, 2019. In his letter of August 3, Bishop Shannon called for "new vision and new energy for the church in our Diocese." To create the best opportunity for that vision and energy, the Standing Committee is seeking a Bishop Provisional for election at the November convention, per General Convention Title III.13.1. We want to make all of you aware of the steps involved in this process, as we work for the good of our Diocese.

As stated in Bishop Shannon's letter, we have been in communication with the Presiding Bishop's Office to ensure a smooth transition. The process the Standing Committee will follow will be similar to what happens in a parish when a rector leaves, and an interim rector is appointed by the Vestry. In this case, the Standing Committee is working with the Presiding Bishop's Office of Pastoral Development to identify individuals who would be willing to serve as our Bishop Provisional for approximately three years, with extensions to that time frame, if needed, to be voted on at Diocesan Convention. As with any process like this, confidentiality will be kept to preserve the privacy of all involved.

This month, we are working to prepare questions to ask of the prospective candidates. We have sought input from Diocesan staff, current and former Bishops, leadership of Diocesan bodies, and the Regional Deans and Presidents to help us formulate these questions. We are also reviewing documents on file at the diocesan offices, to assist in preparing for these interviews, which we plan to hold in September. Once we have completed interviews, and a review of all paperwork, we will present the name of one candidate for the Diocese to elect in November, similar to the way a Vestry would for a parish.

This election will be the final act of our Annual Convention. The Bishop Provisional will be an experienced Bishop who will have the canonical authority of a Bishop Diocesan, and who will partner with us in a thorough diocesan review to enable us to prepare for a healthy call for our next Bishop Diocesan.

Many have asked about the role of Bishop Susan Goff in the Diocese as we move forward. In the same way that an associate or assistant rector is not eligible to serve as interim of a parish after the rector leaves, we have discerned, in close consultation with Bishop Goff, the Presiding Bishop and a variety of wise advisors, that our Bishop Suffragan will serve the Diocese best by remaining our Suffragan. She will be an integral part of the new team of leadership of our Diocese and we are grateful for the gifts she will continue to bring.

We ask for your prayers, for this process and for all the individuals involved, as we undertake this work. The best interests of this Diocese are at the center of all we do.

In Christ's Love,

Helen K. Spence, President
Standing Committee
Diocese of Virginia

