

1 **Title I. General Provisions**

2 **Canon 1. Definition of terms**

3 The following terms shall for the purposes of these Canons be construed to mean as follows:

4 **Section A)** "Church" means The Episcopal Church.

5 **Section B)** "National Constitution" means the Constitution for the government of The
6 Episcopal Church and amendments thereof.

7 **Section C)** "National Canons" mean the Canons for the government of The Episcopal
8 Church.

9 **Section D)** "Constitution" means the Constitution of the Church in this Diocese.

10 **Section E)** "Canons" means the Canons of the Church in this Diocese.

11 **Section F)** "Cleric" means any one Bishop, Priest, Or Deacon. "Clergy" is the plural of
12 Cleric.

13 **Section G)** "Canonically Resident" means that a Cleric has been duly received into this
14 Diocese by the Ecclesiastical Authority by acceptance of Letters Dimissory duly
15 recorded, by Ordination, or by some other mode.

16 **Section H)** "In Good Standing" when applied to any Canonically Resident Cleric means
17 that the Cleric is not under Temporary Inhibition, Inhibition, or Suspension, nor has he
18 been Deposed from the Ministry.

19 **Section I)** "Ecclesiastical Authority" is as defined in the Constitution.

20 **Section J)** "Communicant In Good Standing" means a person whose Baptism has been
21 recorded in this Church, who has received Holy Communion in this Church at least
22 three times during the preceding year and who for the previous year has been faithful in
23 corporate worship, unless for good cause prevented, and has been faithful in working,
24 praying and giving for the spread of the Kingdom of God.

25 **Section K)** "Lay Person in Good Standing" means any Communicant In Good Standing of
26 some Congregation in union with the convention of this Diocese who is not prevented
27 from receiving Holy Communion under the Disciplinary Rubrics of the *Book of*
28 *Common Prayer*.

29 **Section L)** "Member" means any Lay or Clergy Member of Convention.

30 **Section M)** "Adult" means members sixteen years of age and over except in circumstances
31 where the law of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania requires a vote by persons over
32 the age of eighteen years.

33 **Section N)** "Vicar" means the Priest-in-Charge of a Mission.

34
35 **Canon 2.** Words in the singular number include the plural and in the plural number include the
36 singular.

37
38 **Canon 3.** A masculine pronoun or title, whenever used in these canons shall be deemed to
39 include the feminine pronoun or title. A feminine pronoun or title, whenever used in these
40 canons shall be deemed to include the masculine pronoun or title.

41
42 **Title II. Of Congregations In The Diocese**

43
44 **Canon 1. Of Congregations**

45 **Section A)** A Congregation is a group of persons united for the purpose of carrying out the
46 mission of the Church, which includes acknowledging the holiness of God, hearing

46 God's word, offering prayer and worship, celebrating the sacraments and working,
47 praying and giving for the spread of the Kingdom of God.

48 **Section B)** An Unorganized Congregation is a Congregation which has not been admitted
49 into union with the Convention of the Diocese, but where, with the approval of the
50 Bishop, there are members of this Church who meet for regular services at least four
51 times a year.

52 **Section C)** A Mission is a Congregation which has been admitted into union with the
53 Convention of the Diocese and does not meet the requirements of a Parish. Two or more
54 Congregations may form a single Mission with the approval of the Bishop and the
55 Diocesan Convention.

56 **Section D)** A Parish is a Congregation which is totally financially self-supporting and has at
57 least 50 adult Communicants In Good Standing and has been granted Parish status by
58 the Diocesan Convention. A Parish also maintains a place of worship, provides an
59 adequate living for a full time priest equivalent to or exceeding the minimum salary and
60 benefits currently required by the Diocese, remains current in payment of its assessment,
61 and pays all its own operating expenses. Two or more Congregations may form a single
62 Parish with the approval of the Bishop and the Diocesan Convention.

63

64 **Canon 2. Of The Organizing Of Missions**

65 **Section A)** A Congregation which seeks to become a Mission shall make written application
66 to the Bishop, over the signatures of at least ten adult persons who propose to be
67 members thereof. This application must be on the form provided by the Bishop and must
68 include a statement that the Congregation accedes to, will be governed by, and
69 recognizes the authority over them of the National and Diocesan Constitutions and
70 Canons.

71 **Section B)** If the Bishop consents to the organizing of the Mission as thus applied for, he
72 shall name the congregation. In consultation with the Standing Committee he shall
73 appoint for the first year fit persons to serve as Officers of the Mission.

74 **Section C)** When a Congregation shall have given notice to the Bishop of its intention to
75 apply for admission into union with the convention as a Mission, has presented to the
76 Diocesan Convention a certificate from the Bishop approving such application, and also
77 a certificate from the Bishop showing that it has ten or more adult Communicants In
78 Good Standing, it may be admitted into union with the Convention by a majority vote of
79 the Diocesan Convention. When thus admitted, it shall be entitled to representation in
80 the Diocesan Convention.

81 **Section D)** The title to real estate given to or purchased for a Mission shall be vested in The
82 Diocese Of Northwestern Pennsylvania and all trust funds, endowments, or
83 undesignated bequests secured for the benefit of the Mission shall be deposited with the
84 Treasurer Of The Convention.

85

86 **Canon 3. Of The Organizing Of Parishes**

87 **Section A)** A Mission which seeks to become a Parish shall make written application to the
88 Annual Convention. This application shall include proof that:

- 89 **i.** the Congregation has at least fifty adult Communicants in Good Standing;
90 **ii.** the Congregation has supported itself financially, including a full time priest, for
91 three consecutive years;

- 92 iii. that the Congregation accedes to, will be governed by, and recognizes the authority
- 93 over them of the National and Diocesan Constitution and Canons;
- 94 iv. evidence that the Congregation will be able to continue to be self-supporting and to
- 95 pay the diocesan assessment and the minimum salary and benefits of a full time
- 96 Rector
- 97 v. a certificate from the Ecclesiastical Authority approving the application of the
- 98 Congregation.

99 **Section B)** The application required above shall be reviewed by the Resolutions Committee
100 of Convention and a proper resolution changing the status of the Mission to that of a
101 Parish shall be prepared.

102 **Section C)** A majority vote of the Convention shall change the status of the Congregation to
103 Parish.

104
105 **Canon 4. Of the Governance of Missions**

106 **Section A)** The government of a Mission is in the Ecclesiastical Authority, which may
107 appoint as its representative a priest to be Vicar of the Mission who shall conform to the
108 instruction of the Ecclesiastical Authority and be responsible to it. The Bishop shall be
109 the Rector of all Missions, and the Vicar of each Mission shall make such reports as
110 required by the Ecclesiastical Authority.

111 **Section B) Annual Meetings**

- 112 i. In every Mission an Annual Meeting shall be held in January or at such other time as
- 113 the Ecclesiastical Authority may designate. Public notice of the same shall be given
- 114 at all the services on the two preceding weekends.
- 115 ii. The Annual Meeting shall be presided over by the Vicar, or if the office be vacant, or
- 116 if the Vicar be absent, by the Bishop's Warden. When the Annual Meeting is called
- 117 to order, the qualifications for voters as defined in these Canons shall be read.
- 118 iii. Lay Persons in Good Standing of the Mission who are physically present, who are at
- 119 least 18 years of age, who are regular attendants at the services of the local church,
- 120 and who are regular contributors for the six months preceding the meeting to the
- 121 support of the local church and to the work of the Diocese and National Church as
- 122 shown on the books of the Treasurer, shall be entitled to vote at all meetings of the
- 123 Mission.
- 124 iv. No Lay Person shall vote or hold office in more than one Congregation at the same
- 125 time.
- 126 v. The Mission may nominate to the Ecclesiastical Authority not less than five nor
- 127 more than twelve adult Lay Persons in Good Standing to be appointed as the
- 128 Bishop's Committee. The length of one term of office for members of the Bishop's
- 129 Committee shall be three years with one third of the members, or as near as may be,
- 130 nominated each year at the Annual Meeting of the Mission.

131 **Section C) Of Special Mission Meetings**

- 132 i. A Special Mission Meeting may be held at any time on the written order of the
- 133 Ecclesiastical Authority. Such order shall specify the time and place of such meeting
- 134 and the business to be considered. At such meeting, no business shall be considered
- 135 other than that specified in the call.
- 136 ii. Notice of such meeting shall be read publicly in church at all services on two
- 137 weekends prior to the meeting. This notice shall specify the time and place of the

138 meeting and the business to be considered.

