

# The (DRAFT) Canons of the Episcopal Diocese of the Susquehanna

**N.B.** In all cases, the national Constitution & Canons of the General Convention, as amended from time to time, apply to this Diocese and supersede these Canons, especially with regard to matters on which these Canons are silent.

## **TITLE I: The Diocese**

### **Canon 1. Conventions**

#### **Section 1. Membership in Convention**

##### **Subsection (a). Clergy Entitled to Seats**

Not less than one week before the meeting of every Convention of this Diocese, the Bishop shall deliver to the Secretary a list of all the clergy canonically resident in the Diocese, entitled to seats in the Convention, with the names of their respective cures, parishes, stations, or places of residence. This list shall determine the right of any member of the Clergy to a seat, subject, however, to correction by the Convention in accordance with the Constitution and Canons.

##### **Subsection (b). Lay Delegates**

Paragraph (i). Each Parish and each Mission shall elect one Lay Delegates to the Convention. Additional Lay Delegates may be elected based on Average Weekly Engagement as defined by and reported in the most recent Parochial Report. Each Parish and each Mission shall elect Lay Alternates equal in number to the Lay Delegates to which they are entitled.

#### **Average Weekly Engagement** *(additional delegates)*

50 - 100	1 (one) Lay Delegate
101-150	2 (two) Lay Delegates
151-200	3 (three) Lay Delegates
200+	4 (four) Lay Delegates

Paragraph (ii.) Average Weekly Engagement includes “Average Sunday Attendance” In-person and “Average Weekday Attendance In-Person” plus either “Average Sunday Attendance Online” and “Average Weekday Attendance Online” or “Average Number of Unique non-live views” as reported in the most recent Parochial Report.

Paragraph (iii). Each Parish or Mission may elect its Lay Delegates at its annual congregational meeting, at a special congregational meeting or by its Vestry, as specified by parish bylaws.

Paragraph (iv). Lay Delegates to the Convention shall be certified in writing by the Secretary or Clerk of the Vestry. The Certificate shall be forwarded to the Secretary of the Convention not later than four months prior to Convention. If during the year, and prior to Convention, there shall be any change in elected Lay Delegates, prompt notification shall be given to the Bishop's Office.

Paragraph (v). The Lay Delegation shall report to the Vestry or Executive Committee the actions of each Convention and discuss how those actions will be implemented in the Parish or Mission. The report of the lay delegation may be presented in writing or orally, and shall be presented at a meeting of the Vestry.

## **Section 2. Call of the Convention**

Not fewer than forty-five (45) days' notice of each meeting of the Convention shall be given by the Secretary to every member of the Clergy of the Diocese, and to every Parish and Mission in union with the Church in this Diocese.

## **Section 3. Regular Committees of Convention**

**Subsection (a).** The Regular Committees of convention include: Claims of Clergy and Lay Delegates to Seats in the Convention, Constitution and Canons, Courtesy Resolutions, Resolutions, and Nominations.

- (i) Each committee shall consist of two to six persons: clergy canonically resident in the diocese and lay members in good standing in this diocese.
- (ii) Each committee shall have at least one clergy member and one lay member.
- (iii) Members shall continue in office until their successors are appointed. Appointments may be from one to three years with provision for annual rotation of a portion of the committee membership.

**Subsection (b).** The regular Committees may be appointed by the Bishop Diocesan at any time between meetings of the Convention. Their duties and responsibilities shall be as follows:

Paragraph (i). The Committee on Claims of Clergy and Lay Deputies to Seats in the Convention

- A. The committee shall receive from the Secretary any reports of disputed or uncertain claims to seats in the Convention.

B. The Committee shall meet promptly and consider the matters laid before it, and shall make a recommendation to the President of Convention, who shall rule on the matter.

Paragraph (ii). The Committee on Constitution and Canons

A. The Committee on Constitution and Canons shall receive from the Secretary all proposed changes in the Constitution and Canons of the Diocese and shall consider the same.

B. In every case it shall take care that the material in its report be in proper canonical form and not inconsistent with the National Constitution and Canons. It may approve or disapprove the form or substance of a resolution, or both of them, according to its own judgment. The report of this Committee in both form and substance shall take precedence over the original resolution submitted to it.

C. The Committee shall submit its report to the Convention on the proposed changes with approval, with disapproval, with amendments, or without comment.

D. The Committee shall annually review the Constitution and Canons of the Diocese in consultation with the Bishop and make any necessary recommendations to the annual Diocesan Convention

Paragraph (iii). The Committee on Resolutions

A. There shall be a Committee on Resolutions, to which all resolutions shall be referred unless referred by the President of the Convention to another Committee.

B. All resolutions shall be submitted in writing at least two months before Annual Convention.

C. This Committee shall report to the Annual Convention all resolutions received, together with its recommendations as to form and substance, and shall have the power to initiate substitute resolutions.

Paragraph (iv). The Committee on Nominations

A. Not later than four (4) months before each annual Convention, the Committee on Nominations shall notify all clergy canonically resident in the Diocese, and every Parish and Mission, of the offices to be filled by election at the Convention and request that names and addresses of candidates to be nominated for such offices be submitted to the Committee.

- B. Each name shall be accompanied by a brief biography and a statement that the individual so submitted to the Committee has consented and is willing to serve if elected.
- C. Not later than three (3) months before the Convention, the Committee shall prepare and distribute a list of nominees who are in the consideration of the Committee, well qualified for such offices.
- D. In determining nominees for Diocesan Council and Standing Committee, the Committee shall nominate persons who represent diverse geographical areas of the Diocese.
- E. Anyone wishing to make an additional nomination shall submit the name of such nominee, together with a biographical sketch and the signatures of at least ten (10) voting members of convention, to the Chair of the Nominating Committee no later than two (2) months before Convention.
- F. The list of nominees presented by the Committee to the Convention shall include the names of the Parishes or Missions to which the respective nominees belong, and the number of terms, if any, during which each of them has held the office for which nominated.
- G. The Committee shall, not later than 30 days before the Convention, send a copy of the list of nominees to all clergy canonically resident in the Diocese and to every Parish and Mission.

#### **Section 4. The Officers of the Convention**

**Subsection (a).** The Officers of the Convention shall consist of a President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Chancellor.

**Subsection (b). President**

Paragraph (i). The Bishop Diocesan, if there is one, shall be President and preside at meetings of the Diocesan Convention. [see Const. IV.A]

Paragraph (ii). If there is no Bishop Diocesan, then the person to preside at the Convention is chosen in accordance with the provisions in the Diocesan Constitution.

