

SECRETARY OF CONVENTION

The Secretary of Convention, a constitutional officer whose duties are prescribed by Canon D-II.1, is elected each year by the Annual Convention upon nomination of the Bishop. The Secretary has two principal duties: (1) to organize and to publicize the annual and special conventions of the Diocese and to publish a journal of their proceedings, and (2) to serve as secretary of Diocesan Council.

Other duties include receiving and processing applications for admission of congregations, soliciting and receiving reports of diocesan institutions, and receiving and evaluating the annual parochial reports of all parishes and missions. In addition, the Secretary is responsible under the constitution and canons of The Episcopal Church for giving formal notice to the Convention of the Diocese when amendments are proposed to the Constitution of the Episcopal Church or to the Book of Common Prayer, for reporting on the actions of the Diocese in response to acts of General Convention, and for certifying elections by the Diocese of bishops and of deputies to General Convention.

Actions of the 206th Annual Convention

I compiled the Acts of the 206th Annual Convention of the Diocese, communicated actions of the Convention to the necessary parties, and with the assistance of the Communications staff of the Diocese I published the Journal of the 206th Annual Convention. I published the Constitution and Canons of the Diocese and the Rules of Order of Convention as amended by the 206th Annual Convention and as corrected by the Commission on Constitution and Canons; see Exhibits A and B hereto.

Diocesan Council

As secretary of Diocesan Council, I scheduled, prepared the agenda, and arranged logistics for ten meetings since the 206th Annual Convention. I attended and wrote minutes for nine of these meetings. I notified various persons and Diocesan entities of the actions of Council and wrote summaries of actions for the website of the Diocese. I maintained consolidated electronic minutes of Council from 2011 onward and answered occasional inquiries pertaining thereto.

Ex-officio Meetings

Being an ex-officio member of the Commission on Constitution and Canons and the Chartered Committee on History and Archives, I participated in their meetings during 2022.

The Episcopal Church

I forwarded the Journal of the 206th Annual Convention to the Archives of The Episcopal Church. I notified the Office of the General Convention of the deputation from the Diocese to the 80th General Convention and the necrology of prior Deputies.

Organizing of the 207th Annual Convention

I gave formal notices of the 207th Annual Convention, published various forms, prepared the rolls of voting clergy and lay delegates, configured election ballots in Election Runner and assigned voter IDs to voting clergy and lay delegates, served as Secretary for the Committee on Dispatch of Business which met six times in 2022, solicited and received proposed resolutions, solicited and

received nominations, and tracked compliance of parishes and missions with the Constitution, Canons, and Rules of Order of the Diocese with respect to parochial reports, audits, and payment of Fair Share. I also responded to numerous inquiries from parishes and missions, members of the clergy, senior wardens, lay delegates, and Deans of Convocations on matters related to Convention.

Canon D-IV.4 and Rule III Reports

I communicated with 33 churches about incomplete, late, or missing parochial reports, audits, and payments of Fair Share. See Exhibit C hereto. The details of non-compliance are included in my annual letter to the Bishop Diocesan and the Standing Committee for their further deliberation with respect to Canon D-V.13.

Changes in Status of Churches

On February 6, 2022 the vestry of St. Christopher's Church in Garner, a mission of this Diocese, informed the Bishop Diocesan that they were unable to remain open and requested closure. The final service was held on April 3.

On March 6, 2022 the vestry of St. Mark's Church in Raleigh, a parish of this Diocese, informed the Bishop Diocesan that they were unable to remain open and requested closure. The final service was held on April 24. Title to the real property of the parish passed to the Trustees.

On August 20, 2022 the vestry of All Souls Church in Ansonville, a mission of this Diocese, informed the Bishop Diocesan that they were unable to remain open and requested closure. On November 1, the Diocese and Calvary Church, Wadesboro signed a memorandum of understanding whereby Calvary assumed responsibility for All Souls' membership and property.

Accordingly, I shall place before the 207th Annual Convention a motion to dissolve the union between Convention and St. Christopher's, Garner'; St Mark's, Raleigh; and All Souls, Ansonville.

I received no application from a parish or mission to enter into union with Convention.

Statistical Analysis

In my annual letter to the Bishop Diocesan and the President of the Standing Committee, I commented upon the statistics of the Diocese. Of note is the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on record-keeping for Average Sunday Attendance. At this time, I do not consider recent ASA statistics to be meaningful. Fortunately, ASA statistics are not used in the operations of the Diocese.

Reports to Convention

I solicited reports from 50 officers, commissions, committees, appointees, and entities of or related to the Diocese for inclusion in the Journal of the 207th Annual Convention. 47 reports were received.

