

# THE CONSTITUTION OF THE DIOCESE OF THE SUSQUEHANNA

## ARTICLE I. THE TITLE AND BOUNDS OF THE DIOCESE

The Diocese shall be known and designated as the Diocese of the Susquehanna and shall comprise the following named counties in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania: **[Insert Full List]**, as amended from time to time by any Diocesan Convention in accordance with the National Canons.

## ARTICLE II. ALLEGIANCE

The Church in this Diocese, being a constituent part of The Episcopal Church, otherwise known as the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America, accedes to and adopts the Constitution, Canons, Doctrine, Discipline, and Worship of that Church, and recognizes the authority of the General Convention of the same.

## ARTICLE III: CONVENTIONS OF THIS DIOCESE

### SECTION 1: *Time, place, and notice*

- A. There shall be an Annual Convention of this Church in this Diocese, which shall meet at a time and place appointed by a preceding convention; provided that the Ecclesiastical Authority of the Diocese, for sufficient cause, shall have power to change the place and time of the meeting.
- B. A Special Convention may be called by the Bishop at the Bishop's discretion and shall be called on request of a majority of all members of the Standing Committee, duly certified by its Secretary. If the Episcopate be vacant, or the Bishop incapacitated from acting, which shall be determined in the manner provided in the Canons of the General Convention, a Special Convention may be called by the Standing Committee.
- C. Written notice, twenty days in advance, shall be given of any Convention to every member of the clergy and to every Parish in union with the Convention. Notice of a Special Convention shall state the purpose or purposes for which it is called, and no other business shall be transacted at that Convention.
- D. Every Convention shall be opened with Prayers, as directed by the Bishop, and at every Convention there shall be a celebration of the Holy Communion.

### SECTION 2: *Members*

- A. Any Convention shall be comprised of clergy and laypersons who shall vote as individuals.

**B.** Clergy entitled to a seat and vote in any Convention (which shall not be withdrawn because of disability by reason of age or sickness so long as canonical residence in this Diocese is maintained) shall meet the following requirements:

- i.* Canonical residence and active engagement in church work in this Diocese with the previous written sanction of the Ecclesiastical Authority.
- ii.* Status as a retired Bishop of this Diocese, with canonical residence in this Diocese.
- iii.* Such clergy as may be approved by each Convention.

**C.** The lay members shall consist of the Chancellor, the Secretary, the Treasurer, and the Registrar of this Diocese, if they be laypersons, one lay delegate from each Congregation, with one additional lay delegate for each 100 baptized members therein for the first 500 baptized members, and with one additional lay delegate for each additional 200 baptized members therein, as listed in the latest Parochial Report. The privilege to vote shall be denied any Congregation if any of the following occur, unless exonerated by the Convention:

- i.* Failure to file a Parochial Report in accordance with the Canons.
- ii.* Failure to employ a member of the clergy as its Minister for the space of one calendar year in accordance with the Canons.
- iii.* Failure to pay its Diocesan Fair Share in accordance with the Canons.
- iv.* Failure to pay the Church Pension Fund premiums for all prior years on or before the tenth day of January of the year in which the Convention is held.

**D.** Lay delegates to any Convention shall be elected in accordance with the Canons and shall be baptized adult communicants of the Church in good standing.

### **SECTION 3:** *Officers of Convention*

The Officers of any Convention shall be baptized adult communicants of the Church in good standing, and their duties shall be those normally appertaining to the respective offices unless otherwise stated, and shall be as follows:

- A. *President:*** The Bishop shall preside in any Convention or, in the Bishop's absence, the following order of succession shall prevail: the Bishop Coadjutor, a Bishop Suffragan, President of the Standing Committee, a member of the Convention designated by the Bishop, or a member elected by the Convention.
- B. *Secretary:*** To be elected at each Annual Convention and to remain in office until a successor is elected.

**C. Treasurer:** To be elected at each Annual Convention and to remain in office until a successor is elected.

**D. Chancellor:** To be appointed by the Bishop and to remain in office until a successor is appointed. The Chancellor, and any Vice-Chancellor or Vice-Chancellors appointed by the Chancellor, shall be learned in the law and resident within this Diocese. They shall function as legal advisors to the Bishop.

**E. Registrar:** To be elected at each Annual Convention and to remain in office until a successor is elected. The Registrar shall be the custodian of the Archives of all Consecrations and Ordinations of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons of the Diocese, and the Registrar's certificate thereof shall be the authentic evidence of the fact of such Consecration or Ordination.

#### **SECTION 4: *Quorum***

Twenty clerical delegates together with at least one lay delegate from each of twenty Parishes shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business, except that a smaller number may adjourn from time to time.

