

## SECRETARY OF CONVENTION

The Secretary of Convention, an office defined by Article VII of the Constitution and Canon D-II.1, is elected each year by the Annual Convention upon nomination by 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 Constitution and Canons of The Episcopal Church set out various responsibilities of the Secretary.

### **Actions of the 208th Annual Convention**

I compiled the Acts of the 208th Annual Convention of the Diocese and communicated actions of the Convention to the necessary parties. With the assistance of the Communications staff of the Diocese, I published the Journal of the 208th Annual Convention. I published the Constitution and Canons of the Diocese and the Rules of Order of Convention as amended by the 208th Annual Convention and as certified by the Commission on Constitution and Canons; see Exhibit A hereto.

### **Diocesan Council**

As secretary of Diocesan Council, I scheduled, prepared the agenda, arranged logistics, and wrote minutes for ten meetings since the 208th Annual Convention. 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. During the year I served on Council's Department of Planning and also an ad hoc working group to consider changes to the format and schedule of Convention.

### **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 2024.

### **The Episcopal Church**

I forwarded the Journal of the 208th Annual Convention to the Archives of The Episcopal Church and the Secretary of the General Convention. I notified the Office of the General Convention of a change in deputation from the Diocese and of actions taken by the Diocese in response to 91 resolutions of the 80th General Convention in 2022.

Pursuant to Acts 2023-1 and 2023-7 of the 208th Annual Convention, I submitted resolutions entitled "On the Most Reverend Michael Bruce Curry" and "On Affordable Housing" to the

Secretary of the General Convention for consideration by the 81st General Convention in 2024. These resolutions were entered as C001 and C003, respectively. The General Convention adopted both resolutions as amended.

Articles X and XII of the Constitution of The Episcopal Church require the Secretary to inform Convention of amendments to the Constitution or the Book of Common Prayer adopted by General Convention upon first reading. The 81st General Convention adopted three such amendments to the Constitution and one such amendment to the Book of Common Prayer. See Exhibits C and D hereto. The 82nd General Convention will consider these amendments upon second reading. Members of Convention are invited to express their thoughts about the amendments to the Bishops of the Diocese and the deputation that the 210th Annual Convention will elect.

### **Organizing of the 209th Annual Convention**

I gave formal notices of the 209th Annual Convention, recalculated the allocation of lay delegates, 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 eight times in 2024, 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 17 churches about incomplete, late, or missing parochial reports, audits, and payments of Fair Share. For the outcomes of these communications, see Exhibit B 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**

At the request of the Historic Properties Commission and St Mark's, Halifax, a mission of this Diocese, Diocesan Council designated St Mark's a Preserved Historic Church on September 19, 2024. Accordingly, I shall place before the 209th Annual Convention a motion to dissolve the union between Convention and St. Mark's, Halifax.

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

## **Reports to Convention**

I solicited reports from 53 officers, commissions, committees, appointees, and entities of or related to the Diocese for inclusion in the Journal of the 209th Annual Convention. 51 reports were received.

## **A Matter of Concern**

Canon I.6, Section 1 of The Episcopal Church requires annual parochial reports "to secure an accurate view of the state of this Church". As a former Senior Warden of a vacant cure, I recognize that the preparing the parochial report is time-consuming and unenjoyable, especially when membership of a church has decreased.

However, the parochial report has an important purpose. Among other things, the number of adult communicants in good standing determines the number of lay delegates to which a church is entitled at Convention.

Over a period of years, the membership roll of a church tends to accrue persons who have ceased participating in the life of the church but have not transferred membership to another church. Although such persons do remain members of the church, is it likely that they no longer meet the canonical definition of communicants in good standing. I ask every Rector and Vicar to review the roll of their cures at least every two years and to keep the count of the adult communicants in good standing on the parochial report accurate to within five percent. All too often, reviewing the roll is deferred indefinitely – particularly when the count is expected to decrease. Not only does deferral cause statistics to be inaccurate, it increases the workload of the next priest who will struggle to identify the communicants in good standing of an unfamiliar congregation.

## **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  
Secretary of Convention

## **Exhibit A to the Report of the Secretary of Convention**

Canon D-III.7, Section 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 December 13, 2023 the Commission certified changes to the Constitution and Canons made by the 208th Annual Convention:

- Act 2023-2 amended Article XII of the Constitution.
- Act 2023-3 amended Canons D-I.1 and D-II.1.
- Act 2023-4 amended Canon D-I.8.
- Act 2023-5 amended Canon D-III.3.
- Act 2023-6 amended Canon D-VII.4.

The Commission also undertook one technical correction: in Canon D-III.8, Section 6(c) the word “Diaconate” was replaced by “Priesthood” as context clearly requires. This editing error had existed ever since Act 2012-3 bifurcated the Commission on Ministry. Because the error was obvious and the intent of Act 2012-3 was unambiguous, the Commission on Ministry had been operating properly.

## **Exhibit B 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, Section 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.

One church did not pay its Fair Share in full prior to the canonical deadline:

St Alban's, Littleton

Accordingly, its lay delegates cannot vote at the 209th Annual Convention. This consequence is not subject to the discretion of the Ecclesiastical Authority or the Convention.

Missions and parishes should note that Canons D-V.2, Section 4(h) and D-V.1, Section 6(g), respectively, require payment of Fair Share to maintain union with Convention. Parishes should also note that Canon D-IV.4, Section 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 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, Section 4(g) or Canon D-V.1, Section 6(a), as the case may be, concerning the timely filing of an audit or with Canon D-V.8, Section 5 concerning the timely filing of a parochial report”.

