

# NOMINEES FOR DIOCESAN OFFICES

Report Prepared for the 233rd Diocesan Convention  
As of October 2, 2023



## Diocesan Council (Three-year terms)

**The Diocesan Council**, comprised of six clergy and six lay members, along with the Bishop, Treasurer, and Chancellor, is responsible for the development, implementation and oversight of the Diocesan program and budget. Between Diocesan Conventions, the Council functions much like the vestry of a congregation, establishing policies, planning the work of the church, and overseeing its administration.

### **Clergy Nominees (2 Clergy Seats):**

The Rev. Katie Presley  
The Rev. Joseph Smith

### **Lay Nominees (2 Lay Seats):**

Susan Grimes  
Mildred Keith

## Standing Committee (Three-year terms)

**The Standing Committee** is comprised of six clergy and six lay members. The Standing Committee's responsibilities are: to act as the Standing Committee of the diocese in accordance with the requirements of the Constitution and Canons of The Episcopal Church, The Constitution of this Diocese (Article IX), and its Canons, including giving consents to Episcopal elections elsewhere in TEC; to act as a Council of advice to the Bishop; and to act as Ecclesiastical Authority in absence of the Bishop.

### **Clergy Nominees (2 Clergy Seats):**

The Rev. Bill Coyne  
The Rev. Dr. Wilmot Merchant II

### **Lay Nominees (2 Lay Seats):**

Barney Forsythe  
Vermelle Simmons  
Rick Stall

## Trustee, University of the South (Three-year term)

**The University of the South**, located in Sewanee, TN, is owned by the Episcopal dioceses of the southeast, each of which elects two lay persons and one member of the clergy to its Board of Trustees. The Trustees meet once each year for two days. Between annual meetings, trustees serve the University by promoting its mission, encouraging enrollment, and supporting it financially.

### **Lay Nominees (1 Lay Seat):**

Kirk Battle  
Jean McDowell Martin  
Jan Schumann

**Additional nominations may be presented to the Nominations Committee on or before November 2, 2023, the first business day of Diocesan Convention.**

**Additional nominations must include 150 copies of each nominee's photo, nominator statement, and personal statement.**

## Diocesan Council *Clergy*

**Name:** The Rev. Katie Presley

**Church:** All Saints Episcopal Church, Hilton Head

**Nominated by:** Nancy Tillinghast



**Nominator statement:** Katie works well on a team and brings enthusiasm and creativity to her work with the lay and clerical leadership team at All Saints. She is highly organized and detail-oriented. As a vestry liaison for Adult Christian formation in our parish, I have been impressed with the ideas and experience Katie brings to the table from her work with All Saints Atlanta and Grace Midtown(GA) in particular. Katie is passionate about diversity and inclusion in faith communities, is an excellent listener, is excited about spirituality and always seeking creative ways to bring people of all ages closer to God. Finally, Katie is passionate about the future of the Church and empowering new leaders.

**Personal Statement:** It is with great joy that I accept the nomination to serve on Diocesan Council. As a newly ordained priest and a priest new to the Diocese of South Carolina, I come with energy and passion to serve this diocese as we joyfully tend to our present state while we also look ahead with hope and excitement for what is to come. Prior to accepting the call to serve at All Saints, Hilton Head, I served in the Diocese of Atlanta where I was ordained to the priesthood. I come with a breadth of leadership experience thanks to my almost 14 years in the military—12 years enlisted in the Air Force and 2 years as a Chaplain in the Army Reserves. I am passionate about the future of the church and believe that we are being called more and more to serve our communities, to share God's inclusive love, and to continually evolve as the world around us changes. I'm excited for the opportunity to use my gifts, skills, and experience to serve this diocese as we testify to the goodness of God in our midst. May we be a beacon of light for the world!

# Diocesan Council

## *Clergy*

**Name:** The Rev. Joseph K. Smith

**Church:** The Episcopal Church on Edisto, Edisto Island

**Nominated by:** Patricia Neumann



**Nominator statement:** The Reverend Joseph K. Smith began his ministry with The Episcopal Church on Edisto on August 15, 2023. As chair of our church’s Rector Search Committee, I have known him since March. From our Committee’s first conversation with Fr. Joseph, we knew that the Holy Spirit had guided him to Edisto and that he would be a perfect match for our congregation. Fr. Joseph understands our long passage – from starting with nothing in a position of exile to now contemplating the purchase of land on which to build a church. Similarly, he understands the parallel process that the diocese has undergone over the past several years. He will be able to contribute to the work of the Diocesan Council on Day One. Father Joseph has an objective way of evaluating ideas and a thoughtful approach to decision-making – with the ability to understand all sides and pathways. Just as he is perfectly suited to guide us through the next steps in our local journey on Edisto, he is ready to contribute his insight to our diocese. He will bring a steady hand and a vision of the future to the work of the Diocesan Council. I am honored to present his nomination to Convention.

