

Standing Committee Report to the 1st Annual Convention of the Missionary Diocese of Navajoland,
June 6-7, 2025

Ya'ah'tééh Delegates and Council of Navajoland,

First, I would like to acknowledge the Standing Committee Members: Anna Fowler, Rev. Leon Sampson, Maggie Brown, and Margaret Benally.

2024 has been another full year of ministry for the Standing Committee. I am grateful for our efforts to meet twice a month by zoom and making necessary decisions for the life of the Area Mission, now the Diocese.

The Standing Committee (SC) serves as the bishop's council of advice and, in the absence of the bishop, is the ecclesiastical authority. The work of the SC includes:

- Giving advice and consent of the purchase, sale, or encumbrance of any property held by a congregation or the diocese
- Assuring checks and balances in the life of the Navajoland Area Mission (NAM)
- Making recommendations to the NAM Council
- Giving consent for all bishops elected in The Episcopal Church (TEC)
- Receiving Commission on Ministry reports on ordination processes
- Approving of Ordinations and recommending persons for ordinations
- Giving advice and consent as to any judicial sentence given to a clergy person or concurs in allowing a clergy person to cease functioning as a member of the clergy
- Receiving the bishop's resignation
- Articulating to the Presiding Bishop of The Episcopal Church the hopes and desires of Navajoland moving forward

Missionary Diocese Update- The Three Streams

Mission Statement:

After the 2024 General Convention's unanimous vote to become a Missionary Diocese, we continued conversation in the fall with Canon Lee Curtis and Rev. Simone Drinkwater. It was agreed that it was time to combine all the listening sessions notes and bring them to workshop the themes with the standing committee and ECN council members on February 20 and 21, 2025. The one and half day retreat were a productive and successful gathering that birthed the new mission prayer of ECN.

Diné Bizaad- Mission Prayer

NihiTaa Jesus Diyin ayoo at'ei biye nilíini ninqajj'
Kodóó hózhó dooleet
Doo yá'áh'da'téehi bits'qajj
Ajooba' dóó áshjínéé
Bee daa k'é'go
Hózhó náshásljí dooleet.

In the name of Jesus Christ, the Holy One,

We set out to walk in harmony,

Seeking forgiveness and wholeness.

Through compassion and service,
Love binds us in relationship to all creation.
In the Beauty Way all is restored again.

Constitution and Canons

Meanwhile, the work of the Constitution and Canons that would reflect to design them in a way that is consistent with the Episcopal Church's traditions while respecting Navajo land's unique aspects got underway. We began the work with Chancellors Steve Hutchinson, Nancy Cohen, and Karen Aubrey on just the Constitution. We felt that the process should take it's time despite the hope to have a draft completed by end of January 2025 in order to meet the February 2025 meeting of the Executive Council of The Episcopal Church. But after months of prayer and conversations, the process led us to slow the work down rather than to rush it. This slow process resulted with a final draft to the Standing Committee for approval on April 24, 2025, and it was submitted for vote at a Special Convocation that was held on May 3, 2025. Since then, the Constitution has been submitted to Chancellor Michael Glass, Chancellor to the House of Deputies President. The Constitution will be addressed and voted on at the Executive Council's next meeting in June 2025.

Canons

The work on the Canons followed soon after the Special Convocation. The Canons are now complete and were approved at the Standing Committee meeting on May 22, 2025. The Canons will be brought forth before the 1st Annual Convention of the Missionary Diocese on Saturday, June 7, 2025 for vote that will allow ECN to abide by as its Governance and Structure moving forward.

Bishop Election Process and Timeline

Moreover, the Search Committee Formation and Process is underway. Rev. Ann Hallisey, was appointed by the Standing Committee, a consultant to the process. The Search Committee members are: Lillie Henderson, Evelyn Kaniatobe, and Rev. Paula Henson of the Utah Region, Marianita Chee and Rev. Carol Tookey of the San Juan Region, and Georgia Buck of Southeast Region. Their task is to develop a profile of the diocese, job description, and compensation information, and application materials for August application deadline.

The Rev. Ann Hallisey discussed the process of electing a bishop, emphasizing the need for a decision by early next year for a consecration in 2026. She also highlighted the importance of deciding on the search's scope, whether it should be limited to Navajo or indigenous candidates or be open to all applicants. However, according to the Canons of The Episcopal Church, Title III. Canon 1. Section 2 "No person shall be denied access to the discernment process or to any process for the employment, licensing, calling, or deployment for any ministry, lay or ordained, in this Church because of race, color, ethnic origin..." The process must be inclusive and non- discriminatory.

Establishing Budget for Full-Time Bishop with Part-Time Episcopal Duties

The Standing Committee also agreed to establish a budget for a full-time bishop with part-time episcopal duties. This means that the next elected bishop will have a part-time vicar responsibility in one of the regions and serve as a part-time bishop. We had had conversations with Margaret Putnam, ECN Finance, Administrator, to help us build a budget for a Vicar/Bishop position for the search committee. The Standing

Committee agreed on the importance of finding a bishop who will live in Navajoland and remain committed long-term.

Special Rules of Order

Special rules of order are a process of how the Convention will follow for an election of a bishop. The Rules of Order will be addressed at the Standing Committee on June 5, 2025 and to be approved, then will be a part of the agenda for vote by the Convention on Saturday, June 7, 2025.

The Standing Committee approved Bishop consents for Episcopal Dioceses of:

West Texas, West Missouri, Cuba, and Dallas.

This completes the Standing Committee report.

Faithfully,
Rev. Canon Cornelia Eaton
President