**Subsection (c). Secretary**

Paragraph (i). Upon nomination by the President of Convention, each annual convention shall elect a member of the clergy or a lay person to be Secretary of the Convention and to serve until a successor is elected. Upon assuming office, the Secretary is granted seat and voice in the Convention.

Paragraph (ii). It shall be the duty of the Secretary to take minutes of the proceedings of all Conventions, to preserve the Journals and Records, to attest the public acts of the body, and faithfully to deliver into the hands of the successor all books and papers relative to the concerns of the Diocese, which may be in his or her possession.

Paragraph (iii). The Secretary shall cause one copy of every printed Journal to be certified, which shall be deposited as the official record of such Convention and shall be preserved as such.

Paragraph (iv). In the event of a mid-term vacancy in this office, the President of Convention shall appoint a successor with the advice and consent of the Diocesan Council.

#### **Subsection (d). Treasurer**

Paragraph (i). Upon nomination by the President of Convention, each annual convention shall elect a member of the clergy or a lay person to be Treasurer of the Diocese and to serve until a successor is elected. Upon assuming office, the Treasurer is granted seat and voice in the Convention.

Paragraph (ii). The Treasurer shall be the treasurer of the Diocese, reporting to the Diocesan Council and shall perform such duties as may be directed by the Bishop, Diocesan Council, and the Convention.

Paragraph (iii). The Treasurer shall keep such accounts as may be required, which shall be audited annually, and make such periodic reports as may be deemed necessary by the Bishop, Diocesan Council, and the Convention.

Paragraph (iv). The Treasurer shall be required to give such bond or security as may from time to time be required and prescribed.

Paragraph (v). In the event of a mid-term vacancy in this office, the President of Convention shall appoint a successor with the advice and consent of the Diocesan Council.

#### **Subsection (e). Chancellor**

Paragraph (i). The Bishop, with the advice and consent of the Diocesan Council, may appoint a person licensed to practice law in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania as Chancellor of the Diocese. The Chancellor, with the advice and consent of the Bishop, may appoint those Vice-Chancellors necessary to assist in the work assigned to that office.

Paragraph (ii). The Chancellor shall be the legal adviser to the Bishop, and with the permission of the Bishop, the Diocese, the Diocesan Council, the Standing Committee, and all special committees appointed by the Convention, whenever they may require legal advice in questions affecting the interest of the Diocese.

Paragraph (iii). The Chancellor, if a member of the clergy, must be canonically resident in the Diocese and, if a member of the laity, must be an adult communicant in good standing in the Diocese.

## **Section 5. Elections**

### **Subsection (a). Voting in Elections**

Paragraph (i). Elections shall be by a majority vote of the valid votes cast for each office. A person shall be considered to have obtained a majority vote when they have received more than 50% of the valid ballots cast for that office. For any election, when requested by any ten (10) members of convention, a vote by orders shall be held. Elections shall be determined by a majority vote, as defined by this canon, in each order.

Paragraph (ii). 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.

Paragraph (iii). Each delegate shall have one vote on each ballot for each office or position to be filled; provided that when multiple seats for the same office are to be elected on the same ballot, each delegate may cast only a single vote for each of a number of candidates up to the number of seats being filled.

**Subsection (b).** When elections are for different terms of office, the nominee first elected shall be the one elected for the longest term; or if two or more are elected on the same ballot, the candidates receiving the highest number of votes shall be the one or ones elected for the longest term.

**Subsection (c).** Every person appointed or elected to office shall assume office upon the close of Convention.

## **Section 6. Voting on Matters Other Than Elections**

All voting on matters other than elections shall be by all delegates of any Convention unless a vote by orders is required, except that ten (10) 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.

## **Canon 2. Constitutional Committees**

### **Section 1. The Standing Committee**

**Subsection (a).** The Standing Committee shall consist of twelve (12) elected members: 6 clergy members [no more than two of whom may be deacons] and 6 lay members.

**Subsection (b).** Each annual Convention shall elect two clergy in Good Standing and two Lay Persons in Good Standing to serve a term of three years on the Standing Committee.

**Subsection (c).** No one so elected shall be eligible for re-election after having served two consecutive terms until after the expiration of one year.

**Section (d).** The Standing Committee shall be the Ecclesiastical Authority of the Diocese when there is no Bishop or Bishop Coadjutor or when both are incapable of acting, and shall fulfill all duties prescribed for Standing Committees in the General Constitution and Canons and in the Constitution of this Diocese and in these Canons.

**Subsection (e).** Within thirty (30) days following the annual Diocesan Convention, the Standing Committee shall elect from their own body a President of the Standing Committee and shall also elect from their body a Secretary, each of whom shall serve a term of one year and may serve successive terms.

### **Section 2. The Diocesan Council**

#### **Subsection (a). Purpose of the Diocesan Council**

Paragraph (i). The Diocesan Council shall be the executive agency of the Convention of the Diocese between meetings of the Convention, and shall be responsible to the Convention.

Paragraph (ii). The Diocesan Council shall administer and advance the work of the Church in this Diocese, subject to the provisions of the Constitution and Canons of this Diocese.

Paragraph (iii). As the executive agency of the Convention of the Diocese, the Diocesan Council may inaugurate, revise, and enact policies that are not inconsistent with the Constitution and Canons of the Diocese.

Paragraph (iv). The Diocesan Council shall constitute the Board of Directors of that Pennsylvania non-profit corporation known as the Diocese of the Susquehanna.

Paragraph (v). The powers and duties of the said corporation shall be as set forth in its Articles of Incorporation. The Diocesan Council shall have power to make such by-laws and rules as may from time

to time be deemed necessary or expedient for the governance of said corporations; provided, always, that the said by-laws and rules, or any of them be not repugnant to the constitution and laws of the United States, to the constitution and laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, to the Constitution and Canons of The Episcopal Church, and to the Constitution and Canons of the Diocese of the Susquehanna.

#### **Subsection (b). Membership of the Diocesan Council**

Paragraph (i). The Diocesan Council shall consist of 12 members. The Bishop Diocesan of the Diocese shall be president of the Diocesan Council. If there be such, the Bishop Coadjutor, the Bishop Suffragan, and the Assistant Bishop, shall have seat, voice, and vote.

Paragraph (ii). The Secretary, the Treasurer, and the Chancellor shall be *ex-officio* members of the Diocesan Council with seat and voice.

Paragraph (iii). The Convention shall elect four persons, two clerical and two lay, to the Diocesan Council annually to serve for a term of three years. No one so elected shall be eligible for re-election after having served two consecutive terms until after the expiration of one year.