139 **iii.** The Bishop shall preside over such meeting. At the request of the Ecclesiastical
140 Authority, the Vicar may preside. At the request of the Ecclesiastical Authority, the
141 Bishop's Warden may preside.

142 **Section D) Of The Bishop's Committee**

143 **i.** A Bishop's Committee may be appointed by the Ecclesiastical Authority to assist the
144 Ecclesiastical Authority in governing the Mission. The Bishop's Committee shall
145 manage and be responsible for the property and material affairs of the Mission in
146 accordance with directions from the Ecclesiastical Authority.

147 **ii.** In accordance with the canon "Of Membership in Convention" the Bishop's
148 Committee shall annually select delegates to represent the Mission at meetings of the
149 Diocesan Convention.

150 **iii.** The Vicar, if there is one, shall preside at all meetings of the Bishop's Committee. In
151 the absence of a Vicar, the Bishop's Warden shall preside.

152 **iv.** The Lay Officers of a Mission shall consist of the Bishop's Warden, Property
153 Warden, Clerk, and Treasurer who shall all be adult Lay Persons In Good Standing
154 of the Mission and at least 18 years of age.

155 **v.** The Bishop's Warden and Property Warden shall be appointed annually by the
156 Ecclesiastical Authority from among the members of the Bishop's Committee.

157 **vi.** The Wardens shall see that the financial obligations of the Mission are met and that
158 the buildings belonging to the Mission are kept in good repair and are adequately
159 insured. Under the Vicar, they shall see that all things needed for the orderly worship
160 of God and for the proper administration of the sacraments are provided. They shall
161 prevent or repress all disturbance of divine worship. In the absence of a Vicar, they
162 shall, with the advice of the Ecclesiastical Authority, procure suitable supply for the
163 continuance of the services.

164 **vii.** A Clerk shall be appointed by the Ecclesiastical Authority from among the members
165 of the Bishop's Committee to serve until a successor is appointed. The Clerk shall be
166 responsible to see that minutes are taken of all Annual and Special Mission Meetings
167 and of all meetings of the Bishop's Committee and shall attest to the same in the
168 book of Minutes of the Bishop's Committee, shall maintain in the said book the
169 annual accounts of the temporal condition of the Mission, shall keep all original
170 documents, and the list of voters provided for by these Canons. The Clerk shall turn
171 over to his successor all books and documents in his possession that belong to the
172 Mission.

173 **viii.** A Treasurer, not a Cleric or the spouse of a Cleric, shall be appointed annually by
174 the Ecclesiastical Authority from among the members of the Bishop's Committee.
175 Under the authority of the Ecclesiastical Authority and the Bishop's Committee, the
176 Treasurer shall be responsible to collect, receive, disburse, and account for the funds
177 of the Mission and to present a report on the same to each meeting of the Bishop's
178 Committee. Previous to the Annual Meeting, the Treasurer shall present to the
179 Ecclesiastical Authority and to the Bishop's Committee a full and accurate statement
180 of the financial condition of the Mission. This statement shall also be read at the
181 Annual Meeting. The Treasurer shall furnish such bond as the Ecclesiastical
182 Authority shall require, but the cost of such bond shall be borne by the Mission. The
183 Treasurer shall turn over to her successor all books, documents, and funds in her

- 184 possession that belong to the Mission.
185 ix. Regular meetings of the Bishop's Committee shall be held at least quarterly.
186 x. Special meetings of the Bishop's Committee may be called at any time at the request
187 of the Ecclesiastical Authority.
188

189 **Canon 5. Of the Governance of Parishes**

190 **Section A)** This Canon supersedes and takes the place of the By-laws of all Parishes in the
191 Diocese.

192 **Section B) Of The Annual Parish Meeting**

- 193 i. In every Parish, the Annual Parish Meeting shall be held in January at a time and
194 place designated by the Vestry. Public notice of the Annual Meeting shall be given at
195 all the services on the two preceding weekends. With the consent of the
196 Ecclesiastical Authority, the Annual Meeting may be held during a different month.
197 ii. The purpose of this Annual Meeting shall be to elect members to the Vestry; receive
198 reports from the Vestry, parish officers, and organizations; receive a budget for the
199 new year; and to transact such other business as may properly come before it.
200 iii. The Annual Parish Meeting shall be presided over by the Rector or Priest-in-Charge,
201 or if the office be vacant, or if the Rector or Priest-in-Charge be absent, by the
202 Senior Warden. When the Annual Parish Meeting is called to order, the
203 qualifications for voters as defined in these Canons shall be read.
204 iv. Lay Persons in Good Standing of the Parish who are physically present, who are at
205 least 18 years of age, who are regular attendants at the services of the local church,
206 and who are regular contributors for the six months preceding the meeting to the
207 support of the local church and to the work of the Diocese and National Church as
208 shown on the books of the Treasurer, shall be entitled to vote at all Parish Meetings.
209 v. A quorum for the transaction of business in the Annual Parish Meeting shall consist
210 of 25% of the persons entitled to vote if they were present or 25 persons entitled to
211 vote, whichever is less.
212 vi. No Lay Person shall vote or hold office in more than one Congregation at the same
213 time.
214 vii. The Parish shall elect not less than five nor more than twelve adult Lay Persons in
215 Good Standing to the Vestry. The actual number to be elected shall be set by
216 resolution of two successive Annual Parish Meetings. No cleric shall be eligible for
217 election as a member of the Vestry. The length of one term of office for members of
218 the Vestry shall be three years with one third of the members, or as near as may be,
219 elected each year at the Annual Parish Meeting.

220 **Section C) Of Special Parish Meetings**

- 221 i. A Special Parish Meeting may be held at any time on the written order of the
222 Ecclesiastical Authority or of the Rector or Priest-in-Charge, or by resolution of the
223 Vestry, or on a petition to the Ecclesiastical Authority if such petition be signed by
224 not less than one-third of the number entitled to vote at the last Annual Parish
225 Meeting. All such orders, resolutions, or petitions shall specify the time and place of
226 such meeting and the business to be considered. At such meeting, no business shall
227 be considered other than that specified in the call.
228 ii. Notice of such meeting shall be read publicly in church at all services on two
229 weekends prior to the meeting. This notice shall specify the time and place of the

- 230 meeting, the business to be considered, and by whose order the meeting is called.
231 **iii.** Such meeting may be presided over by the Bishop. If the Bishop does not preside,
232 the Rector or Priest-in-Charge shall preside. If there is no Rector or Priest-in-Charge,
233 the Ecclesiastical Authority may request the Senior Warden to preside.

234 **Section D) Of Vestries**

- 235 **i.** In accordance with the Constitutions and Canons of The Episcopal Church and of
236 this Diocese the Vestry shall govern the Parish and shall manage and be responsible
237 for its property and material affairs; shall further the temporal and spiritual welfare
238 of the Parish; provide a suitable place of worship and see that it is provided with all
239 things necessary to the worship of Almighty God; shall select and call a Rector and
240 provide for the remuneration of the Rector; and shall present to each Annual Parish
241 Meeting a report on its work during the year preceding and a budget for the next
242 year.
- 243 **ii.** As to civil matters, the Vestry shall be the corporate Board of Directors. The Rector
244 or Priest-in-Charge shall be a member of and preside over the Vestry and is the
245 President of the corporation. If there is no Rector or Priest-in-Charge then the Senior
246 Warden shall be the President of the Corporation.¹
- 247 **iii.** The Vestry, in accordance with the Canon “Of Membership In Convention” shall
248 elect Lay Persons in Good Standing to serve as delegates to the Diocesan
249 Convention.
- 250 **iv.** The Lay Officers of a Parish shall consist of the Senior Warden, Junior Warden,
251 Clerk and Treasurer who shall all be adult Lay Persons In Good Standing of the
252 Parish and at least 18 years of age. No cleric or spouse of a cleric may serve as an
253 Officer of the Parish.
- 254 **v.** The Senior Warden shall be elected annually by the Vestry, upon nomination by the
255 Rector or Priest-in-Charge, from among the members of the Vestry. If there be no
256 Rector or Priest-in-Charge of the Parish, the Ecclesiastical Authority shall nominate
257 a Senior Warden from among the members of the Vestry.
- 258 **vi.** It is the duty of the Senior Warden to work closely with the Rector or Priest-in-
259 Charge, to advise the Rector or Priest-in-Charge on all matters pertaining to the
260 parish upon which the Rector or Priest-in-Charge may wish to consult the Senior
261 Warden, and to inform the Rector or Priest-in-Charge of all matters which the Senior
262 Warden feels the Rector needs to know.
- 263 **vii.** If there is no Rector or Priest-in-Charge, it shall be the duty of the Senior Warden to
264 assume all the temporal duties of the Rector including, but not limited to, presiding
265 at Vestry meetings, signing documents, filing reports, and maintaining the Parish
266 Register. In addition, it shall be the duty of the Senior Warden to provide for the
267 continuation of Divine Worship.
- 268 **viii.** The Junior Warden shall be elected annually from among their number by the
269 Vestry. It shall be the duty of the Junior Warden to see to the care of the Parish’s
270 physical property making sure that it is being kept clean and in good order and
271 repair. In the absence of the Senior Warden, the Junior Warden is to assume the
272 duties of the Senior Warden.
- 273 **ix.** The Wardens shall see that the financial obligations of the Parish are met and that
274 the buildings belonging to the Parish are kept in good repair and are adequately
275 insured. Under the Rector or Priest-in-Charge, they shall see that all things needed

