

## **Nominees for the Ninth Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of the Rio Grande**

**January 18, 2010**

**The Standing Committee is pleased to announce five nominees for the 9th Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of the Rio Grande. In alphabetical order the nominees are:**

**The Reverend Ellis Tucker Bowerfind, Rector  
St. Luke's Episcopal Church, Alexandria, Virginia**

**The Reverend James R. Harlan, Rector  
Church of the Ascension, Denver, Colorado**

**The Reverend Jedediah D. Holdorph II, Rector  
St. Mark's Episcopal Church, Medford, Oregon**

**The Reverend John S. Nieman, Rector  
Holy Trinity Parish, Clemson, South Carolina**

**The Reverend Dr. Michael Louis Vono, Rector  
St. Paul's Within the Walls, Rome, Italy**

**The nominees photographs, biographical sketches and resumes will be found on the following pages.**

The Reverend Ellis Tucker Bowerfind, Rector, St. Luke's Episcopal Church, Alexandria, Virginia



Ellis Tucker Bowerfind, "Tuck," was born (1958) the second child of Dr. Edgar S. and Maria T. Bowerfind and raised in Cleveland Heights, Ohio. He was baptized by his beloved maternal grandfather, the Right Reverend Beverley Tucker (1958), confirmed by the Right Reverend John Burt (1971), Ordained to the Diaconate (1991) and the Priesthood (1992) by the Right Reverend James R. Moodey, ninth Bishop of Ohio. Tuck graduated from Hawken School, Gates Mills, Ohio, (1976) St. John's College, Annapolis, MD, (B.A., 1984) Yale Divinity School, (M.Div., 1991) and earned a Masters of Education from Ursuline College, Pepper Pike, Ohio (1998). From 1991-1999 Fr. Bowerfind served the Reverend Nicholson B. White as associate rector at St. Paul's Cleveland Heights, Ohio and on the faculty of the University School, Shaker Heights, Ohio where he taught grade 8 Civics and coached the 7-8 grade swim team. In 1999 the Reverend David Allen appointed Fr. Bowerfind as associate rector at St. Mary's, Barnstable, MA. Fr. Bowerfind became priest in charge upon the retirement of Fr. Allen in 2001. In 2003 the Vestry of St. Luke's, Wellington in Alexandria, Virginia elected Fr. Bowerfind as their seventh rector. He serves on the steering/executive committee of two interfaith organizations: Ventures in Community, and Virginians Organized for Interfaith Community Engagement in Northern Virginia, Inc. Fr. Bowerfind is proud that St. Luke's offers Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, Journey to Adulthood, outstanding adult education conferences and series, excellent preschool, music, elder and outreach ministries, and is renowned for the unparalleled excellence of the annual Catesby Jones Barbecue.

In 1992 Tuck won the hand of Delea Free Joly formerly of Florence, Alabama and they married at St. Paul's, Cleveland Heights in October, 1992. Tuck and Delea have four children: Tiffany Joly, and George, Dorothy, and Elizabeth Bowerfind.

**The Reverend James R. Harlan, Rector, Church of the Ascension, Denver, Colorado**



I count it a great honor to be nominated in the election for the next Bishop of the Diocese of the Rio Grande. As a native of Colorado, I have always loved the wide expanses of the western states with their rich mix of climates and cultures as well as the frontier, missionary spirit that has characterized the Church here for decades. I grew up in the Episcopal Church where the rich liturgy, music, and community inspired me, even in elementary school, to sense a call to serve God as a priest. For the last 23 years, my sole focus has been church ministry, beginning when I was a student at the University of Colorado.