Proposed Amendments to the Constitution of The Episcopal Church

Article XII of the Constitution of The Episcopal Church requires the Secretary of each Diocese to inform the respective diocesan Convention of amendments to the Constitution adopted by a

General Convention upon first reading. The 80th General Convention in 2022 adopted three such amendments. See Exhibit D hereto.

In Closing

I am blessed by the opportunity to interact regularly with so many dedicated, thoughtful, considerate, diligent, and inspirational disciples of Christ in this Diocese. Let me express my particular gratitude for assistance from the Bishops, staff, and other officers of the Diocese to make fulfilling my responsibilities as Secretary not merely less burdensome, but rather a pleasure.

I am committed to serving the Convention and its constituent churches and institutions. All clergy, lay delegates, senior wardens, parish administrators, and so forth are encouraged to contact me with their questions and concerns.

Submitted by
Charles L. Till

Exhibit A to the Report of the Secretary of Convention

Canon D-III.7.3(c) states:

After the close of each Annual Convention, the Commission [on Constitution and Canons] shall certify the changes, if any, made in the Constitution and Canons, including a correction of errors in spelling, punctuation, grammar, and references made in any portion of the Constitution or Canons to another portion thereof, and report the same to the Secretary of the Convention who shall include such corrections in the official edition of the Constitution and Canons published in the Journal. All such technical corrections shall be reported to the Convention.

On February 23, 2022 the Commission certified changes to the Constitution and Canons made by the 206th Annual Convention:

- Act 2021-10 amended the Constitution regarding the length of the term of the Treasurer (second reading).
- Act 2021-11 deleted Canon 13, Section 8, Paragraph (c); Canon 16, Section 8; and Canon 29.
- Act 2021-12 adopted a new Canon 47.
- Act 2021-13 adopted a new Rule of Order XXVI.

As of adjournment of the 207th Annual Convention, the Commission will publish a new edition of the Canons to make them more legible and useful to the Diocese. Prior to finalizing the new edition, the Commission published an introduction to the new edition in Exhibit B hereto, circulated a copy of the new edition for comment, and held a teleconference to collect corrections.

Parishes and missions of the Diocese may revise their bylaws to reflect the numbering in the new edition of the Canons without obtaining the usual prior consent of the Ecclesiastical Authority and Chancellor, so long as there is no change to the substance of the bylaws.

Exhibit B to the Report of the Secretary of Convention

Introduction to the New Edition of the Canons of the Diocese Commission on Constitution and Canons

Over the years, the Canons of the Diocese of North Carolina became increasingly difficult to comprehend and apply. The Canons were not arranged in a logical order. For example, provisions of the Canons relevant to the vestry of a church were scattered throughout the published Canons. Fractional numbers of new Canons had been used to avoid resequencing the Canons, which was a daunting undertaking because of the large number of cross-references to be corrected. Some Canons contained obsolete provisions of a transitional nature. Other Canons had sections or paragraphs that dealt with matters that would be more clearly described in a separate canon.

The net effect is that most persons in the Diocese who consulted the Canons found them to be impenetrable and obscure. Even the persons in the Diocese who consult the Canons weekly – the Bishops, the officers, and ourselves as the Commission on Constitution and Canons – often found it difficult to identify the Canons of particular interest in a given situation.

Until the adoption of Canon 12.2(c) by the 203rd Convention in 2018, the only mechanisms available to remedy these problems were a complete replacement of the Canons by Convention or a massive set of amendments. Neither mechanism was considered feasible, and therefore the problems in the published Canons continued to accrue. However, Canon 12.2(c) empowered the Commission on Constitution and Canons to make technical corrections.

After months of painstaking work, we are pleased to offer for your review and comment a new edition of the Canons of the Diocese.

At first, you will notice a new structure for the Canons:

The number of each Canon is prefixed by the letter D to denote a canon of the Diocese. The numbers of the Canons of the General Convention have no prefix. This eliminates ambiguity as to whether a given Canon is a Canon of the Diocese or a Canon of the General Convention. Everything we do in the Diocese is subject to the Canons of the General Convention.

The Canons are grouped into in seven titles, so that all Canons relevant to a given topic are found in the corresponding title. The titles are:

- Title D-I, Convention.
- Title D-II, Officers.
- Title D-III, Permanent Bodies. This Title describes the Standing Committee, the Trustees, the Diocesan Council, etc.
- Title D-IV, Finances.
- Title D-V, Congregations.
- Title D-VI, Ecclesiastical Discipline.
- Title D-VII, Administration.