- 276 for the orderly worship of God and for the proper administration of the sacraments
277 are provided. They shall prevent or repress all disturbance of divine worship. In the
278 absence of a Rector or Priest-in-Charge, they shall, with the advice of the
279 Ecclesiastical Authority, procure suitable supply for the continuance of the services.
- 280 x. A Clerk shall be elected annually by the Vestry from among their number to serve
281 until a successor has been chosen. The Clerk shall be responsible to see that minutes
282 are taken of all Annual and Special Parish Meetings and of all meetings of the Vestry
283 and shall attest to the same in the Book of Minutes of the Vestry, shall maintain in
284 the said book the annual accounts of the temporal condition of the Parish, shall keep
285 all original documents, and the list of voters provided for by these canons. The Clerk
286 shall turn over to his successor all books and documents in his possession that
287 belong to the Parish.
- 288 xi. A Treasurer, not a Cleric or the spouse of a Cleric, shall be elected annually by the
289 Vestry from among their number. Under the authority of the Vestry, the Treasurer is
290 responsible to collect, receive, disburse, and account for the funds of the Parish.
291 Previous to the Annual Parish Meeting, the Treasurer shall present to the Vestry a
292 full and accurate statement of the financial condition of the Parish. This statement
293 shall also be read at the Annual Parish Meeting before the election of officers. At
294 every meeting of the Vestry the Treasurer shall report the total assets and liabilities
295 of the Parish and the income and expenses of the general operating funds. As
296 directed the Treasurer shall report the income and expenses of any other funds. The
297 Treasurer shall furnish such bond as the Vestry shall require, but the cost of such
298 bond shall be borne by the Parish. The Treasurer shall turn over to her successor all
299 books, documents, and funds in her possession that belong to the Parish.
- 300 xii. The Vestry shall fill any mid-term vacancies in their number or among the officers
301 of the Parish by majority vote.
- 302 xiii. Regular meetings of the Vestry shall be held at least quarterly.
- 303 xiv. Special Meetings of the Vestry may be called at any time at the request of the
304 Rector or Priest-in-Charge, or of any two of the members. Notice of such meeting
305 shall be given to the Rector or Priest-in-Charge, the Wardens, and the members of
306 the Vestry. This notice shall specify the time and place of the meeting and the
307 business to be considered. No other business shall come before such meeting except
308 with the unanimous consent of the Rector or Priest-in-Charge, the Wardens, and the
309 members of the Vestry.
- 310 xv. At no meeting shall it be competent for the Vestry to transact any business except
311 there be present the Rector or Priest-in-Charge of the Parish, or, in the event of the
312 absence of the Rector or Priest-in-Charge, or if the office be vacant, one of the
313 Wardens; and except there be present a quorum consisting of a majority of the
314 elected members of the Vestry. No action affecting the rights of the Rector or Priest-
315 in-Charge shall be taken at any meeting at which the Rector or Priest-in-Charge has
316 not had the opportunity to be present.
- 317 **xvi. Indemnification**
- 318 a. No member of the Vestry shall be personally liable for monetary damages for
319 any action taken, or any failure to take any action, unless:
- 320 • said person has breached or failed to perform the duties of his office
 - 321 prescribed by these canons, and

- 322 • the breach or failure to perform constitutes self-dealing, willful misconduct
323 or recklessness
- 324 • The provisions of this section shall not apply to the responsibility or liability
325 of said person pursuant to any criminal statute, or for the payment of taxes
326 pursuant to local, state, or federal law.
- 327 **b.** The Parish shall indemnify any Vestry member and may indemnify any other
328 employee or agent, who was or is a party to, or is threatened to be made a party
329 to or who is called as a witness in connection with any threatened, pending, or
330 completed action, suit or proceeding, whether civil, criminal, administrative or
331 investigative, including any action by or on behalf of the Parish by reason of the
332 fact that he is or was a member of Vestry, employee, or agent of the parish,
333 against expenses, including attorney's fees, judgments, fines and amounts paid in
334 settlement actually and reasonably incurred by him in connection with such
335 action, suit, or proceeding unless the act or failure to act giving rise to the claim
336 for indemnification is determined by the Court to have constituted willful
337 misconduct or recklessness. With respect to any such action, the Parish may
338 participate therein at its own expense; and the Parish shall be entitled to assume
339 the defense thereof, with Counsel selected by the Parish to the reasonable
340 satisfaction of the party being indemnified. After notice from the Parish to such
341 person of its election to assume the defense thereof, the Parish shall not be liable
342 to such person for any legal or other expenses subsequently incurred by such
343 person in connection with the defense thereof. Such person shall have the right
344 to employ separate Counsel in such action, but the fees and expenses of such
345 Counsel incurred after a notice from the Parish of its assumption of the defense
346 thereof, shall be at the expense of such person.

347
348 **Canon 6. Official Books, Records, And Reports**

349 **Section A) Books and Records**

350 **i. Members**

- 351 **a.** It shall be the duty of the priest in charge to keep, so far as is practicable, a list of
352 the families and individuals within the Congregation to be retained for the use of
353 a successor.
- 354 **b.** In every Congregation, there shall be provided a proper book or books, to be
355 called The Parish Register, in which the priest in charge of the Congregation, or,
356 if the Congregation be vacant, one of the Wardens, shall record the names of all
357 persons baptized, confirmed, married, and deceased within the Congregation,
358 with such other facts as to dates, places, and persons as are important matters of
359 record, all of which shall be certified by the signature of the person making the
360 records together with the names of all persons who are Communicants of the
361 Church, with memoranda as to their reception, removal, or death.
- 362 **c.** Provision shall be made for the due recording of such other items and statistics
363 as are required in the Annual Parochial Report prescribed by the National
364 Canons.

365 **ii. Minutes**

- 366 **a.** Every Congregation shall maintain a permanent Minute Book in which the Clerk
367 shall record the Minutes of all Annual and Special Parish or Mission Meetings

368 and the Minutes of all meetings of the Vestry or Bishop's Committee.

369 **iii. Financial**

- 370 **a.** Every Congregation shall maintain paper or computer records, with adequate
371 backups, of all the financial affairs of the Congregation. Such records shall
372 include records of all assets and liabilities, income and expenses, and the
373 location of the evidence showing ownership of all assets.
374 **b.** Statements of all investment, banking, and other accounts must be sent to the
375 official mailing address of the Congregation and not to private homes.

376 **Section B) Preservation**

- 377 **i.** The Parish Register, Minute Book, and financial records of the Congregation shall
378 be kept in the church, chapel, or other property belonging to the Congregation or
379 Diocese or at such other secure location determined by the Vestry or Bishop's
380 Committee.
381 **ii.** Consideration is to be given to the preservation of all items in case of natural or man
382 made disaster when determining a secure location. Adequate backups and copies
383 should be made and held in a different location.
384 **iii.** Prior to taking any books or records away from the location specified in section 1,
385 the person taking them must notify the priest in charge or Warden of the
386 Congregation. No one may give notice to themselves.
387 **iv.** Books or records may be away from the location specified in Section A for only
388 short periods of time.
389 **v.** Items of historical interest should be collected and preserved in similar secure
390 locations.

