

REPORT TO 2022 ANNUAL DIOCESAN CONVENTION:

At its two (virtual online) meetings this year, our Committee considered clarifications to several canons and provided input to others with respect to resolutions that would require amendments to the Diocesan Constitution or Canons. The following are changes that the Committee recommends for passage at Convention.

First Vote on Changes to Constitution

Our diocesan Constitution provides (in Article XXI) that it may be amended by a majority vote of the two orders voting separately at two successive annual meetings of Convention. The following amendments are proposed for their first vote.

MISSION STATIONS: Mission Stations are a recent category of small congregations that have been certified by the Bishop but are not yet mentioned in the Canons. They aspire to become Missions, and our Committee was asked to confirm their status by giving them a place in our Constitution and Canons. In our Constitution, we therefore propose:

Constitution, Article VI (The Convention of the Diocese):

Section 3: Ninety days notice shall be given of every annual meeting of the Convention and thirty days notice shall be given of a special meeting of the Convention, by the Secretary of Convention, except as provided for in Article XIX. The mode of notice shall be in writing, addressed and delivered to all members of the clergy who are canonically resident and to every Parish, Mission and Mission Station in this Diocese.

Constitution, Article VII (Members of Convention):

Section 4: The lay members of Convention shall consist of:

- a. Lay delegates elected from each Parish and Mission in union with the Convention;
- ...
- e. The Chancellor, Vice-Chancellor (if any), Secretary of Convention, and Treasurer of the Diocese, if lay persons, during their terms of office;
- f. One young adult (ages 16-21) selected by each Regional Ministry prior to Convention;
- g. Lay members of the Board of Directors of the Diocese of Olympia, Inc. during their terms in office; and
- h. Lay members representing Mission Stations to whom Convention grants voting rights under Canon 2.

All lay members described in this Section 4 must be adult Communicants in Good Standing.

EPISCOPAL VACANCIES: Title III, Canon 13, in the Canons of the Episcopal Church authorizes hiring a Bishop Provisional when there is no Diocesan Bishop. To authorize a Bishop Provisional with full authority of a Diocesan Bishop, there must be a vote of the Diocesan Convention “in consultation with the Presiding Bishop.” Alternatively, a Diocese Standing Committee can invite an Assistant Bishop with more limited authority to “exercise episcopal offices”. We proposed the following changes to our Constitution to address episcopal vacancies:

Constitution, Article IV (The Bishop):

Section 2: If the office of the Diocesan Bishop becomes vacant, the Ecclesiastical Authority shall pass temporarily to the Bishop Coadjutor (if any), or in the absence of a Bishop Coadjutor, to the Suffragan Bishop (if any). Such temporary authority shall continue until a new Diocesan Bishop is consecrated.

Section 6 (new): When there is no Diocesan Bishop and no Bishop Coadjutor, the Convention may elect a Bishop Provisional to fill the duties and offices of the Diocesan Bishop on a temporary basis. Alternatively, the Standing Committee may invite an Assistant Bishop to exercise temporary episcopal duties in the Diocese, if Convention approves creation of such a position. The term of any bishop appointed under this section shall be revocable and subject to all limitations set forth in the Canons of the Episcopal Church.

Constitution, Article VI (The Convention of the Diocese):

Section 2: Special meetings of the Convention may be called by the Bishop or by a two thirds vote of the Standing Committee.

Constitution, Article X (Standing Committee of the Diocese):

Section 2: If there be no Diocesan Bishop, Bishop Coadjutor, Bishop Provisional, or Suffragan Bishop, the Ecclesiastical Authority shall pass temporarily to the Standing Committee, to the extent that such authority arises under the Constitution and Canons of this Diocese.

Constitution, Article XIX (Election of a Bishop):

Section 1: The election of a Bishop, Bishop Coadjutor, Bishop Provisional, or Suffragan Bishop for this Diocese may be held at an Annual Meeting of Convention, or at a Special Meeting of Convention called for the purposes at least sixty days before the time appointed, of which the object shall be stated in a written notice sent by the Secretary of the Standing Committee to every member of the clergy canonically resident and to the Vestry of every Parish and the Bishop’s Committee of every Mission.

