

THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESES OF
**Western New York &
Northwestern Pennsylvania**

March 19, 2025

Dear People of the Episcopal Partnership of WNY & NWPA,

We want to provide an update on where we are as we move forward to our Special Convention scheduled for **Saturday, May 3, 2025, at St. Luke's Church in Jamestown, NY.**

Our partnership is currently at a crucial time. We are at the end of the designated period to undertake this experiment for the sake of the gospel. We have commissioned an evaluation of our work together, which we have now received and distributed to the partnership.

Additionally, Bishop Sean Rowe, who has served as bishop for both of our dioceses, was elevated in November to the office of the Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church. Since then, our Standing Committees have served as the Diocesan Ecclesiastical Authorities, in addition to their normal work as a Standing Committee and their review of the partnership.

Both of our dioceses now face the question of how we move forward with electing our next bishop. The first step in answering this question is whether we wish to move forward together to elect the same bishop in partnership with both dioceses. This decision has significant implications for our partnership, but we cannot make other significant decisions until this question is resolved.

On Saturday, May 3rd at 10:00a.m., our partnership will hold a joint Special Convention at St. Luke's Church in Jamestown, NY. Each Diocesan Convention will be organized using a Special Order of Business and Rules for Debate where each will consider a single resolution that has been drafted by a joint planning group. We anticipate concluding our work by 1:30 p.m. The resolutions read:

Resolution WNY

Resolved by this Special Convention of the Diocese of Western New York, that the Diocese of Western New York begins the process of electing a bishop diocesan in partnership with the Diocese of Northwestern Pennsylvania and instructs our Standing Committee to begin such a process in accordance with our Constitution and Canons.

Resolution NWPA

Resolved by this Special Convention of the Diocese of Northwestern Pennsylvania, that the Diocese of Northwestern Pennsylvania begins the process of electing a bishop diocesan in partnership with the Diocese of Western New York and instructs our Standing Committee to begin such a process in accordance with our Constitution and Canons.

Voting on each resolution will be by orders by written ballot. To move forward with electing a bishop in partnership, both resolutions would need to pass by a simple majority in both orders of their respective convention. We will be voting by orders because we need to ensure the support of everyone to make a continuation of the partnership at this level successful. Additionally, clergy and laity bring different gifts and perspectives and we want explicitly to include both perspectives in this vote.

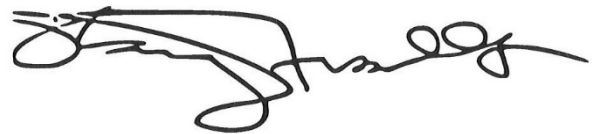
If the resolution passes, it will effectively make the Partnership between our two dioceses permanent with us sharing a bishop and staff for the foreseeable future.

If the resolution fails, it will effectively end our current level of Partnership and each Standing Committee will determine next steps in securing Episcopal oversight for their respective diocese. We would also begin to separate shared administrative structures and staff. This vote, however, will not make a decision about our collaborative ministries such as the Joint Commission on Ministry and the Commission to Dismantle Racism and Discrimination. Regardless of the vote, clergy from both dioceses could continue to serve churches in both dioceses.

If you have any questions, please feel free to direct them to either of us and we will happily answer them as we are able. We look forward to our discernment together, as always confident of the guidance of the Holy Spirit.



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