#### **Subsection (c). Duties of the Diocesan Council**

Paragraph (i). The Diocesan Council shall envision and identify the mission priorities of the diocese and shall annually communicate to the Convention for its consideration and approval of those priorities, together with programs and services to implement this strategy, setting these programs and services in an order of a priority and including criteria and standards for evaluating same.

Paragraph (ii). The Diocesan Council, with the advice and counsel of the Finance Committee, Treasurer, and CFO, shall prepare and submit annually to the Convention for its consideration and approval, subject to subsection (c) herein, a proposed operating budget for all programs and services included in the proposed mission priorities, and the assessments and acceptances of the parishes and missions. The Council shall propose minimum salaries and cost of living increases for the grading system established by Convention. This provision does not apply to positions filled by deacons, diocesan interns, lay readers, or non-stipendiary clergy.

Paragraph (iii). At the first meeting of the Diocesan Council in each fiscal year, the aforementioned proposed operating budget shall be finalized and approved, in accordance with the strategy and priorities adopted by the Convention, which operating budget shall not be greater than the financial resources available for these purposes.

When unforeseen circumstances prevent Diocesan Council from convening in person, the budget may be finalized and approved via telephone conference call or teleconference link of the members or any other method chosen by Diocesan Council in accordance with its bylaws promulgated under subsection (a)(v).

Paragraph (iv). The Diocesan Council shall have the powers and duties, either in its own name, or the name of the Diocese of the Susquehanna, or as trustee of any of these entities, to buy and sell real estate



(working with the Standing Committee), securities and other investments, to receive, hold, administer, and properly dispose of all property, real and personal, which may be given, granted, conveyed, devised, bequeathed, or transferred to the Diocese (working with The Standing Committee as required by National Canons), including but not limited to the Episcopal Endowment Fund and the Episcopal Diocesan Fund, or to the Diocese of the Susquehanna, either in its own name or in trust, for any religious, charitable, or educational use or purpose connected with the Diocese or any portion of the Diocese, or for the aid, benefit, or advancement of any parish, congregation, or religious, charitable, or educational association of Episcopalians in the Diocese.

Paragraph (v). Upon approval of the proposed operating budget by the Convention, notice shall be sent to the Rector or Priest in Charge and Treasurer of each Parish and Mission of the assessment or fair share due and payable by the respective Parish or Mission, which shall be payable in monthly installments to the Financial Staff of the Diocese commencing January of the fiscal year to which said budget is applicable.

Notice of the right of appeal from the amount of the assessment or fair share shall be printed in the notices sent to the Parishes and Missions. All requests for reduction or for exoneration shall be submitted to the Finance Committee, who shall act upon same in a timely fashion. At least one month before the close of the diocesan fiscal year and one month before any Special Convention, Diocesan Council shall notify all Parishes and Missions which may have failed to meet their assessments or fair share in full, stating the amount still due.

#### **Subsection (d). Committees of Council**

Paragraph (i). The Diocesan Council shall have the power to initiate and appoint such committees as are necessary to fulfill the diocesan strategy and policies.

Paragraph (ii). Notwithstanding any other committees it may establish, the Diocesan Council shall be required to establish a Finance Committee.

##### **A. Membership of the Finance Committee**

The Finance Committee shall consist of the Treasurer, CFO, the Chancellor, two members appointed by the Bishop, and two members appointed by the Diocesan Council. Members of the Committee need not be members of the Diocesan Council. Members appointed shall be persons with expertise in fiscal or fiduciary affairs. Such committee members shall serve at the pleasure of the Diocesan Council.

##### **B. Powers and Duties of the Finance Committee**

The Finance Committee shall monitor the financial affairs of the Diocese; shall provide for an annual audit of the Diocese; and shall recommend to the Diocesan Council the proper and prudent administration of such real or personal property as may have been granted to the corporation known as the Episcopal Diocese of the Susquehanna, or any real or personal

property designated for the use of the Episcopal Church in this Diocese. Such recommendations shall include recommendations for the approval of all investments or change in investments in respect of which the Diocesan Council, the Diocese, or the corporation known as the Episcopal Diocese of the Susquehanna has any authority or responsibility, and any matters relating to loans from loan funds under the control and supervision of the Diocese. To carry out its purpose, the Finance Committee shall establish its own rules, keep a record of its meetings, and make a report at each meeting of the Diocesan Council.

Paragraph (iii). All Committees established by Council pursuant to this Canon, including but not limited to the Finance Committee, shall report to Council in such ways as Council shall determine. Any reports and recommendations of these Committees shall be subject to Council's review and approval.

#### **Subsection (e). Reports**

At the opening of each annual Convention, the Diocesan Council shall report in full to the Convention, including a report stating in detail the fiscal condition of the Diocese.

### **Canon 3. Diocesan Staff**

**Section 1.** No part-time or full-time employee or staff person of the Diocese shall be eligible for election to or to serve as a member of the Standing Committee, Diocesan Council, a Constitutional Committee, or the Commission on Ministry.

**Section 2.** Nothing in this Canon shall preclude an employee or staff person of the Diocese from election to, or serving as, a Deputy to General Convention.

### **Canon 4. The Cathedral**

#### **Section 1. Definition**

There shall be two Cathedrals for the diocese: Nativity Cathedral, Bethlehem and St. Stephen's Cathedral, Harrisburg. The Cathedrals are for the use of the clergy and laity of the Diocese, are public civic and religious institutions for the common good of the local and regional community, and are also Houses of Prayer for all people who may resort thereto for worship.

**Section 2. Mission:** A Cathedral's mission is to:

**a. Serve the Diocese**

- i. Provide the seat of the Bishop Diocesan.
- ii. Function as a center for diocesan work and worship
- iii. Promote and facilitate partnerships between parishes within the Diocese and support the mission of diocesan parishes when appropriate.
- iv. Offer cathedral space for events of parishes of the Diocese, at the Dean's discretion.
- v. Provide a prominent example of Episcopal worship, preaching, education, social service, and witness to the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the greater community and region.

**b. Serve as a Parish**

Offer regular worship, administer the Sacraments, offer pastoral care, and provide Christian education and fellowship for a local community of Christians while organized as a parish in accordance with the Constitution and Canons of the Diocese.

**c. Serve the Greater Community and Region in a Civic Role**

- i. Provide public gathering spaces for civic discourse, social justice advocacy, community celebrations, and educational endeavors.
- ii. Provide space for prayer, discernment, planning, and communal response during times of national or local crises.
- iii. Nurture and develop relationships and partnerships with local groups and organizations whose mission aligns with that of The Episcopal Church.

