

Summary of Standing Committee Meeting
February 19, 2025

Members present: Dianne Audrick Smith (President, 2025), Mother Debra Q. Bennett (Secretary, 2025), Mother June Hardy Dorsey (2026), Halley Marsh (2026), Kristen Busa (2027), Marc Norman (2028), and Father George Baum (2028).

Bishop Anne Jolly (ex-officio).

Excused: Father Seth Wymer (2027) Guest: Sammy Busa

Mother Debra Q. Bennett called the meeting to order and Father George Baum led the opening prayer which was a series of praises from The New Zealand Prayer Book. Following a time of checking in the minutes of the January 15, 2025 meeting were accepted with corrections.

Bishop Jolly reported on the resignation of Christine Butterfield and the steps being taken to ensure that the 2023 audit will be completed and other financial systems and procedures brought into order. The interim CFO, Chanin Tyler, has designed a 30, 60 and 90 day plan of action for these goals and meets daily with the finance team. Current finance office staff are stepping up to help implement the plan. Bishop Anne assured the Standing Committee that it is going to be OK and will take time, acknowledging that this is asking for more patience from a system that has already been practicing patience.

Bishop Anne went on to share about many wonderful initiatives and events in the Diocese including great progress at Bellwether Farm under Strat Byers' able leadership. The newly hired staff members were named as excellent choices with gifts in innovation and creativity. The Bellwether Working Group is helping to formulate a long-term business plan for Bellwether Farm. A marketing firm will help Bellwether Farm reach fill capacity.

The Canons have been working on identifying priorities in their areas of ministry and will continue to do so.

St. Luke's, Niles was closed with an intentional and well-designed closing worship where representatives from all around the Diocese attended to show support. The sacred vessels, fabrics and worship tools were gifted to on-going parishes and were processed from the worship with representatives of the parishes receiving them. The primary chalice and paten, used in sacred ministry at St. Luke's was given to the Diocese and will be used as the primary chalice and paten for Diocesan worship for at least the next year. Bishop Anne reported that the process of closing this parish was done with grace, collaboration and thanksgiving for 154 years of faithful ministry.

Winter Convocation was well-received in the new location and was an engaging and educational experience for the many different churches represented. There was energy and interest around the College of Congregational Development.

Canon Russ Trippi has completed the recruitment and training for the Discernment Committee for numerous aspirants for Holy Orders. Over 60 people are involved in the many Discernment Committees of those expressing a high level of interest, especially in the Diaconate.

Canon Audra has been working with two creative and collaborative processes in two locations. The collaboration between Grace Church, Mansfield and St. Matthew's , Ashland is being shepherded by their new Rector, The Rev. Christopher Hofer. This collaboration is characterized by creativity, innovation and new ways to be church together in two neighboring communities.

St. John's, Cuyahoga Fall, is involved with other churches nearby in the Church Block Project, which, among other things, involves city redevelopment partners including the city government and churches.

The Reimagining Resources Task Force has been formed to work on reallocating resources around buildings and finances in parishes throughout the Diocese. The goal of this work is to help ease the burden that managing these resources places on parishes so they can be freed up for mission and ministry. Bishop Anne reported that everyone she asked to serve on these task groups agreed to serve, naming the 100% acceptance rate as rare.

A discussion about possible future property sales was held.

Letters of Notices and Accords from numerous Dioceses are sent to all Standing Committees. These were noted and received.

A letter from the Standing Committee encouraging further work on R-2 was distributed to the Executive Committee of Diocesan Council and will be incorporated into the Council Agenda at the March 29 Diocesan Council meeting.

A vote was taken to confirm the appointment of Kevin M. Norchi as the Church Attorney.

The next meeting of Standing Committee will be held at Trinity Commons and on Zoom on March 19, 2025 at 3 pm.