391 **Section C) Reports**

- 392 **i.** At every visitation of the Bishop, the priest in charge of the Congregation, or the
393 Warden if there be no priest in charge, shall submit the Parish Register to the Bishop
394 for inspection.
395 **ii.** The priest in charge of every Congregation, or if there be no priest in charge, the
396 Warden and the Treasurer shall present the Annual Parochial Report to the
397 Ecclesiastical Authority by the date specified.
398 **iii.** It shall be the duty of the Vestry to see that a report, acceptable to the Ecclesiastical
399 Authority, of the Annual Audit required by the National Canons is sent to the
400 Ecclesiastical Authority on or before September first of each year.

401
402 **Canon 7. Of The Reduction And Dissolution Of Congregations**

403 **Section A)** A Congregation may petition the Diocesan Convention for a change in status of
404 that Congregation. With the assent of the Ecclesiastical Authority, the Diocesan
405 Convention, by majority vote, may grant the petition and change the status of the
406 Congregation.

407 **Section B)** Any one of the following items shall constitute cause for which the Diocesan
408 Convention may change the status of a Congregation, or suspend or dissolve entirely the
409 union of a Congregation with the Diocesan Convention:

- 410 **i.** A Congregation without a Rector, Vicar or Priest-in-Charge for three consecutive
411 years
412 **ii.** A Congregation without Officers of the Congregation for three consecutive years
413 **iii.** A Congregation without divine service for one year.

- 414 **iv.** A Congregation whose church or chapel has become disused and closed.
415 **v.** A Congregation with less than ten adult Communicants for three consecutive years.
416 **vi.** A Congregation failing for two years to pay its assessment in full.
417 **vii.** A Congregation failing for two years to file its Annual Parochial Report required by
418 the National Canons.
419 **viii.** A Congregation failing for two years to file the report of their Annual Audit as
420 required by the National and Diocesan Canons.
421 **Section C)** For any of the causes listed in Section B of this Canon the Bishop, after
422 consulting the Standing Committee, may request Diocesan Convention to change the
423 status of a Congregation to that of a Mission or to that of an Unorganized Congregation.
424 **Section D)** With the consent of the Standing Committee the Bishop may dissolve an
425 Unorganized Congregation.
426 **Section E)** When any Congregation shall have been dissolved, its name shall be stricken
427 from the roll of Congregations, all of its records shall be forwarded to the diocesan
428 office, and the title to all its property, real and personal, including money, shall forthwith
429 vest in, and be transferred to, the corporation known as The Diocese Of Northwestern
430 Pennsylvania.

431
432 **Canon 8. Of Property**

- 433 **Section A)** Any Congregation or other institution holding or intending to hold title to real
434 property shall be incorporated. Its form of incorporation shall be in accordance with the
435 laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and in harmony with the Constitution and
436 Canons of The Episcopal Church and of this Diocese, and the directions of Diocesan
437 Convention.
438 **Section B)** All property, real and personal, held by or for the benefit of any Congregation of
439 this Diocese is held in trust for the Diocese and The Episcopal Church. The existence of
440 this trust, however, shall in no way limit the power and authority of the Congregation
441 otherwise existing over such property so long as the congregation remains a part of, and
442 subject to, this Church and its Constitution and Canons.
443 **Section C)** No mortgage, judgment lien, or indebtedness shall be incurred by any
444 Congregation of this Diocese without the consent and approval of the Bishop Diocesan,
445 if there is one, and the Standing Committee and the Diocesan Council. No consent and
446 approval shall be granted unless there is a reasonable plan for the repayment of all such
447 obligations.
448 **Section D)** No real property titled to any Congregation or other institution of this Diocese
449 shall be sold, given away or otherwise alienated or encumbered without the consent and
450 approval of the Bishop Diocesan, if there is one, and the Standing Committee and the
451 Diocesan Council.
452 **Section E)** All Congregations, institutions, and other entities belonging to this Diocese or
453 any of the Congregations of this Diocese shall be adequately insured with property and
454 liability insurance that shall conform to a minimum standard for insurance established
455 by the Diocesan Council and shall provide to the Diocese a certificate of insurance
456 showing the Diocese of Northwestern Pennsylvania to be an “additional insured” on said
457 property.

458
459 **Canon 9. Of The Priest In Charge Of A Congregation**

- 460 **Section A)** The priest in charge of a Congregation shall have, subject only to the rubrics of
461 the Book of Common Prayer, the National and Diocesan Constitutions and Canons, and
462 the godly counsel of the Bishop, the exclusive charge of all things pertaining to the
463 spiritual interests of the Congregation. The priest shall order and direct the services of
464 worship and music of the church and all that pertains thereto and shall have the spiritual
465 direction and general oversight of the church school, the altar guild, and of all
466 organizations connected with the Congregation. The priest may appoint persons to
467 perform, under Clergy supervision, such duties pertaining to the services and to the care
468 and decoration of the church as are properly performed by lay members.
- 469 **Section B)** The priest shall at all times have free access to the church or chapel and to the
470 church hall, to open and use the same as shall be required for religious services and
471 offices and for such parochial occasions and objects as the priest shall deem necessary.
472 The priest may arrange, modify, or improve the furnishings, ornaments, appointments,
473 and conveniences of the church or chapel as the priest shall deem necessary. The priest
474 shall have control of the use of the church hall. In the exercise of these rights and duties,
475 however, the priest shall not disturb the fabric of the building or involve the
476 Congregation or the Diocese in any expenditure of funds not authorized by the
477 Ecclesiastical Authority or by the Officers of the Parish.
- 478 **Section C)** All employees of any Congregation, and all other Clergy in any Congregation,
479 are selected by, work under the supervision of, and may be terminated by the priest in
480 charge of that Congregation.
- 481 **Section D)** The priest shall preside, with the right to vote, at all meetings of the Vestry or
482 Bishop's Committee, and no such meeting shall be held unless the priest has been duly
483 notified of the same at least twenty-four hours previous thereto.
- 484 **Section E)** The priest shall at all times have and exercise such other rights and shall perform
485 such duties as pertain to this office under the laws and usages of The Episcopal Church.
- 486 **Section F)** The priest shall keep such records and make such reports as may be directed by
487 National or Diocesan Canons or by order of the Diocesan Convention.
- 488 **Section G)** The priest in charge of a Congregation shall give to the proper Officers thereof
489 and to the Ecclesiastical Authority at least one month's notice, in writing, of her intent to
490 resign such charge.
- 491 **Section H)** No Cleric shall officiate within the bounds of this Diocese, either by preaching,
492 reading prayers, administering sacraments, or any other sacred functions, within the
493 parochial, missionary, or other cure of a priest, unless the Cleric have received express
494 permission for that purpose from the priest in charge of the cure, or, in the absence of
495 the priest in charge, from the church Wardens or a majority of the Vestry. In the case of a
496 vacant Mission, permission shall be obtained from the Ecclesiastical Authority. Nor
497 shall any Cleric, not Canonically Resident, officiate within the bounds of the Diocese in
498 a vacant Congregation without the consent of the Ecclesiastical Authority.
- 499 **Section I)** A Cleric serving a Congregation may enter into a contractual agreement with
500 another Congregation for pastoral services. Said contract shall cover all services to be
501 provided by the Cleric to the contracting Congregation and all financial arrangements
502 between the contracting Congregation and the Cleric. Said contract must be approved by
503 both Vestries and the Ecclesiastical Authority.
- 504 **Section J)** The priest in charge of a Mission is known as a Vicar.
505

506 **Canon 10. Of The Election And Call Of A Priest For A Parish**

507 **Section A)** When the Rector or Priest-in-Charge of a Parish retires, resigns, becomes
508 incapacitated or dies, the Wardens shall promptly notify the Ecclesiastical Authority and,
509 with the advice of the Ecclesiastical Authority, make due provision for services, the cost
510 thereof to be paid by the Parish.

511 **Section B)** In the absence of a Rector or Priest-in-Charge, the Wardens shall take care that
512 the church building be kept from all secular and other uses not authorized by the
513 Church. They shall make and certify all entries in the Parish Register required by these
514 Canons and shall make out and present to the Ecclesiastical Authority the Annual
515 Parochial Report.

516 **Section C)** The Vestry shall elect a priest to be Rector of the Parish. The said election shall
517 be subject to the following provisions:

- 518 **i.** It shall be the prerogative of the Ecclesiastical Authority to submit to the Vestry the
519 name or names of priests to be considered by them.
- 520 **ii.** No election shall be had until background checks, according to criteria established
521 by the Ecclesiastical Authority, have been satisfactorily completed.
- 522 **iii.** No election shall be had until the name of the priest whom it is proposed to elect has
523 been made known to the Ecclesiastical Authority. The Ecclesiastical Authority shall
524 have sixty days in which to communicate with the Vestry. No election may be had
525 until the Vestry meets in special session to consider the comments of the
526 Ecclesiastical Authority.
- 527 **iv.** The election being made, a written notice of the election, signed by the Wardens of
528 the Parish, a copy of the call to the Rector-elect, and a copy of the letter from the
529 Rector-elect accepting the call shall be sent to the Ecclesiastical Authority.