#### **SECTION 5: *Voting***

All voting shall be by members of any Convention as individuals, except that ten members may require a vote by Orders on any question, and a majority of the votes in each Order taken separately shall be necessary for passage. In all elections, when a vote by Orders is requested, balloting shall be in the following manner: there shall be only one ballot for other than the election of Bishops, and that candidate, or those candidates, who shall receive a plurality in both the clerical and lay Orders, shall be declared elected. If the number of persons to be elected exceeds the number of candidates who have a plurality in both Orders, the following procedure shall be used: the percentage of the total clerical vote and of the total lay vote which each candidate receives shall be calculated; for each candidate, those two percentage figures shall be added together and then divided by two to give the combined percentage; that candidate, or those candidates, with the highest percentage shall be declared elected.

#### **SECTION 6: *Offerings***

The offering at any Convention, if any, shall be paid over to the Treasurer of the Diocese to be credited to the account announced by the Bishop in advance of the Collection thereof.

### **ARTICLE IV. ELECTION OF BISHOP**

The election of Bishop in this Diocese shall be made in the following manner: after nomination in any Convention, the clergy and lay delegates shall ballot separately, and the required majority in each Order on the same ballot shall be necessary to a choice. If two-thirds of the members of an Order entitled to vote be present at Convention, a majority vote determines the choice of such

Order; if less than two-thirds of the members of an Order entitled to vote are present at Convention, the vote of two-thirds of such Order shall be necessary to determine the choice of such Order.

## **ARTICLE V: STANDING COMMITTEE**

### **SECTION 1. *Members***

The Annual Convention shall elect a Standing Committee which shall consist of twelve members: six clergy persons, no more than two of whom may be deacons, and six laypersons. Each member so elected shall serve a term of three years and may stand for re-election for one successive term. After serving for a period of six years, a member shall not be eligible for re-election until the lapse of one year from the completion of the second term. No member of the Standing Committee shall be eligible to serve concurrently on the Disciplinary Board or the Finance Committee.

### **SECTION 2. *Officers***

The Standing Committee shall meet within one week after the adjournment of the Annual Convention and shall choose a President and a Secretary from among its members. Immediate notice of the selections shall be given to the Bishop. The Secretary shall keep a record of the proceedings of the Committee, and all books and papers in the Committee's hands relative to the Church shall be subject to the examination of the Bishop and of any Convention.

### **SECTION 3. *Duties and Powers***

The Standing Committee shall:

- A.** Be the Ecclesiastical Authority of the Diocese when there is no Bishop or Bishop Coadjutor or when both are absent from the Diocese or are incapable of acting.
- B.** Fill all vacancies that may occur during the recess of Annual Convention in its own body and in any Committee appointed to sit during the recess of Annual Convention.
- C.** Fill all vacancies in such Diocesan offices as are held by annual election, unless otherwise provided for.
- D.** Perform such other duties as are directed by any Convention or defined by Canon.
- E.** Exercise and enjoy all the power, authority, and duties conferred upon Standing Committees by the Constitution and Canons of this Church as modified by amendment from time to time.

## **ARTICLE VI: DEPUTIES TO GENERAL CONVENTION**

At the Annual Convention at least twelve months prior to the next session of the General Convention, eight members of the clergy and eight laypersons shall be elected as deputies and alternates to represent this Diocese in said Convention. The members of the clergy shall be presbyters or deacons, canonically resident within this Diocese, and the laypersons shall be baptized adult communicants of the Church in good standing, resident within this Diocese. The residence requirement shall apply both at the time of election and of General Convention. The four in each Order receiving the highest number of votes shall be the deputies. Alternates shall be designated as deputies as needed, in the order of votes received.

## **ARTICLE VII: ADMISSION OF CONGREGATIONS**

A Congregation may be admitted into union with this Diocese on motion, and by a vote of the majority of the members of an Annual Convention, provided that:

- A.** It has complied with the applicable policies and procedures established by the Bishop and Standing Committee;
- B.** It has submitted its proposed Charter or Articles under which it proposes to function, to the Bishop and Standing Committee, and has secured their approval of the Charter and By-laws, at least thirty (30) days prior to the meeting of Annual Convention; and
- C.** It accedes to the Constitution, Canons, Doctrine, Discipline, and Worship of The Episcopal Church and to the Constitution and Canons of this Diocese.

## **ARTICLE VIII: CANONS**

Any Convention may enact, amend, or repeal Canons upon such matters as it may deem proper, which shall not be inconsistent with the provisions of this Constitution, or with the Constitution and Canons of the General Convention.

## **ARTICLE IX: AMENDMENT**

This Constitution, or any part thereof, may not be altered, amended, or revised unless the same shall be first proposed at one Annual Convention and be approved by a majority of each Order, and lie over to the next Annual Convention and again be approved by a majority of each Order. Amendments to the Charter or Articles shall be subject to the same regulations as are prescribed in the case of an original Charter or Articles.