

# NOMINEES FOR DIOCESAN OFFICES

Report Prepared for the 235th Diocesan Convention  
As of October 19, 2025



## 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 The Episcopal Church; 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. Julia Madden  
The Rev. Fred Thompson

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

Barney Forsythe      Jane Hart Lewis  
Christine Jennings      Michael Roberts  
Steve Johnston      Henry Saunders

## Deputies to the 82nd General Convention in 2027 (Two-year term)

**Deputies and Alternates:** Each diocese of The Episcopal Church is entitled to four clergy and four lay deputies at the triennial meetings of the General Convention. Deputies serve any number of three-year terms. The 82nd General Convention will be held July 3-8, 2027, in Phoenix, Arizona. Expectations include being in Phoenix from June 30 through July 8 for the full days at Convention and the preparatory meetings on July 1-2, as well as the two-day Province IV Synod meetings. There will be some diocesan funds available to offset the costs, but additional funds may need to be identified from local parishes and individuals.

### **Clergy Nominees (4 Deputies/Alternates):**

The Rev. Eric Bash  
The Rev. Bill Coyne  
The Rev. Michael Crandall  
The Very Rev. Wilmot Merchant II  
The Very Rev. Michael Shaffer  
The Rev. Adam Shoemaker

### **Lay Nominees (4 Deputies/Alternates):**

Deb Harris  
Veronica Hinkson  
Andrea McKellar  
Jan Schumann  
Vermelle Simmons  
Mark Whitehouse

## 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):**

Helen Britton  
Laura Marshall  
Jan Schumann

**Additional nominations may be presented to the Nominations Committee on or before November 6, 2025, the first business day of Diocesan Convention.**

**Additional nominations must include 150 copies of each nominee's photo, nominator statement, and personal statement (which can be on one page).**

## Standing Committee *Clergy*

**Name:** The Rev. Julia Madden

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

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



**Nominator statement:** I nominate Julia Madden to serve on the Standing Committee of our diocese to bring a fresh perspective to our common life together. Julia is a newly canonical priest to South Carolina having transferred in from the Diocese of Western North Carolina where she served on the Standing Committee there. She is still in her first year as one of the associate rectors at St. Stephen's with oversight over our pastoral care and parish life ministries but in that time we have already been blessed by her eye for detail, faithfulness, and organizational skills. I believe she would bring these gifts and more to her work on our Standing Committee and be a real asset to this leadership body.

**Personal Statement:** I am honored to be nominated to serve on our diocese's Standing Committee. I currently serve as the Associate Rector for Pastoral Care and Parish Life at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church and am a newly ordained priest and lifelong Episcopalian. Over the years, I have been blessed to serve the Church in many ways: on the General Board of Examining Chaplains (Executive Support), the Standing Committee of the Diocese of Western North Carolina, the Cursillo Leadership Team in the Diocese of Southern Virginia, and at the parish level through vestry, pastoral care, worship, and lay leadership roles.

"Do not remember the former things, or consider the things of old. I am about to do a new thing..." (Isaiah 43:18–19). These words capture the spirit of this moment in our diocese. God is calling us to discern and participate in new ways of being Church—ways rooted in compassion, collaboration, and courage. My thirty-plus years of leadership in environmental remediation and construction have taught me the value of communication, trust, and teamwork in navigating complex challenges and creating sustainable paths forward.

I believe these same skills, together with my pastoral experience, can serve our diocese well as we explore this new season of God doing a new thing among us. It would be a privilege to join with others on the Standing Committee in prayerful discernment, shared responsibility, and faithful leadership for the life of the Church.

## Standing Committee Clergy

**Name:** The Rev. Fred Thompson

**Church:** St. John's, Johns Island

**Nominated by:** Cappy Traywick



**Nominator statement:** Father Fred Thompson was a Godsend, in every sense of the word, to Church of the Holy Communion. Between rectors, our only on-site clergyman having just resigned, we had reached a point of profound discouragement in October 2024. Enter Fr. Fred, who called out of the blue to offer his assistance on Sundays: he celebrated and preached basically every Sunday for the next eight months. We needed help, and he gave it, in spades: his time and energy inputs for Holy Communion's benefits were remarkable.

The effort and care that went into his ministry at Holy Communion was striking. Fr. Fred brought with him a caring spirit, an innate and authentic kindness, and an irrepressible enthusiasm that we badly needed: at a particularly tough moment, amidst a run of tough years. Fr. Fred stepped into our Anglo-Catholic traditions, with which he had limited experience, with a stated determination to do his best to keep things as they have been. It was a tough assignment, under difficult circumstances, and he succeeded- with aplomb.

Fr. Fred's ministry to the parishioners of Holy Communion will always be remembered with love and appreciation: a true leader and teacher, full of intelligence, compassion, and diplomacy with the people of the parish. It is an honor to nominate Fr. Fred Thompson to serve on the Standing Committee.

**Personal statement:** My name is Fred Thompson, and I am a priest in the Diocese of South Carolina and the chaplain assigned to Hollings Cancer Center at the Medical University of South Carolina. I am also the Chaplain to the Retired Clergy of South Carolina along with their spouses and widows. When I have free time, I also enjoy supply preaching around the Sea Islands of Charleston. My past experiences within the diocese have included serving as the Diocesan Disaster Coordinator, the Standing Committee, the Diocesan Committee, and the Bishop's Search Committee.

