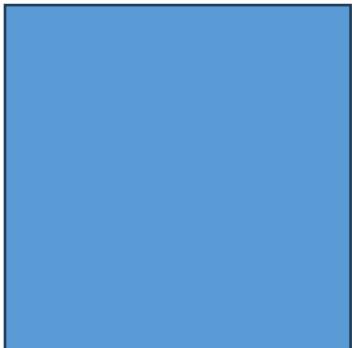


2026 STANDING COMMITTEE NOMINATIONS

We are still seeking at least one CLERGY NOMINATION. The form is available at www.diocgc.org/2026-diocesan-convention.

CLERGY ORDER



Nominee:

Church:

Nominated by:

Church:

Describe experiences and positions you have, or currently hold, in the church and the world that will have helped you prepare for serving in this position:

What, in your opinion, are the greatest opportunities and challenges facing the Episcopal Church and the Diocese of the Central Gulf Coast at this time?

What sustains you in your spiritual life?

2026 STANDING COMMITTEE NOMINATIONS

LAY ORDER



Nominee: Joyce Landers
Church: St. Mark's, Troy

Nominated by: The Rev. Mike Schwarte
Church: St. Mark's, Troy

Describe experiences and positions you have, or currently hold, in the church and the world that will have helped you prepare for serving in this position:

I have participated in many of the ministries at St. Marks', my home parish, including but not limited to the vestry, the pastoral care committee, the choir, and our county jail ministry. At the diocesan level, I have served on Cursillo staffs, the Cursillo Commission, the ECW Commission, and have been the Diocesan UTO Coordinator since 2014. I am a graduate of the lay school of ministry as a lay preacher and worship leader. I have served on the Province IV (PIV) Executive Committee, the PIV ECW Board and am currently the secretary of the PIV ECW Board. I was a member of The United Thank Offering Board for 9 years and was the Vice President in charge of Grants for 6 of those years. During these leadership opportunities, I received training in leadership and about our church and its policies and procedures. I enjoyed my service on each of these committees and I am excited by the opportunity to serve our church in a new capacity.

What, in your opinion, are the greatest opportunities and challenges facing the Episcopal Church and the Diocese of the Central Gulf Coast at this time?

The greatest challenge our church faces is how to respond to the discord, mistrust, anger, and violence in our country without becoming violent ourselves. It is very difficult, when faced with such venom, to not be pulled into that same mindset. Jesus repeatedly challenged the status quo of his time and pointed out the social injustices of their society. However, he did this with his words and by example at the same preaching about love and forgiveness. Therefore, our greatest challenge can also be our greatest opportunity to evangelize. We can do this through social justice programs and by living into the words, "The Episcopal Church welcomes you." We need to step up and be the voice of those who have been silenced and teaching others what it means to be a follower of Christ. Presiding Bishop Curry set the stage for us by preaching so passionately about the love of Jesus. It is now our turn to carry on what he started.

What sustains you in your spiritual life?

The people of St. Marks', The Daughters of the King, and this diocese sustain and inspire me to be my best self. Whenever I have a weak moment, you all support me and keep me going. I read scripture and frequently write sermons in my head. Some of those are written down and presented but most just become a part of my conversations with God. Music speaks to my soul. I see our hymnal as a book of poetry based on scripture. My personal prayer life is inspired by the book, "The Practice of the Presence of God" by Brother Lawrence. Rather than having a scheduled prayer time, I pray small prayers throughout the day. My involvement with UTO has added a new component to my relationship with God because UTO encourages us to live a life based on gratitude.

2026 STANDING COMMITTEE NOMINATIONS

LAY ORDER



Nominee: Matthew Thomason
Church: St. Paul's, Daphne

Nominated by: The Rev. Thack Dyson
Church: St. Paul's, Daphne

Describe experiences and positions you have, or currently hold, in the church and the world that will have helped you prepare for serving in this position:

I was raised in the Diocese of the Central Gulf Coast, attending St. Matthews in Mobile until I was five and St. Paul's in Daphne until moving away for college. After college, my wife and I were active in Episcopal parishes in Ponte Vedra Beach, FL and Houston, TX. Since returning to Daphne in 2018 with my wife and two children, I have been privileged to serve as a delegate to the diocesan convention and as a member of the Vestry, Property Committee, Emergency Preparedness Committee, and Men's Group at St. Paul's, Daphne. These roles have been a great blessing to me, and I've learned a lot through these experiences. I am a licensed civil engineer, employed as a consultant for airport capital development projects, active in several aviation professional societies.

What, in your opinion, are the greatest opportunities and challenges facing the Episcopal Church and the Diocese of the Central Gulf Coast at this time?

Generally, I worry that we are in an increasingly divisive and materialistic society. People in my generation are participating less in community engagement, both in civic organizations and organized religion, setting a poor example for those who follow. Perhaps the COVID pandemic allowed some to realize that they could technically exist as islands connected only by electronic means. Regardless, this eroding of active participation in community isolates us, reduces empathy, and further divides us.

In this challenge, I see a great opportunity for the Church, specifically the Episcopal Church in America. Despite the waning participation in community, and church attendance specifically, people have a deep desire, imparted by our Creator, to be in community with one another. In times of isolation and darkness, the Church has an opportunity to welcome souls weary from discord and the failed promises of false idols when there is the inevitable search for belonging. Historically, the Church has flourished when it is the minority or even persecuted. The message of Grace, good news of the Gospel, and the scriptural-based liturgy that the Episcopal Church provides can really resonate with the issues of modern society. We just need to be equipped to carry that message.

What sustains you in your spiritual life?

The Lord has given me many different avenues by which he sustains and feeds the faith that He has given me. I have an amazing wife and family that always encourage and support me with a faith-forward focus. I often have been uplifted by a veritable experience of God in nature and the arts. Prayer, both extemporaneous and liturgical, plays a large role in how I encounter God. However, the most recurring and reliable way that God sustains me is through active engagement in a community of believers, my church family. I believe that more than anything, God has used the community of the believers around me to nourish my faith and that of my family.