



*The Episcopal Diocese of Northern Michigan  
Standing Committee  
131 East Ridge Street  
Marquette, Michigan 49855*

*May 1, 2009*

*The Standing Committee Comments on the Consent Process*

*Dear Friends in Christ,*

*When the Episcopal Ministry Support Team was affirmed and Kevin Thew Forrester was elected bishop of our diocese at the Special Convention in February, it seemed to many to be the end of the process, the culmination of many months of hard work by the Episcopal Ministry Discernment Team, and the joyful beginning of the next phase of life in our diocese. In reality it was only the beginning of a process in the Episcopal Church that surrounds the election of a bishop.*

*The Standing Committee knew that we would have to prepare materials to accompany our request for consents which would explain our discernment process and assure the wider church that we had followed the canonical process in the election of our bishop. What we were not prepared for was the questioning of the bishop-elect that began with Kevin's use of meditation as a spiritual tool to deepen his own Christian life and progressed to questions about his use of liturgy and even his theology. Fueled by bloggers with misinformation and untruths, some of the "church" press began to publish material questioning all aspects of the election and our choice of bishop.*

*We have enclosed a letter from Kevin Thew Forrester, "Approaching the Heart of Faith," in which he speaks for himself to several of the key issues that have been raised during the consent process. These issues transcend our particular consent process and raise the question as to what kind of community we will be as The Episcopal Church. We ask that you read, reflect on, and consider his words. His address to you is significantly more than a sound bite or a blog bite. He reminds us that "We live in a time of much cultural change and fear. Conventional ways of understanding ourselves, God and church are in transition." Can we as a church remain open as our theologies, liturgies and ministries evolve? Can we "remember that Trinitarian unity is neither enforced conformity nor simple uniformity"? If so, might it not be, as Kevin suggests, "that our hope lies in transcending an "either/or" cul-de-sac and living into the traditional Anglican wisdom of "both/and"?"*

*The members of this diocese have overwhelmingly (88% of the delegate vote and 91% of the congregation vote) elected a bishop we know to be a man of deep faith, a spirit filled man, who possesses many gifts and talents, a man of a sharp intellect, a thoughtful theologian and the one we have called to walk with us in this new phase of our journey. With our Bishop-Elect we pray that "we may each have the humility to realize that the Spirit of God has much to teach us, and that no one theology of Christ, Trinity, church, or liturgy, can ever define us or God."*

*The Standing Committee members are: Carol Clark, Marcia Franz, Sue Jamison, Marsha Kleber, Linda Piper, Sue Ray and Hazel Satterly.*