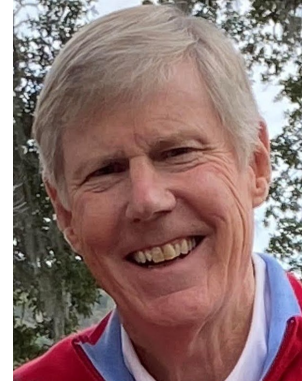
# Standing Committee

## *Lay*

**Name:** Brigadier General Barney Forsythe, US Army (retired)

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

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



**Nominator statement:** I have had the pleasure of knowing Barney Forsythe for the past eight years. He has served in various leadership positions at St. Mark's Episcopal Church, Port Royal, (Sr. Warden, Chair of the Rector Search Team, Capital Campaign) as well as at the diocese, where he is on the Strategic Planning Team.

Barney brings a deep love for at the Church, along with excellent people and management skills. I believe having Barney serve as a member of the Standing Committee will add guidance and insights as our diocese engages the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead.

**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 choir member. I served for six years as the senior warden, during which time 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 now chair St. Mark's Scholarship Committee, which provides a need-based scholarship for a graduating high school student of color, an initiative that my wife and I started after participating in Sacred Ground. For the diocese, I served on the Visioning Committee and am now a member of the Diocesan Feasibility Study Committee.

I served 35 years in the Army, retiring in 2005 as Professor and Vice Dean for Education at West Point. I went on to serve as President of Westminster College in Missouri until 2015. I now do corporate leadership training for Thayer Leadership based out of West Point.

Having served on the Visioning Committee and the Diocesan Feasibility Study Committee, I am excited to help Bishop Ruth and the people of the diocese realize the bold vision and strategic plan that now guide our life in Christ. With my background in education and leader development, I am particularly committed to diocesan initiatives that foster Christian formation for all ages, promote racial reconciliation and social justice, and support the development of lay leaders who are equipped to partner with the clergy in mutual ministry.

# Standing Committee

## Lay

**Name:** Christine Jennings

**Church:** Holy Communion, Charleston

**Nominated by:** Cappy Traywick



**Nominator statement:** I have known Christine Jennings for at least 15 years through our time at the Church of the Holy Communion, Charleston. Chris is a natural leader and communicator. She's a great listener as well as a great contributor. Chris has served on many committees and participated in many ministries of the church. I have had the privilege of working with her on a variety of projects and it is always a pleasure.

Currently, Chris serves on the finance committee with me, on the vestry at Holy Communion (her 3rd term, I believe) and is a cantor in our choir. One of her stints on the vestry was in the role of senior warden, a role to which she brought her characteristic calm demeanor, and tremendous dignity, during a period of great upheaval at Holy Communion. Outside of the Church of the Holy Communion, Chris has held a leadership position in CAJM (Charleston Area Justice Ministry) and has served as a Sacred Ground facilitator. I am confident that Christine Jennings is a well-qualified lay nominee for the diocesan Standing Committee.

**Personal Statement:** I have lived in the South for over 40 years and have raised all three of my children here. I love the history of the Lowcountry, and the wondrous art and music that reflects our diverse heritage. For over 25 years I specialized in Social Security law, representing disabled people of all ages and backgrounds—work that is fulfilling and humbling. I am reminded every day of our to seek justice for those who are in need.

I have been a member of the Church of the Holy Communion since June 10, 2001, the day of my baptism there. I came to Holy Communion as a musician, and I stayed for the deep love of service, community, and the promise we all make in our Baptismal Covenant to “seek justice and peace among all men, and respect the dignity of every person.” Over time, I have served as a vestry member, senior warden, and stewardship chair. I am currently serving a third term on the vestry, and am a member of the Finance and Stewardship Committees. I remain an active member of the Charleston Area Justice Ministry (CAJM).

I am excited at the prospect of serving as a lay member of the Standing Committee as we move forward in our strategic vision for a diocese anchored in justice for our Beloved Community. I believe that meeting the challenges of that vision will take all of us listening deeply to one another, and partnering with other congregations and community shareholders to create a welcoming, loving space for all who come through our doors.

## Standing Committee

### Lay

**Name:** Stephen Johnston

**Church:** St. James, Charleston (James Island)

**Nominated by:** Cappy Traywick



**Nominator Statement:** I met Steve Johnston at the Church of the Holy Communion, Charleston. He was the acolyte warden at the time and both of my children served as acolytes under him. Steve was senior warden and the search committee chairperson. I had the pleasure of serving with Steve on the search committee for a new rector. We had very efficient and meaningful meetings under his leadership. Steve has served all around our diocese in the Charleston area. He has a natural servant's heart and has been proactive in offering his service wherever he is at the time. After Steve's time at Holy Communion he has served at Grace Cathedral Church, Saint John's and presently at Saint James. I was delighted to reconnect with Steve at last year's diocesan convention. We shared memories of Holy Communion and ideas of church internal operating systems. Recently, Steve reached back out to me on a church finance topic we discussed previously. I was delighted to be able to share more of my experience and to guide him in the next steps for his church finance project. Steve is a servant, a doer, a thinker, a connector and would be a great candidate for the lay position on the Standing Committee.

**Personal Statement:** I am a lifelong member of the Episcopal Diocese of South Carolina, baptized and confirmed at Saint Helena's, Beaufort. I now belong to Saint James, James Island, where I serve as senior warden. My leadership has also included service on the vestry of the Church of the Holy Communion, Charleston, as member, junior warden, and senior warden. In addition, I continue to serve at Grace Church Cathedral as an acolyte, reader, and chalice at weekday noon services.

Professionally, I retired from the Ralph H. Johnson VA Medical Center in Charleston in 2011 after 27 years as a Registered Nurse. My final role was Compliance and Business Integrity Officer, a position that required oversight, accountability, and careful stewardship. These skills, combined with a lifelong commitment to the Church, prepare me for service on the Standing Committee.

I am a 2023 graduate of Education for Ministry (EfM) and currently serve on the board of James Island Outreach, where I see firsthand the transformative work of the Church in the community.

