



January 30, 2026

Dear Friends,

We give thanks for the good and prayerful 194th Annual Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Tennessee on Friday, January 23 at St. Bartholomew's in Nashville. Two resolutions that pertain to our bishop nominating and election processes were passed unanimously. Which makes this a fitting time to review the bishop search, nomination, and election timeline and process.

We have two major goals in this process. The first, of course, is to elect the Twelfth Bishop of the Diocese of Tennessee. The second is to connect you to each other and to deepen our bonds of affection as the body of Christ. Please be talking with one another, especially people with different perspectives from your own. This is the work that needs to happen as we together seek consensus and as we seek to be a faithful witness to the world of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Also, as a practical matter, the election of a bishop for our diocese requires a two-thirds vote in each Order (lay and clergy) on the same ballot.

Listening to the Diocese and Diocesan Profile

As you know, this fall our Search Committee invited the diocese to participate in a process of intentional sharing and listening through a survey, eight in-person listening sessions, and one online listening session. Participation was impressive. And your responses have communicated clearly your deep commitment to our local churches, to the diocese itself, and to The Episcopal Church

Your feedback has been incredibly important, and part of the Search Committee's discernment is to properly situate and understand the many voices of the diocese together with Holy Scripture and the Book of Common Prayer tradition. Collectively, these elements are guiding the Search Committee in developing the Diocesan Profile and the application process.

Once the profile has been created, it will be reviewed by the Standing Committee before being released to the public by mid- to late-March. This also will mark the opening of a four-week application period.

Search Committee & Candidate Discernment

April, May, and June, the Search Committee will engage in a period of interviews and mutual discernment, including both online conversations and an in-person discernment retreat. There will also be a parallel safeguarding process of candidate background checks, medical and psychological evaluations, and a session on substance use. All of the work with candidates is strictly confidential.

The Search Committee will then present a set of diverse candidates to the Standing Committee for review. The Standing Committee will then publish the list, at which point the candidates become nominees. All this will happen by the end of June.

Standing Committee & Petition Process

This inaugurates a period of one to two weeks in which the diocese may petition the Standing Committee to add additional names to the slate. In order to be considered by the Standing Committee, a petition candidate will need to meet the same standards set by the Search Committee, will require the same safeguarding checks, and broad endorsement from canonically resident clergy and lay delegates to the Electing Convention.

If you have someone you'd like to have apply, please encourage them to do so during the regular search and discernment process. It does not benefit them to wait for the petition process.

Getting to Know the Nominees

Following the petition period, the Standing Committee will then announce the final list of nominees along with information to help you get to know them. Once the final list is announced, nominations are closed. Nominations from the floor of the Electing Convention shall not be in order.

In August, there will be in-person forums in order to meet and get to know the nominees prior to the special Convention to Elect the Twelfth Bishop Diocesan of the Diocese of Tennessee on Saturday, August 22.

How Will the Election Work?

There are special rules for our Electing Convention. These rules, as well as the nominating process outlined above, were established by the unanimous passage of two resolutions at Diocesan Convention (January 23, 2026).

Many people were involved in the drafting of both resolutions, including the Standing Committee of the Diocese of Tennessee and the Standing Committee on Constitution and Canons. They were then presented at a public hearing at the Diocesan Convention. Feedback was received by the General Resolutions committee who then presented amended resolutions to the convention.

Click here for the resolutions establishing the [Nominating Process](#) and the [Rules of the Electing Convention](#).

We are grateful for the generous contributions of so many and for all of your contributions to come.

In Christ,
The Standing Committee of the Diocese of Tennessee

Mrs. Catherine Beemer (St. George's, Nashville)
The Rev. Michael Blaess, president (Redeemer, Shelbyville)
The Rev. Bradley Johnson (St. James the Less, Madison)
Mr. L. Jarod Pearson, secretary (St. Agnes', Cowan)
The Rev. Justin Taliaferro (Messiah, Pulaski)
The Rev. Canon Natalie Van Kirk (Good Shepherd, Brentwood)
Mr. John Whitaker (Christ Church Cathedral, Nashville)