



The Rev. Ketlen Solak Elected as the Ninth Bishop

The Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh has elected the Reverend Dr. Ketlen A. Solak as its next bishop.

Bishop-elect Solak currently serves as rector of Brandywine Collaborative Ministries in Wilmington, Delaware.

She will be consecrated and installed as the ninth Bishop of Pittsburgh on November 13, 2021, succeeding Bishop Dorsey McConnell, who is retiring.

"I am ready to become a Pittsburgher for Jesus!" Solak said in an address to the diocese moments after being elected.

"I am deeply moved. God has done this. With God's help you have discerned and elected a new bishop, and I am humbled by the honor of the one being chosen. The future of your diocese, which is soon to become our diocese, is bright."



The bishop-elect was chosen by clergy and lay leaders representing each parish of the diocese during a special convention held solely for the purpose of electing a bishop from a slate of five nominees.

She was elected on the third round of balloting with 56% of the clergy votes and 54% of lay votes. A majority of both clergy and lay votes in the same round was needed for election.

"We are so grateful for the historic election of Ketlen Solak as the ninth Bishop of Pittsburgh. She is a dynamic and collaborative leader who will support us in our ministries of sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ, welcoming all of God's people, and working for justice and peace in our world," said the Rev. Noah Evans, president of the diocesan Standing Committee, the senior governing body that oversaw the election process.

The other nominees were the Very Rev. Kim L. Coleman, rector of Trinity Episcopal Church, Arlington, Virginia; the Rev. Canon Scott A. Gunn, Executive Director of Forward Movement, based in Cincinnati; the Rev. Jeffrey D. Murph, rector of St. Thomas Church, Oakmont, Pennsylvania; and the Rev. Diana L. Wilcox, rector of Christ Church in Bloomfield and Glen Ridge, New Jersey.

Afterward, each expressed best wishes to the bishop-elect and gratitude to the diocese.

More about Bishop-elect Solak

The Rev. Dr. Ketlen Solak was born and raised in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. She attributes a slight lilt as she talks to that French-speaking Caribbean upbringing, as well as her love of music.

Solak is known to infuse her writing and speech with the lyrics of songs and hymns. She is known to sing her prayers, leading those with her in a melodic offering.

She earned a bachelor's and a master's degree in music from the Catholic University of America, before going on to earn a Master of Divinity and a Doctor of Ministry degrees from Virginia Theological Seminary.

Solak was ordained a priest in the Diocese of Virginia in 2005 and served as an associate rector in Alexandria, Virginia.

In 2014, she became the founding rector of Brandywine Collaborative Ministries, a group of three Wilmington, Delaware-area parishes that share pastoral and administrative leadership.

She serves on the Diocese of Delaware's Standing Committee and as a deputy to the General Convention of the Episcopal Church.

Additional biographical information about the bishop-elect is available at <https://episcopalpgh.org/pebs/>.

The Election Process

The Diocese of Pittsburgh's search for a new bishop began in December 2019 when Bishop McConnell announced his plan to retire in the spring of 2021. His retirement and timetable for finding a successor were delayed several times due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

A local nominating committee of six clergy and eight lay leaders was appointed and tasked with presenting a slate of candidates to stand for election. The committee engaged parishioners throughout the diocese in assessing their current situations and their hopes and dreams for the future. From those consultations, the committee produced a Diocesan Profile that served as a de facto 27-page job posting for the new bishop.

The number of priests from around the country who applied for consideration created one of the largest applicant pools in recent bishop elections throughout the Episcopal Church. Working confidentially over the course of months, the nominating committee then evaluated and discerned with each applicant his or her calling to be the bishop.

Through this process, three individuals were then recommended and approved by the Standing Committee to compose a preliminary slate. Two others were added to the slate by a petition process that demonstrated a wide cross-section of support. All five nominees underwent the same background and qualification checks, and were presented as a slate without designation as to how they were selected.

A Thank You from the Other Nominees...

Congratulations on your election of your next diocesan bishop. I am so incredibly grateful for the opportunity to enter this process of discernment with you and to have had the opportunity to meet many of you during the week of Meet and Greet events. I commend the Nominating and Transition Committee for the exceptional job they did in facilitating this process and making us all feel right at

home. Judging from the grace and hospitality that you extended to me and all the other candidates, I am confident your new bishop will be well-received and supported as the diocese moves forward in becoming more fully who God has called you to be. May God's best blessings be upon your new bishop-elect and may the joy of the Lord be your strength for all that lies ahead. Your sister in Christ,
--The Very Rev. Kim L. Coleman

It was an honor to be in discernment with you. I wish the bishop-elect and the whole diocese a vibrant and holy future. "Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

--The Rev. Canon Scott A. Gunn

It was a very high honor for me to be nominated as a candidate to be the IX Bishop of Pittsburgh. I was extraordinarily humbled by the confidence and belief that many people expressed in me and, though the election process was somewhat exhausting, I also found it exciting to consider so seriously the future of our diocese. I was thankful for the chance to share a vision for the future of the diocese that would focus on our congregations and our clergy. The process was run so smoothly by the leaders of the Transition Committee, Jon Delano and Florence Atwood, who did such a remarkable job in welcoming and in introducing candidates to our whole diocese and in providing so many opportunities for our people to get to know the candidates. Indeed, I was excited to meet the other candidates myself. In addition, I am deeply grateful for other members of the committee who served as shepherds and moderators, who were, without exception, committed to help and support the candidates in every way they could. It is easy for me to commit to pray for the new bishop-elect and the Diocese of Pittsburgh. May God bless us all with an abundant future to spread the Kingdom of his son, Jesus Christ!

--The Rev. Jeffrey D. Murph

Dear people of the Diocese of Pittsburgh, the Holy Spirit has spoken, and God's will is done. I want to wish you all, and the bishop-elect the very best in the days ahead. I know that you will be served well. May the Lord bless and keep you all.

--The Rev. Diana L. Wilcox

Next Steps

Episcopal Church law requires that a majority of diocesan bishops and Standing Committees throughout the church consent to the election of new bishops. Such consent is usually secured within the required four-month window.

The consecration of Pittsburgh's new bishop is scheduled for Saturday, November 13, at Calvary Episcopal Church in East Liberty. The Episcopal Church's Presiding Bishop, Michael B. Curry, will be the chief consecrator.

A formal seating at Trinity Cathedral in downtown Pittsburgh will occur the following day.

