

RESOLUTION #3:

I. Type of Resolution: Canons

II. Title & Author:

Amendments to “Assorted Loose Canons”

Constitution and Canons Committee

III. Intent:

This resolution attempts to adjust certain provisions in the diocesan canons so that they align more closely with actual practices at this time and/or are easier to comply with in the contemporary church context.

BE IT RESOLVED, that the 221st Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of New Hampshire, in response to the recommendations of the Committee on Constitution and Canons, pursuant to Canon 7 of the Canons of the Episcopal Diocese of New Hampshire, amend Canons 1, 2, 3 and 4 of the Canons of the Episcopal Diocese of New Hampshire, by making the following deletions (indicated by strike-through text) and additions (indicated by italic text):

Canon 1, Section 2, add new subsection (d):

(d) The duties of the secretary may be performed in coordination with diocesan staff

Canon 1, Section 3, Subsection 1, revise to read:

1.1 Election. At the annual session of Convention prior to the year preceding the year in which the General Convention is to meet, Convention shall elect clergy persons and lay persons to serve as deputies and alternate deputies to General Convention. The clerical deputies shall be priests or deacons canonically resident in this diocese, and the lay deputies shall be adult confirmed communicants of a congregation in this diocese. No fewer than ~~eight~~ *six* clergy persons and ~~eight~~ *six* lay persons shall be nominated. Elected nominees shall be seated in order of the number of votes received, with the four highest named as deputies, and the next ~~four~~ *two to four* as alternates. Deputies and alternate deputies shall be elected to three-year terms and may be elected to successive terms.

Canon 2, Section 3, Subsection 1(a)(4), revise to read:

(4) *up to* ~~at least~~ two additional persons, appointed by Diocesan Council, who are clergy resident in the diocese or lay communicants in good standing in their respective congregations.

Canon 2, Section 4, Subsection 1, revise to read:

Section 4. Convocations

4.1 Designation of convocations. Congregations in union with Convention shall be organized into the following six regional associations known as convocations: Central, Lakes Region,

Northern, Seacoast, Southern, and Western. The membership of convocations shall be as follows: *designated by the bishop with the advice of the Diocesan Council.*

- (a) ~~Central shall comprise Concord Grace, Concord St. Paul's, Dunbarton, Hopkinton, Pittsfield, and Weare.~~
- (b) ~~Lakes Region shall comprise Ashland, Laconia, Meredith, North Conway, Plymouth, Sanbornville, Tamworth, Tilton, and Wolfeboro.~~
- (c) ~~Northern shall comprise Berlin, Colebrook, Lancaster, Lisbon, Littleton, North Woodstock, and Woodsville.~~
- (d) ~~Seacoast shall comprise Dover, Durham, Exeter, Hampton, Portsmouth Christ Church, Portsmouth St. John's.~~
- (e) ~~Southern shall comprise Derry, Goffstown, Hampstead, Londonderry, Manchester Grace, Manchester St. Andrew's, Merrimaek, Milford, Nashua, Peterborough, and Salem.~~
- (f) ~~Western shall comprise Charlestown, Claremont Trinity, Claremont Union, Hanover, Keene, New London, Newport, and Walpole.~~

Canon 2, Section 4, Subsection 2, revise to read:

4.2 Transfers and new congregations.

- (a) A congregation seeking transfer to another convocation shall submit written request for the transfer to the bishop and Diocesan Council for consideration. ~~And Diocesan Council may submit a recommendation for transfer to the secretary of Convention no later than the date established for the submission of resolutions proposing amendment of canon.~~
- (b) ~~A newly organized congregation shall be assigned to a convocation by Convention at the time the congregation is admitted to union with Convention.~~

Canon 3, Section 3, Subsection 1 (a)(2), revise to read:

- (2) After the first year, a bishop's committee shall be chosen by the regular worshipers of the mission, in the manner prescribed by the canons for the election of the vestry of a parish. *Prior to an election, at the request of the bishop, the mission shall seek the bishop's advice on, and shall obtain the bishop's consent to, the slate of nominees.*