**Personal statement:** As one of the newest members of the Diocese of South Carolina, it is my privilege to stand for election for Diocesan Council. Having been born and raised up and sent out from the Diocese of Upper South Carolina, I am so happy to be home after a nine-year stint in the Diocese of Pennsylvania. What I am most excited about is doing the work that I was ordained to do. And to be sure, part of that work is to "take my share in the councils of the Church" (BCP 531). I am humbled and ecstatic to be serving at the Episcopal Church on Edisto in the Episcopal Diocese of South Carolina where we are in the exciting part of building up the Church. We have the long tradition of the Episcopal Church to lean on, and yet, in this phase of our life as Church and diocese, we are compelled to dream beyond the same old thing that we have already done. And, if I haven’t said it already, I’m excited to be here and ready to serve.

# Diocesan Council

## *Lay*

**Name:** Susan Grimes

**Church:** St. Mark's, Port Royal

**Nominated by:** The Very Rev. Roy Tripp



**Nominator statement:** Susan Grimes, a member of St. Mark's, Port Royal, has over 40 years involvement in the Episcopal Church. Presently she serves on our Vestry. Her skills in team building and leadership have helped our church face the challenges of COVID, and the return to full operational status. Susan's ability to think creatively provides a fresh perspective, leading to solving challenges with an innovative approach. I believe she will bring a passion for growing the diocese.

**Personal Statement:** The Episcopal Church has been my spiritual home for the past 40 years. I have been on several vestries and currently serve as liaison for Parish Life and as a co-director for our newly established women's group.

I worked as a design assistant in Manhattan renovating brownstones and as a real estate agent in Connecticut. As a retired teacher from Georgia, my goal is to continue learning and serving our Church. With God's help we will bring the Gospel's message to those longing for peace and love. My passion is to develop and help enable this worthwhile endeavor.

# Diocesan Council

## Lay

**Name:** Mildred Keith

**Church:** Epiphany, Summerville

**Nominated by:** The Rev. Lenwood Williams



**Nominator Statement:** I have been serving as the interim priest at the Church of the Epiphany, Summerville for the past two and a half years. During this time, I have come to know Mrs. Mildred Keith quite well and am pleased to recommend her for a seat on the Diocesan Council.

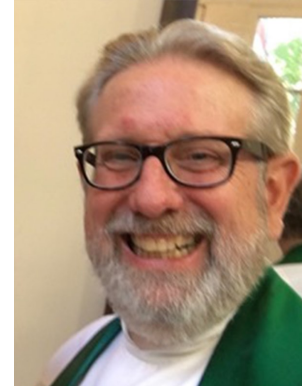
**Personal Statement:** I am married to Dr. Edward Keith, Jr. We have one child and two grandchildren. I have been an Episcopalian since 1985. I have been a member of New St. Andrews Church where I served on the vestry and was trained by Diocesan personnel to conduct internal audits at the church. I am currently a member of church of the Epiphany where I am on the vestry and Vice President of the ECW. I recently served as a member of the Strategic Visioning Team and very involved in the mission of our faith and growth of our church. I am also involved in community projects with the Silhouettes of Kappa Alpha Psi where we contribute annually to St, Jude and My Sister's House and make monthly contributions to Blessing Boxes in the area.

## Standing Committee *Clergy*

**Name:** The Rev. Bill Coyne

**Church:** St. Stephen's, Charleston

**Nominated by:** The Rev. Dr. Adam Shoemaker



**Nominator statement:** I am happy to nominate the Rev. Bill Coyne for a clergy spot on the Standing Committee because of his many decades of ministerial experience both in the parish and as a member of diocesan staff in two different dioceses. His unique perspective and love for the work of the church would make him an outstanding addition to the Standing Committee as we continue to build up our diocese. He is warm, thoughtful, and insightful and I know would bring a great deal to the body.

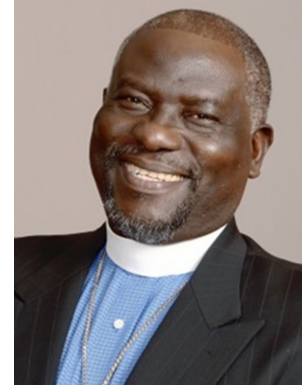
**Personal Statement:** I have been active in two dioceses (WMA & SC) since ordination in 1978. I have served as a deputy eight times to General Convention (1988, 1991, 1994, 1997, 2006, 2009, 2012 and 2022). I served as archdeacon and congregational development officer in the Diocese of Western Massachusetts from 1998 to 2013. In the Diocese of South Carolina I have served at: St. Stephen's, Charleston; East Cooper Episcopal Church; diocesan Missioner for Returning Congregations & as the interim priest-in-charge at the Episcopal Church on Edisto. I also served on the Standing Committee in WMA and look forward to serving here if elected.