**Section 3. Leadership**

**a. Dean:** The Rector of each cathedral parish shall have the title Dean of the Cathedral.

- i. The Dean shall administer the Cathedral in accordance with the Canons of this diocese and those of The Episcopal Church regarding the life, rights, and responsibilities of Rectors of parishes.
- ii. The Dean shall work diligently to build and nurture relationships with community stakeholders that promote the mission of Christ's One, Holy, and Apostolic Church and shall strive to be a public presence in the local community, offering a religious and moral voice and perspective to issues of public concern.

**b. Bishop Diocesan:** The Bishop Diocesan shall take such part in religious services as the Bishop Diocesan deems appropriate and shall have the use of the cathedral pulpits and the privilege to celebrate the Holy Communion there, giving due notice to the Dean.

- c. **Honorary Canons:** Assistant ministers on the staff of a Cathedral may, at the discretion of the Dean and with the consent of the Bishop, be designated as Canons of the Cathedrals. The Bishop may appoint and remove honorary canons, subject to ratification by a majority vote of the Cathedral Chapter at a meeting called for this purpose.
- d. **Parish Vestry:** Each Cathedral shall have and elect its own Vestry in accordance with the Constitution and Canons of the Diocese and those of The Episcopal Church.
- e. **Cathedral Chapter:** There shall be one Cathedral Chapter to advise and assist the Cathedrals of the Diocese in carrying out their mission.
  - i. The Cathedral Chapter shall consist of the Bishop Diocesan or other appointee, the Dean of each cathedral, the Wardens of each cathedral, one representative appointed by the Vestry each Cathedral, and three representatives appointed by the Bishop. The Bishop shall designate one person of the body to serve as Clerk.
  - ii. Meetings of the Chapter may be called by the Bishop or by a Cathedral Dean. Notice of the meeting shall be provided at least fourteen (14) days in advance, and shall include an agenda of matters to be discussed at the meeting. The Bishop and Deans may invite additional people to any meeting of the Chapter to provide advice, guidance, and insight, but invited guests shall not have a vote.

## **Canon 5. Convocations**

To provide for effective coordination of the work of the Church, the Diocese shall be divided into four regions: Northwest, Northeast, Southwest, Southeast. Such regions may be further subdivided into convocations.

The purpose of such regions shall be to plan and work together on local and regional mission efforts, to share information and resources within the Convocation, and to participate in determining and carrying out the Convention mission priorities. Convocations will meet at least twice a year, in part, to receive updates from the Diocesan staff, share news from representative parishes, and take any action necessary for the good of the Convocation.

## **Canon 6. Deputies to Regional Organizations**

Deputies to the Provincial Synod or any successor regional organization shall be chosen by the Bishop, and shall serve at the Bishop's pleasure, unless the Annual Convention adopts another rule.

## **Canon 7. Disclosure of Conflicts of Interest**

Officers of the Diocese and of its committees and commissions, and Diocesan staff, shall complete and file with the Diocese, at the commencement of their service and thereafter not less often than annually, a conflicts of interest disclosure statement on a form provided by the Diocese.

## **TITLE II: Congregations and Parishes**

### **Canon 1. Congregations and Parishes**

**Section 1.** All congregations or parishes in this Diocese shall be governed by the Constitution and Canons of the General Convention of The Episcopal Church and of this Diocese.

#### **Section 2. A Parish of this Diocese shall:**

**Subsection (a).** Be incorporated in accordance with the laws of Pennsylvania.

**Subsection (b).** Call a Rector and financially support said Rector to the extent the Parish is served by such Rector, in accordance with these Canons.

**Subsection (c).** Elect and assemble a Vestry in accordance with these Canons.

#### **Section 3. Responsibilities of Parish Vestry**

**Subsection (a).** The Vestry in every parish shall cooperate with the Rector in promoting the spiritual welfare of the parish and shall aid the Rector in the initiation, conduct, and development of the mission of the Church both within and outside the parish.

**Subsection (b).** The Vestry shall supervise the care and maintenance of the buildings, furnishings, and other properties of the parish, providing adequate insurance thereon.

**Subsection (c).** The Vestry shall be responsible for the proper care of the finances of the parish, including any trust funds, subject to the General Canons of the Church and this Diocese and the appropriate laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

**Subsection (d).** Each Vestry meeting shall be open to members of the congregation, except with respect to confidential personnel, legal, or pastoral matters. The Vestry may, upon

majority vote of the members where a quorum is present, designate the relevant portion of the meeting as confidential and closed.

## **Canon 2. Call of a Priest**

A call to a priest in the event of a vacancy in a clerical position shall be made in the form of a written Letter of Agreement, which shall include all items required by the Bishop Diocesan, including a clause that the Letter of Agreement may be revised by mutual agreement. The Letter of Agreement and any subsequent revisions shall be submitted to the Bishop Diocesan for approval.

## **Canon 3. Call of a Deacon**

A deacon is appointed to serve in a parish at the pleasure of the Bishop Diocesan and in consultation with the Rector or Priest in Charge (if there be one) in the parish. The Deacon's ministry is developed in conversation with the Bishop and Rector or Priest in Charge and includes a Letter of Agreement.

## **Canon 4. Governance of Parishes**

### **Version A**

**Section 1:** This canon governs the adoption of bylaws for all Parishes in the Diocese. As a foundational matter, all by-laws must comply with the Constitution and Canons of The Episcopal Church, the Diocesan canons, and the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

**Section 2:** Bylaws shall be amended by the Vestry in the manner set forth in a Parish's existing bylaws.

**Section 3:** All Parishes shall be required to review their bylaws and submit a copy of same to the Bishop triennially.

**Section 4:** Upon review, all Parish bylaws shall have the following provisions included. While each Parish's bylaws may include other provisions, the following provisions shall be incorporated and adopted at the time that a Parish's bylaws are reviewed under Section 2, *infra*.

**Section 5:** In the interim and until their triennial review, all Parishes shall operate under the bylaws existing as of January 1, 2026.

