

REPORT TO 2023 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.

Article IV (The Bishop): Change title from “The Bishop” to “The Bishop and the Ecclesiastical Authority” (as being more descriptive)

Article VIII (Officers of Convention):

Section 1: The person holding the Ecclesiastical Authority as defined in Article IV shall be ex-officio President of the Convention. The President of the Standing Committee shall be next in order to preside. In the absence or incapacity of these, a president pro-tempore shall be elected by the Convention from among the members thereof.

Article IX (Transaction of Business):

Section 1 [amend as follows]

One-third of the clergy entitled to seats in the Convention, and delegates from one-third of the congregations at any time duly assembled, shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business, except that a smaller number may adjourn from time to time.

Section 2 [amend as follows]

Unless otherwise provided, the clergy and lay members shall deliberate in one body and vote as individuals on all matters coming before Convention, and a majority of the votes shall be decisive. Each delegate present shall be entitled to only one vote.

Section 3 [amend as follows]

On the call of any five members or as otherwise required by the Constitution or Canons, the two orders shall vote separately, and a concurrence of a majority of each order shall be necessary to constitute a decision.

Article X (Standing Committee of the Diocese):

Section 2 [delete this section as duplicative of Article IV and renumber Sections 3-5]

Section 3 [amend as follows]

...The secretary shall keep a record of all the proceedings of the Standing Committee, which shall be subject at all times to review by the Bishop of the Diocese, and a full report of their acts shall be made to each Annual Meeting of Convention.

Section 5 [amend to avoid confusion with officers of Convention; see Art. VIII, sec. 4]

During the interim between the meetings of Convention, the Standing Committee shall have the power of Convention to ratify or elect Standing Committee members to fill vacancies until the next Annual Convention.

Article XII (Deputies and Alternate Deputies to General Convention):

Section 1 [amend as follows]

At an Annual Meeting of the Diocesan Convention held at least twelve months before the regular meeting of the General Convention for which they are chosen, a concurrent majority vote of the clerical and lay orders, voting separately, shall elect four clerical Deputies who are canonically resident in the Diocese, and four lay Deputies, who are confirmed adult Communicants in Good Standing, and those Deputies shall represent this Diocese in the General Convention of the Episcopal Church. Deputies and Alternate Deputies shall serve until their successors are elected.

Section 3(e) [amend as follows to comply with General Convention rule]:

Unless otherwise provided by the rules of General Convention, the diocesan deputation shall elect its own chair by majority vote.

Section 4 [amend as follows]

If at the time of the Annual Meeting of the Convention in the year preceding the regular meeting of the General Convention, a vacancy shall have occurred among the Deputies or Alternates elected at a previous meeting of Convention, nominations and an election of the required number of Alternates shall be conducted by a combined ballot as described above.

Section 5 [amend as follows to comply with General Convention age rule]

Adult Communicants in Good Standing who are elected as Deputies or Alternate Deputies to General Convention must be at least 16 years old at the start of General Convention. If they are under the age of 18 years, they must be accompanied by a parent or guardian in compliance with applicable Diocesan procedures for those who work with children or youth.

Second Vote on Changes to Constitution

The following amendments are proposed for a second 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.

Votes 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.

[No amendments to Canons proposed in 2023]

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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