



*Almighty God, direct The Episcopal Diocese of Alaska
in our search for a new bishop.
Guide our Search Committee and grant them the ability to discern and
communicate those qualities in a bishop that are most needed in our
diocese.*



*Help us to treat candidates with love and understanding;
Care for our Standing Committee as they assume responsibility for the Diocese.
And keep our hearts always open to direction of the Holy Spirit.
In Jesus name we pray. Amen.*

**THE
STANDING
COMMITTEE
OF THE
EPISCOPAL
DIOCESE OF
ALASKA**

*The Rev. Dawn Allen-
Herron, President,
SouthEast*

*Ms. Mary Margaret
Davis, Vice President,
Interior*

*Mr. John Crittenden,
Secretary,
SouthCentral*

*Mr. Martin Oktollik,
Arctic Coast*

*The Rev. Jerry Norton,
Arctic Coast*

*The Rev. John Holz,
Interior*

*The Rev. Connie Jones,
SouthCentral*

*Ms. Barbara Learmonth,
SouthEast*

*The Rev. Bob Stevens,
At Large*

The Epiphany of

Our Lord Jesus Christ
Tuesday, January 6, 2009

*"...they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its
rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was." Matthew 2:9*

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ:

As we celebrate the Epiphany and recall the journey of the Magi, we recognize again how God leads faithful people by the Spirit's Light, even when this Light—much like the headlights on our four-wheelers against winter's darkness--gives light to only the place "there, ahead of them" rather than for the whole journey, all at once. As a Diocese, we are on one of those journeys. As a Standing Committee, we thank God for the people of the Diocese, who are such generous and faithful companions on this way.

The Standing Committee has met with the Bishop Search Committee by teleconference, and has met face-to-face with the Search Committee chair, our search consultant, and the Bishop's Staff. We have consulted with our chancellor, the National Church, and with many of you by phone, email, and in person. We have deliberated as a Standing Committee in circles of prayer with the Gospel at the center, asking "What is the Gospel saying to us?" and "What is the Gospel calling us to do?" Today, we want to describe for you what we can see—there, ahead of us—regarding our search process and episcopal pastoral care during this transition.

- ***YOUR STANDING COMMITTEE GIVES THANKS FOR THE WORK OF THE BISHOP SEARCH COMMITTEE, AND FIRMLY SUPPORTS THE DISCERNMENT PROCESS AND SPIRIT-LED WORK.*** It would have been easier for them to follow another path, rather than the Spirit. Their courage and faithfulness is a gift not only to us, but to many future generations of Episcopalians in Alaska. We thank them, and we thank God for them.
- ***A BISHOP DISCERNMENT COMMITTEE WILL CONTINUE THE WORK THAT THE BISHOP SEARCH COMMITTEE COMPLETED, SEEKING ADDITIONAL CANDIDATES THAT IT WILL RECOMMEND TO THE STANDING COMMITTEE AS NOMINEES FOR THE VIIITH BISHOP OF ALASKA.*** We invited each member of the Search Committee to consider continuing with the work. Because the Bishop Discernment will require commitments of time that go far beyond the commitment that the Search Committee originally made, we understand that some members are unable to continue. Each member of the Search Committee has already made enormous contributions to the process of electing our next bishop; none of those

*The Episcopal Diocese of Alaska
1205 Denali Way; Fairbanks, Alaska 99701
800-478-3043*

gifts will go to waste. The newly formed Bishop Discernment Committee will build upon the work already done, helping us to “cast our net on the other side of the boat.” We have communicated and made it clear that the Discernment Committee is seeking candidates to *add to* the one candidate that remains from the process that has already occurred. We still intend to nominate this candidate.

- ***THE TRANSITION COMMITTEE HAS BEEN INVITED TO CONTINUE TO SERVE.*** Most have agreed to continue to serve; some are still considering their decision. The Transition Committee has accomplished a great number of plans and details toward their work. We give thanks for their gifts and skills and know that they are committed to provide leadership.
- ***WE HAVE SIGNED A LETTER OF INTENT WITH THE RIGHT REVEREND RUSTIN KIMSEY (RETIRED BISHOP OF EASTERN OREGON AND RETIRED ASSISTING BISHOP OF NAVAJO LAND) TO SERVE AS ASSISTING BISHOP OF THE DIOCESE OF ALASKA UNTIL THE ELECTION OF THE VIIITH BISHOP OF ALASKA.*** We will meet face-to-face with Bishop Kimsey to work out more specific details about his ministry with and among us, especially regarding areas of responsibility. Our intention is that Bishop Kimsey will attend every Deanery meeting, our Diocesan Convention, and will make many visits to parishes and missions. We have heard you say that you miss a Bishop’s care. Bishop Kimsey will *not* be in Alaska all the time, but will make extended trips through much of the Diocese, and will walk with us in ministry and mission during our transition. We look forward to a deeper, more consistent, and ongoing relationship than was possible with visiting bishops.
- ***YOUR STANDING COMMITTEE IS CLEAR THAT THE MOST IMPORTANT DISCERNMENT FOR THE VIIITH BISHOP OF ALASKA IS TO GIVE TIME FOR THOSE INVOLVED TO SEEK OUT INDIVIDUALS WHO WILL PROVIDE THE DIOCESE, AT ITS ELECTING CONVENTION, A SLATE OF NOMINEES.*** We are also clear that we, the members of the Standing Committee and the Diocese of Alaska, need the wisdom, presence, and continuity of an Assisting Bishop. We believe that Bishop Kimsey will be just the person for us in this part of our journey. His presence among us will allow us to move expediently, but without rushing faster than the challenges that Alaska’s geography and diversity allow for.
- ***PROJECTED TIME FRAMES AND MAJOR EVENTS***
 - January 19, 2009: Bishop Discernment committee is appointed by Standing Committee
 - The Discernment Committee organizes and publishes projected discernment timeline
 - February 1, 2009: Bishop Rustin Kimsey begins his work with us
 - February-May, 2009: Deanery meetings occur
 - July 8-17, 2009: 76th General Convention of The Episcopal Church, in Anaheim, California
 - October 8-11, 2009: Diocesan Convention
 - We do *not* anticipate that this will be an Electing Convention
 - Receive substantive report from the Bishop Discernment Committee regarding their progress and potential dates for Electing Convention (if prior to October 2010)
 - Receive substantive report from the Suffragan Bishop Task Force
 - 2010: Completion of the Bishop Discernment work, presentation of nominees to the diocese and Electing Convention.
- ***MORE INFORMATION IS ATTACHED.*** No doubt many questions will emerge. We look forward to the opportunity to answer those. Please contact me, or any member of your Standing Committee, by phone, email, or in person. A contact list is attached, along with a brief biography of Bishop Kimsey, and more detail about the Bishop Discernment Committee.

*The Episcopal Diocese of Alaska
1205 Denali Way; Fairbanks, Alaska 99701
800-478-3043*

Those who followed the star to Bethlehem brought gifts. We, each, have gifts to offer. We, your Standing Committee, have seen how the members of each congregation, lay and ordained, continue to carry out the Gospel message in the cities, towns and villages of Alaska. The ministry of Jesus Christ is alive and well in Alaska because of your faithfulness, and for that we rejoice.

May Christ, the Son of God, be manifest in you, that your lives may be a light to the world,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dawn Allen-Herron+" with a small cross at the end of the line.

Dawn Allen-Herron+
Standing Committee President

*The Episcopal Diocese of Alaska
1205 Denali Way; Fairbanks, Alaska 99701
800-478-3043*