It would be an honor to serve on the Standing Committee, supporting the health, integrity, and mission of our diocese. I seek to strengthen collaboration across our diverse congregations and to help guide our common life in faithfulness to Christ. Thank you for your consideration.

# Standing Committee

## Lay

**Name:** Jane Hart Lewis

**Church:** St. Catherine's, Florence

**Nominated by:** The Rev. Eunice Dunlap



**Nominator Statement:** Jane is well known in this Diocese as an extremely detail-oriented person who has served on other committees. She has really good listening skills due to her long term career as a therapist and is very detail oriented. She certainly was an integral part of helping St. Catherine's Church come together after the schism. In my opinion she would be an excellent candidate for Standing Committee.

**Personal Statement:** I am a founding member of St. Catherine's Episcopal Church in Florence. A lifelong Episcopalian, I have served two three-year terms as senior warden. The first term began very quickly after our first gathering of nine displaced Episcopalians, through three temporary locations, the approval of a name, developing bylaws, and achieving mission status. The second term started with COVID and ended after we had both a full-time priest and a permanent location. Currently, I serve as a chalice bearer, lay reader, crucifer, and acolyte. Since the schism, I have also been a member of the Commission on Ministry for eight years, served three three-year terms as lay trustee for Sewanee: The University of the South, and was an alternate delegate to 2024's General Convention.

Professionally, I am a licensed professional counselor and supervisor. I have practiced in the private and public sectors for over 36 years. I provide continuing education training for various organizations and have also been an adjunct professor at Francis Marion University in both the graduate and undergraduate programs.

My husband Donald and our family are my greatest blessing. The people of the Diocese of South Carolina have also given me much. They have been pivotal guides in my experiencing Christ's love in the world. I ask for your vote to serve on Standing Committee. I will work diligently and faithfully to give back to God and the Diocese what can only be a fraction of the love and grace I have received.

# Standing Committee

## Lay

**Name:** Michael Roberts

**Church:** St. Anne's, Conway

**Nominated by:** The Rev. Kevin Sparrow



**Nominator Statement:** It is my great privilege to nominate Dr. Michael Roberts for election to the Standing Committee. Michael brings to this ministry a rare and needed combination of faith, wisdom, and practical experience: qualities that serve the Church well in a season of both discernment and decision in our common life.

Michael has been a steady and trusted leader from our very beginning. As a founding member of St. Anne's, Conway, he helped to shape the vision, governance, and culture that continue to guide our common life today. Over the years, he has served faithfully as vestry member, junior and senior warden, and now as a participant in Education for Ministry (EFM). His love of thoughtful inquiry, his theological curiosity, and his openness to the movement of the Holy Spirit are evident in all he does. Michael also embodies the humble, practical side of Christian leadership. As our volunteer Sexton, he is the one who quietly changes the lightbulbs, tends to the building, and makes sure that what needs doing simply gets done.

Professionally, Michael brings a wealth of experience as a scientist and university dean at Coastal Carolina University. His background in academic administration has given him a deep understanding of governance, strategic planning, and stewardship. In every setting, he has proven himself to be a clear thinker and careful listener: someone who asks the right questions, weighs options with integrity, and guides others toward wise, shared decisions. But what stands out most is Michael's sense of vocation. He approaches leadership in the Church not as another administrative responsibility but as a ministry of faith. He has a gift of helping the people of God listen for the Spirit's guidance in our common life. As a lifelong Episcopalian, his devotion to the Church is both steady and joyful.

For these reasons, I commend Dr. Michael Roberts with gratitude and confidence. He will bring to the Standing Committee a steady presence, discerning mind, and faithful commitment to the mission of Christ's Church in this diocese and beyond.

**Personal Statement:** I am excited about the opportunity to serve on the Standing Committee of our Diocese. I see this service as a logical continuation of my commitment to the Church; a commitment that began when I was asked to head up the stewardship program at Trinity Episcopal Church in Potsdam, NY just over 35 years ago. I would hope to bring to the Standing Committee my extensive experience as an academic leader—as department chair, associate dean, and dean—with a strong background in financial management, strategic planning, and creative problem solving.

While I am currently retired from my professional career as an academic scientist and administrator, I fill my time serving on several boards. These include the Board of Directors of the Waccamaw Economic Opportunity Council which runs Headstart, the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG), and the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) in the local tri-county area of Horry, Georgetown, and Williamsburg counties. I also serve on two boards at Coastal Carolina University: the Retired Employees Group, which serves to keep retirees engaged with the University, and the Research Foundation, which facilitates the purchase of equipment and supplies in support of the scholarly efforts of University faculty and students.

I am the volunteer sexton at St. Anne's, changing lightbulbs, rolling trash dumpsters in and out, and doing light maintenance tasks. On the spiritual side, I am a Year 2 participant in the EfM program at St. Anne's. In my spare time I enjoy Phillies baseball and making home-brew.

# Standing Committee

## Lay

**Name:** Henry Saunders

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

**Nominated by:** The Very Rev. Cn. Wilmot Merchant II



**Nominator statement:** I am delighted to nominate Henry Saunders to serve as a member of the Standing Committee. Henry has served St. Stephen's in many integral leadership capacities. His experience, forward-thinking mindset, leadership skills, and personal qualities have been a blessing to our parish. Now that he has retired from his medical profession and is willing to serve in this capacity, I strongly believe the diocese will share in this blessing of his participation.

**Personal Statement:** I am proud to be a member of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in North Myrtle Beach. I have served as Chairman of our Trust and Endowment Board, Vestry Member, Junior Warden, Senior Warden, Program Director of our Annual Rich Jacobs Golf Tournament, and President of The Episcopal Church Men.