530 **Section D)** The call of the Rector shall be in writing, signed by the Wardens and Clerk of
531 the Vestry for the Parish. It must express distinctly any special conditions, together with
532 the stipulation of salary or support and provision for residence, which shall conform, at a
533 minimum, with any resolutions regarding minimum salary and benefits. The salary may
534 be increased or decreased as the parties may from time to time agree, due notice of
535 which shall be given to the Ecclesiastical Authority by the Clerk of the Vestry.

536 **Section E)** Any priest appointed by the Ecclesiastical Authority to minister to a Parish as
537 the Priest-in-Charge, but not elected by the Vestry thereof, is sent by the Ecclesiastical
538 Authority upon such terms as to financial support, and for such a period of time, as may
539 have been agreed upon by the Ecclesiastical Authority, the priest, and the Vestry of the
540 Parish. This appointment and agreement shall be in writing.

541 **Section F) Assistants**

- 542 **i.** Prior to the calling of an Assistant, the Rector of the calling Parish shall submit the
543 name of the priest he proposes to call to the Ecclesiastical Authority. The
544 Ecclesiastical Authority shall have 60 days to communicate with the Rector and
545 Vestry about the Cleric they propose to call.
- 546 **ii.** The Ecclesiastical Authority may accept Letters Dimissory for the Assistant or may
547 grant the Assistant annual license to function within this Diocese.
- 548 **iii.** The provisions of Section D of this canon as to a written agreement on salary and
549 conditions of call apply to the calling of an Assistant.

550
551 **Canon 11. Of The Parish Alms Fund**

- 552 **Section A)** Every congregation shall have a special monetary fund called the Alms Fund.
553 **Section B)** The purpose of the Alms fund is to care for the poor and needy and to provide
554 scholarships to church related camps, conferences, and events.
555 **Section C)** The Alms Fund shall be funded by:
556 i. Special gifts for the relief of the poor and needy and
557 ii. Regular contributions:
558 a. by a monthly deposit from the regular budgeted operating funds of the
559 congregation or
560 b. by the loose offering taken at all services on one weekend a month.
561 **Section D)** Every congregation shall have an Almoner who shall oversee and distribute
562 these funds for appropriate purposes. .
563 i. If there are clergy attached to the congregation, all of the clergy shall be Almoners.
564 ii. If there are no clergy attached to the congregation then the Vestry or Bishop's
565 Committee shall elect annually a suitable Lay Person in Good Standing to be the
566 Almoner.
567 **Section E)** The Alms Fund may not be used to pay for or reimburse any business or
568 personal expenses of any Almoner or the family of any Almoner.
569 **Section F)** Records of the income and expenses of the Alms Fund are confidential but not
570 secret.
571 **Section G)** Reports on the usage of the Alms Fund shall be made to the Vestry or Bishop's
572 Committee at least quarterly and annually to the Annual Meeting of the Congregation.
573 These reports shall include income by category, expenses by category, and current
574 balance of the Alms Fund.
575 **Section H)** Like all congregational funds, the Alms Fund is subject to and shall be included
576 in the Annual Audit required by these canons.
577

Canon 12. Of Deaneries

- 578 **Section A)** The diocese shall be divided into four Deaneries as follows:
579 i. The Northwest Deanery comprising the Congregations in Erie County;
580 ii. The Northeast Deanery comprising the Congregations in Warren County, Forest
581 County and McKean County;
582 iii. The Southwest Deanery comprising the Congregations in Crawford County, Mercer
583 County, Lawrence County, Venango County and Foxburg Borough of Clarion
584 County;
585 iv. The Southeast Deanery comprising the congregations in Jefferson County; Elk
586 County; Cameron County; Clarion County, except for Foxburg Borough; and
587 Clearfield County, except for Morris Township.
588 **Section B)** At each annual Convention the Ecclesiastical Authority shall appoint a Priest in
589 Good Standing from each Deanery to be the Dean thereof.
590 **Section C)** The purpose of Deaneries is to engage in mutual education, foster fellowship
591 and communication among the Clergy and Laity within the Deanery, and to work and
592 pray for the spread of the Kingdom of God.
593 **Section D)** The Bishop shall have the power to confer upon the Deans and upon any
594 member of the Diocese such ecclesiastical title and assign duties appropriate thereto as
595 the Bishop shall deem proper. The Bishop may designate the regalia to be worn by the
596 recipient of the title.
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Title III. Of Diocesan Convention

Canon 1. Of Membership In Convention

Section A) Clergy Members

- i.** The Bishop Diocesan, Bishop Co-Adjutor, if any, and Bishop Suffragan, if any, shall have seat, voice and vote in the Clergy order at any Diocesan Convention.
- ii.** All Priests in Good Standing in the Diocese shall have seat, voice and vote in the Clergy order at any Diocesan Convention.
- iii.** All Deacons in Good Standing in the diocese shall have seat, voice and vote in the Clergy order at any Diocesan Convention.

Section B) Lay Members

- i.** All Lay Members of Diocesan Convention must be Lay Persons In Good Standing of some Congregation in union with the Diocesan Convention.
- ii.** Every Congregation admitted into union with the Convention of the Diocese is entitled to send to any Diocesan Convention two lay delegates who will have seat, voice and vote and be Lay Members thereof unless otherwise limited by canon.
- iii.** Any Congregation with an Average Sunday Attendance shown in the Annual Parochial Report of 75 to 149 is entitled to send to any Diocesan Convention three lay delegates who will have seat, voice and vote and be Lay Members thereof.
- iv.** Any congregation with an Average Sunday Attendance shown in the Annual Parochial Report of 150 or greater is entitled to send to any Diocesan Convention four lay delegates who will have seat, voice and vote and be Lay Members thereof.
- v.** In order that they may be fully represented in Convention, all Congregations may select Alternate Delegates in the same manner and with the same qualifications as Delegates. Substitution of an Alternate Delegate for a Lay Member of Convention must be certified to the Credentials Committee by the priest in charge of that Congregation. If there is no priest in charge, then a previously certified Lay Member from that Congregation shall certify the substitution.
- vi.** All Delegates to Convention shall be certified to the Credentials Committee on the form provided by the Committee and no later than March first.
- vii.** Lay Members from any Congregation which has failed to submit the Annual Parochial Report due not less than six weeks prior to the start of any Diocesan Convention shall not be entitled to vote at that Convention.
- viii.** Lay Members from any Congregation which has failed to provide evidence, adequate to the Ecclesiastical Authority, of the Annual Audit required by National Canon due not less than six weeks prior to the start of any Convention shall not be entitled to vote at that Convention.
- ix.** Lay Members from any Congregation which has failed to pay the assessment levied upon that Congregation shall not be entitled to vote at that Convention unless that Congregation has been granted relief by the Diocesan Council and is current on that agreement. A Congregation shall be considered to have failed if their assessment is not paid current through the end of the month that occurs no less than 15 days prior to the start of any Convention.

