

August, 2020

Archpastoral Letter Regarding the Nomination of a Bishop for the Diocese of New England

July 24, 2020

To the Reverend Clergy and Pious Faithful of the Diocese of New England,

Christ is in our midst!

With this letter, I am happy to announce the procedure by which, God-willing, a new bishop will be nominated and elected for the Diocese of New England. This procedure is in conformity with the standard procedure for such an election in the Orthodox Church in America.

The procedure is as follows:

1) This present letter will serve as notice to all parishes of the Diocese of New England that any parishioner in good standing can identify one possible candidate for possible nomination as diocesan bishop. Names may be submitted directly and confidentially to the Chancellor of the Diocese of New England, Archpriest John Kreta, at the following email address: fjkreta@snet.net. All names of candidates must be submitted for nomination by August 31, 2020, and no names received after that date will be considered.

2) When identifying candidates, please note that according to the Statute of the Orthodox Church in America (Article VIII, Section 6), the following are the qualifications for a diocesan bishop:

a. If he is not already a bishop, the candidate for the office of bishop shall be nominated from among the clergy or laity, monastic, celibate, or widowed.

b. To receive episcopal ordination, the nominee must satisfy all the requirements of the Sacred Canons pertaining to this highest of all ecclesiastical offices.

c. It is preferable that the candidate have completed a course of study in a graduate school of Orthodox theology.

d. He should be conversant in the English language and, as appropriate, in another language commonly spoken among the faithful of the Diocese.

e. If at the time of his nomination he is a layman or a celibate or widowed priest, he shall pronounce at least the first monastic vows (*rasophore*), if he has not already pronounced such vows.

f. Diocesan bishops shall not be eligible for nomination for another Diocese.

3) The chancellor will initially discern simply that the qualifications of bishop are met by candidates whose names have been submitted.

4) At its meeting on February 18, 2020, the Diocesan Council established a Search Committee that includes: the Chancellor of the Diocese, Archpriest John Kreta; the three deanery deans, Archpriest Vasily Lickwar, Archpriest John Hopko, and Archpriest Mark Korban; and Fr. Steven Voytovich who has previously served as a Dean of St. Tikhon's Seminary. The Search Committee will review the candidates initially vetted by the Diocesan Chancellor (from #2) and from among them confidentially select three candidates.

5) The Search Committee will then meet, separately and confidentially, with these three candidates, informing them of the Search Committee's intent to present them as candidates.

6) The Search Committee then must send the names of the three candidates to the Secretary of the Holy Synod, His Eminence Archbishop Michael, for him to confirm which of these candidates are named in the list of candidates, which has been approved by the Holy Synod, that he maintains as Secretary of the Holy Synod. If any of these candidates are not already named on the Synodal list, the Search Committee will forward the name of such a candidate to the Metropolitan with a request that the candidate be vetted according to the process established by the Holy Synod for possible approval. Subsequently, the Holy Synod will inform the Search Committee if the vetted candidate has, or has not, received approval from the Holy Synod.

7) The candidate(s) nominated by the Search Committee and vetted and approved by the Holy Synod will be asked by the Search Committee to prepare a brief autobiography, and will then meet with the Diocesan Council which shall serve as the Nominating Committee. The Diocesan Council may request further background information and will interview the candidates at an appropriate time.

8) Next, the Diocesan Council will decide which of the candidate(s) will be forwarded to the Special Diocesan Assembly.

9) The Special Diocesan Assembly will follow this procedure for the nomination of a candidate, which has been approved by the Holy Synod:

PROCEDURES CONCERNING THE ELECTION OF THE RULING BISHOP

I. The Special Diocesan Assembly shall begin with a Divine Liturgy and a special service of Invocation to the Holy Spirit.

II. Following the Divine Liturgy, the Special Diocesan Assembly shall meet in accordance with the provisions of the Statute (Article VIII, Section 7; and Article IX). The Assembly shall then elect tellers entrusted to count the votes.

III. The Committee on Credentials, appointed in advance by the Diocesan Council (Article IX,

Section 8) shall then report the exact number of voting delegates.

IV. The Locum Tenens, as chair of the Special Diocesan Assembly, shall call on the Nominating Committee to present the names of the candidates. Nominations will not be allowed from the floor. There shall be no speeches in support of or against any candidates.

V. The balloting will take place in secret, and diocesan-certified ballots shall be distributed to all delegates.

VI. On the first ballot one name shall be written. The ballots containing more than one name or names other than officially listed candidates shall be declared void.

VII. The results of the ballot, with figures, shall be announced by the Locum Tenens.

VIII. If at the first ballot a candidate receives $\frac{2}{3}$ of the accredited votes, he shall be declared by the Locum Tenens as the designated nominee to the See and his name shall be submitted to the Holy Synod of Bishops for approval and canonical election.

IX. If no candidate receives $\frac{2}{3}$ of the accredited votes, a second ballot shall take place and two names shall be written on each ballot. The ballots with fewer or more than two names, or names other than those of officially listed candidates, shall be declared void.

X. The Locum Tenens shall then announce the results. The names of the two candidates with the largest pluralities shall be submitted to the Synod for canonical election.

XI. However, if no candidate received more than 40% of the accredited votes, the Locum Tenens shall declare the ballot as non-conclusive and the Assembly as having failed to nominate a candidate for the office of Diocesan Bishop (Article VIII, Section 7.e). In this case, the Synod may elect another qualified candidate as Diocesan Bishop, or they may authorize another Diocesan Assembly to nominate a candidate.

XII. The Nominating Committee may also, at the beginning of the Special Diocesan Assembly, announce its failure to nominate a candidate, move that the Assembly waive its right to nominate the Bishop, and request that the Holy Synod directly elects a candidate.

