

The Committee on Constitution and Canons plans to submit this proposed revision of the Constitution for an initial vote at the Convention this coming October. Because the Committee has made extensive revisions to the Canons, it plans to present them for informational purposes only at Convention this year and seek comments on them from parishioners and clergy throughout the Diocese.

This working draft of the revised Canons eliminates the language of Canon 16 regarding marriage, as well as the marriage reference in Canon 11.8 regarding ordination standards. The language of Canon 11.8 and Canon 16 conflicts with the Canons of The Episcopal Church and is currently not enforced.

If you have comments or concerns regarding this proposed revision of the Constitution, please contact The Reverend Canon Neal Longe at nlonge@albanydiocese.org by Friday, July 18.

Summary of Significant Changes

New Article I: The new provision acknowledges the authority of the Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church and provides that **any constitutional or canonical provision of the Episcopal Diocese of Albany that conflicts with the Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church will be removed or amended.**

Presiding Officer at Convention: The Bishop Diocesan remains the presiding officer at Convention, but in the absence of a Bishop Diocesan, the identity of the presiding officer is now specifically identified. **There is no longer an election of a president pro tempore.** The potential for electing a president pro tempore without advance preparation for Convention has been a concern. It could hinder the progress of the Convention and be a stressful disservice to the person elected.

Standing Committee: **The provision for electing Standing Committee members has been moved to the Canons.** This location is more consistent with the Constitution of the Episcopal Church.

Lay Delegates: **The term “Lay Delegate” is new.** The former term was “Lay Deputy,” which is the term used by General Convention. This change acknowledges the common use of the term “delegate” by parishioners in our diocese.

The number of Lay Delegates to Convention has been reduced from 3 per parish to 2 per parish. This is intended to assist small parishes that struggle to field delegates and

to alleviate the logistical burden of a Convention. With the change to the procedure for a vote by orders, there is no longer a need for three Lay Delegates to avoid a tie within a parish delegation.

Vote by Orders: Delegates in the Lay Order will cast their votes individually, rather than casting a single vote as a parish. A specified majority of each order will still be necessary. The prior method of allowing each parish a single vote has been a source of tension and complaints. Our research showed that other dioceses do not utilize the one-vote-per-parish method.

Amendments: The description of the process for amending the Constitution has been expanded to include greater detail. This ensures consistency with other constitutional and canonical mechanisms.

Constitution

Adopted at the Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Albany _____; as amended at subsequent Conventions.

Article I.

The Episcopal Diocese of Albany (hereinafter the “EDOA” or “Diocese”) accedes to and acknowledges the authority of the Constitution and Canons for the Government of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America, otherwise known as The Episcopal Church, as adopted in General Convention (hereinafter referred to as the “Canons of the General Convention”). The Diocesan Convention may adopt Canons and Rules of Order consistent with this Constitution or the Constitution and Canons of the General Convention. In the event of a conflict between the Constitution and Canons of the EDOA and those of The Episcopal Church, as determined by the Ecclesiastical Authority in consultation with the Chancellor(s), the Article of the Constitution or Canon of the Diocese which is in such conflict shall be suspended and presented to the next Diocesan Convention for removal or amendment.

Article II.

Sec. 1. There shall be an annual Convention of the Diocese, meeting on such day and location as the Ecclesiastical Authority may determine and select, with the advice and consent of the Standing Committee ~~and the Diocesan Council~~. Location may include such electronic means as may be appropriate, as determined by the Ecclesiastical Authority.

Sec. 2. The Ecclesiastical Authority may call Special Conventions, with the advice and consent of the Standing Committee ~~and the Diocesan Council~~. The purpose or purposes for which a Special Convention is called shall be stated in the notice for such convention, and no business not stated in the notice shall be in order except by the affirmative vote of two-thirds of those present and voting in each of the clerical and lay orders.

Article III.

Sec. 1. The members of any Convention shall be:

- (a) The Bishop Diocesan;
- (b) The Bishop Coadjutor, if there be one, and also, if there be any, the Bishop Suffragan;
- (c) All members of the clergy canonically resident in the Diocese not under discipline;
- (d) Two (2) delegates from each parish in union with the Convention.

Sec. 2. Each member of Convention shall be entitled to one vote.