We are a service church of active retirees. I am proud of the church family that we are, and the good we do for the community. Prior to the painful split I was a member of St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Conway where I served as treasurer, junior warden, and vestry member. This experience with two congregations has taught me much about church politics and governance. As a lifelong Episcopalian and grandson of an Episcopal priest, I know the history and traditions of our denomination. Now fully retired from my practice of general internal medicine and hospice medicine in Horry County, I am pleased to have the time to devote to my children, my grandchildren, and to the strength and growth of St. Stephen's and The Episcopal Diocese of South Carolina.

Our denomination faces challenges economically, politically, and demographically. I am refreshed by the leadership of Bishop Ruth. I am proud of the efforts of the diocese toward racial and political reconciliation. With Christ as our leader and our focus, our work is to build the Kingdom of God on earth as it is in heaven. I seek a position on the Standing Committee to be of service to that mission, and I am grateful for your support.

## Deputy, 82nd General Convention—2027 *Clergy*

**Name:** The Rev. Eric Bash

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

**Nominated by:** The Rev. Denise Trogdon



**Nominator statement:** The Reverend Eric Bash has been serving at All Saints Episcopal Church as an associate rector since June 1, 2025. Rev. Bash was ordained in 2024, and served his first year of ministry at St. Johns, John's Island. Eric has jumped into leadership with energy, passion and grace and he is already well loved among our parishioners. He has shown great commitment and creativity in his various roles. He currently serves on the Resolutions Committee for the diocese, was the head Sacristan at his seminary, Sewanee, and also served as the Assistant to the Dean of Grace Cathedral. I believe General Convention would be a wonderful experience for a relatively new clergyman and Eric would represent the diocese with respect, honor and commitment.

**Personal Statement:** Serving as a delegate to the General Convention represents a unique opportunity to contribute meaningfully to the future of our church. I have a deep sense of responsibility and commitment to The Episcopal Church, and I believe that it would be an amazing experience for a new clergy member. The General Convention is a forum where diverse voices come together to discern God's will, address pressing issues, and chart the course for our church's next chapter. My desire to participate stems from a passion for collaborative decision-making, inclusivity, and the pursuit of justice within our faith tradition.

As a delegate, I hope to listen actively to the concerns of fellow members, ensuring that their voices are heard and respected during important deliberations. I am eager to learn from others, engage in thoughtful dialogue, and participate in matters that affect the entire church. By representing the Diocese of South Carolina, I would carry the words of Bishop Guerry that say, "we should strive for unity, not uniformity." Ultimately, my goal is to serve with integrity, humility, and a servant's heart, making thoughtful decisions that reflect the values and hopes of our community. Being a delegate would be both an honor and a profound responsibility, and I am excited by the possibility of experiencing and contributing to the General Convention.

# Deputy, 82nd General Convention—2027 Clergy

**Name:** The Rev. Bill Coyne

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

**Nominated by:** The Rev. Courtney Davis-Shoemaker



**Nominator statement:** Being a deputy at General Convention requires time and expertise. Having served as a clergy deputy for multiple Conventions, Rev. Bill Coyne demonstrates the understanding and desire to do the work that is required prior to attending Convention and the demanding work at the in-person Convention.

Bill's experience makes him an asset to the SC deputation. He is willing and able to dedicate significant time to the pre-convention and in-person activities which can be extensive and complex. Through his experience as a parish priest and on diocesan staffs, Bill understands Episcopal polity and has a strong commitment to the church's mission. His collaborative leadership style strengthens any deputation. Please join me in supporting Rev. Bill Coyne as one of the clergy delegates for the 82nd General Convention in 2027.

**Personal statement:** I have served and been active in two dioceses (WMA & SC) since ordination in 1978 in a variety of congregations and diocesan staff positions. I have served as a General Conventions deputy nine (9) times: 1988, 1991, 1994, 1997, 2006, 2009, 2012, 2022 and 2024.

General Convention has a tradition of long days (pace yourself), leans into seniority (check) and has thrilling moments of grace and mission focus. I have the time, the experience and the willingness to engage this ministry once again.

Prior to moving to SC in 2015 – the Bishop of Western Massachusetts called me to his staff as archdeacon and congregational development officer from 1998 to 2013.

In the Diocese of South Carolina, I have served in the following assignments:

- Interim rector of St. Stephen's, Charleston (2015-2017);
- Priest-in-charge of the East Cooper, Mount Pleasant (2017-2019);
- Diocesan missionary for Returning Congregations (2018-2020);
- Interim priest-in-charge at the Episcopal Church on Edisto (2022-2023);
- Coach / mentor with the Rev. Courtney Davis Shoemaker (Nov.'24 - August '25)
- Diocesan facilitator for Mutual Ministry Reviews for congregations (2025)
- Standing Committee member (term ends 2026)

## Deputy, 82nd General Convention—2027 *Clergy*

**Name:** The Rev. Michael Crandall

**Church:** St. George's, Summerville

**Nominated by:** The Rev. John Robert Spainhour



**Nominator Statement:** Father Michael, while a more recently ordained priest in The Episcopal Church and rector of St. George's Episcopal Church, Summerville, has served for many years in ordained ministry in church settings and the military. He brings that wealth of knowledge and experience to our diocese. He is a focused, caring priest with a drive for mission and ministry, personal and congregational growth, and wisdom from his years of service that I believe will serve us well as a representative of the Episcopal Diocese of South Carolina at General Convention. I believe that his passion for the well-being of all God's beloved and the marginalized represent a voice that will speak boldly for the needs of all our diocesan family.