### **Subsection (a). Annual Parish Meeting**

1. In every Parish, the Annual Parish Meeting shall be held in the first quarter of the calendar year at a time and place designated by the Vestry. Public notice of the Annual Meeting shall be given at all the services on the two preceding weekends.
2. The purpose of this Annual Meeting shall be to elect members to the Vestry; receive reports from the Vestry, parish officers, and organizations, including any reports about the budget approved by the Vestry for the new year; and to transact such other business as may properly come before it.
3. At the Annual Meeting, a report of the Parish finances shall be given. This report shall include, but not be limited to: 1) a report of the finances of the preceding year; 2) reports of all assets and liabilities and all income and expenditures of any subsidiary or related organization or entity, including but not limited to all trusts, endowments or other accounts; and 3 ) a budget for the year in which the Annual Meeting is held.
4. The Annual Parish Meeting shall be presided over by the Rector or Priest-in-Charge, or if the office be vacant, or if the Rector or Priest-in-Charge be absent, by the Senior Warden.
5. Lay Members in good standing of the Parish who are physically present, who are at least 16 years of age and who meet all other qualifications set by the Parish's bylaws, shall be entitled to vote at all Parish Meetings. A quorum for the transaction of business in the Annual Parish Meeting shall consist of 25% of the persons entitled to vote if they were present or 25 persons entitled to vote, whichever is less.
6. Each Parish shall have a Vestry consisting of not fewer than five nor more than twelve Lay Members at least 18 years of age in good standing elected at the annual Parish Meeting. The number of persons to serve on the Vestry of the Parish shall be set by resolution of the Annual Parish Meeting. A change in number may be effected by the same procedure.
7. Except for the eligible age for voting at a Parish Meeting, the qualifications of persons to serve on the Vestry shall be the same as the qualifications to vote at the Annual Parish Meeting as set out above, except that the person to be elected need not be present at the Meeting.
8. No cleric or member of a cleric's family shall be eligible for election as a member of the Vestry in the parish where the cleric is employed. No employee of the Parish or member of the employee's family shall be eligible for election to Vestry. No more than one member of a family may serve on Vestry at the same time without prior notice to and approval of the Bishop. A Parish may apply by letter to the Bishop for a waiver of the provisions of this paragraph 8, stating the specific provision for which it wishes a waiver and the reasons for the waiver. The Bishop shall provide a written response to the Parish. If the Bishop approves the waiver, the

provisions of this paragraph 8 shall be considered waived to the extent and for the period that the Bishop has approved the waiver as of the date of the written response.

9. In each Parish the Vestry may by resolution designate the manner in which nominations to the Vestry are to be received. The Nominating Committee shall publish to the parish two weeks prior to the Annual Parish Meeting a ballot with sufficient qualified nominees to fill the vacancies on the Vestry for the upcoming year.
10. Additional nominations may be made from the floor of the Annual Parish Meeting. The nominator shall first obtain the consent of the nominee. Any question of the nominee's qualification to serve shall be resolved by the Rector or Priest-in-Charge prior to the election of Vestry members. In the absence of a Rector or Priest-in-Charge, the Senior Warden shall have the responsibility for determining the qualifications of any person nominated from the floor.
11. Each Annual Parish Meeting shall elect persons to serve on the Vestry replacing those members whose term in office has ended.
12. The length of one term of office for members of the Vestry shall be determined by each individual Parish's bylaws.

#### **Subsection (b). Special Parish Meetings**

1. A Special Parish Meeting may be held at any time in the manner set forth in the Parish's bylaws, and proper notice required by the Parish's bylaws shall be provided along with appropriate notice of business to be considered. .
2. The Rector (or Priest in Charge) shall work with lay leadership to determine the agenda for the meeting and may elect to invite the Bishop's counsel and participation, as needed. The Bishop may preside over the meeting. If there is no Rector or Priest in Charge, the Ecclesiastical Authority shall confer with the lay leadership and determine the presidency of the meeting. If the Bishop or Ecclesiastical Authority does not preside, the Rector or Priest-in-Charge shall preside. If there is no Rector or Priest-in-Charge, the Ecclesiastical Authority may request the Senior Warden to preside.

#### **Subsection (c). Vestries**

1. Duties of the Vestry.
  - a. In accordance with the Constitutions and Canons of The Episcopal Church and of this Diocese, the Vestry shall act as the agent and legal representative of the Parish in all matters concerning its corporate property and the relations of the Parish to its clergy and laity with the Rector to develop and implement a program of spiritual nurture and mission to the glory of God. As



such, the Vestry shall manage and be responsible for the Parish's property and material affairs; shall further the temporal and spiritual welfare of the Parish; shall provide a suitable place of worship and see that it is provided with all things necessary to the worship of Almighty God; shall select and call a Rector and provide for the remuneration of the Rector; and shall comply with all other requirements of this Canon.

- b. As to civil matters, the Vestry shall be the corporate Board of Directors. The Rector or Priest-in-Charge shall be a member of and preside over the Vestry and is the President of the corporation. If there is no Rector or Priest-in-Charge then the Senior Warden shall be the President of the Corporation.
- c. In consultation with the Rector or Priest-in-Charge, all staff positions are created and funded by the Vestry. Personnel filling those positions are hired by and serve at the discretion of the Rector or Priest-in-Charge and are accountable to the Rector or Priest-in-Charge. The Rector or Priest-in-Charge may work collaboratively with a nominating or personnel committee in the selection of personnel.
- d. A financial report shall be given at each regular meeting of the Vestry, which shall include current income and expenditures. Following approval, the report shall be made available to members of the congregation by publicly posting or otherwise.
- e. The Vestry may assume any other duties that are encompassed in a Parish's bylaws that are consistent with the law and the Constitution and Canons of this Diocese and the Church.

## 2. Officers of the Vestry and of the Parish

- a. The Lay Officers of a Parish shall consist of the Senior Warden, Junior Warden, Clerk, and Treasurer, who shall all be adult Lay Members in good standing of the Parish and at least 18 years of age. No cleric or family member of a cleric may serve as an Officer of the Parish in which the cleric is employed. No employee of the Parish or member of such employee's family may serve as an Officer of the Parish without prior notice to and approval of the Bishop. No family member of a Vestry member may serve as an Officer of the Parish without prior notice to and approval of the Bishop. A Parish may apply by letter to the Bishop for a waiver of the provisions of this subsection, stating the specific provision for which it seeks a waiver and the reasons for the waiver. The Bishop shall provide a written response to the Parish. If the Bishop approves the waiver, the provisions of this subparagraph shall be considered waived to the extent and for the period that the Bishop has approved the amendment as of the date of the written response.
- b. The manner of election and the duties of the Lay Officers shall be proscribed in each Parish's bylaws.

