

Policy on the Safety of Church Buildings

Section 1. Each vestry is responsible for maintaining its buildings to preserve the safety of the public and the members of the church. This means more than minimal compliance with building codes and other government regulations.

Section 2. If a church building (or a portion of it) is or might be unsafe¹, the vestry will:

- (a) stop using the area,
- (b) prevent access to the area except to assess or repair it,
- (c) notify the Bishop, and
- (d) repair it within a reasonable time, during which the vestry will keep the Bishop informed.

Section 3. Each vestry is financially responsible for its buildings. If a vestry does not have the financial resources to repair a building, the Diocese will assist the vestry by identifying resources and courses of action that may be available to them.

Section 4. If the vestry of a mission church needs financial assistance to determine the extent of a building problem, the vestry may ask the Dept. of Planning of Diocesan Council to engage a Professional Engineer and/or General Contractor to study the situation and estimate the repair cost.

Section 5. Parish vestries are reminded that whenever a vestry wishes to sell real property or borrow against real property – whether to raise cash for building repairs or for any other purpose – it must first obtain written consent from the Ecclesiastical Authority acting with the advice and consent of the Standing Committee. Mission vestries are reminded that title to their real property is held by the Trustees and only the Trustees may encumber or sell their real property.

Section 6. Vestries are reminded that the Canons of the Diocese require every church to “maintain a suitable place of worship.”

Adopted by Diocesan Council, Sept. 14, 2023

¹ This judgment is best made by the clergy and vestry of the church, but it may also be made by the Diocese upon advice of a Professional Engineer or General Contractor, the building’s insurer, or a governmental inspector.