

A message from Bishop Stephen T. Lane

*Jesus went out again beside the sea; the whole crowd gathered around him, and he taught them. As he was walking along, he saw Levi son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him, "Follow me." And he got up and followed him. (Mark 2:13-14)*

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Welcome to the 199th Convention of The Episcopal Diocese of Maine, the Episcopal branch of the Jesus Movement in Maine.

Our theme for this Convention comes from our Presiding Bishop: *The Way of Love*. *The Way of Love* is a program of practices for Episcopalians to help build a Jesus-Centered life. It's a means of transforming our verbal and liturgical commitment to following Jesus into a Way of Life with Jesus at the center. Information and materials about *The Way of Love* may be found here: <https://www.episcopalchurch.org/explore-way-love>. Materials will also be available at Convention.

The Way of Love is also an apt description for what we're trying to do in this time of Episcopal Transition. We're doing the best we know how to discern candidates who are willing to stand for election as the Tenth Bishop of Maine. It's an imperfect process undertaken by imperfect people. We're not all good interviewers or born communicators. But we trust that God will use our efforts to bring before us a group of candidates who are able and willing to love us and to lead us into the future. I think the Discernment and Transition Committees are doing excellent work, and we offer them our continuing prayers and support.

And we continue, as congregations, clergy, and diocesan staff, to carry out the ministries that God has given us in the places God has placed us. We do this work in the face of the many transitions facing our communities and this diocese. About a third of our congregations are seeking new clergy leadership. We continue to work at connecting more deeply with our communities. *Living Local* continues to generate enthusiasm and new approaches to ministry. The diocesan staff is doing its best to serve you while adjusting to significant staff changes.

We're not perfect, but all our ministry is possible because we follow Jesus' Way of Love. Jesus offers the invitation. Jesus leads the way. Jesus transforms what we offer into new life.

This year's Convention will be held at Hannaford Hall of the University of Southern Maine, Portland. Free parking is available in the parking garage behind Hannaford Hall on Bedford Street. Look for red-aproned volunteers to point the way.

Everything you need for Convention can be found on the Convention page of our website ([episcopalmaine.org/convention/2018](http://episcopalmaine.org/convention/2018)). To conserve bandwidth on the floor of Convention, please download any materials you might need onto your tablet or laptop and/or print them if you desire (a music booklet will be made available at registration). We will continue to use electronic voting, and we will practice in preparation for the Electing Convention in February of next year. Two Pre-Convention gatherings are scheduled (Wed., Sept. 26th 7:00pm-9:00pm at St. Mark's, Waterville and Wed., Oct. 3rd 7:00pm-9:00pm at Trinity, Portland), and a recording will be available online to assist with your preparation. Check back to the Convention webpage as updates are happening almost daily.

I am aware that this is my final Diocesan Convention, and I'm very much looking forward to seeing all of you. However, it's too early for farewells. (I don't think any of us are prepared to say goodbye for ten months!) We will focus on doing our business and celebrating our life together. There will be time for farewells following the election in February, and there will be ample opportunities to do so.

Don't forget to download or print what you need. And let's not forget that our job is to bring the *Way of Love* to all whom we meet.

Faithfully,

*Bishop Steve*