

Episcopal Diocese of Western New York

Nominees for Diocesan Offices at the 185th Convention

Diocesan Council - Lay (Elect Two to 3 Year Terms):



Shawn Slother (St. Paul's, Lewiston) As a candidate for Diocesan Council, my goal is to assist in making the Diocese of WNY stronger and more collaborative among the parishes. It is my belief that only by moving forward together can we continue our ministries and grow. As our demographics have changed, we must also change by reaching out into our communities. While I am not a lifelong Episcopalian, I chose to make it my home for the last 23 years. I have served in all aspects of parish leadership at St Paul's (Lewiston), and I'm currently employed as the Parish Administrator at two Northern Region Deanery parishes. I also serve on the Discernment Committee for the Diocesan Partnership and the planning committee for the 2022 Diocesan Convention. It is my hope that this service in the Episcopal Church will allow me to bring my diverse experience and background to the Diocese to help meet the needs of all WNY parishes, as they are brought before the Council.



Amy Swanson (St. Paul's, Stafford) I've enjoyed representing and being a voice of the small rural congregations on the outskirts of the diocese. I bring to the council an awareness of the needs of the elderly. As many of our congregations are facing the challenges of growing older with increased numbers of aged and shut in parishioners, it's important that we find new and innovative ways to continue to minister to their spiritual needs. I see the struggle of our young and very old in the church communitybut I also see a common thread and that is a desire to serve God and minister to the needy. I may not bring a strong biblical understanding or deep theological knowledge to council, but I do bring a love and desire to help the church in any way I am called. Covid has brought many challenges but it has also brought about new and innovative ideas. I would enjoy the opportunity to continue serving, representing and seeing many of these ideas evolve.

Diocesan Council - Clergy (Elect one to a 3 Year Term):



The Rev. Stephen Lane (St. Philip's, Buffalo) I would like to continue to serve the diocese in this way. There is much work to be done yet.

Standing Committee - Lay (Elect one to a 4 Year Term):



Denise Clarke-Merriweather (St. Philip's, Buffalo) Just before the notification in 2020 of the Covid-19 Pandemic, I considered exploring other Christian denominations. My decision was based on feelings of stagnation within the Episcopal church. My spiritual needs were not being met. My relationship with God was strong, but not enhanced by attending church. Our church seemed to be an isolated entity within the partnership. It did not appear that we were truly considered Christian siblings within the Diocese. However, either due to the limitation of movement during the pandemic or divine intervention, I only visited one church. As a result, I decided to remain at my home church with a commitment to be involved in the promotion of beloved community within the partnership. I am currently a member of both St. Philip's Vestry in Buffalo, NY and

The Commission to Dismantle Racism and Discrimination for the Diocese of WNY and NWPA. Within my current roles, I have appreciated the ability to engage directly with Bishop Rowe on different aspects of church initiatives and programs. An opportunity to serve on the Standing Committee would provide another avenue to share my leadership skills as a NYS designated highly effective high school principal at the time of my retirement. Therefore, I would like to lend my communication, organizational, and critical thinking for problem solving skills to further contribute collaboratively on a governing body of the Diocese.

Standing Committee - Clergy (Elect one to a 4 Year Term):



The Rev. Luke Fodor (St. Luke's, Jamestown & Grace, Randolph) I feel called to serve on Standing Committee again as my first term expired before my desire to serve the Diocese in the capacity was exhausted. I bring important skills related to property management and fundraising for capital concerns and as well as the skills learned from running a regional partnership between a larger transition size church (as Rector) and rural pastoral size congregation (as Priest-in-Charge). As such, I am aware of the needs/concerns of both small and large parishes within our Diocese.



