

Saturday, November 15, 2008

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ:

The people of the Diocese of Alaska have supported the Bishop Search Committee and the Standing Committee faithfully with your prayers, and have been generous with your patience while awaiting our nominations for the VIIIth Bishop of Alaska. Today, I write with difficult news regarding our process.

In October, the Search Committee brought two names to the Standing Committee; we intended to nominate both of these persons to the Diocese. However, one of the candidates has withdrawn, leaving us with only one potential nominee. It is important to say that the reasons for this withdrawal have nothing to do with the Diocese of Alaska, nor with information in the candidate's background check. Unexpected life circumstances made the decision clear, if painful, for the candidate.

Faced with this news, your Standing Committee met by teleconference last night. We affirmed our faith that although this is not the place we imagined for ourselves, it is the place to which God has led us. With you, we commit ourselves and our Diocese into God's care. We did not attempt to answer every question that faces us, but we did make the following decisions:

1. With only one candidate remaining for consideration, ***THE STANDING COMMITTEE SUSPENDED PROGRESS TOWARD PRESENTING NOMINEES*** to the Diocese.
2. Given our inability to construct a timeline that could result in an election of a bishop by January, ***THE STANDING COMMITTEE WILL POSTPONE THE CONVENTION SCHEDULED FOR JANUARY 22-25, 2009 UNTIL OCTOBER 8-11, 2009.***
3. The interim between bishops is now lengthened. However, ***THE STANDING COMMITTEE REMAINS COMMITTED TO ENSURING THE PROVISION OF EPISCOPAL PASTORAL CARE OF OUR CHURCH AND ITS MEMBERS.*** Although we do not have specific details to present, we want to assure the people of the Diocese that we will provide for visiting bishops for confirmations, ordinations, and other needs.

Certainly, many issues and questions remain. In these weeks leading to Advent, we recognize that we will practice hope-full and active waiting in new ways this year.

Together, we will listen for God's voice and direction.

Together, we will use the gifts God gives us as wise and generous stewards.

Together, we will see where God is leading us.

Please contact me, or any member of the Standing Committee, with any questions, hopes, or issues. As always, I am honored to share this Way with you.

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