Sec. 3. The governing body of the parish shall choose the lay delegates in a manner decided by the parish. Persons meeting the qualifications as prescribed by Canon shall be eligible to serve as lay delegates. They shall also be eligible for election or appointment to any lay office of the Diocese.

Sec. 4. The definition of a parish or mission, the mode of admitting a parish or mission into union with Convention, and the conditions under which union or representation shall be forfeited, may be prescribed by Canon.

Article IV.

The Cathedral of All Saints in the City and Diocese of Albany, New York shall be the Cathedral Church of the Diocese, and its congregation shall have such rights and responsibilities as pertain to a church in union with the Diocese.

Article V.

Every Convention shall be opened with prayers, and there shall be a Celebration of the Holy Eucharist during the meeting of Convention at a time set by the Ecclesiastical Authority, to the extent practicable.

Article VI.

The Bishop Diocesan or, if there not be one, the Bishop Coadjutor or the Bishop Suffragan, shall preside over the Convention; but in case of a vacancy in the Episcopate, incapacitation, or necessary absence, the President of the Standing Committee or, in the President's absence, the most senior in office among the clerical members of the Standing Committee present, shall preside over the Convention.

Article VII.

A Secretary shall be chosen upon the assembling of the annual Convention, who shall remain in office until the meeting of the next annual Convention or until a successor shall be selected. The manner of nomination of the Secretary may be prescribed by Canon. The Secretary may be removed from office at any time by the Standing Committee for any neglect or misconduct, of which it shall be the judge. The duties of the Secretary shall be

to take minutes of the proceedings of Convention, to preserve the journals and records, to attest to the public acts of the body, and to faithfully deliver into the hands of their successor all books, papers, and electronic files relative to the concerns of the Convention which may be in their possession. It shall also be the duty of the Secretary to give due notice to each member of the clergy and the governing body of each parish of the time and place appointed for the meeting of each Convention. The Secretary shall also perform such other duties as may be prescribed by the Canons of the General Convention and of the Diocese.

Article VIII.

A Treasurer shall be chosen upon the assembling of the annual Convention, who shall remain in office until the meeting of the next annual Convention or until a successor shall be selected. The manner of nomination of the Treasurer may be prescribed by Canon. The Treasurer may be removed from office at any time by the Standing Committee for any neglect or misconduct, of which it shall be the judge. The duties of the Treasurer shall be prescribed by the Canons of the General Convention and of the Diocese.

Article IX.

Sec. 1. In all matters which come before the Convention, the clergy and laity shall deliberate and, except as otherwise provided under this article, may vote in one body; but if in any case it shall be required by Canon or by ten members, the two orders shall vote separately, the clergy as individuals, and the laity as individual delegates; and the concurrence of a majority of each order present and voting shall be necessary to constitute a decision.

Sec. 2. In the election of a Bishop, the two orders shall vote separately by ballot, and the concurrence of a majority of those present and voting in each order shall be necessary to constitute a duly held election.

Article X.

The method for amending the Constitution shall be as follows:

Sec. 1. Any proposal to amend the Constitution must be submitted to the Secretary of the Convention, in writing, sponsored and seconded by members of the Convention, no later than the ninetieth day preceding the day fixed as the first day of the next ensuing Convention. The Secretary shall transmit forthwith copies of any such proposal to the Bishop and the members of the Committee on Constitution and Canons.

Sec. 2. The Committee on Constitution and Canons shall notify the Secretary of the Convention of its recommendation regarding such proposal no later than the forty-fifth day preceding the day fixed as the first day of the next ensuing Convention. The Secretary shall transmit forthwith copies of such recommendation to the Bishop and the sponsor and seconder of said proposal.

Sec. 3. Any proposal to amend the Constitution which is not submitted in accordance with the provisions of this article shall not be considered by the Convention, unless a two-thirds majority of the votes in each order shall be cast in favor of considering such proposal.

Sec. 4. Any proposition to amend the Constitution considered at the Convention, if approved by a majority of the votes at the Convention, shall be put over until the next annual Convention for a second reading. If approved on second reading at such next Convention by a majority of those present and voting in each order, the change shall take effect immediately unless otherwise expressly provided. The adoption of any amendment of this Constitution which inserts or repeals an Article, or a Section or Clause of an Article, shall effectuate the necessary change in numbers or letters of Articles or Sections or Clauses of an Article that follow, and in references made in this Constitution to any other part, without the necessity of specific provision therefore in the amendment.