



Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts

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STANDING COMMITTEE

May 17, 2023

Dear People of the Diocese of Massachusetts,

Last week, on May 10, 2023, Bishop Alan Gates announced his intention to retire at the end of 2024, after over a decade of service at that point. On behalf of the clergy and people of the diocese, we want to express our universal gratitude to God for Bishop Gates's kindly, pastoral care and service, for his compassionate leadership, and for all that has been accomplished by the Holy Spirit here during his tenure. We believe that Bishop Gates's faithfulness – particularly in keeping the flock of the diocese in mind with every decision – serves as an example to us all. Thank you, Bishop Gates. Over these next 19 months, Bishop Gates will remain fully engaged as our bishop, and the work of the diocese will continue uninterrupted. Our dedicated diocesan staff, as well as the faithful members of Diocesan Council, will be working with our various commissions and committees to ensure that this is so.

It now falls to the Standing Committee to offer a word about search, election, and transition. This is the first of what will be regular periodic communications so that our process will be as open and transparent as possible. According to canon, the Standing Committee will be responsible for oversight of the search and transition process [Canon III.11.1.a(2022)]. This process began with an in-person conversation between the Standing Committee and the Right Reverend Todd Ousley, Bishop for the Office of Pastoral Development of the Episcopal Church (member of the Presiding Bishop's staff), last Thursday, May 11. Bishop Ousley supports dioceses in transition and was very helpful in outlining next steps.

Know that the Standing Committee has begun the process of formalizing the plans, including the timeline, for the search, election, and transition. In the coming months, many opportunities for involvement in this process by all will occur, particularly through Listening Sessions and through service on two committees: the Search & Nomination Committee and the Transition Committee. Please prayerfully consider being a member of either. Information describing the responsibilities of each will be widely distributed in a future communication. Also, please feel free to reach out to any member of the Standing Committee if you have any questions, and we will do our best to respond as we are able. Finally, please pray for the diocese, for Bishop Gates, and for the members of the Standing Committee. In God, all things are being brought to their perfection by him through whom all things were made, our Savior Jesus Christ.

A Prayer for the Election of a Bishop from *The Book of Common Prayer* (p. 818)

Almighty God, giver of every good gift: Look graciously on your Church, and so guide the minds of those who shall choose a bishop for this Diocese, that we may receive a faithful pastor, who will care for your people and equip us for our ministries; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Faithfully,

Louise Gant, President
The Rev. Kathryn Elledge, Vice President
The Rev. Dr. Karen Coleman, Secretary
Grace Knowles
The Rev. Dr. Tara Soughers
Suzanne Owayda
The Rev. Daniel Dice
James Dilday, Esq