Through these years of wonderful ministry—in large and small congregations; rural, suburban, and urban congregations; institutional and parish settings; local, diocesan, educational, and national church settings—I have come to focus, in each context, on helping everyone to recognize that we need the widest variety of congregations and ministries possible to fulfill God’s mission in our common life. I have a deep desire to see every Christian affirmed and empowered in their call to serve and to share the Good News of God in Christ. Every congregation in distinctive ways is a community that shapes and equips God’s people for ministry. My wife, Elizabeth and I have been married for twelve years, and our daughter, Hannah celebrated her tenth birthday this past summer. We make it a point to have dinner and family time together almost every evening. Usually, at least a couple of those evenings each week include other family or friends as our guests. In my free time, I enjoy reading, watching a good movie, volunteering at Hannah’s school, and working out.

I’m grateful for all the moments of grace to see God at work, and I look forward to continuing to share life in Christ with God’s people.

The Reverend Jedediah D. Holdorph II, Rector, St. Mark's Episcopal Church, Medford, Oregon



Jedediah (Jed) Holdorph was born in 1958. The youngest of six children, he was raised by a widowed mother and grew up in Michigan and Arizona. Jed earned his bachelor's degree from the University of Arizona, in Tucson, in 1980, and his Master of Divinity degree from the Episcopal Divinity School, in Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 1988.

He began his ordained ministry in Albuquerque, where he served first as curate and then as interim rector at St. Mark's-on-the-Mesa. Over the course of the following 19 years, Jed has served parishes in rural Missouri, suburban Chicago, and, most recently, an urban parish in southern Oregon (more than 250 miles south of the diocesan offices). He is passionate about preaching and teaching that is grounded in Scripture and connected to our contemporary life and witness.

Jed has consistently participated in the life of the larger church, elected and appointed to a variety of leadership positions, and has strengthened local ecumenical efforts. He was centrally involved in providing key leadership during a challenging transition between bishops in Oregon. He is highly-regarded and known, both within his congregation and diocese, for his wisdom, warmth, and lively sense of humor.

In every context, Jed encourages others to see themselves as members of the Body of Christ, working to engage them in the life and leadership of the church.

Barb Morris, his wife of 29 years, has deep roots in the Southwest and is currently completing a Master's degree program in environmental conflict resolution. They share a love for the natural world and seek out opportunities to explore God's wondrous creation. Jed and Barb are the proud parents of two adult children, Becky and Adam. In his spare time, Jed also enjoys photography, reading, hiking, crossword puzzles, and camping.

The Reverend John S. Nieman, Rector, Holy Trinity Parish, Clemson, South Carolina



The Rev. John S. Nieman has been rector of Holy Trinity Parish, Clemson, SC since 2006. He was born and raised in New Jersey, the last of four children. After working summers from age 12 and three years full time after high school for his father as a carpenter, he began his undergraduate education at Drew University, where he graduated in 1984. That summer he married Margaret, a passionate knitter and dancer. They are proud parents of a bright and beautiful fifteen year old daughter, Joanna. After receiving an M.Div. from Harvard Divinity School, he was ordained a transitional deacon and priest in 1987.

Previous clergy positions include curate, St Elizabeth's, Ridgewood, New Jersey; rector, St. Dunstan's, Ellsworth, Maine; rector, St. Mary's, Sparta, New Jersey; and rector, St. Andrew's, Ann Arbor, Michigan. On the diocesan level he currently chairs the Committee for the Support of the Ordained and co-chairs the Commission on Episcopal and National Concerns. He also serves on the Diocesan Executive Council and Commission on Ministry. In the past he has served on the Standing Committee (Michigan), the Commission on Ministry (Upper South Carolina, Michigan and Newark), and chaired the Christian Education Committee (Newark).

John is a spiritual director, and anticipates the completion this spring of the *Sursum Corda* program, a two year process for the formation of spiritual directors. He loves music, and plays classical guitar for fun. He also enjoys walking in beautiful places, cooking, relaxing with a good book, and taking a ride in the mountains on his old Gold Wing.

The Reverend Dr. Michael Louis Vono, Rector, St. Paul's Within the Walls, Rome, Italy



I was born in Providence, RI, the second of four children in a close-knit family. I had a clear sense of vocation from an early age, and my sixteen years of seminary formation included Catholic, Protestant and Anglican theological training. I completed my doctoral degree in Congregational Studies in 1986. My spiritual gifts are pastoral care, community building, administration, preaching and evangelism.