### 3. Meetings of the Vestry

- a. Regular meetings of the Vestry shall be held at least quarterly in the manner set forth in the Parish's bylaws.
- b. The Vestry shall not transact any business without the presence of the Rector or Priest-in-Charge of the Parish, or in the event that the office of Rector or Priest-in-Charge be vacant, without the presence of one of the Wardens. A quorum consisting of a majority of the elected members of the Vestry shall be present for the Vestry to transact business. No action affecting the rights of the Rector or Priest-in-Charge shall be taken at any meeting at which the Rector or Priest-in-Charge has not been given the opportunity to attend.
- c. Special Meetings of the Vestry may be called at any time in the manner set forth in the Parish's bylaws.

### 4. Indemnification

- a. The members of the Vestry shall be indemnified to the extent permitted by applicable law unless (i) said person has breached or failed to perform the duties of the office prescribed by these Canons, and (ii) the breach or failure to perform constitutes self-dealing, willful misconduct, or recklessness. The provisions of this section shall not apply to the responsibility or liability of said person pursuant to any criminal statute, or for the payment of taxes pursuant to local, state, or federal law.

## Section 2. Subordinate Entities

**Subsection (a).** If a Parish wholly owns any subordinate entity, whether or not that entity is separately incorporated, and the Parish pays staff to perform work for that entity, that subordinate entity shall have its own bylaws.

**Subsection (b).** All such bylaws and any amendments thereto shall first be submitted to the Bishop and Standing Committee for determination of any encumbrances and alienations, prior to submission to the Vestry for approval.

**Subsection (c).** Any existing bylaws for such entities that have not already been approved by the Bishop and the Standing Committee shall be submitted to the Bishop for review on a triennial basis.

**Version B**

Section 1. Annual Meeting. Every Parish shall have an Annual Meeting, for the purpose of electing Members of Vestry and Delegates and Alternate Delegates to Diocesan Convention, and for such other purposes as may be specified in the parish bylaws. The parish bylaws shall specify the method of setting the date of the Annual Meeting, the timing and manner of providing notice of the Annual Meeting, and the quorum for conducting business.

Section 2. Vestry. Every Parish shall have a Vestry consisting of no less than five members; the number of members of Vestry shall be specified by the parish bylaws. The term of office and eligibility for election and re-election shall be specified by the parish bylaws. The Rector, or another member selected by the Rector, shall preside at all meetings of the Vestry. The parish bylaws shall specify the frequency of regular vestry meetings, the procedure for calling and providing notice for special vestry meetings, and the manner of filling vacancies in the Vestry.

Section 3. Officers. Every Parish shall have a Senior Warden, Clerk, and Treasurer, and such other officers as the parish bylaws may specify. The Senior Warden shall be selected by the Rector; or, if the office of Rector is vacant, by majority vote of the Vestry. Other officers shall be elected or appointed in the manner specified by the parish bylaws.

Section 4. Corporate Matters. Every Parish shall be incorporated according to the laws of this Commonwealth. The corporate office of President shall be filled by the Rector; or, if the office of Rector is vacant, by the Senior Warden. The corporate offices of Secretary and Treasurer shall be filled by the Clerk and Treasurer, respectively.

Section 5. Senior Warden. Whenever a Parish has neither a Rector nor a Priest-in-Charge, the Senior Warden shall execute all of the duties and responsibilities assigned to the Rector (except those matters that require priestly ordination).

Section 6. Bylaws. Every Parish shall adopt bylaws that are consistent with the Constitution and Canons of the General Convention of the Episcopal Church, and of this diocese. Every Parish shall review its bylaws at least every five years. The diocese may publish suggested bylaws for parishes to consider.

#### **Canon 4. Alienation and Business Methods in Church Affairs.**

##### **Section 1. Real Estate**

**Subsection (a).** No Congregation shall acquire, or commit itself to acquire, by purchase, exchange, or otherwise, any real estate, without the consent of the Bishop and the Standing Committee.

**Subsection (b).**

Paragraph (i). No Congregation shall sell, give away, deliberately destroy, or otherwise alienate or encumber any real estate held by it or for its use, without the consent of the Bishop and the Standing Committee.

Paragraph (ii). Real property held or administered by the Diocese or by Institutions, Parishes or Congregations connected with it, shall be offered for sale, sold, or leased only on a non- discriminatory basis consistent with the applicable laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the United States of America, and with the General Canons of the Church.

**Subsection (c).** In case any Congregation shall be dissolved, it shall be the duty of the Bishop and the Standing Committee to take such action as may be necessary and proper to vest all of the Congregation's property, real and personal, in the corporation of this Diocese. The Council shall oversee the disposition of the property of closed churches in cooperation with the Bishop or the Bishop's appointee.

**Section 2. Indebtedness**

No mortgage, lien, or indebtedness shall be incurred by a Congregation without the approval of the Bishop and Finance Committee, in accordance with the policies and procedures as developed by the Finance Committee. If any Congregation learns that it is subject to an involuntary lien or judgment, the Rector and/or Senior Warden shall promptly notify the Ecclesiastical Authority.

**Section 3. Insurance**

All Congregations, institutions, and other entities belonging to this Diocese or any of the Congregations of this Diocese shall be adequately insured with property and liability insurance that shall conform to a minimum standard for insurance established by the Diocesan Council, and shall provide annually to the Diocese a certificate of insurance.

**Section 4. Business Methods**

In every parish, mission, congregation or institution connected with the Diocese, the Manual of Business Methods in Church Affairs, as issued from time to time by the Diocese, shall be used as a guide for the conduct of business.

**Section 5. Property is in Trust**

All property, real and personal, held by or for the benefit of any Congregation of this Diocese is held in trust for the Diocese and The Episcopal Church. The existence of this

trust, however, shall in no way limit the power and authority of the parish otherwise existing over such property so long as the parish remains a part of, and subject to, The Episcopal Church and its General and Diocesan Constitution and Canons.

## **Canon 5. Imperiled Parishes**

### **Section 1. Conditions for Declaration of Imperiled Status**

A parish may be declared to be an Imperiled Parish when one or more of the following conditions exist, as determined by the Bishop with the consent of the Standing Committee:

**Subsection (a).** The Parish has violated the Constitution or Canons of the Diocese or the General Constitution and Canons of the Church, including employing a member of the clergy under ecclesiastical censure or process, permitting a church edifice to be used for purposes incompatible with its consecration, or engaging in any persistent course inconsistent with the doctrine, discipline, or worship of the Church;

**Subsection (b).** The Parish has refused or neglected to elect a Vestry, or failed to provide representation at any Annual Convention of this Diocese, or refused or neglected to pay its Diocesan Fair Share or Assessment;

**Subsection (c).** The Parish has failed to call a Rector after a reasonable period of time and without having made reasonable efforts;

**Subsection (d).** The Parish has failed to comply with the provisions of the Canons of this Diocese or the General Canons of this Church pertaining to Business Methods in Church Affairs or the Church Pension Fund;

**Subsection (e).** The Parish has failed to make timely reports as required by the Canons with regard to “Parochial Reports”

**Subsection (f).** The Parish has repeatedly invaded the principal portion of endowment funds for regular operating expenses, evidenced substantial financial instability, or otherwise is not financially sustainable.