**Personal Statement:** An avid, life-long learner and native of Tennessee, I attended Union University receiving a Christian Ministry Diploma (2004), Associates of Divinity (2005), and Bachelors of Science in Organizational Leadership (2009). I subsequently completed a Masters of Divinity at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary (2014). In May 2024, I earned a Diploma of Anglican Studies at the University of the South, Sewanee, where I am currently working toward a Doctorate of Ministry (anticipated 2025).

My 27 years of ministry began in the Baptist church serving as supply clergy beginning at age 16, and then I served as hospital chaplain, minister of students, and senior clergy. I also served at a convention level in various roles including vice-chair of the Tennessee Baptist Mission Board and vice-president of the Tennessee Baptist Convention. In 2017 I was led to continue my ministry serving in the United States Navy Chaplain Corps. During his time as a chaplain, I discerned the call to continue ministry in The Episcopal Church and return to parish ministry.

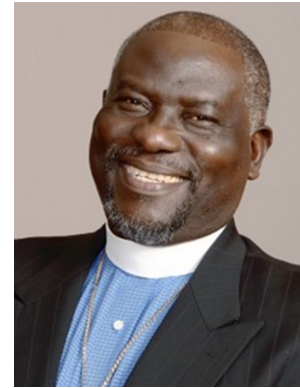
My greatest passions in ministry include meeting people where they are, walking alongside them, and helping parishes discern God's call for them and navigating the path to get there together. Since beginning my tenure at St. George's, Summerville in June 2024, I have worked alongside the church's vestry and other leaders to renovate the entire campus and relaunch several programs that had been dormant. The church has experienced significant growth since June 2024 and currently offers five Sunday services in both English and Spanish. I also currently serve on the Diocesan Council.

## Deputy, 82nd General Convention—2027 *Clergy*

**Name:** The Very Rev. Canon Wilmot Merchant II

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

**Nominated by:** Henry Saunders



**Nominator statement:** With honor, I nominate the Rev. Canon Dr. Wilmot T. Merchant II, rector of St. Stephen's Church in North Myrtle Beach to serve as Deputy to General Convention 2027. I have known Canon Merchant for many years and have been privileged to witness his commitment to the parish, parishioners, and community. His spiritual leadership has inspired St. Stephen's parishioners to actively share their time, talent, and treasure, serving our brothers and sisters in the community for the last 25 years. As a result, this outreach has grown exponentially. He possesses a clear, thoughtful, and common sense approach to critical matters giving him the ability to make informed decisions. I strongly believe he is well-suited to represent this diocese and would be a strong asset as deputy to General Convention.

**Personal Statement:** I have served St. Stephen's since 1999. In 2001, I became the interim priest after the rector retired and in 2002 I was installed as the rector. After the split, my parish and I remained an active member of The Episcopal Church in South Carolina.

In December 2012 I was asked to serve on the Steering Committee for the restructuring of our diocese. I served on that committee as we reorganized and held our first convention. During that convention I was elected a member of the Diocesan Standing Committee, and subsequently elected president which I served for three years. I was elected Deputy to General Convention in 2015 and re-elected first clergy alternate deputy for 2018. In 2019, I served as a member of the Diocesan Council and chair of the Diocesan Nominating Committee.

I currently serve on Executive Council of The Episcopal Church, having been elected by Province IV as the clergy representative. I have been active throughout our community serving as public safety chaplain for The City of North Myrtle Beach, President of Mobile Meals of the Grand Strand and Mobile Meals of the North Strand, and Board Member of North Strand Helping Hand. In addition, I am an active member of the Union of Black Episcopalians, and former Chairperson of the Liberian Episcopal Community in the United States. I am the past Chairperson of the Liberian Covenant Committee of General Convention and Canon of the Anglican Diocese of Cape Coast, Ghana, West Africa.

## Deputy, 82nd General Convention—2027 *Clergy*

**Name:** The Very Rev. Michael Shaffer

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

**Nominated by:** Lonnie Hamilton III



**Nominator statement:** To the members of the committee, I'm thankful for the opportunity to speak in support of the Very Rev. Dr. Michael Shaffer in his quest for nomination as deputy to the General Convention of The Episcopal Church. I have known Michael since he served as associate rector of Calvary Episcopal, my home church since 1955. I know Michael both as a sincere servant of the Lord, working to bring about racial reconciliation and healing through his service to all three historically black Episcopal congregations in Charleston and also as a shrewd legal mind with special expertise in church canon and constitutional law. For these and other reasons, on which I would be happy to elaborate at length, I enthusiastically nominate the Rev. Dr. Shaffer to serve as deputy.

**Personal Statement:** I am honored to have been nominated to serve as a clergy deputy to the 82nd General Convention of The Episcopal Church by Canon Lonnie Hamilton, III, a six-time General Convention deputy himself. Having been a lifelong Episcopalian and ordained for 25 years, I have never served as deputy to Convention. I believe strongly however, that our "New Historic Diocese" should have fresh voices representing our interests within the larger Church, as we live into the new season of ministry which both our Bishop Ruth Woodliff-Stanley and Presiding Bishop Sean Rowe call us.

Over the past several years, having served the worship communities of St. Francis, the Historic Calvary Episcopal Church, St. Stephen's, Charleston and St. Mark's, Charleston, and having served as dean of the Peninsula Deanery, president of the Standing Committee and a member of the Strategic Visioning and Canon and Constitution committees, I believe I have a thorough understanding of our vision and mission in The Episcopal Diocese of South Carolina, which will be valuable in advocating as a deputy to General Convention for polity and policies which embrace gospel values of diversity, equity and inclusion. I ask for your support, as it would be an honor and privilege to serve as clergy deputy for The Episcopal Diocese of South Carolina at the 82nd General Convention of The Episcopal Church.