To implement the new structure, there is considerable rearrangement of the sequence of the Canons. In a few instances, sentences or paragraphs were transferred from one Canon to another or to a new Canon.

Other corrections incorporated into the new edition:

- Transitional language no longer relevant to the Diocese was deleted. A typical transitional provision was to implement staggered terms of office 20 years ago. Now that the staggered terms have been in effect for so long, the transitional language served no purpose.
- Sections and paragraphs of some Canons were resequenced within the respective Canon to provide a more logical flow.
- Content that was haphazardly spread across multiple Canons was collected into a single place. For example, all provisions of the Canons that granted seat and voice at Convention to certain persons ex officio are transferred to a new Canon D-I.9.
- Titles of some Canons were modified to reflect more accurately the content of the respective Canons.
- All internal cross-references within the Canons were corrected to conform to the new structure.
- We found that a canonical amendment adopted by the 195th Convention in 2011 had not been accurately captured in the master document of the Canons. This oversight created ambiguity about the membership of the Disciplinary Board. By consulting the Journal of the 195th Convention, we have corrected the text of the relevant Canon.
- Various references to our church are standardized as “The Episcopal Church”.
- Various references to the Canons of our church are standardized as “Canons of the General Convention.”

In order to ease the transition from the old structure of the Canons to the new structure, the Table of Contents of the new edition contains references to the former numbers of the Canons.

We, the Commission on Constitution and Canons were careful to stay within the limits of the authority granted to us by what is now Canon D-III.7.3(c). Amending the Canons remains the purview of the Convention alone. Also, this process of canonical editing did not extend to the Constitution of the Diocese. The only way that even “one iota” of the Constitution may be changed is for two successive Conventions, each voting by orders, to adopt an amendment. However, it is our opinion that the compact nature of the Constitution and the infrequency of amendments to it, compared to amendments to the Canons, has allowed the Constitution to remain readable.

Exhibit C to the Report of the Secretary of Convention

Canon D-IV.4 Report

Article IX.7 of the Constitution of the Diocese and Canon D-IV.4.4 require the Secretary to strike from the voting rolls of Convention the lay delegates of and members of the clergy assigned to any church that failed to pay its Fair Share in full and on time. For the avoidance of doubt, this requirement does apply to churches with interim clergy or no clergy.

Two churches did not pay their Fair Share in full prior to the canonical deadline:

Battleboro, St John.
Weldon, Grace.

Accordingly, their lay delegates and clergy cannot vote at the 207th Annual Convention. This consequence is not subject to the discretion of the Ecclesiastical Authority or the Convention.

Churches should note that Canons D-V.2.4(h) and D-V.1.6(g), respectively, require payment of Fair Share to maintain union with Convention. Parishes should also note that Canon D-IV.4.4 establishes other consequences for non-compliance specifically by a parish. As long as a parish remains in arrears on Fair Share, its vestry shall not elect a rector, nor shall the rector call an assistant minister or other member of the clergy. If the parish fails for two consecutive years to contribute the amount required of it, the parish is automatically changed in status to a mission. These consequences are not subject to the discretion of the Ecclesiastical Authority or the Convention.

Rule III Report

The Episcopal Church requires every church to submit a parochial report and an audit. General Convention sets the deadlines, which are March 1 and September 1, respectively. I remind churches with no clergy, interim clergy, or clergy on sabbatical that they are not exempt from these requirements. In those situations, the parochial report and the audit are the responsibility of the Senior Warden.

Rule of Order III of Convention, as rewritten by Act 2019-6, applies to a church that “fails to comply with Canon D-V.2.4(g) or Canon D-V.1.6(a), as the case may be, concerning the timely filing of an audit or with Canon D-V.8.5 concerning the timely filing of a parochial report”.

Pursuant to the process defined by Rule III, the Secretary notified 11 churches that both their clergy and lay delegates would be deprived of vote at the 207th Annual Convention unless the churches were to apply to Diocesan Council for waivers of Rule III and Diocesan Council were to grant such waivers. On October 22, 2022, Diocesan Council granted 7 waivers:

Charlotte, Christ the King – no audit.
Durham, El Buen Pastor – no audit.
Greensboro, Holy Trinity – no audit.
Henderson, Holy Innocents – non-timely parochial report.
High Point, St Mary – no audit.
Kernersville, St Matthew – non-timely parochial report.
Lexington, Grace – no audit.

Diocesan Council did not decline any application for a waiver.

The following churches did not apply for a waiver. Accordingly, their lay delegates and clergy cannot vote at the 207th Annual Convention:

Halifax, St Mark – no audit and no parochial report.
Louisburg, St Matthias – no audit.
Mooresville, St James – no parochial report and no audit.
Rockingham, Messiah – no parochial report and no audit

This consequence is not subject to the discretion of the Ecclesiastical Authority or the Convention.

