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THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH

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25 February 2009

Dear Members of Our Federal Ministry Family:

We are greeting an unprecedented opportunity as we anticipate the new bishop's election in March, 2010. As you probably know the selection of the Suffragan Bishop is done through an election by the House of Bishops. As such the position shares a unique heritage with the Presiding Bishop who is the other bishop selected in this way. Taking a cue from Bishop Jefferts Schori's election--in which persons from all levels of the Church were asked to participate before the election--we are endeavoring to make this process more accessible to those whom the new bishop will serve, you, members of this federal family. To do that we have scrutinized venues that would enhance contact with the members of the House of Bishops. They want the feedback that is necessary to enable them to make a sensitive and informed selection on our behalf.

Here's what we've come up with:

- We will be posting a questionnaire on an independent website to assist in writing a profile-job description for the new bishop. This site will present all information on the election such as the timeline calendar, nominee bios, and other pertinent information.
- The planning workshop originally scheduled for May at Kanuga will now occur in July and in southern California so that it will precede General Convention. This will afford more contact with the House of Bishops and increase the visibility of our deliberations in the selection process to the greater Church. We expect 35 persons representing the categories of this episcopacy to be in attendance. Please consult the new website for more information on names and the areas they represent. This meeting is an added, extra step. Rather than my office selecting a nominating committee this discernment conference will do that. It will be their job to use your responses to the questionnaire as a means of selecting representatives (12 persons) to the joint nominating committee with the bishops.

These are new ways for us. In the past--and before the Internet--bishop appointed representatives attended meetings to advise the House of Bishops on nominations. This was done with the utmost care as far as circumstances would allow but now we have the capacity to embrace our far-flung community and a thorough intake of ideas and opinions. Further, the original schedule of meeting with representatives in May followed by another set of persons destined to represent us at General Convention two months later did not make financial sense in this economy.

You will be notified soon about timely information posted on the "election website." This is an exciting time!

In Christ,

+ George