## Deputy, 82nd General Convention—2027 *Clergy*

**Name:** The Rev. Adam Shoemaker

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

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



**Nominator statement:** Father Adam is a proven servant leader within our local diocese as well as in our wider local community. Father Adam has proven himself to be an effective collaborator and listener to the wider ideas and experiences of others. He has served our Diocese as president of the Standing Committee as well as the co-chair of the Diocese's Racial Justice & Reconciliation Commission. As the rector of Saint Stephen's Episcopal Church, a historic and courageous Episcopal community in the city of Charleston, Father Adam has taken the helm of the call for every Church to exercise radical hospitality, by making Saint Stephen's not only a "safe space" for all people to experience the love and liberation of Jesus, but he has worked to make Saint Stephen's a "brave space" for all who enter in and out of their red doors to fulfill the command of Jesus in Matthew 28: "Go and make disciples of all nations..." As a husband, as a father, as a Christian, as a priest, as a pastor, as a community organizer, but most of all - as a witness - Father Adam Shoemaker will bring wisdom, experience, and the heart of a pastor to the House of Deputies. He will serve the wider Church well because he is aware of the love of Jesus that we are all so in need of.

**Personal Statement:** I am currently in my ninth year as rector of St. Stephen's, Charleston. In that time, it has been my joy not only to serve my wonderful congregation but also our diocese and wider community. I have previously served as dean of the Peninsula Deanery, president of the Standing Committee, and co-chair of the Racial Justice and Reconciliation Commission. I am a co-founder of the "Three Churches United" in Charleston and also served as co-president of the Charleston Area Justice Ministry and been a Racial Healing Circle facilitator with the Sophia Institute's Social Justice and Racial Equity Collaborative.

I have had the privilege of serving as a General Convention Deputy from South Carolina the last two conventions and feel as though these experiences will help me to engage all the more if elected for the next convention. I served as secretary to the Legislative Committee on World Mission for the 80th General Convention and as a member of the Legislative Committee on Social Justice and International Policy at the 81st General Convention. I would look forward to serving again if elected.

# Deputy, 82nd General Convention—2027

## Lay

**Name:** Deb Harris

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

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



**Nominator Statement:** Deb Harris joined Holy Cross Faith Memorial 12 years ago, but I cannot remember a time here without her. She has served with just about every ministry here, save singing in the choir. She is utterly dependable in her service and I would not have as good a time of it without her support and her service. Deb is unparalleled at finding nominees for open positions and then supporting them in their roles. She is wonderfully organized and I feel certain this is grounded in a rich prayer life. She has never missed an appointment for anything and is always present and centered well-before any activity that she is either participating in or leading and she is always willing to offer any assistance that might enable others to succeed, as well.

**Personal Statement:** It would be my honor to serve, once again, as a lay member of our deputation to General Convention. I am a lifelong Episcopalian. I was born, raised and spent the majority of my life in the Washington, DC metropolitan area and moved to South Carolina in March 2013. I was an active member of St. Christopher's Episcopal Church in Springfield, VA for more than 25 years and was involved in many ministries: vestry, altar guild, outreach committee, lay eucharistic minister, Sunday school teacher, EYC leader, delegate to Diocesan Convention, search committees, discernment committees and lay committees for seminarians. I'm involved in many ministries at HCFM: vestry, Stephen Ministry, ECW, acolyte, and verger. I also served on the Diocesan Stewardship and Development Committee and the Strategic Visioning Committee. I am currently serving on the diocesan Feasibility Study Committee. I very much enjoyed my experiences at the abbreviated 80th General Convention in Baltimore and the 81st General Convention in 2024 in Louisville. I have found ministry and connections beyond my parish to be very meaningful and would embrace the opportunity to serve as a lay deputy at the 82nd General Convention.

I am retired from a 35 year career as a system engineer and defense contractor. I have an adult daughter and was very involved in her schools and activities - church, symphonic and marching bands, lacrosse and karate.

## Deputy, 82nd General Convention—2027 *Lay*

**Name:** Veronica Hinkson

**Church:** Good Shepherd, Summerville

**Nominated by:** The Rev. Dow Sanderson



**Nominator Statement:** Veronica has served the Church in almost every leadership capacity, including multiple terms on the Standing Committees of the Diocese of Long Island and South Carolina. Her network of connections throughout the entire church is impressive. She would be an outstanding deputy to General Convention.

**Personal Statement:** I have been a member in good standing of the Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd in Summerville since 2018 after moving from New York City where I was employed as Director of Insurance and Claims at Saint Vincent Catholic Medical Centers. At the church of the Good Shepherd, I am a eucharistic minister, served one term on the vestry, as a delegate to Diocesan convention, and as a member of the Discernment Committee.

I currently serve on Standing Committee and the Board of St. Christopher Camp and Conference Center. In the past I served as a eucharistic minister, vestry member, warden, altar guild member, and delegate to Diocesan Convention, and at the diocesan level I was a certified Safe Church trainer in the Diocese of Long Island and served on the Missional Vitality Committee, Standing Committee, and Cathedral Chapter for the Cathedral of the Incarnation. I was a member of the Episcopal Cursillo Ministry Committee for four years; three as the representative for the Northeast Region and the fourth year as national president. I am also a life member of the Union of Black Episcopalians.

I am excited about the future of The Episcopal Church and welcome the opportunity to use my gifts of discernment, strong ethics, deep faith, and ability to work collaboratively, to represent the Diocese of South Carolina as a delegate to General Convention.

