



The Episcopal Diocese Of Western New York

May 9, 2026

Dear Friends in Christ,

In April we wrote to you about entering a season of reset in our bishop search process. We named the places where our process needed strengthening—in clarity, in communication, in shared identity, and in broad diocesan engagement—and we committed to doing that work before moving forward. We are grateful for your prayers and faithfulness in this season.

Today, we write to tell you: the reset work is underway, and we are moving forward together.

The pause we took was an act of faithfulness. It is allowing space for the Standing Committee, the Search Committee, and diocesan leadership to have the candid conversations our process needs about structure, trust, and who we truly are as a diocese.

We know that uncertainty about the timeline has been difficult. We know that some have felt distant from the process. And we know that we as a diocese have a great responsibility: doing the deeper work of discerning and articulating our shared identity as the people of God in Western New York.

Three commitments guiding us forward:

As we re-engage this work, we are grounded in three commitments:

- 1) **Faithfulness over speed.** We will move forward only when the work is ready. We will not rush to fill a vacancy; we are seeking to discern a calling.
- 2) **Transparency and trust.** Communication will be regular, clear, and accountable. You will hear from us consistently—not only when there is something to announce, but as a steady engagement throughout this process.
- 3) **Shared discernment.** The voices of the whole diocese will shape the profile and the process. This search belongs to all of us.

What comes next:

The Search Committee reconvenes with renewed structure, a revised charge from the Standing Committee, and a strengthened leadership model. After reflection on the demands of this work, the Standing Committee has determined that the scope of a search is best served by two leaders sharing full responsibility with clear definition of roles. We are pleased to announce that Ms. Lisa Yaggie and the Rev. Nick Evancho will now serve as co-chairs, bringing experience and complementary strengths to bear

together. We are deeply grateful for all that each has already contributed, and confident that this structure will serve the search and the diocese well.

We are also pleased to announce that we have retained Ms. Carrie Graves as our communications consultant to support the diocese throughout the search, ensuring that our communications are consistent, clear, and worthy of the trust you have placed in us. Carrie has served as canon for communications in the dioceses of Upper South Carolina and Maryland. She was the staff liaison for the bishop search in Maryland and saw that communication about the search reached the diocesan community and the media, as appropriate, through multiple platforms and strategies. She also works in a supporting communications capacity with the Diocese of Lexington, bringing to Western New York a current and firsthand perspective on how dioceses across the Church are approaching this work.

A summary of the road ahead:

Spring–Summer 2026. Governance and structure strengthened; Search Committee operational reset and relational covenant; communications framework launched.

Summer–Fall 2026. A renewed season of listening across the Diocese—diocesan-wide gatherings, regional in-person sessions, and targeted conversations with clergy, lay leaders, and racial justice groups. The data from the Holy Cow Survey and our listening sessions will be shared as part of this process.

Fall 2026 (October 23–24). Diocesan Convention: presentation on search progress and approval of election rules of order.

Advent 2026 (November). Publication of a revised and faithful diocesan profile, reflecting who we truly are. Active recruitment begins.

Winter–Spring 2027. Discernment and candidate process, including application review, interviews, and a semi-finalist retreat.

May 1, 2027. Special Electing Convention.

September 18, 2027. Consecration of the Bishop-Elect (subject to the 120-day consent process required by the canons of The Episcopal Church).

We recognize that this timeline is longer than many had hoped. We ask for your continued patience and trust. Proceeding with time to allow for care, discernment, trust, and detail is critical to the work. We are committed to doing this right.

What you can expect from us:

Beginning now, you will receive regular updates from us—biweekly diocesan communications during active phases, and monthly narrative reflections that keep us connected to one another and to the spiritual grounding of this work. We will also be rebuilding our digital presence to ensure that information about the search is accessible, current, and welcoming to all who wish to follow along.

If you have questions, concerns, or thoughts you wish to share, please do not hesitate to reach out to the Standing Committee through the diocesan office. We are listening.

Our work as the Church is not simply to call a bishop. With God's help, we are becoming a community fully ready to receive the one who is called to us. That honest, patient, and prayerful work is already underway.

Please continue to hold this Diocese, and this process, in your prayers. We give thanks for each of you.

Faithfully,

The Rev. Luke Fodor, President
and the Members of the Standing Committee
Episcopal Diocese of Western New York

Note on Process: The bishop search process is governed by the canons of the Episcopal Diocese of Western New York and the canons of The Episcopal Church (Title III, Canon 11). The Standing Committee, as the ecclesiastical authority of the Diocese during a vacancy, holds canonical responsibility for overseeing the search and election process. All phases of this work—including the composition of the Search Committee, the election process, and the consent procedure—are being conducted in accordance with those canons.