

The Rev. Dr. J. Derek Harbin
- Sense of Call -

June 29, 2019

Susan Grimm, Standing Committee Chair
Episcopal Diocese of Southern Virginia
11827 Canon Boulevard, Suite 101
Newport News, VA 23606-3071

Dear Susan:

This week on my 58th birthday, I received a call from a priest of this diocese urging me to prayerfully consider entering the Petition Process for our XI Bishop.

Her call came as quite a shock. She had no idea that I had already been nominated but had not been selected by the Search Committee to continue in their final, Round III deliberations. But her call also prompted the Holy Spirit to ask me once again, "Do you trust me or not?"

Initially reading the Profile reminded me of my first encounter with personality type descriptions, wondering how the author knew so much about me! When Clifford and our children surprised me by saying, "They're looking for you," the Holy Spirit swirled even stronger. I knew that I had reached another pivotal point in my journey when two colleagues nominated me. But when my participation in the process abruptly ended, I wondered, "What was that all about, Lord?"

In 2009 God spoke to me in a dream: "I send you forth to a new people. Do not be afraid. The path is now open." Could my nine years in Portsmouth be merely the first part of this divine commission? I cannot answer that question. What I can say is that the Holy Spirit is once again calling me to step out in faith. I trust that the Standing Committee and the people of this diocese will be guided by that same Holy Spirit as we call our next bishop.

Yours in Christ Jesus,

J. Derek Harbin