

Name: Sheila Miller

Order: Lay

Congregation: St. Barnabas', Arroyo Grande

Nominated for: Standing Committee

Please tell us why you feel called to serve and what you can contribute to this particular body.

When Father Rob Keim called to ask me to serve on the Standing Committee for the remainder of Tricia Ottesen's term, I told him I felt there were those more worthy than me. As we talked, a dove landed outside my window. The dove had a nesting twig in its mouth, and it looked directly at me. I told this to Father Rob and he said to pray on my decision overnight. I did pray and believe that the dove was a sign that I was being called to be of service to the Standing Committee.

Please give some brief background on your church activities.

I am currently serving on the St. Barnabas vestry. I am active in the leadership of our thrift shop ministry. I am on our Social Justice committee, our Adult Formation committee, and our Aging and Spirituality group. My husband and I serve as welcomers to newcomers and we also participate frequently in the coordination and implementation of our coffee/social hour. I love being involved in my church.

What is the most pressing issue facing the diocese in the next 5 years and how would you work to address it if elected?

One of the most pressing issues facing our diocese and democracy itself is the growth of White Christian Nationalism (WCN). It is an ideology cloaked in religious language that is not a religion at all. WCN has raised its ugly head here in San Luis Obispo County with banners being hung over the freeway and hate literature being distributed in neighborhoods throughout the county. As a church, we are especially suited to lift the veil on WCN and to see it as a political strategy and a way to exert power over others. I feel it can be countered by raising awareness within our own Christian community and believing and showing the love of Jesus of Nazareth to all.