



## *The Diocese of New Jersey*

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September 2, 2021

My dear Sisters and Brothers of the Diocese of New Jersey,

The Standing Committee was informed by Bishop Stokes, at our June meeting, of his intention to retire. Since that announcement, the date of June 24, 2023 has been scheduled for the consecration and now our work of discernment begins.

The first step in that discernment is for each congregation to meet to nominate six people to attend a special Convocation Meeting. Those congregational meetings will all happen on September 26. You will report the names of your representatives to the Dean of your convocation.

On October 24, the Convocations will hold a special meeting. At the meeting, the convocations will elect from the parish representatives one clergy and one lay person to be on the Bishop Search and Nomination Committee.

The Standing Committee will be hiring a consultant to work with the Committee. Bishop Todd Ousley has given us a list of qualified consultants.

Bishop Stokes has appointed Valaida Guerrero to be the Chair of the Bishop Search and Nomination Committee and the Standing Committee approved this appointment.

At the initial meeting of the Bishop Search and Nomination Committee they will nominate six additional at large members. The Convocational Members shall be as inclusive as possible to insure that the Committee is representative of the entire Diocese. Once the Committee is full, they will elect their Vice Chair and their work begins.

I know you join me in giving thanks for Bishop Stokes leadership of our Diocese. I am sure there will be opportunities between now and the consecration of our next Bishop to celebrate his and Susan's ministry among us.

While searches often take up much of the focus of a diocese, the ministries and initiatives already begun will continue.

Please pray for this search and participate fully when the surveys come out. When the profile is released consider reaching out to clergy to invite them into discernment.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Edmund W. Zellej +".

The Reverend Edmund W. Zellej  
President of Standing Committee