Second Vote on Changes to Constitution

The following amendments are proposed for a second vote:

Article I: Name and Jurisdiction

The Church in that portion of the State of Washington lying west of the summit of the Cascade range of mountains and including the Counties of Whatcom, Skagit, San Juan, Island, Clallam, Jefferson, Snohomish, King, Kitsap, Grays Harbor, Mason, Thurston, Pierce, Pacific, Lewis, Wahkiakum, Cowlitz, Clark, and Skamania shall be known by the name and description of the “Diocese of Olympia, of ~~the~~ the Episcopal Church ~~in the United States of America,~~” hereinafter referred to as “~~the~~ the Diocese of Olympia,” “this Diocese,” or “~~the~~ the Diocese.”

Article II: Acceding to General Convention:

The Church in the Diocese of Olympia accedes to the Constitution and Canons of ~~the~~ the Episcopal Church and recognizes the authority of the General Convention of the same.

Article III: The Authority of the Diocese:

The authority of this Diocese is vested in and exercised by its Bishop, and as it may be assigned, to a Bishop Coadjutor (if there be one), and to its Convention and ~~the~~ Standing Committee.

Article IV: The Bishop:

Section 2: Upon the death of the Diocesan Bishop, the Ecclesiastical Authority shall pass temporarily to the Bishop Coadjutor (if any), or in the absence of a Bishop Coadjutor, to the Suffragan Bishop (if any). Such temporary authority shall continue until a new Diocesan Bishop is consecrated.

Section 3: During any period when the Standing Committee determines that the Diocesan Bishop is by reason of disability unable to serve, the Ecclesiastical Authority shall pass temporarily to the Bishop Coadjutor (if any), or in the absence of a Bishop Coadjutor, to the Suffragan Bishop (if any). Such temporary authority shall continue for the period of the Diocesan Bishop’s disability, as determined by the Standing Committee.

Section 4: During any period when the Diocesan Bishop is absent from the Diocese, the Bishop may delegate the Ecclesiastical Authority to the Bishop Coadjutor (if any), or in the absence of a Bishop Coadjutor, to a Suffragan Bishop (if any). Such temporary authority shall cease upon the Bishop’s return to the Diocese.

Section 5: Where the Ecclesiastical Authority is temporarily transferred under Sections 2, 3 or 4 of this Article, and where there is neither a Bishop Coadjutor nor a Suffragan Bishop, the authority shall pass to the Standing Committee.

Article V: The Cathedral:

Section 1: Saint Mark’s ~~Parish Church~~ of Seattle is hereby designated and declared to be the Cathedral ~~Church~~ of this Diocese, and the official seat of the Bishop of the same.

Article X: Standing Committee:

Section 1: ...Members of the Standing Committee shall serve a four-year term and shall not be eligible for re-election until one year ~~has~~~~shall have~~ elapsed following the expiration of the four-year term to which they have been elected. However, a person who serves a short term of no longer than two years shall not be subject to the one-year disqualification....

Vote on Changes to Canons:

Pursuant to Canons 28 and 29, canons can be enacted or amended by a "vote of a majority of each Order." These amendments "take effect upon the adjournment of the meeting of Convention at which they are enacted," unless the Convention votes unanimously for the changes to take immediate effect.

Canon 2 (Lay Members of Convention):

Section 1: *[insert at end of this section]* By majority vote of both orders voting together, the delegates at any Convention may grant voting rights to the designated representatives of any Mission Station.

Section 3: *[insert at end of this section]* Each Mission Station shall hold an annual meeting where its Communicants in Good Standing shall elect up to two lay persons for one-year terms to represent them at meetings of the Convention. Those representatives shall have seat and voice at all meetings of Convention.

Canon 6 (The Diocesan Council):

Section 3: ...All lay members shall be adult Communicants in Good Standing of a diocesan congregation.

Canon 11 (Missions and Mission Stations):

[add new Section 8] Where a newly formed congregation aspires to achieve Mission status but cannot yet meet all requirements of this Canon, the Bishop may certify that congregation as a Mission Station for a term of up to three years, subject to review and extension. Clergy serving in such Mission Stations shall be considered ecclesiastically employed for purposes of Article VII in the Constitution. Mission Stations shall maintain records to identify their Communicants in Good Standing, and they shall be encouraged to take steps toward being organized as a Mission.

The undersigned chair gratefully acknowledges the patience and good humor of Convention as he celebrates his 25th year in his position on this Committee.

Faithfully submitted,
COMMITTEE ON CONSTITUTION & CANONS

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Rev. Jedediah Fox

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Sarah S. Mack
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