Pursuant to the process defined by Rule III, the relevant churches were notified that both their clergy and lay delegates would be deprived of vote at the 209th 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 17, 2024, Diocesan Council granted 5 waivers:

Durham, St Titus – no audit.  
Greensboro, Holy Trinity – no audit.  
Huntersville, St Mark – no audit.  
Southern Pines, Emmanuel – non-timely audit.  
Winston-Salem, St Timothy – 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 209th Annual Convention:

Halifax, St Mark – no audit.  
Henderson, St John – no parochial report and no audit.  
 Mooresville, St James – non-timely parochial report and non-timely audit.  
Rockingham, Messiah – no parochial report and non-timely audit.  
Smithfield, San Jose – no parochial report and no audit.  
Weldon, Grace – no parochial report and no audit.

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

**Exhibit C to the Report of the Secretary of Convention**

**Amendments to the Constitution of The Episcopal Church  
Adopted on First Reading by the 81st General Convention**

A043 - Amend Constitution Article VIII regarding Clergy in Local Ecumenical Partnerships

Resolved, That the 81st General Convention amend Article VIII of the Constitution by adding the following paragraph at the end of the existing article:

Of Clergy in Local Ecumenical Partnerships

Local Ecumenical Partnerships (LEPs) are ministries that may be formed between Episcopal dioceses and their parallels in other Christian denominations in order to provide shared pastoral leadership. An ordained minister in good standing of one of the constituent denominations identified in the canons may be appointed by the Ecclesiastical Authority of the Diocese to serve in this Church on a temporary basis as part of a Local Ecumenical Partnership as governed by the relevant canons.

A224 - Amend Article X with clarifying amendments (post 2024-A072)

Resolved, That the 81st General Convention of The Episcopal Church repeal Article X, Sections 1 and 2, and replace with the following:

Article X: Of The Book of Common Prayer

Sec. 1. The Book of Common Prayer is those liturgical forms, communal and devotional prayers, and other content authorized by the General Convention in accordance with this article and shall be enriched by our church's cultural, geographical, and linguistic contexts.

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

Any Book of Common Prayer, or portions thereof, memorialized by the General Convention, is authorized for use at any service in all the Dioceses and other jurisdictions 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 and other jurisdictions, 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 and other jurisdictions entitled to representation in the House of Deputies.

D049 - Increase by one the possible number of bishops suffragans in a Diocese

Resolved, That Article II of the Constitution is amended as follows:

Article II: Of Bishops

Sec. 4. It shall be lawful for a Diocese, at the request of the Bishop of that Diocese, to elect not more than three Bishops Suffragan, without right of succession, and with seat and vote in the House of Bishops. A Bishop Suffragan shall be consecrated and hold office under such conditions and limitations other than those provided in this Article as may be provided by Canons of the General Convention. A Bishop Suffragan shall be eligible for election as Bishop Diocesan or Bishop Coadjutor of a Diocese, or as a Bishop Suffragan in another Diocese.



**Exhibit D to the Report of the Secretary of Convention**  
**Amendments to the Book of Common Prayer**  
**Adopted on First Reading by the 81st General Convention**

A116 – Marriage Rites for Inclusion in the Book of Common Prayer

Resolved, That the 81st General Convention authorize for trial use under Article X.b the following revisions to the Book of Common Prayer 1979:

BCP pp. 349 and 381: Following the Preface of Marriage, add the rubric “or this”, followed by Preface of Marriage, Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music (SCLM) Blue Book report p. 39

BCP p. 423: Revise the title to read “The Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage I”

BCP p. 433: Revise the title to read “The Blessing of a Civil Marriage I”

BCP p. 435: Revise the title to read “An Order for Marriage I”

Following BCP p. 438, add The Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage, SCLM Blue Book report pp. 28-36; The Blessing of Civil Marriage, SCLM Blue Book report pp. 36-37; An Order of Marriage, SCLM Blue Book report pp. 37-38; and Additional Directions, SCLM Blue Book Report, pp. 38-39; with the following revisions:

SCLM Blue Book Report p. 28: Revise the first paragraph Concerning the Service as follows: “At least one of the parties must be a baptized Christian; the ceremony must be attested by at least two witnesses; and the marriage must conform to the laws of the State and the canons of this Church.”

SCLM Blue Book Report p. 29: Revise the title to read “The Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage II”

SCLM Blue Book Report p. 35: Replace “Preface of the Season” with “Preface of Marriage, or of the Season”

SCLM Blue Book Report p. 36: Revise the title to read “The Blessing of a Civil Marriage II”

SCLM Blue Book Report p. 37: Revise the title to read “An Order for Marriage II”

SCLM Blue Book Report p. 37: Replace the first paragraph of An Order of Marriage with the following text: “If it is desired to celebrate a marriage otherwise than as provided in the Book of Common Prayer or any authorized alternative thereto, this Order is used.”

SCLM Blue Book Report p. 37: Revise paragraph 3 of An Order of Marriage as follows: “The laws of the State and the canons of this Church having been complied with, the couple, together with their witnesses, families, and friends assemble in the church or in some other convenient place.”

Blue Book Report p. 37: Revise #1 of An Order of Marriage as follows: “The teaching of the Church concerning Holy Matrimony, as it is declared in the formularies and canons of this Church, is briefly stated.”

*[Note: the text of Resolution A116 continues with additional resolves that do not change the Book of Common Prayer.]*