As Curate in an inner-city multicultural church, I lived with people in crisis, transition, conflict, and confusion. I learned how to be a shepherd, counselor, and friend, as my parishioners struggled to recognize God in their personal wildernesses. My primary responsibility was to parish and local youth, mostly African and Spanish, as well as to newly married couples and the elderly, visiting hospitals and nursing homes. I came to understand how preaching the Gospel, the sacraments, pastoral care and building community effectively changed lives and inspired hope and faithfulness.

As its Vicar, the 'bedroom community' of Christ Church, Leicester taught me the value of living in a spiritually intimate community. I began to concentrate on congregational development, and studied at Hartford Theological Seminary. I learned that I had the pastoral gifts to bring an economic mix of people together, enable pastoral visioning and inspire positive results in conflict management situations. I learned how to be a priest, pastor and teacher at Christ Church. In my twelve years there I learned to appreciate the uniqueness of every relationship and love the complex diversities of the Body of Christ.

The Standing Committee expresses appreciation to all members of the Search Team who have devoted hundreds of hours of prayer and work in discerning these nominees.

The Search Committee used the following criteria, drawn from the Diocesan Profile, to shape its discernment

*We seek a Bishop who...*

- *Will walk with us in our continued journey towards healing and reconciliation*
- *Is able to inspire a shared vision, and to motivate and empower others in its implementation*
- *Will lead us to a new way of being Christ's church in the 21st century*
- *Has leadership experience as a parish Rector or Vicar, and as a member of Diocesan committees or commissions*
- *Has experience serving and creating community in a diocese with distant, rural parishes*

### *Petition Process*

Other nominations may be made through the petition process (equivalent to nomination from the floor) which officially opens on January 19, 2010. The deadline for receipt of nomination by petition packets is February 1, 2010 at 4:00 PM. Instructions for this process were posted on the website and mailed to all clergy and churches on January 5.

Names of those nominated by petition will be announced when all background checks are completed (early April.) Written answers to essay questions for both Standing Committee nominees and petition nominees will be released at that same time. All nominees will be invited to participate in the walk-about currently scheduled for April 8-14, 2010.

You are urged to continue to pray for this process. The following prayer was composed by the Search Committee Chaplain, the Rev. Adams Lovekin:

*Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, giver of every good gift, send forth your Holy Spirit and raise up for us a bishop of your own choosing: a shepherd to lead and guide us with personal holiness, wisdom, compassion and grace.*

*Father, we pray for a bishop with vision and the commitment to heal and unite your faithful people of the Diocese of the Rio Grande that we all may make known the love of Jesus Christ, who offered Himself for us and the whole world, in whose Name we pray.*

*Amen.*

## **A note from our Assisting Bishop**

A couple of years ago, at Convocation or some other gathering of diocesan leadership I told the story of my visiting a small West Indian congregation near the east coast of Costa Rica. It was the rainy season and water was pouring in from a leak in the thatched roof just over the altar.

I remarked to the Warden, "That's a bad leak you've got there." And he replied, "Oh yes, Father. When the bishop he gonna fix it?" I of course said, "The bishop he's not going to fix it. That's your responsibility."

As we approach the election of our new bishop, I think it's worthwhile to say a word about unrealistic expectations. The bishop's not going to fix all our problems. A bishop's crosier is not a magic wand. And the bishop is not some Super Hero from the comic strips.

Years ago, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, in his book, *Life Together*, warned people of the danger of comparing their imaginary ideal community with the real flesh and blood community in which they live. Fantasy always defeats reality. But, as a wonderful African bishop once told me, "God does not bless unrealities." Let's keep our hopes and expectations high, but let's keep them realistic.

And let's engage ourselves in a process where we earnestly seek God's will – true spiritual discernment – rather than treating the process as a merely political endeavor.

+Bill Frey