## Deputy, 82nd General Convention—2027 *Clergy*

**Name:** Andrea McKellar

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

**Nominated by:** Deb Harris



**Nominator Statement:** I have had the privilege of serving with Andrea as the chair of The Diocese of South Carolina's deputation to the 80th and 81st General Conventions. She has done an amazing job of organizing, preparing and leading our deputations at both conventions. Her experience serving on our diocesan staff in multiple capacities for over twelve years in addition to serving a full term on Executive Council have prepared her to do an exceptional job serving the wider church. Andrea is also currently serving a term as president of Province IV of The Episcopal Church. In addition to her vast professional experience, Andrea is also an exceptional wife and mother of two amazing children.

**Personal Statement:** I would be honored to serve the diocese as a General Convention deputy in the desert heat of Phoenix in 2027. I have served four times as a deputy previously including two times as deputation chair, as well as on Executive Council, DFMS Audit Committee, and several other interim bodies. I was on Bishop's staff for 12 years before transitioning into church consulting. I live on Johns Island with my husband Mark and our two teenagers and attend St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in Charleston. I also support the burgeoning St Peter's, Charleston after many years of working toward an Episcopal presence in the West Ashley area.

## Deputy, 82nd General Convention—2027 *Lay*

**Name:** Jan Schumann

**Church:** Holy Communion, Charleston

**Nominated by:** Cappy Traywick



**Nominator Statement:** Jan has been an Episcopalian her whole life. She has held leadership positions in the church, served on committees and has participated in many of its ministries. Jan spent many years as a chorister at the Church of the Holy Communion, then a few years ago she saw that there was a great need for ushers; so she became the lead usher and has served in that capacity almost every Sunday for the last couple of years. Jan has had almost two terms on the vestry and is a Sunday money counter a couple of times a month. Jan is an active network member of CAJM and has served as a parish delegate to the diocesan convention more than once. Jan would be an excellent deputy to the National Convention. She would represent the Diocese of South Carolina well.

**Personal Statement:** I am a lifelong Episcopalian who grew up at St. Stephen's in St. Stephen and I now worship at the Church of the Holy Communion in Charleston. I graduated from Sewanee in 1985. I serve on vestry at Holy Communion and am on the altar guild. I participate in the Charleston Area Justice Ministry (CAJM).

Running for a deputy to the National Convention is not something that I planned. However, it popped out of my mouth when discussing with a member of the Nominating Committee. I feel that I am called to run for the House of Deputies. I want to do what the Lord wants of me.

# Deputy, 82nd General Convention—2027

## Lay

**Name:** Vermelle Simmons

**Church:** Calvary, Charleston

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



**Nominator Statement:** Vermelle Simmons is the quintessential church professional. She has served on the Diocesan Council for our diocese, she is currently the vice president of our diocese's Standing Committee, she also serves on our diocese's Racial Justice & Reconciliation Commission as its co-chair, and currently, Vermelle also serves as a member of the vestry of The Historic Calvary Episcopal Church. As an accomplished professional educator in the City of Charleston, she brings years of dedication and class to every task she is a part of. I am confident that Vermelle will represent our diocese well at General Convention, and as a "life-long learner," she will learn the role of deputy and exercise it for the good of all of us as a diocese. Above all of these accomplishments and accolades, as her rector, I have found Vermelle to be a wise and trusted confidant who has the best interests of the Church in everything that she does. Therefore, I enthusiastically ask all of my siblings in the Episcopal Diocese of South Carolina to join me in voting for this awesome Woman of God as one of our deputies for General Convention.

**Personal Statement:** "There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work." *1 Corinthians 12: 4-6*

I have served in several leadership capacities in the diocese, the government/state, and the school district. Each of these areas of leadership has been a gift from God to share his love with the wider community. Presently, I serve as the vice president of the Standing Committee and co-chair of the Diocesan Racial Justice and Reconciliation Commission. Some years ago, I also served on the Diocesan Council. I am an active member of my church (Calvary), where I serve on the vestry and as an usher. I've worked with the U.S. Government as a team leader, traveling the state of South Carolina, teaching communities about their civic duty mandated by the Constitution of the United States to be counted every 10 years. I've also touched the lives of numerous families in the Charleston area as a school administrator.

I believe that, with the many leadership roles I have held, I am equipped through God's grace to be apart of the governance body voting on resolutions, canon changes, and public policy which clarifies our position and dictates how we conduct ourselves in The Episcopal Church. Thank you for your consideration.

# Deputy, 82nd General Convention—2027

## Lay

**Name:** Mark Whitehouse

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

**Nominated by:** Sally Mayse



**Nominator Statement:** Mark Whitehouse is a very active and engaged member of St. Mark's, Port Royal, serving on the vestry and usher team. He has a wonderful sense of humor and is an entrepreneur, developing his own company in the health technology field. Mark and his wife Amy have raised four children and are currently being raised by their dog, River.

Mark is attentive to detail, is a good listener and is always willing to entertain new ideas. He has been a genuine asset to St. Mark's and will represent the Diocese at General Convention with the same dedication, energy and insight he shares in his church. I am pleased and proud to nominate Mark as a lay delegate to General Convention 2027.

**Personal Statement:** I would appreciate your consideration in selecting me to represent our diocese at the 82nd General Convention of the Episcopal Church in 2027. I believe that I can make a positive contribution on behalf of our diocese, and I am at a point in my personal spiritual growth where I where I want to serve at a higher level.

I am an active parishioner at St. Mark's Episcopal Church in Port Royal, SC, serving regularly as an usher, lay reader and videographer. I represented St. Mark's as a delegate at the Annual Diocesan Convention, Diocese of South Carolina in 2024 and in 2025 I joined the St. Mark's Vestry. As a parish leader I am focused on how St. Mark's engages our local community and how we can expand our influence beyond the church doors.