## Standing Committee *Clergy*

**Name:** The Rev. Cn. Dr. Wilmot T. Merchant II

**Church:** St. Stephen's, North Myrtle Beach

**Nominated by:** Ron Hall



**Nominator statement:** Canon Merchant has been a priest in this diocese since 1999 and has been the rector of St. Stephen's (NMB) since 2002. Prior to that, he served in various ministries in St. Stephen's Parish from October 1999 until 2001. He has served as volunteer Public Safety Chaplain for the City of North Myrtle Beach, & Hospital Chaplain for Loris Hospital, now McLeod Seacoast. He served as chairperson of the Faith Leaders Advisory Council for South Carolina Coalition Against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault. In 2009, he was honored as the "Volunteer of the Year" of the Victim Assistant Network of SC. Canon Merchant served as president of the Standing Committee of the Diocese from 2013 to 2015. In 2022, Canon Merchant was elected Clergy Representative of Province IV to the Executive Council of The Episcopal Church ("TEC"). In 2023, the Bishop of Liberia appointed Canon Merchant as liaison of The Episcopal Church of Liberia to The Episcopal Church in the U.S.A.

**Personal Statement:** Originally from Liberia, West Africa, I have served churches in Liberia and the United States since my ordination in 1986. Beginning October 1999 until August 2002, I served St. Stephen's in North Myrtle Beach SC in various capacities, including Christian Education Director, assistant priest, and interim priest-in-charge. In August 2002, I was installed as their third rector.

From 2004 to 2008 I served as the National Chairman of the Liberian Episcopal Community in the United States. From 2004 to 2015 I served on the National Board of the Union of Black Episcopalians. I am an active member of the Diocese of South Carolina and served as president of the Standing Committee from 2013 -2015. In June 2014, I was appointed priest-in-charge of Calvary Episcopal Church in Charleston. I simultaneously served the congregations of St. Stephen's and Calvary as an experiment of the changing times of the "Church" until December 2014. I have also served as a coach for the Black Ministries Office of the Episcopal Church and am a Senior Fellow of the Waccamaw Chapter of the American Leadership Forum.

From 2015 to the present, I have been elected deputy or associate deputy to General Convention. In 2015, I was made a Canon of The Anglican Diocese of Cape Coast in Ghana. In 2022, I was elected Clergy Representative of Province IV to the Executive Council of The Episcopal Church. In 2023, the Bishop of The Episcopal Church of Liberia appointed me as Liaison to The Episcopal Church. In 2023, Bishop Ruth Woodliff-Stanley appointed me as Dean of the Pee Dee-Waccamaw Deanery.

I will be delighted to be given the opportunity to serve as a member of the Standing Committee of the Diocese.

## Standing Committee

### Lay

**Name:** George B. (Barney) Forsythe

**Church:** St. Mark's, Port Royal

**Nominated by:** The Very Rev. Roy Tripp



**Nominator statement:** Barney Forsythe is a life-long Episcopalian with a deep love for the church, its heritage and traditions. As the Rector at St. Mark's, I have had the good fortune to have Barney serve with me as Senior Warden for two consecutive terms. He would bring to the Standing Committee years of experience and leadership from both military and civilian life. His understanding of group dynamics contributes to building consensus while honoring a wide range of views. He would be a wonderful addition to the Standing Committee as we move into the future.

**Personal statement:** I am a lifelong Episcopalian and member of St Mark's Episcopal Church in Port Royal, where I serve as a lay reader and member of the choir. I chaired the search committee that called the Rev Roy Tripp to St Mark's and served for six years as senior warden of the vestry. I recently served on the Diocesan Visioning Committee, co-chairing the "How" subcommittee. During my time on the vestry, St Mark's purchased the Union Church in Port Royal, conducted its first capital campaign, remodeled the church, updated its governance documents, and established an endowment.

I served thirty-five years in the Army, retiring in 2005 as Professor of Psychology and Leadership and Vice Dean for Education at West Point (and Brigadier General). I went on to serve as Dean of Faculty and then as President of Westminster College in Missouri until 2015. Since then, I have done corporate leadership training for Thayer Leadership based out of West Point.