XIII. Since the Assembly only nominates a candidate and the latter is to be approved by election of the Holy Synod, a nominated candidate is not to be declared as "Bishop-elect". The Locum Tenens and the Diocesan Council shall inform the Primate of the Orthodox Church in America and request him to convene the Synod for the canonical approval and election of the nominee. As mentioned above, if the nominee is not approved by the Holy Synod, the Synod shall direct the Diocesan Assembly to reconvene and elect another candidate.

XIV. The Diocesan Assembly shall adjourn with a Thanksgiving Service.

XV. Following his canonical election by the Holy Synod, the new Diocesan Bishop, if already of episcopal rank, has full authority and prerogatives as Diocesan Bishop of the Diocese of New England. If the canonically elected candidate is not already a bishop, he will receive ordination (consecration) to the holy episcopacy, after which he will have full authority and prerogatives as Diocesan Bishop of the Diocese of New England.

XVI. The date and place of the consecration, if necessary, and the enthronement shall be announced to all parishes so that the entire Body of the Faithful may take part in this event.

As the assigned *Locum Tenens* of the Diocese of New England, I encourage everyone involved to carry out this process in a spirit of peace, integrity, and love for Christ and His Body the Church. I pray that we may all make our best efforts to be “united in the same mind and the same judgment” (1 Corinthians 1:10) so that God’s will may be done for the Diocese of New England.

With archpastoral blessings and intercessions,

†Tikhon

Archbishop of Washington
Metropolitan of All America and Canada

Around the Parish

While forty of us currently may come to worship in person each Sunday, **our parish community will continue to pray at home while gathering together online.** Our parish website has the latest information: sspeterpaul.org/praying. The response so far has been enthusiastic, and more are welcome! We are delighted that some of our shut-ins have been able to join us as well.

All our gatherings for prayer use the following details:

SS. Peter & Paul: Praying Together

Please join our meeting from your computer, tablet or smartphone.

<https://www.gotomeet.me/JoshuaMosher/ss-peter--paul-praying-together>

You can also dial in using your phone.

United States (Toll Free): **1 877 309 2073**

Access Code: **333-540-349**

New to GoToMeeting? Get the app now and be ready when your first meeting starts:

<https://global.gotomeeting.com/install/333540349>

Please note: you do not need to sign up for a free trial or subscribe to GoToMeeting to participate. **The software is free for attendees.**

Please also note that you can call in!

Fr. Joshua can make outdoor pastoral visits.

Under the more flexible rules of Phase 2 of our reopening, we can arrange for such visits for Confession, Communion for the sick, and other spiritual needs. We have already arranged meetings in people's back yards, or even under a tree outside the church! The usual safety measures in Connecticut apply. If you would like arrange such a visit, please contact Fr. Joshua at 203-237-4539 or email frjmosher@sspeterpaul.org.

Sign Up for Parish

News: Everyone in the parish is invited to sign up for our Parish News list. We established it at the beginning of the year as a fresh way to communicate. Now that we are confronting the necessity of quarantines and “social distancing,” it’s a valuable tool for our community to stay connected. **You can sign up for Parish News on our Contact page:** <https://sspeterpaul.org/contact>.

You can also follow our parish on Facebook.

We have shared a steady stream of news and other material on our page: facebook.com/saintspeterandpaulmeriden/.



We welcome your donations and pledges, which can be mailed to SS. Peter & Paul Orthodox Church, PO Box 334, Meriden CT 06450. We are grateful for your continued support of the work of our parish, which has continued even during the lockdown, and even has expanded into new areas, like our online ministries. Thank you!

Online Christian education series: “Exploring Our Faith.” Join us any time as we explore important aspects of the Orthodox Christian Faith, inviting your own questions each session. We have sessions planned for Tuesdays, Aug. 11 and 18, at 7:00. We continue to use GoToMeeting, with the “Praying Together” details shared above.

Thanks go to everyone who prepared for and participated in our parish meeting on July 26. It required commitment and careful attention, and we accomplished our work smoothly, while involving more than two-thirds of our voting membership.

Dormition Fast: Aug. 1-14. The fast begins with the Procession of the Holy Cross and ends with the Feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos, August 15. The remembrance of the Cross reminds us of our own precious responsibility to follow the way of Jesus Christ, while the Dormition reminds us of our hoped-for end, welcomed into Paradise by Christ’s own mother. Don’t let these few days slip past unnoticed.

Feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord:

Aug. 6. At the Transfiguration, our Lord Jesus Christ took the disciples Peter, James and John to Mount Tabor and there manifested his divine glory to them, as far as they could bear it. The disciples saw Moses and Elijah standing with the Lord, and they heard the voice of the Father saying, “This is my beloved Son. Listen to him.” By this sign, the disciples would come to understand that the Lord suffered and died voluntarily, for our sake. We bless fruit (and veggies!) at this feast: if you would like to bring your own, keep it with you in your place, and we will bless it all following the liturgy. Great Vespers on Wednesday, Aug. 5, at 6 PM will be online. Divine Liturgy on Thursday at 9:30 will be in church, but streamed online as usual.



The Dormition (Falling-Asleep) of the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary on Aug. 15.

On the eve, Friday, Aug. 14, at 6 PM, we will celebrate with Vespers and Liturgy in the temple, followed by the blessing of flowers. The Dormition is a foretaste of the universal hope of life following death. In the feast's icon (which we can see on the ceiling of our church), we see the Theotokos laid out upon her funeral bier, but her Son bearing her up to heaven, as a new-born babe. We glorify her, and pray that, on the last day, all of us may be carried into new life!



As we are about two-thirds of the way through the year, **please re-view your pledge of support to the parish.**

If you have questions, speak with Alexia Tassmer (203-284-0856). Thank you for your ongoing support of the ministry of this parish.