

To the people of the Diocese of West Missouri:

Grace to you, and peace in Jesus Christ our Lord.

We write to inform you of a process underway to strengthen the mission and ministry of the Diocese of West Missouri.

At the end of May, The Right Reverend F. Clayton Matthews, Bishop of the Office of Pastoral Development* appointed Mary Kostel, Special Counsel, to visit West Missouri to listen to the bishop, clergy, and lay persons of the Diocese. Her appointment was in response to a letter written by the Standing Committee of the Diocese of West Missouri to The Most Reverend Michael B. Curry, Presiding Bishop, requesting mediation of the pastoral relationship between the bishop and diocese (pursuant to Canon III.12.10 of the Constitution and Canons of The Episcopal Church).

The Standing Committee wrote its letter having been made aware of concerns among members of the diocese and having decided to seek help as laid out in the aforementioned canon. This is a new canon and a new process in the Episcopal Church, the aim of which is to restore pastoral relationships in a diocese where such might be imperiled. The process provides for a time of mutual and careful listening. It is not about finding or assigning blame.

Ms. Kostel has completed a visit to the diocese, has spoken to the bishop as well as to several key leaders from both our Diocesan Council and our Standing Committee, and has received open and honest cooperation from all parties. She will now consult with Bishops Matthews and Curry, and we await our Presiding Bishop's desires and recommendations for next steps.

In the meantime, if any person has questions, any and all should feel free to contact the bishop or the Standing Committee. The President of the Standing Committee will be away for the next several weeks for vacation and to accompany our cathedral's choir on tour; therefore, to inquire of the Standing Committee, please contact The Rev. Megan Castellon (610-209-6587 or northcentralmetro.wemo@diowestmo.org). To inquire of the bishop, please contact Bishop Field (816-471-6161, ext 16; or BishopField@DioWestMo.org)

Through this process, and with the help and good offices of our Presiding Bishop, we hope to move forward in the common ministry of our baptisms. We are confident that Christ is with us even in times of disagreement. Even as the two disciples walked and talked with the stranger who joined them upon the road to Emmaus—only to discover it had been Jesus all along—so we hope also to recognize the lively presence of Christ among us in new and fresh ways. To that end, we call the people and clergy of the diocese to prayer, and we thank you all for your many ministries of witness and service to the Blessed One in whom we will always be held together in bonds of love and care.

Faithfully in Christ,

The Right Reverend Martin S. Field
Bishop of West Missouri

The Very Reverend Peter J. DeVeau
President of the Standing Committee

**The Office of Pastoral Development serves our Presiding Bishop and the Church's House of Bishops in the areas of formation and development of bishops, of pastoral care of bishops and their families, of growing healthy diocesan systems, and of mediation according to canonical mandates.*