

Diocese of Olympia – A Governance Overview

Governance includes the boards, councils, commissions and events that provide overall leadership for the Diocese of Olympia. The authority of the Diocese is vested in and exercised by the Bishop, the Convention and the Standing Committee.

We are governed by a [Constitution and Canons](#): The Constitution is the fundamental document by which a diocese works. It describes who we are and, among other things, our relationship to the wider church. The Canons are our regulations and rules for implementation and organization.

The [Convention](#) elects to diocesan offices; ratifies a budget; sets assessment levels; admits congregations as missions or parishes; votes on resolutions; elects a General Convention deputation; and hears the bishop's annual address. *Voting membership – clergy & two to twelve lay delegates elected by each congregation.*

The [Board of Directors](#) – “**Diocese of Olympia, Inc.,**” provides stewardship, control, and investment of trust funds; holds the legal title to all diocesan property, including that of missions, developing congregations, and certain specialized ministries not separately incorporated; approves construction plans for all mission property, as well as loans for construction and renovation projects; puts in place structured relationships with congregations and diocesan staff regarding real property and funds; and oversees and manages redevelopment of properties. The Board has several subcommittees/task groups: the DIF (Diocesan Investment Fund Committee); Property Committee; Loan Committee; and Commission on Church Architecture, which advises and makes recommendations regarding proposed plans for new construction and/or renovation of church properties. *Six lay and two clergy members are appointed by the bishop and approved by the Convention.*

The [Standing Committee](#) is the council of advice for the bishop on all matters, including decisions related to the sale, encumbrance or disposal of real property for parishes. It participates in the consent process for ordination, facilitates the bishop's yearly Mutual Ministry Review process, has judicial responsibilities in cases of clergy misconduct, and responsibilities to include giving or withholding consent to the election of bishops within the wider Episcopal Church. The Standing Committee may become the ecclesiastical authority in the absence of the bishop. *The Standing Committee has eight members, four clergy and four lay, elected by the convention.*

The [Diocesan Council](#) is the convention in recess and has focus areas including: public relations, to

include outreach, facilitated conversations and connectedness; mission and vision related to diocesan properties, particularly where a congregation has voted to close and the Board is considering use/sale of the property. and program administration and support. The Diocesan Council develops an annual operating budget, monitors income and expenses, and oversees budget and program goals. It supports the work of commissions, committees and task forces; proposes the annual assessment rate; prayerfully responds to the needs of congregations; actively works to move us from operations to mission; and serves as a sounding board for the bishop. *Membership is in transition; for 2024 membership includes: 12 members representing geographical areas of the diocese; 4 at-large member, and 4 members representing the BIPOC community.*

The [Diocesan Staff](#) provides leadership, program oversight, and ministry development; resources to congregations, ministries and institutions, as well as regions, individuals and clergy. Staff members carry out the vision of the diocese on a local, regional, diocesan-wide, provincial and wider church level, with an emphasis on providing resources to congregations. Staff members provide a wider perspective, support, and accountability; they have the power to convene, to challenge congregations, and to provide a unifying vision. They develop and provide oversight of the diocesan operating budget, manage our corporate responsibility, and provide a fiduciary structure.

Ten regional ministry areas – geographical regions – facilitate networking, and connections. The regions are: *Mt Baker, Sno Isle, Be Attitudes, Holy C, Eastside, Evergreen, Rainier, Peninsula, Willapa, and Columbia.*

The main goals of the **Joint Finance Panel (JFP)**, a group appointed by and directed by the bishop, is to enhance a clear flow of information among all governing bodies enabling each to make sound decisions. The JFP is the formal Audit Committee for diocesan funds. The JFP has no approval authority, only recommending power. *Members from the Diocesan Council, Board of Directors, Standing Committee, and Office of the Bishop.*

Questions? Please contact Dede Moore, Canon for Human Resources, Governance & Convention, dmoore@ecww.org. Revised February 2024