Good Shepherd, Rocky Mount received a waiver of Rule III from Diocesan Council for the 205th and the 206th Annual Conventions. The church did not submit an audit for 2021. As specified by Rule III, a church may not receive a waiver for a third consecutive year. Therefore, the clergy and lay delegates of Good Shepherd, Rocky Mount cannot vote at the 207th Annual Convention. This consequence is not subject to the discretion of the Ecclesiastical Authority or the Convention.

Exhibit D to the Report of the Secretary of Convention

Amendments to the Constitution of The Episcopal Church Adopted on First Reading by the 80th General Convention

A031 - Amend the Constitution and Canons Relating to Mergers of Dioceses

Resolved, That the 80th General Convention amend Article V, Section 4 of the Constitution to read as follows:

Sec. 4. Whenever a new Diocese is formed and erected out of an existing Diocese or out of two or more existing Dioceses or parts of them, it shall be subject to the Constitution and Canons of the Diocese out of which it was formed, except as local circumstances may prevent, until the same be altered in accordance with such Constitution and Canons by the Convention of the new Diocese the formation process of the newly formed Diocese, including the adoption of its Constitution and Canons, shall be as set forth in the Canons.

~~Whenever a Diocese is formed out of two or more existing Dioceses, it shall be subject to the Constitution and Canons of that one of the said existing Dioceses to which the greater number of Members of the Clergy shall have belonged prior to the erection of such new Diocese, except as local circumstances may prevent, until the same be altered in accordance with such Constitution and Canons by the Convention of the new Diocese.~~

A059 - Amend Article X of the Constitution of The Episcopal Church

Resolved, That the 80th General Convention of The Episcopal Church repeal Article X in its entirety and replace it with the following:

Sec 1. The Book of Common Prayer is understood to be those liturgical forms and other texts authorized by the General Convention in accordance with this article and the Canons of this Church.

The Book of Common Prayer in this Church is intended to be communal and devotional prayer enriched by our church's cultural, geographical, and linguistic contexts. The Book of Common Prayer shall contain both public worship and private devotion.

The Book of Common Prayer, as now established or hereafter amended by the General Convention, shall be in use in all the Dioceses of this Church.

Sec. 2. No alteration thereof or addition thereto shall be made unless the General Convention approve the same on first reading in one regular meeting of the General Convention and, by resolve so directing, be sent by the Secretary of the General Convention to the Secretary of the Convention of every Diocese, to be made known to the Diocesan Convention at its next regular meeting, and be adopted on second reading

without alteration by the General Convention at its next succeeding regular meeting by a majority of all Bishops, excluding retired Bishops not present, of the whole number of Bishops entitled to vote in the House of Bishops, and by an affirmative vote by orders in the House of Deputies in accordance with Art. I, Sec. 5 of this Constitution, except that concurrence in the affirmative by the orders shall require the affirmative vote in each order by a majority of the Dioceses entitled to representation in the House of Deputies.

Sec 3. No alteration thereof or addition thereto shall be made unless it has previously been authorized for Trial Use in accordance with this Article and the Canons of this Church.

Sec 4. The General Convention may at any one meeting, by a majority of the whole number of the Bishops entitled to vote in the House of Bishops, and by a majority of the Clerical and Lay Deputies of all the Dioceses entitled to representation in the House of Deputies, voting by orders as previously set forth in this Article:

a. Amend the Table of Lessons and all Tables and Rubrics relating to the Psalms.

b. Authorize for Trial Use such alterations or additions in whole or in part to the established Book of Common Prayer as maybe proposed in accord with the Canons of this Church and duly undertaken by and implemented according to the directives of the General Convention.

c. Authorize for use throughout this Church, as provided by Canon, alternative and additional liturgies to supplement those provided in the Book of Common Prayer.

Sec. 5. Nothing in this Article shall be construed as restricting the authority of the Bishops of this Church to take such order as may be permitted by the Rubrics of the Book of Common Prayer or by the Canons of the General Convention for the use of special forms of worship.

A157 - Amend Article I Sec. 7

Resolved, That Article I, Section 7 of the Constitution be amended to read as follows:

Sec. 7. The General Convention shall ~~meet~~ hold its regular meeting not less than once in each three years, at a time and place determined in accordance with the Canons. In the event of a change of circumstances indicating the necessity or advisability of changing the date of such regular meeting of The General Convention beyond three years, said meeting may be rescheduled as provided by Canon. Special Meetings may be held as provided for by Canon.