The Rev. Claudia Scheda (St. David's, West Seneca & St. John's-Grace, Buffalo) In my 11 years as a priest I've served small missions and parishes in all corners of our diocese. The lessons I've learned in these places inform my current work serving two congregations in separate deaneries--St.David's, West Seneca, and St. John's Grace, Buffalo. The Church of the future looks very much like what I've already experienced in ministry—people of faith who do the incredible and blessed work of juggling congregational sustenance and joyfully witnessing Christ's work in the world. I feel called to serve on Standing Committee at this time because the work of the diocese must take into account our changing dynamics and respond creatively to the challenges before us. I've served our diocese as a Safe Church Trainer and member of Diocesan Council, practice Spiritual Direction, and am a Board Member of Father Isaac's Fund for Medical Missions to Nigeria.

Trustees – Clergy (Elect two to 3 Year Terms):



The Rev. Matthew Lincoln (Trinity, Buffalo) The Trustees' role tends to be behind the scenes, but nevertheless, makes a meaningful contribution to our common life as Episcopalians who share in the stewardship of property and assets for the sake of living out God's love in the world. I have been honored to serve in this capacity and believe I can continue to make contributions to the Trustees' work.



The Rev. Randi Hicks Rowe (St. Paul's, Lewiston & St. Andrew's, Burt) I have an MBA and have served as a trustee for the past three years. I also believe very strongly in the good stewardship of our buildings and diocesan money.

Deputy to General Convention – Lay (Elect four deputies and four alternates):



Elisabeth Brauza-Hughes (St. Andrew's, Buffalo) The Episcopal Church needs faithful people who are committed to the work of envisioning its future, while doing the hard work of examining our past, our mistakes, and what we can and should learn from them. These people must be willing to embrace change, while still keeping fast to the core principles that make us Episcopalians. I believe I am called to this task. To this work, I bring my experience as a deputy to General Convention in 2015 and 2022, and as an alternate deputy in 2018, as well as several years of experience on the Diocesan Council of this diocese, and as a lay professional in the church. I love the Episcopal Church, and I want to work for our common future.



Faith Laudenslager (St. David's, West Seneca) Having been a lifelong member of the WNY Episcopal Diocese, I have weathered many storms as well as great times. Changes are always difficult but are needed. I have been the Church School Director, Member of the Vestry, now the Parish Administrator - - all volunteer positions. Also at diocesan level was a member of the Happening Board and Youth Commission, have been part of the team for Sleep Away Camp and the recent WNY/NWPA summer camp. I know I can contribute to the wider church as a whole.



Cheri Maytum-Krull (St. Luke's, Jamestown) It was my recent honor to serve the Diocese of WNY as a Deputy to the 80th General Convention of the Episcopal Church this year. My experience there has inspired me to submit my name again as a candidate to serve at the next General Convention in 2024. My short time in Baltimore has confirmed my faith that our church is facing exciting and demanding times ahead. I feel called again to offer my own insight and inspiration to the diverse community of servants who will help to guide our denomination as we face such important and historic issues as racial reconciliation, environmental stewardship, gender identities, and the basic structure and leadership of the ECUSA as we move forward to meet these significant changes and challenges.



Hon. Rose H. Sconiers (St. Philip's, Buffalo) I have served as a General Convention Deputy in the past and have acquired the necessary skills to discharge the duties of this office. I feel that my background as a Judicial Officer coupled with my involvement in efforts to address racial equity and discrimination will promote the church's Beloved Community. I presently serve as Chair of the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo Racial Equity Roundtable. We offer racial equity analysis training that I would like to introduce to the Episcopal Church. If allowed to serve another term as General Convention Deputy, I will work with the leadership and Deputies to dismantle racism and discrimination so that we will truly be the "Beloved Community."

Deputy to General Convention – Clergy (Elect four deputies and four alternates):



The Rev. Lillian Davis-Wilson (St. Philip's, Buffalo) As the elected provincial clerical representative to Executive Council until 2024, I am looking to continue to represent you at the 2024 General Convention. Having served on various leadership roles on all levels of the Episcopal church this has provided me with insight and knowledge that will help to discern where the Holy Spirit wants to lead the church. I prayerfully request your consideration in representing you as a Clerical Deputy at the General Convention. As the church moves forward in becoming a more inclusive church seeing God in all persons, through the "Jesus Movement" of the Presiding Bishop. I would be honored

to have the opportunity to bring our concerns and challenges we face in our churches to the legislative committees of the convention, with the hope of leaving the convention with a deeper awareness of what it would take for us to love one another and show the world that we are truly Christian.