Having served on the Visioning Committee, I am excited to help Bishop Ruth and the people of the diocese realize the bold vision and strategic plan that will be put forth during the convention. With my background in education and leader development, I am particularly committed to diocesan initiatives that foster Christian formation for all ages and that support the development of lay leaders who are equipped to partner with the clergy in mutual ministry.

## Standing Committee

### Lay

**Name:** Vermelle Simmons

**Church:** Calvary, Charleston

**Nominated by:** The Rev. Ricardo Bailey



**Nominator Statement:** I feel that Mrs. Vermelle Simmons should be nominated to the Standing Committee of our diocese because she is a woman who truly is dedicated to her parish and overall to the ministry, efficacy and witness of The Episcopal Church. Vermelle is a loyal Episcopalian who stands with and is unapologetically enthusiastic about the potential of what our church can and should be for the world that we live in. Vermelle has served on the Diocesan Council under two previous bishops. She also served as co-chair of the Search Committee that called me to be rector of Calvary Episcopal Church. She also currently serves as a member of Calvary's vestry and most recently, Vermelle is serving on the Racial Justice & Reconciliation Commission of the Diocese of South Carolina.

Vermelle has excellent listening skills and she has a sharp demeanor to be in a position to dialogue with others. I have seen her listen and pastorally lead others to understand different ways of thinking while keeping people in the space of knowing and feeling that they are part of the conversation at hand. She is a very generous, hard-working and a welcoming soul.

**Personal Statement:** God has continually focused my attention on being a good servant. I have served the children and parents of Charleston for over 38 years in education. Along with educating counties, cities, communities, school districts, faith-based organizations, community-based organizations, media, and businesses throughout of South Carolina on having a "voice." Through His grace, I've taken that same servant attitude to serve my church (Calvary) and the diocese in various roles of accountability, discernment, and dialogue over the years. At this point, I feel called to do more and I believe "the more" is to serve on the Diocesan Standing Committee. I will be an asset in encouraging everyone to follow the vision, and canons, of the diocese. With the current work I'm doing on the Diocesan Racial Justice and Reconciliation Commission, it's important to continue to have a "seat" at the table which allows for diversity and inclusion.

Our diocese has committed itself to doing the work of reconciliation and justice. I feel I can help bring a perspective for those of color and those who have been overlooked for years to the forefront of what so many of us must consider when it comes to diocesan identity. This will assist our bishop in her role as teacher, shepherd and witness bearer for all Episcopalians. In so doing, we will never forget the past, but draw closer in sharing the love of God.

# Standing Committee

## *Lay*

**Name:** Richard (Rick) Stall

**Church:** Messiah, Myrtle Beach

**Nominated by:** Patricia Neumann



**Nominator statement:** Rick Stall is dedicated to the mission of The Episcopal Church, both locally and in the diocese. He is well qualified for the defined as well as the anticipated work of The Standing Committee. Rick was a member of the Standing Committee, 2018-2020, when this body was performing its primary role of acting as the ecclesiastical authority of the diocese in the absence of a Bishop. His service encompassed the time of uncertainty surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic when difficult decisions had to be made for the diocese and its individual churches. He has also been very active in the diocese in other ways – serving on the Diocesan Missions Committee, the Diocesan Convention Committee for New Parishes and Missions, and most recently with me as co-chair of the Bishop Transition Committee. Rick has been the senior warden of The Episcopal Church of The Messiah since its formation in 2013, helping to establish, guide and grow this community of worship in Myrtle Beach. He is mindful of the past with his eyes always on the future. I am honored and pleased to nominate Rick Stall for a lay position on the Standing Committee of the Episcopal Diocese of South Carolina.

**Personal Statement:** As a lifelong Christian and an active adult communicant of five Episcopal churches in two dioceses, I have felt God's hand and guidance in numerous challenges and changes throughout my life. As senior warden of one of the churches that lost property in the bizarre ebbs and flows of our state Supreme Court's decision-making process, I have experienced the remarkable determination and resourcefulness of a pioneering community of faith. As one of the people who worked to form the Episcopal Church of the Messiah, Myrtle Beach in 2013, I have lived the wilderness experience fully. As an Episcopalian at this time in this diocese, I am compelled to offer all of that background and experience to perpetuating the rebuilding of the Episcopal Diocese of South Carolina as we progress beyond, and heal from, a rending schism.

Our diocese is historic, but cannot rest on our past. Our current situation is challenging and calls for creative adaptation and resourcefulness—that is now our exciting opportunity.