Canon 2. Of Officers Of The Convention

- 644 **Section A)** The Officers of Convention shall consist of a President, Secretary, Treasurer and
645 Chancellor.
- 646 **i. President**
- 647 **a.** The Bishop Diocesan, if there is one, will be President of and preside at meetings
648 of the Diocesan Convention.
- 649 **b.** If there is no Bishop Diocesan then the person to preside at the Convention is
650 chosen in accordance with the provisions in the Diocesan Constitution.
- 651 **ii. Secretary**
- 652 **a.** Upon nomination by the Ecclesiastical Authority, each annual Convention shall
653 elect either a Cleric in Good Standing or a Lay Person in Good Standing to be
654 Secretary of Convention and to serve until a successor is elected. Upon assuming
655 office, the Secretary is granted seat, voice, and vote in Convention.
- 656 **b.** The Secretary shall be responsible to take minutes and to produce a journal of
657 the proceedings of every Diocesan Convention. This journal shall be available to
658 the Congregations of the Diocese not more than 120 days after the adjournment
659 of the Convention.
- 660 **c.** The Secretary shall faithfully fulfill all the duties imposed on the Secretary of
661 Convention by the National Constitution and Canons and by the Diocesan
662 Constitution and these Canons.
- 663 **d.** The Secretary shall deliver to his successor all papers and materials in his
664 possession which belong to the Diocese.
- 665 **iii. Treasurer**
- 666 **a.** Upon nomination by the Ecclesiastical Authority, each annual Convention shall
667 elect either a Lay Person in Good Standing or a Cleric in Good Standing to be
668 Treasurer of Convention and to serve until a successor is elected. Upon assuming
669 office, the Treasurer is granted seat, voice, and vote in Convention.
- 670 **b.** The Treasurer shall be responsible, under the direction of the Diocesan Council,
671 for the collection, investment, and distribution of all money and securities due to,
672 held by, or payable by the Diocese and for the proper accounting thereof. The
673 Treasurer shall make a full report of all assets and liabilities of the Diocese and
674 income and expense reports of all funds under the control of the Diocese or its
675 officers to the Annual Convention. The Treasurer shall make a full report of all
676 assets and liabilities of the Diocese and the income and expenses of the general
677 operating funds to every meeting of the Diocesan Council and, as directed by
678 Diocesan Council, the income and expenses of all other funds under the control
679 of the Diocese or its officers.
- 680 **c.** The Treasurer shall faithfully fulfill all the duties imposed on the Treasurer of
681 Convention by the National Constitution and Canons and by the Diocesan
682 Constitution and these Canons. The Treasurer and any assistants to the Treasurer
683 may be bonded with the expense being paid by the Diocese.
- 684 **d.** The Treasurer shall deliver to her successor all papers and materials in the her
685 possession which belong to the Diocese.
- 686 **iv. Chancellor**
- 687 **a.** Upon nomination by the Ecclesiastical Authority, each annual Convention shall
688 elect either a Cleric in Good Standing or a Lay Person in Good Standing who is
689 licensed to practice law in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to be Chancellor

- 690 of Convention and to serve until a successor is elected. Upon assuming office,
691 the Chancellor is granted seat, voice, and vote in Convention.
- 692 **b.** Upon nomination by the Ecclesiastical Authority, the Diocesan Council may
693 elect one or more Vice Chancellors, qualified as above, as may from time to time
694 appear necessary.
- 695 **c.** The Chancellors shall function as the solicitor for and the legal advisor to, in the
696 following order: the Ecclesiastical Authority of the Diocese, the Diocesan
697 Council, and the Convention of the Diocese.
- 698 **d.** The Chancellors shall be responsible to see that the Diocese follows and obeys
699 the National Constitution and Canons and the Diocesan Constitution and these
700 Canons. The Chancellor shall interpret the meaning and application of these
701 Constitutions and Canons. His rulings may be appealed to the Diocesan
702 Convention or to the National Church as appropriate.
- 703 **e.** The Chancellors shall faithfully fulfill all the duties imposed on the Chancellor
704 of Convention by the National Constitution and Canons and by the Diocesan
705 Constitution and these Canons.
- 706 **f.** The Chancellors shall deliver to their successors all papers and materials in their
707 possession which belong to the Diocese.
- 708

Canon 3. Of Committees of Convention

Section A) Credentials

- 711 **i.** A Credentials Committee shall be nominated by the Ecclesiastical Authority and
712 elected by each annual Diocesan Convention.
- 713 **ii.** The Credentials Committee shall consist of three Clergy and three Lay Members of
714 Convention.
- 715 **iii.** The Credentials Committee shall determine the right of persons to seat, voice, and
716 vote at Convention and shall recommend to Convention persons to whom the
717 Convention should grant seat and voice.
- 718 **iv.** Any person denied a seat, voice or vote by the Credentials Committee may appeal
719 such denial to the Convention which shall make the final determination by a
720 majority vote.

Section B) Dispatch of Business

- 722 **i.** A Dispatch of Business Committee shall be nominated by the Ecclesiastical
723 Authority and elected by each annual Diocesan Convention.
- 724 **ii.** The Dispatch of Business Committee shall consist of one or more Members of
725 Convention.
- 726 **iii.** The Dispatch of Business Committee shall assist the President of Convention in
727 seeing that all the business of Convention is done in an efficient and expeditious
728 manner. The Dispatch of Business Committee shall assist the President of
729 Convention in developing an agenda and rules of order for the Convention.

Section C) Resolutions

- 731 **i.** A Resolution Committee shall be nominated by the Ecclesiastical Authority and
732 elected by each annual Diocesan Convention.
- 733 **ii.** The Resolutions Committee shall consist of three Clergy and three Lay Members.
- 734 **iii.** The Resolutions Committee shall give due consideration to all resolutions submitted
735 to it and shall present all such resolutions to the Diocesan Convention.

736 iv. The Resolutions Committee shall develop any resolutions of courtesy to be
737 considered by the Convention.

738 **Section D) Nominations**

739 i. A Nominations Committee shall be nominated by the Ecclesiastical Authority and
740 elected by each annual Diocesan Convention.

741 ii. The Nominations Committee shall consist of three Clergy and three Lay Members.

742 iii. The Nominations Committee shall be responsible to present a ballot with sufficient
743 nominees for each office to be filled by Convention.ⁱⁱ

744 **Section E) Judges of Election**

745 i. Judges of Election shall be nominated by the Ecclesiastical Authority and elected by
746 each annual Diocesan Convention.

747 ii. Three Members of Convention shall be elected to be the Judges of Election.

748 iii. The Judges of Election shall oversee the distribution and counting of ballots for each
749 election as instructed by the President of the Convention.

750 **Section F) Site of the Next Convention**

751 i. A Site of the Next Convention Committee shall be nominated by the Ecclesiastical
752 Authority and elected by each annual Diocesan Convention.

753 ii. The Site of the Next Convention Committee shall consist of one Clergy Member and
754 two Lay Members.

755 iii. The Site of the Next Convention Committee shall recommend to Convention a place
756 and date to hold the next Annual Diocesan Convention.

757
758 **Canon 4. Of Nominations**

759 **Section A)** Any Cleric or Lay Person may, and all are encouraged to, nominate qualified
760 persons to fill the various offices to be chosen at each annual Convention.

761 **Section B)** The Nominations Committee of Convention shall give notice of the need for
762 such nominations and shall set a final date for receiving of the same which shall be not
763 less than thirty days prior to Convention.ⁱⁱⁱ

764 **Section C)** Any person submitting a nomination shall do so on such form provided and give
765 such information as the Nominations Committee shall determine. Such information shall
766 include at least the name and contact information for each nominee; their consent to
767 serve if elected; a current digital photograph; and other relevant information.

768 **Section D)** A list of all nominees shall be published and distributed to all Delegates at least
769 two weeks prior to the meeting of Convention.

770 **Section E)** Additional nominations may be made from the floor of Convention. The
771 nominator shall first obtain the consent of the nominee and may present a short
772 statement.

773
774 **Canon 5. Of Resolutions**

775 **Section A)** Resolutions properly considered by the Convention are those:

776 i. Submitted by a Cleric in Good Standing.

777 ii. Submitted by a Lay Person in Good Standing.

778 iii. Submitted by some Congregation of this Diocese.

779 iv. Submitted by the Diocesan Council.

780 v. Submitted by some other committee mentioned in these Canons.

781 **Section B)** All resolutions must bear the name of the individual or organization submitting

- 782 the resolution.
- 783 **Section C)** All resolutions must be submitted to the Secretary of Convention at least forty-
- 784 five days prior to any Convention. Resolutions submitted less than forty-five days in
- 785 advance may be considered on a two-thirds vote of the Convention.^{iv}
- 786 **Section D)** All resolutions submitted which would amend the Constitution or Canons of this
- 787 Diocese are to be considered by the Constitution and Canons Committee. The
- 788 Constitution and Canons Committee will review the resolution and
- 789 i. Put the resolution in proper form to bring about the intent of the submitter
- 790 ii. Report the resolution to Convention with:
- 791 a. A recommendation to adopt the resolution
- 792 b. A recommendation to defeat the resolution
- 793 c. A recommendation to be released from any further consideration of the
- 794 resolution
- 795 **Section E)** Resolutions not affecting the Constitution and Canons submitted by persons
- 796 named in Section A i,ii, or iii of this Canon shall be considered by the Resolutions
- 797 Committee of Convention. The Resolutions Committee will review the resolution and
- 798 i. Put the resolution in proper form to bring about the intent of the submitter
- 799 ii. Report the resolution to Convention with:
- 800 a. A recommendation to adopt the resolution
- 801 b. A recommendation to defeat the resolution
- 802 c. A recommendation to be released from any further consideration of the
- 803 resolution
- 804 **Section F)** Resolutions not affecting the Constitution and Canons submitted by Diocesan
- 805 Council or other committees will be reported to Convention by the Diocesan Council or
- 806 the committee and are assumed to have a recommendation that Convention adopt the
- 807 resolution.