### **Section 2. Administration while Imperiled**

If the conditions set forth in Section 1 shall persist for more than one year, or if conditions warrant immediate action, the Bishop, with advice and consent of the Standing Committee,

may require the application of one or more of the following measures to restore health to the Parish:

Paragraph (a). Appointment, by the Bishop, of three (3) to five (5) persons, some or all of whom may be adult communicants of the Parish to govern the affairs of the Parish as the Vestry, replacing the current Vestry, notwithstanding any other provisions for such governance or the election of a Vestry in the Canons of this Diocese.

Paragraph (b). Designation of the Rector as Vicar.

Paragraph (c). Conveyance of title of all property to the Diocese, through its Diocesan Council, who shall hold the same while these conditions exist.

### **Section 3. Restoration to Regular Canonical Status**

**Subsection (a).** When the conditions that have led to the decision to declare a Parish at risk have been substantially ameliorated, the Parish may petition the Bishop for restoration of the Parish to regular canonical status. The restoration of the former Vestry or its reconstitution shall be a component part of the restoration of the Parish to regular canonical status.

**Subsection (b).** The Bishop, with the advice of the Standing Committee, shall decide whether or not to approve the petition.

## **Canon 6. Closing of a Parish**

### **Section 1. Conditions for Voluntary Closure**

**Subsection (a).** A Parish may voluntarily determine to close, if such action is:

- (i) approved by two-thirds (2/3) of the Vestry; and
- (ii) approved by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Members present at a special or regular parish meeting; and
- (iii) approved by the Rector; and
- (iv) approved by the Bishop.

**Subsection (b).** If a Parish does not have a functioning Vestry, the Bishop and the Standing Committee, acting together, may act in lieu of the Vestry under Paragraph (a)(i) of this Section.

### **Section 2. Conditions for Closure**

**Subsection (a).** Other than as set forth in Section 1 above, no Parish shall be closed except upon the affirmative vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the Members of any Convention of the Diocese.

**Subsection (b).** Such Convention vote shall be upon a special report of the Diocesan Council, which shall consider the issues and evidence of conditions warranting a declaration of dissolution. Such report shall contain a statement of the issues and evidence of conditions placed before the Bishop and the Diocesan Council.

**Subsection (c).** Upon the affirmative vote of the Convention, such Parish shall be closed.

### **Section 3. Disposition of Property**

Upon closing of a Parish, title to and beneficial interest of all property thereof shall vest in the Diocese.

## **Canon 7. Missions**

### **Section 1. Definition**

A Mission is a congregation of the Diocese of the Susquehanna that does not meet the requirements of a Parish.

### **Section 2. Establishment of Missions**

**Subsection (a).** The power to establish a Mission in any town or district is hereby vested in the Bishop of the Diocese. A Mission is, for the purpose of this Canon, an incipient organization over which a Missionary may at any time be placed by the authority of the Bishop.

**Subsection (b).** A Mission shall not be established in any town or district until an application shall have been made to the Bishop by not less than ten adult persons, declaring their attachment to The Episcopal Church, and their purpose to sustain the services of said Church; they shall furthermore pledge the payment of a specified sum for the maintenance of the Vicar whom the Bishop shall appoint.

**Subsection (c).** The Bishop shall have the sole power to appoint and remove clergy serving a Mission and shall set the level of compensation of such clergy, not to be less than the minimum standards as determined by Convention. The priest in charge of a Mission, if there be one, shall be called by the title of Vicar. The Vicar of a Mission Congregation shall be the President of the Executive Committee and shall preside at all of its meetings and at all meetings of the congregation.

### **Section 3. Role of Diocesan Council**

The Diocesan Council shall be responsible for the supervision and regulation of the affairs of each mission parish. Diocesan Council shall receive all gifts and bequests for the Mission; have custody of its permanent funds; hold title to all of its real estate; and make such rules to preserve the assets of the Mission and require such reports as it shall see fit.

### **Section 4. Property**

All property of a Mission shall be vested in the Diocese through its Diocesan Council, who shall hold the same for the benefit of said Mission, until such time as it shall be duly organized as a Parish, when the said property may be transferred to the Parish Corporation; provided that when a property is vested in a parent Parish it shall retain the same until the Mission be organized as a Parish and as such be admitted into union with the Convention.

### **Section 5. Executive Committee**

There shall be annually elected in every Mission not fewer than four nor more than ten adult members with staggered terms who, with the Vicar, shall constitute the Executive Committee of the Mission, and whose duty it shall be to promote the temporal and spiritual interests of the Mission.

**Subsection (a).** The duties of the Vicar and Executive Committee shall be similar to the duties of a Rector and Vestry of a parish, insofar as possible under the law, the canons and the bylaws of the congregation.

**Subsection (b).** Regular meetings of the Executive Committee shall be held each month, upon three days' notice to each member thereof by the Vicar, or if there be no Vicar, or if the Vicar be incapable of acting, by the Clerk. Special meetings may be called in the same manner. A majority of the membership of the Executive Committee shall constitute a quorum.

**Subsection (c).** The Executive Committee shall have power to fill vacancies in its membership until the next Annual Meeting of the Mission.



## **Section 6. Officers**

**Subsection (a).** The Vicar shall appoint from the Executive Committee a Warden.

**Subsection (b).** At the first meeting of the Executive Committee following the organization of the Mission, and thereafter at the annual meeting in each year, the Executive Committee shall elect a Clerk and a Treasurer to hold office for one year. The Treasurer need not be a member of the Executive Committee. The duties of the Clerk and the Treasurer shall be comparable to the duties of a Clerk and Treasurer of a Parish

## **Section 7. Mission Bylaws**

Each new mission congregation shall adopt bylaws, which shall be subject to the approval of the Bishop, and which shall not be inconsistent with the canons of General Convention or these canons.

## **Section 8. Convention Delegates**

The Lay delegates from the Mission shall be chosen from among the members thereof in the manner provided in Title 1, Canon 1, Section 1(b).