I consider myself open-minded, progressive and focused on the future. I appreciate the long tradition of our diocese and have a vision where we can leverage this tradition to increase our relevance in the present age. I see The Episcopal Church leading our national future in racial reconciliation and creation care, two critical contemporary issues about which I am passionate.

As a healthcare entrepreneur, I make decisions and then roll up my sleeves to get things done. I am not afraid of conflict, and I resolve by listening, contemplating the long-term impact of actions and clearly articulating the options before us. It helps that I have a sense of humor and that I do not take myself too seriously. I would be honored to serve as a delegate at the General Convention and promise to represent our diocese faithfully.

# Trustee, University of the South

## Lay

**Name:** Helen Britton

**Church:** Grace Church Cathedral, Charleston

**Nominated by:** The Rev. Cn. Rob Donehue



**Nominator Statement:** Helen is a graduate and a long-time supporter of the University of the South. Her knowledge of the University and her commitment to its thriving make her an ideal candidate for the position of trustee. Having worked with Helen on various large-scale projects at the cathedral, I know that Helen is a superb team player and has a high level of organizational expertise. Having served a term as a trustee myself, I can say with great confidence that Helen would be a welcome voice on the board.

**Personal Statement:** I am a native Charlestonian, cradle Episcopalian, and 1992 graduate of Sewanee. My family and I are members of Grace Church Cathedral. My husband, John Britton, and I have two boys, Jack (24) and Heward (22). I have served in many roles over the years— a few of the highlights include teaching Sunday School and VBS, volunteering for Tea Room as a waitress and currently as a co-chair, serving on our vestry, chalice bearing, and making two kneelers.

I started Sewanee in 1988 and loved every minute of my four years on the Mountain. Sewanee gave me the education that led me to graduate school and becoming a Special Education teacher. Our oldest son is on the Spectrum, and I know that the leadership qualities and confidence I developed as a Sewanee student have helped me be a guide and mentor for other families with a child on the Spectrum, which I believe is one of my ministries. My lifelong friends are my Sewanee friends, and I look forward to our girl's weekend every single November where we meet back on the Mountain and fill our souls with time together, love, tears, and laughter.

I am forever grateful for all the gifts that Sewanee has given me and have been delighted to give back with my time as our class agent and with my resources. I am honored to be nominated to serve as a Trustee and look forward to serving the University in this capacity if elected.

# Trustee, University of the South

## Lay

**Name:** Laura Marshall

**Church:** Heavenly Rest, Estill

**Nominated by:** Sally Mayse



**Nominator Statement:** One of the joys of the Diocese of South Carolina is the number of communicants who are eager and willing to serve the Diocese in various capacities. It gives me great pleasure to nominate a faithful member of The Southern Deanery to the position of Trustee for The University of the South, Sewanee. Laura Marshall is the senior warden of the Church of the Heavenly Rest, Estill, SC. Through her tireless leadership and efforts, this small church has established a large footprint in a small rural area of Hampton County. Laura is an officer in a large international banking firm, an enthusiastic Episcopalian, and currently serves as a trustee of Sewanee and of the Diocese of SC. She is deeply interested in the work of the theological school at Sewanee and desires to continue to serve the university as a trustee. She is a very strategic thinker and planner, is a good listener, and has seemingly unlimited energy for the work of the church. The Diocese of South Carolina will be proud and well served to elect Laura Marshall as a trustee of our University of the South, our beloved Sewanee.

**Personal Statement:** I am profoundly honored by your nomination to continue serving as a Trustee of the University of the South, a cherished and sacred institution.

In August 2024, the Board of Trustees adopted *Elevating Mind, Heart, and Place: The Strategic Plan for the University of the South 2024–2030*, the first such plan in twelve years. The privilege of serving another term would allow me to see this transformative vision to its fulfillment.

I feel a profound calling to serve this institution, honoring its rich history, advancing its mission, promoting enrollment, ensuring financial stability, and preserving its treasured traditions for future generations. I am committed to collaborating with fellow Trustees, faculty, and students to strengthen the Seminary School of Theology and the broader University, and supporting the University financially.

With a Bachelor of Science in Finance and 35 years of experience in the financial services industry, currently as Vice President and Corporate Secretary of a large community bank, I bring relevant expertise to support the fiduciary and strategic mandates of Sewanee's trustees.

Thank you for considering me for another term. I am eager to continue this sacred work and welcome further discussion on how I may best serve Sewanee.

# Trustee, University of the South

## *Lay*

**Name:** Jan Schumann

**Church:** Holy Communion, Charleston

**Nominated by:** Cappy Traywick



**Nominator Statement:** Jan Schumann and I met at the Church of the Holy Communion in Charleston a little over a decade ago. We have worked on several projects and events together at church over many years. I have always been able to depend on Jan to serve where she is needed. Jan graduated from Sewanee in 1985 with a BS in Mathematics. I learned about this wonderful school through Jan—she speaks very fondly of her time there. When it came time for my daughter to explore college campuses, Jan provided a wealth of information to us about Sewanee and has continued to be a great source to me now that I am officially a parent of a Sewanee student. I know that she will be a wonderful addition to the Sewanee Board of Trustees.

**Personal Statement:** I am a lifelong Episcopalian who grew up at St. Stephen's in St. Stephen and now I worship at the Church of the Holy Communion in Charleston. I graduated from Sewanee in 1985 with a degree in Math and was a member of a now defunct local sorority (When you don't insist that your friends join, it's a bit of a problem.). I learned so much at Sewanee both academically and socially. I learned how to be myself and I'm still in touch with many of my Sewanee friends.

If elected to the Sewanee Board of Trustees, my goal is to continue to support the university and allow others to have excellent experiences. Yea! Sewanee's Right!!