808

809 **Title IV. Of Constitutional Committees**

810

811 **Canon 1. Of the Standing Committee**

- 812 **Section A)** Each annual Convention shall elect one Priest in Good Standing and one Lay
- 813 Person in Good Standing to serve a term of four years on the Standing Committee. The
- 814 election shall be done on a vote by orders.
- 815 **Section B)** The Standing Committee shall fulfill all duties prescribed for Standing
- 816 Committees in the National Constitution and Canons and in the Constitution of this
- 817 Diocese and in these Canons.
- 818 **Section C)** The Standing Committee shall elect from their own body a President of the
- 819 Standing Committee. The Standing Committee shall elect from their own body a
- 820 Secretary.
- 821 **Section D)** Within three months following each annual Diocesan Convention the Standing
- 822 Committee shall appoint a person, licensed to practice law in the Commonwealth of
- 823 Pennsylvania, to serve as Church Attorney for a one year term.
- 824 **Section E)** The Standing Committee shall meet upon the call of the Bishop and from time to
- 825 time in conformity with their own rules. They shall keep a record of their proceedings.
- 826 **Section F)** When a duty is to be performed, or a power exercised, by the Standing
- 827 Committee a majority of the members shall be a quorum and a majority of the quorum

828 so convened shall be competent to act, unless the contrary is expressly required by the
829 National Constitution or Canons or the Constitution of this Diocese or these Canons.

830 **Section G)** No member of the Standing Committee shall simultaneously serve as a member
831 of the following diocesan bodies:

- 832 i. The Diocesan Council
- 833 ii. The Ecclesiastical Court
- 834 iii. The Commission on Ministry

835

836 **Canon 2. Of the Diocesan Council**

837 **Section A) Members**

- 838 i. The Bishop Diocesan, the Secretary of Convention, the Treasurer of Convention, and
839 the Chancellor of Convention shall have seat, voice, and vote on the Diocesan
840 Council.
- 841 ii. The Lay Members of each annual Convention shall elect one Lay Person in Good
842 Standing to serve a term of four years on the Diocesan Council with seat, voice, and
843 vote.
- 844 iii. The Priests in Good Standing at each annual Convention shall elect one Priest in
845 Good Standing to serve a term of four years on the Diocesan Council with seat,
846 voice, and vote.
- 847 iv. The Deacons in Good Standing at every fourth annual Convention shall elect a
848 Deacon in Good Standing to serve a term of four years on the Diocesan Council with
849 seat and voice but no vote.

850

Section B) Officers

- 851 i. The Bishop Diocesan, if there is one, shall preside at, and be the President of, the
852 Diocesan Council. The Secretary of Convention shall be the Secretary of the
853 Diocesan Council. The Treasurer of Convention shall be the Treasurer of the
854 Diocesan Council. The Chancellor of the Convention shall be the Chancellor of the
855 Diocesan Council.
- 856 ii. If there is no Bishop Diocesan, the Diocesan Council shall elect annually one of the
857 members of Council to be the President of the Diocesan Council.
- 858 iii. The Diocesan Council shall elect each year one of the members of the Council to
859 serve a one year term as Vice President of the Council.

860

Section C) Work of the Diocesan Council

- 861 i. The Diocesan Council shall oversee the program and priorities of the Diocese and
862 make a report thereon to the annual Convention of the Diocese.
- 863 ii. The Diocesan Council shall serve as the board of directors of the corporation known
864 as The Diocese of Northwestern Pennsylvania.
- 865 iii. The Diocesan Council shall develop and present to each annual Convention a budget
866 and schedule of assessments for the ensuing year.
- 867 iv. The Diocesan Council may provide a means of relief to Congregations that are
868 having difficulty paying their assessment.
- 869 v. The Diocesan Council shall develop and present to each annual Convention
870 minimum stipends and allowances for Clergy serving in the Diocese.

871

Section D) Committees

- 872 i. Diocesan Council may appoint such committees as it deems necessary to carry out
873 its work.

- 874 ii. All committees shall have a definite term of existence and a stated purpose
875 determined by the council.
876 iii. Committees shall consist of at least one member of Diocesan Council and such other
877 persons as Council may decide. These additional persons shall have seat, voice and
878 vote only as to the business of the committee. The member of Council on each
879 committee shall serve as liaison between the committee and Council.
880 iv. The member of Council shall call the first meeting of each committee. Thereafter
881 each committee may effect its own organization provided that a quorum for the
882 transaction of business shall consist of a majority of all members of the committee.

883 **Section E) Meetings**

- 884 i. The Diocesan Council shall meet on a regular basis and at least once per calendar
885 quarter.
886 ii. Special meetings of the Council may be called by the President or Vice President of
887 the Council.
888 iii. A majority of the members of the Diocesan Council shall constitute a quorum for the
889 transaction of business.

890 **Section F) Indemnification**

- 891 i. No member of Diocesan Council shall be personally liable for monetary damages for
892 any action taken, or any failure to take any action, unless:
893 a. said person has breached or failed to perform the duties of his office prescribed
894 by these canons, and
895 b. the breach or failure to perform constitutes self-dealing, wilful misconduct or
896 recklessness.
897 c. The provisions of this section shall not apply to the responsibility or liability of
898 said person pursuant to any criminal statute, or for the payment of taxes pursuant
899 to local, state, or federal law.
900 ii. The Diocese shall indemnify any Council member and may indemnify any other
901 employee or agent, who was or is a party to, or is threatened to be made a party to or
902 who is called as a witness in connection with any threatened, pending, or completed
903 action, suit or proceeding, whether civil, criminal, administrative or investigative,
904 including any action by or on behalf of the Diocese by reason of the fact that she is
905 or was a member of Council, employee, or agent of the Diocese, against expenses,
906 including attorney's fees, judgments, fines and amounts paid in settlement actually
907 and reasonably incurred by him in connection with such action, suit, or proceeding
908 unless the act or failure to act giving rise to the claim for indemnification is
909 determined by the Court to have constituted willful misconduct or recklessness. With
910 respect to any such action, the Diocese may participate therein at its own expense;
911 and the Diocese shall be entitled to assume the defense thereof, with Counsel
912 selected by the Diocese to the reasonable satisfaction of the party being
913 indemnified. After notice from the Diocese to such person of its election to assume
914 the defense thereof, the Diocese shall not be liable to such person for any legal or
915 other expenses subsequently incurred by such person in connection with the defense
916 thereof. Such person shall have the right to employ separate Counsel in such action,
917 but the fees and expenses of such Counsel incurred after a notice from the Diocese
918 of its assumption of the defense thereof, shall be at the expense of such person.
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Canon 3. Of the Constitution and Canons Committee

Section A) Each annual Convention shall elect one Priest in Good Standing and one Lay Person in good standing to serve terms of three years on the Constitution and Canons Committee.

Section B) The Bishop Diocesan and a Chancellor of the Diocese shall be members ex-officio of the Constitution and Canons Committee but shall not be counted in the determination of a quorum.

Section C) The Constitution and Canons Committee shall effect its own organization.

Section D) The Constitution and Canons Committee shall review and report to Convention on all proposals to amend the Constitution or Canons of this Diocese.

Section E) The Constitution and Canons Committee shall review these Canons during the year following every meeting of the General Convention of The Episcopal Church and propose such amendments to these Canons as they deem necessary or advisable.

Canon 4. Of the Commission On Ministry

Section A) Upon nomination by the Ecclesiastical Authority each annual Convention shall elect nine persons to serve one year terms on the Commission On Ministry. These persons may be any Cleric in Good Standing or Lay Person in Good Standing.

Section B) The chair of the Commission shall be appointed from among its members by the Ecclesiastical Authority.

Section C) The Commission shall effect its own organization.

Section D) The Commission shall faithfully fulfill all duties laid upon such Commissions by the Nation Constitution and Canons and by the Constitution of this Diocese and by these Canons.

Section E) Additional persons may be co-opted by the Commission from time to time because of their expertise or special knowledge. Any such co-opted members are given seat and voice at meetings of the Commission but do not have a vote on Commission business. Co-opted members will not be counted towards a quorum.