## **Section 9. Transfer of Status from Mission to Parish**

The Bishop, with the approval of the Standing Committee, may approve a petition from a Mission to become a Parish when, in the Bishop's opinion, such change of status is warranted, and upon such terms as the Bishop shall deem appropriate.

## **Section 10. Dissolution of a Mission**

The Bishop, with the approval of the Diocesan Council, may dissolve a Mission when, in the Bishop's opinion, such action shall be warranted. In the event of such dissolution, title to and beneficial interest of all property of the Mission shall vest in the Diocese, and it shall be the duty of the Vicar and Executive Committee to surrender title to, beneficial interest of, and control of such property to the Diocese.

## **TITLE III: Clergy**

### **Canon 1. Commission on Ministry**

#### **Section 1 Membership**

a. The Commission on Ministry shall be composed of twelve (12) members, of whom six (6) are lay members and six (6) are members of the clergy.

b. In addition to the above members, The Bishop or his/her designees shall ex-officio be a member of the Commission on Ministry.

c. The Bishop Diocesan shall annually appoint to the Commission on Ministry of the Diocese two (2) clergy and (2) two lay members to a three-year term. No one so appointed shall be eligible for re-election after having served two consecutive terms until after the expiration of one year. The Bishop Diocesan shall take care to ensure that at least one member of the diaconate serves on the Commission on Ministry.

**Section 2. Duties.** The duties of the Commission on Ministry shall be those prescribed in the Canons of the Church; and such other duties related to the ministry in this Diocese as shall be assigned by the Bishop.

**Section 3. Organization.** The Commission on Ministry shall have the power to devise and enact bylaws for its own governance, not inconsistent with the Constitution and Canons of the Church and this Diocese.

### **Canon 2. Ecclesiastical Discipline**

#### **Section 1. Title IV Canons**

The provisions of Title IV of the General Church Canons that are applicable to or may become applicable to the Diocese are hereby incorporated as part of this Canon. To the extent, if any, that any of the provisions of this Canon are in conflict or inconsistent with the provisions of Title IV of the General Church Canons, the provisions of Title IV of the General Church Canons shall govern.

#### **Section 2. Discipline Structure**

**Subsection (a).** Disciplinary Board. The Board shall consist of nine (9) persons, five (5) of whom are members of the Clergy and four (4) of whom are Laity.

**Subsection (b).** Clergy Members. The clergy members of the Board must be canonically and geographically resident within the Diocese.

**Subsection (c).** Lay Members. The lay members of the Board must be Adult Communicants in Good Standing and geographically resident in the Diocese.

**Subsection (d). Election:**

1. With the advice and consent of the Standing Committee, the Bishop shall nominate person to fill the terms of those members whose terms are expiring.
2. The members of the Disciplinary Board shall serve for a term of three (3) years, with terms to be staggered so that three (3) members are elected each year.
3. No member of the Board shall be eligible to serve concurrently on the Standing Committee or Finance Committee.
4. No member of the Board shall be eligible for reelection for a year after the end of his or her second full three (3) year term.
5. There shall be no change in the composition of a Disciplinary Board as to a proceeding pending before it while that proceeding is unresolved, except for just cause as determined by the Disciplinary Board.
6. Should a mid-term vacancy occur, the Bishop shall nominate a replacement, with the advice and consent of the Standing Committee, for election from the same order as the person being replaced. The replacement shall serve until the expiration of the term of the person being replaced. Vacancies must be filled within four (4) months of notification of the vacancy unless sooner required by other provisions of canon.
7. President: At the first meeting of the Disciplinary Board after the Diocesan Convention, the members of the Disciplinary Board shall elect from among themselves a President of the Disciplinary Board to serve for the ensuing year or until a successor is elected.
8. The Disciplinary Board shall appoint one or more attorneys to serve as Church Attorney. Any person so appointed must be a duly licensed attorney in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania but need not reside within the Diocese.

## **TITLE IV: Miscellaneous**

### **Canon 1. Rules of Order in the Convention**

The Rules of Order of the last preceding Annual Convention shall be in force until altered by the Convention, and the procedure of the business in Convention shall be carried on in accordance therewith.

### **Canon 2. Amendments**

**Section 1.** All proposals, other than proposals originating with the Committee on Constitution and Canons, to amend the Constitution or the Canons of the Diocese shall be referred without debate to the Committee on Constitution and Canons no later than six (6) months before the next meeting of the Convention for consideration, and a report of its recommendations submitted to Diocesan Clergy and Secretaries of Vestries no later than four (4) months before the Convention. Comments, if any, on such recommendations received by the Committee no later than three (3) months before the Convention shall be reviewed by the Committee. Further changes, if any proposed by the Committee, shall be circulated to Clergy and Secretaries of Vestries no later than two (2) months before the Convention.

**Section 2.** No existing Canon shall be changed or deleted, and no new Canon shall be enacted at the Convention at which the change or the enactment may be proposed, except by the affirmative vote of two thirds (2/3) of the delegates then present.

**Section 3.** Any amendments to the Canons shall be effective on the date of approval by Convention, unless otherwise stated in the proposal.

### **Canon 3. Terminology**

**Section 1.** The Constitution and Canons shall be interpreted in their plain and literal sense except that words specific to one gender shall be read as gender inclusive.

**Section 2.** Whenever the term "Bishop" is used without qualification in these Canons, it shall mean the Bishop of this Diocese.

**Section 3.** Whenever the term "Church" is used without qualification in these Canons, it shall mean The Episcopal Church.

**Section 4.** Whenever the term "Diocese," or some form of that term, is used without qualification in these Canons, it shall mean the Episcopal Diocese of the Susquehanna.

**Section 5.** Whenever the term "Family" is used without qualification in these Canons, it shall mean spouse, parent, sibling, child, stepchild, in-law, or domestic partner.

**Section 6.** Whenever the term “General Canons” or “General Church Canons” is used without qualification in these Canons, it shall mean the Constitution and Canons of The Episcopal Church.

**Section 7.** Whenever the term "Lay Member" is used without qualification in these Canons, it shall mean a baptized member of the Church.

**Section 8** Whenever the term "Order(s)" is used in these Canons, it shall mean a group or class of people, either clergy or lay.

**Section 9.** Whenever the term "Rector" is used without qualification in these Canons, it shall mean rector or priest-in-charge.

**Section 10.** Whenever the term "Vicar" is used in these Canons, it shall mean an ordained priest of The Episcopal Church who serves under the direction, and at the pleasure, of the Bishop.

#### **Canon 4. Repeal**

Any Canon, portion of a Canon, or prior resolution of Convention that conflicts with the provisions of these Canons is hereby repealed.