Canon 4, Section 2, Subsection 1, revise to read:

- (a) An annual meeting of a congregation shall occur during the month of January, except in those congregations whose charter orders otherwise, *or for other good reason.*
- (b) If a congregation has a compelling reason for ~~petitioning to holding~~ its annual meeting on a date other than in January, *it shall notify the bishop, with a two-thirds vote of and the Standing Committee, may authorize the congregation to hold its annual meeting on the date petitioned.*
- (c) ~~The bishop shall maintain a record of congregations thus authorized to hold annual meetings on dates other than January.~~

Canon 4, Section 2, Subsection 6 (a), revise to read:

- (a) ~~In all congregations having more than one hundred adult active baptized members and a vestry of five or more members, at least one of every five vestry members shall be ineligible for re-election at any annual meeting until the expiration of one year. No member of a vestry or bishop's committee, including officers, shall be eligible for re-election for at least 1 year after serving 9 consecutive years on the vestry or bishop's committee in any capacity.~~

Canon 4, Section 6, Subsection 1(c), revise to read:

- (c) Treasurers and custodians other than banking institutions shall be adequately bonded. *This canon may be fulfilled through the insurance requirement specified in Canon 4.6.3 per the guidelines specified by the chief financial officer.*

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that these canonical changes shall become effective upon adjournment of the 221st Diocesan Convention.

IV. Rationale: Constitution and Canons Committee recognized that there were several areas of the canons where 1) the specific canon did not align with current practice, and 2) that certain canonical changes would help our church be more nimble in the face of the challenges we face in the current age.

Specifically:

- Canon 1.2(c): The canons specify duties of the secretary that are often fulfilled by diocesan staff. This amendment makes it clear that the staff may support the secretary, and the secretary is not obligated to perform these duties personally.
- Canon 1.3.1: In recent years, we have not had eight candidates on the ballot at Diocesan Convention, which is OK. This amendment puts the canons in line with current practice.
- Canon 2.3.1(a)(4): For many years, there has only been one Finance Committee representative appointed by Diocesan Council. The Finance Committee has functioned well with its current membership. This amendment puts the canons in line with current practice.
- Canon 2.4: With the advent of Gospel Oriented Communities, it becomes clear that assigning convocations in the canons is too cumbersome. This amendment gives the bishop, with the advice of Diocesan Council, the authority to configure our 6 convocations.
- Canon 3.3.1(a)(2): This amendment clarifies the bishop's authority in the election of a bishop's committee.
- Canon 4.2.1: A number of congregations routinely hold annual meeting outside of the month of January, in most cases deviating by a week or two. Pre-approval of holding annual meeting outside of the month of January provides no value to the bishop or Standing Committee. Many congregations ignore this requirement. This amendment gives congregations more flexibility in scheduling annual meeting, yet provides a notification requirement so the Bishop and Standing Committee can inquire if the scheduling appears inappropriate.

- Canon 4.2.6(a): The rotation of vestry and bishop's committee membership is an important part of congregational vitality. However, the current rotation requirement only applies to congregations of 100 or more members and is confusing. This amendment simplifies the rotation requirement and applies it to all congregations.
- Canon 4.6.1(c): This amendment clarifies an Episcopal Church Canon that we are required to comply with. The CFO frequently gets questions about bonding, which is functionally fulfilled through the insurance policies our congregations hold with Church Insurance Corp.

V. Plan of Action: Upon approval by Convention, the Committee on Constitution and Canons will ensure that an updated version of the Diocese of New Hampshire Constitution and Canons is published electronically on the diocesan website.

VI. Projection of Cost: There is no direct cost associated with the implementation of resolution.

VII. Accountability: Publication of the updated Canons will be announced through the diocesan email newsletter, website and other diocesan communications channels.

VIII. Supporters: The Constitution and Canons Committee, The Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church in New Hampshire