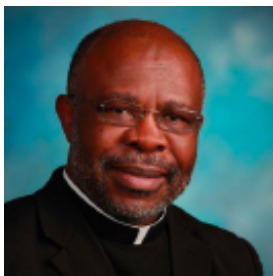
The Rev. Canon Cathy Dempsey-Sims (Diocesan Staff & St. James, Batavia) If elected this would be my fourth General Convention. It will also be my last time as a deputy. There is a fine balance between being a deputy for too short a time and too long of a time. I think being a deputy a few times gives you a certain amount of familiarity with the legislative process of the Episcopal Church which is helpful to the rest of the deputation. Staying too long, in my opinion, blocks the opportunity for others to be elected deputy. It is a fine balance. I want to serve in 2024 as this past "quadrennium" (it is usually a triennium) was unlike anything we had previously experienced.

I would like an opportunity to use my experience and love for our Episcopal Church as the House of Deputies has the opportunity to assent to the election of the next Presiding Bishop and we continue the work of addressing the call of Jesus for the Episcopal Church in the coming years. So many of us are wearied by the changes and chances of our congregational life but still we find joy and hope and new ways of being the light of Christ in our varied community settings. If I can add some well-earned wisdom to the conversation, drawing on my years of work with lay leaders and clergy in our dioceses, then I will end my time as a deputy satisfied that the voice of the small but mighty congregations which make up our dioceses has been amplified.



The Rev. Luke Fodor (St. Luke's, Jamestown & Grace, Randolph) As a parish priest (St. Luke's Jamestown & Grace, Randolph), I believe that ministry happens in community, at local levels. And having worked on the church-wide staff at the Episcopal Church (at "815") for 8 years before ordination, I also know the important influence of church-wide initiatives to shape the character of our local ministry expressions. I feel called to run as a General Convention Deputy because I have both the experience and ability to think globally and locally about the future of the Episcopal Church and the mission to which God is calling us. As church-wide staff I worked at two General

Conventions (2006 & 2009) and I served as a first-time deputy (in 2022). My current leadership roles in the Diocese—serving as Dean for Cattaraugus-Chautauqua, Co-Chair of the Joint Board of Examining Chaplains and previous service on Standing Committee—will ensure that I bring our real concerns of our parishes and Diocese to General Convention.



The Rev. Canon Dr. Isaac I. Ihiasota (St. Stephen's, Niagara Falls) I'm currently the Priest-in-Charge of St Stephen's Episcopal Church, Niagara Falls, since 2019; having been their Rector from 2006 to 2015. Although I'm a retired priest, I believe that I've a lot to offer to the Church in general. I've had the honor and privilege of serving as a priest in the Worldwide Anglican Communion in Nigeria, United Kingdom, as well as the United States, for about forty-five (45) years now. I've been elected to the General Convention six (6) times and served four (4) times, as a Deputy/Alternate; as well as serving one term on the Anglican and International Committee. I've served on both

Provincial and Diocesan levels. I've a broad and thorough knowledge of The Episcopal Church and worldwide Anglican Communion. I look forward to offering my rich background, broad knowledge, and experience of the Worldwide Anglican Communion, across three continents to the Church in general.



The Rev. Claudia Scheda (St. David's, West Seneca & St. John's-Grace, Buffalo) I was honored to be elected General Convention Deputy three years ago; as a second-time deputy, I am ready to meet the requirements of a shortened timeline to prep for the next General Convention and its work which spreads the gospel and advances justice, dignity, and equity for all people. Despite the disruption caused by Covid-19 which wreaked havoc on the convention process, I found the work of the Church exhilarating as we sought new ways to convene and hear many more voices, from all over the world, participating in hearings and meetings. I served on GC's Credentials

Committee this summer, and I bring my experiences as a Safe Church trainer, and my interests in Liturgy and Racial Reconciliations to this ministry. I look forward to serving the Church in this capacity again in 2024.