Canon 5. Of the Examining Chaplains

Section A) Upon nomination by the Ecclesiastical Authority each Annual Convention shall elect three Clergy in Good Standing to be Examining Chaplains. The Examining Chaplains shall assist the Bishop in determining whether persons seeking ordination have knowledge, in accordance with the National Canons, sufficient for the Order they seek.

Canon 6. Of the Ecclesiastical Court

Section A) The Ecclesiastical Trial Court shall consist of five Clergy in Good Standing and four Lay Persons in Good Standing.

Section B) Each annual Convention shall elect three persons to serve on the Ecclesiastical Trial Court for a term of three years. Persons elected shall be from each order as required to maintain the required make up of the Ecclesiastical Trial Court.

Section C) Vacancies occurring within the membership of the Ecclesiastical Trial Court shall be filled by majority vote of the remaining members of the Court. Persons elected to fill a vacancy must be from the same order as the person they replace. Vacancies must be filled within three months of notification of the vacancy unless sooner required

- 966 by other provisions of National or Diocesan canons.
967 **Section D)** Within two months following each annual Diocesan Convention the members of
968 the Ecclesiastical Trial Court shall elect from among themselves by majority vote one
969 person to serve as Presiding Judge for a one year term.
970 **Section E)** Charges for which a Cleric may be made to stand trial are contained in the
971 National Canons.
972 **Section F)** The mode and manner of making charges, securing presentments, and of
973 conducting trials shall be as established in the national Canons.
974 **Section G)** The powers, duties and procedures of the Ecclesiastical Trial Court and the
975 definition of terms used herein shall be governed by Title IV of the National Canons.
976 **Section H)** The Standing Committee shall serve as the Review Committee.
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978 **Title V. Miscellaneous**

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980 **Canon 1. Of Special Offerings**

981 **Section A) Bishops' Alms Fund**

- 982 i. The Diocese shall have a special monetary fund called the Bishops' Alms Fund.
983 ii. The purpose of the Bishops' Alms Fund is to care for the poor and needy and to
984 provide scholarships to seminaries, church related camps, conferences, and events.
985 iii. The Bishops' Alms Fund shall be funded by:
986 a. Special gifts for the relief of the poor and needy and
987 b. Regular contributions:
988 • by a monthly deposit from the regular budgeted operating funds of the
989 diocese or
990 • by the loose offering taken at all services when a Bishop visits a
991 Congregation.
992 iv. The Ecclesiastical Authority shall be the Almoner who shall oversee and distribute
993 these funds for appropriate purposes.
994 v. The Bishops' Alms Fund may not be used to pay for or reimburse any business or
995 personal expenses of any Almoner or the family of any Almoner.
996 vi. Records of the income and expenses of the Bishops' Alms Fund are confidential but
997 not secret.
998 vii. Reports on the usage of the Bishops' Alms Fund shall be made to the Diocesan
999 Council at least quarterly and annually to the Diocesan Convention. These reports
1000 shall include income by category, expenses by category, and current balance of the
1001 Bishops' Alms Fund.
1002 viii. Like all funds, the Bishops' Alms Fund is subject to and shall be included in the
1003 Annual Audit required by these canons.
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1005 **Canon 2. Of the Historiographer**

1006 **Section A)** The Ecclesiastical Authority shall appoint a Historiographer at each annual
1007 Convention who shall continue in office until a successor is appointed.

1008 **Section B)** The Historiographer shall have charge of all documents belonging to the
1009 Diocese which relate to its history or that of any Congregation of the Diocese, of the
1010 Journals of all Conventions of this Diocese, and of all books and papers committed to
1011 him by the Convention or Ecclesiastical Authority.

1012 **Section C)** In the event of the dissolution of a Congregation of this Diocese, the books,
1013 records, and historical information of that Congregation shall be delivered into the
1014 custody of the Historiographer.

1015 **Section D)** All books, papers and documents, in whatever form they may exist, held by the
1016 Historiographer shall be kept in good condition and in such place as designated by the
1017 Diocesan Council.

1018 **Section E)** The Historiographer shall issue proper certificates based upon the records in his
1019 charge

1020 **Section F)** Subject to the exclusions provided in the Canons, all books, papers and
1021 documents, in whatever form they may exist, shall be open to the inspection of the
1022 Bishop Diocesan, the Chancellor, the Standing Committee, the Diocesan Council, and
1023 any committee of the Convention.

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Canon 3. Of the Cathedral

1026 **Section A)** The Parish church of St. Paul in Erie, Pennsylvania is hereby designated as the
1027 Cathedral of the Diocese of Northwestern Pennsylvania.

1028 **Section B)** Governance of the Cathedral^v

1029 i. The Cathedral shall be governed by a Cathedral Charter, Statutes and Bylaws not in
1030 conflict with the National Constitution and Canons, the Constitution of this Diocese
1031 or these Canons.

1032 ii. Amendments may be made to the Cathedral Charter, Statutes and Bylaws in the
1033 following manner:

1034 a. Proposed amendments shall be submitted to the Ecclesiastical Authority and the
1035 Standing Committee for their advice and consent.

1036 b. Consent of both the Ecclesiastical Authority and the Standing Committee having
1037 been received, the proposed amendment shall be submitted to a meeting of the
1038 Cathedral Congregation. A majority of two thirds of those present shall be
1039 required to adopt the amendment.

1040 **Section C)** The Cathedral Congregation shall be entitled to representation in the Convention
1041 of this Diocese in accordance with the Canon on Membership in Convention.

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Canon 4. Of The Election Of A Bishop

1044 **Section A)** On the call by the Bishop Diocesan for the election of a successor, or of a
1045 Bishop Co-Adjutor or of a Bishop Suffragan or upon the death, resignation, or
1046 permanent disability of the Bishop Diocesan, the Standing Committee shall appoint nine
1047 persons to serve as a Search Committee and the Diocesan Council shall appoint nine
1048 persons to serve as a Transition Committee. The persons appointed to these committees
1049 may be any Cleric in Good Standing or any Lay Person in Good Standing.

1050 **Section B)** The Search Committee shall conduct all tasks necessary to select and nominate
1051 to the electing Convention three to five persons to be a Bishop in this Diocese.

1052 i. There will be no nominations permitted from the floor.

1053 ii. Additional persons may be nominated by written petition signed by at least three
1054 Clergy in Good Standing and ten adult Lay Persons in Good Standing. Such written
1055 petition must be submitted by a deadline established by the Search Committee.

1056 iii. All persons nominated must comply with, and be qualified for office by, the
1057 National Constitution and Canons, by the Constitution of this Diocese and by these

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Section C) The Transition Committee shall conduct all tasks necessary for the consecration, welcome, and transition to a new Bishop.

Canon 5. Of The Election Of Deputies To The General Convention

Section A) The annual Convention, in the second year preceding that in which a stated meeting of the General Convention will be held, shall elect, by the Clergy and Lay Members voting separately, four Priests in Good Standing and four Confirmed Adult Lay Persons in Good Standing to be Deputies to the General Convention.

Section B) After the election of Deputies as prescribed in Section A, additional ballots shall be taken, with the Clergy and Lay members voting separately, to elect four Priests and four Lay Persons, qualified as above, from among the remaining nominees to be Alternate Deputies to the General Convention.

Canon 6. Of The Election Of Deputies To The Provincial Synod

Section A) The Annual Convention following each triennial meeting of The General Convention of The Episcopal Church shall elect, by the Clergy and Lay Members voting separately, one Priest in Good Standing and two Confirmed Adult Lay Persons in Good Standing to be Deputies to the Provincial Synod.

Section B) After the election of Deputies as prescribed in section a, an additional ballot shall be taken, with the Clergy and Lay Members voting together, to elect and rank those remaining nominees to be Alternate Deputies to the Provincial Synod.

- i Convention 2009 added “Priest-in-Charge” to make clear that a Priest-in-Charge is the president of the Corporation and presiding officer.
- ii Convention 2009 changed “slate of” to “ballot with sufficient” to clarify that the committee's task is to present sufficient nominees for each office and not to recommend particular persons.
- iii Convention 2009 changed the deadline for nominations from no less than 60 days before convention to not less than 30 before the meeting of convention
- iv Convention 2009 changed the deadline for resolutions from 60 days to 45 before the meeting of convention.
- v Section B was changed by Convention in 2009 to add subsection ii so as to provide a way for the Cathedral Charter, Statutes and Bylaws to be amended.