I feel called to employ my recent years of leadership experience in a mission church and at the diocesan level to the work of building a thriving and dynamic missional diocese in the 21st century. With benefit of my broad and multi-layered experience, I feel especially called to advocate for the Tier Two (churches who lost properties) and Tier Three (historically marginalized) faith communities of our diocese. With your support, I am eager to serve if elected.

# Trustee, University of the South *Lay*

**Name:** Kirk Battle

**Church:** Holy Cross Faith Memorial, Pawleys Island

**Nominated by:** The Rev. Wil Keith



**Nominator Statement:** Kirk Battle has been a faithful member of Holy Cross Faith Memorial Episcopal church for years. He belongs to a wonderful growing family that allows him to employ my own daughters as a frequent babysitters. Kirk maintains a strong and enduring connection with his alma mater, The University of the South and has expressed interest in the role of Trustee to the University frequently over the last decade. He has a fascinating personality that includes a delightful writing style that is appreciated by many through the many of his pieces that have been published. He will certainly represent our diocese well in this role and he will bring much enthusiasm as I expect his work may appropriately entail bring the family along and perhaps adding another generation of “Sewanee Battles.”

**Personal Statement:** I am a member of Holy Cross Faith Memorial Church in Pawleys Island and a 2005 graduate of Sewanee. The Episcopal Church has always been a part of my life both growing up in Conway, SC, and in high school when I attended St. Andrew’s in Middletown, DE.

I am a practicing lawyer in South Carolina who chiefly works with government entities handling personal injury, property, and licensing disputes. I have represented the local college, Coastal Carolina University, in a variety of lawsuits brought by students, parents, and guests to the campus. My wife, Lindsey, is a pharmacist at Georgetown Memorial Hospital. We live in Pawleys Island with our one-year old son, Walt.

In my spare time I write fiction and my latest book is a epic historical fiction saga about the founding of Sewanee called *These Hallowed Halls*. The book was a massive project which took eight years of research and revision to complete. While the text is certainly a celebration of the University, it does not shy away from discussing the racial prejudice of Reconstruction South.

Sewanee has been a part of my life since I arrived there. I am still in regular contact with my friends from the school, many of whom have served the University as trustees, professors, or fundraisers. I have a wealth of experience to call on through this network and a deep motivation to support the place we all love. I would be honored to continue to serve as a trustee and help the University share that experience with others.

## **Trustee, University of the South**

### ***Lay***

**Name:** Jean McDowell Martin

**Church:** Grace Church Cathedral, Charleston

**Nominated by:** The Rev. Charles E. Jenkins



**Nominator Statement:** Jean McDowell Martin graduated from the University of the South in 2005. She comes from a long line of family members who have also attended Sewanee. Jean and her family are active members of Grace Church Cathedral. I believe Jean's love for the church and love for Sewanee would make her an ideal candidate to serve as lay trustee.

**Personal Statement:** As an alumna of The University of the South (Class of '05) and a lifelong Episcopalian, the nomination for Lay Trustee is truly an honor. I am an active member of Grace Church Cathedral in Charleston, SC, and I am grateful for the strong relationship our congregation has with Sewanee. I have served on the vestry, been a lay reader, led a young adult group, and enjoyed attending services and parish events at Grace throughout my life.

The opportunity to serve both Grace Church and The University of the South in another capacity is one I would be grateful for and eager to do. Both institutions have played a significant role in shaping who I am as both a Christian and a person. I have deep respect and gratitude for Sewanee – the incredible education I received, the lifelong friendships we made, the encouragement from professors to think critically, and the true sense of home and family I still feel every time I visit or think about the Mountain. It is a sacred place in my heart, and I would be honored to serve as a lay trustee.

## Trustee, University of the South *Clergy*

**Name:** Jan Schumann

**Church:** Holy Communion, Charleston

**Nominated by:** The Rev. Cn. Ryan Currie



**Nominator Statement:** Jan Schumann is a loyal alumna of the University of the South and faithful member of Holy Communion in Charleston. A member of the University Choir during her undergraduate days, Jan understands the close ties between Sewanee and the church. While respecting its traditions, Jan has spoken about the need for Sewanee to thrive in the twenty-first century as an excellent, inclusive school in the liberal arts tradition. I believe Jan's perspective could be valuable on the Board of Trustees.

**Personal Statement:** After withdrawing my name from nomination last year, I am in a much better place this year and ready to be considered for the position on the Sewanee Board of Trustees representing the Diocese of South Carolina. I graduated with a BS in mathematics in 1985. I have continued to support Sewanee financially since I graduated and am committed to the university being a living, growing institution for many years to come. I love the traditions of Sewanee but know that the institution must grow and change to remain a vital and consequential university. Sewanee has made a positive impact on my life and inspires me to seek a way to give back to the university in a meaningful way.