

**CONSTITUTION OF THE DIOCESE OF NORTHWESTERN PENNSYLVANIA**

**Article I. Territory and accession**

Section A. That part of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church known as The Episcopal Church, situated in the northwestern portion of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, does hereby establish itself as the Diocese of Northwestern Pennsylvania and does ordain and adopt this constitution for its governance.

Section B. The diocese of Northwestern Pennsylvania consists of all members of the Episcopal Church within the Pennsylvania counties of Cameron, Clarion, Clearfield (except Morris Township), Crawford, Elk, Erie, Forest, Jefferson, Lawrence, McKean, Mercer, Venango, and Warren.

Section C. The Diocese of Northwestern Pennsylvania is a constituent part of The Episcopal Church and does accede to, recognize and adopt the Constitution and Canons of The Episcopal Church as they now exist or may hereafter be amended and acknowledges their authority over the diocese.

**Article II. Ecclesiastical Authority**

Section A. The Ecclesiastical Authority of the Diocese shall be the Bishop Diocesan.

Section B. If there be no Bishop Diocesan, or if the Bishop Diocesan be unable to act or is absent from the diocese for an extended period, then the Bishop Coadjutor, if there be one, shall be the Ecclesiastical Authority

Section C. If there be neither a Bishop Diocesan nor a Bishop Coadjutor able to act under the provisions of Sections A and B, then the Standing Committee shall be the Ecclesiastical Authority.

**Article III. Convention**

**Section A. Meetings**

**1. Annual Convention**

a) There shall be a regular convention of the church in this diocese to be held annually at a time and place to be fixed by the preceding annual convention. The action of fixing the time and place of the regular annual convention shall constitute adequate notice of such meeting.

b) For good and sufficient cause the time or place of meeting of the annual convention may be changed by the ecclesiastical authority. Notice of such a change must be given by regular mail to all canonically resident clergy and to all congregations in union with the convention at least thirty days prior to the convention.

**2. Special conventions**

a) Special conventions may be held upon the call of the ecclesiastical authority.

b) Special conventions shall be called by the ecclesiastical authority upon written petition stating the reason for such convention signed by at least five clergy canonically resident in the diocese and ten adult communicants in good standing of any two or more congregations in the diocese.

c) The special convention shall be held at a time and place fixed by the ecclesiastical authority.

d) Notice of such special convention shall be given by regular mail to all the clergy canonically resident in the diocese and to all the congregations in union with the

47 convention at least thirty days prior to the date of such special convention.

48 e) The notice shall include the reason for calling such special convention and the  
49 business to be done by such special convention.

50 f) No business, other than that stated in the notice, shall be transacted at such special  
51 convention except by three fourths majority vote of the members of the convention.

52 **Section B. Membership in convention**

- 53 1. The Convention shall be composed of the following members with voice and vote: The  
54 the officers of the Convention, at least one lay delegate from each of the congregations  
55 in union with the Convention, and all other clergy who have been canonically resident in  
56 the diocese for at least six months preceding the convention.
- 57 2. The mode of determining the number of lay delegates, of electing lay delegates, and of  
58 admitting congregations into union with the Convention shall be prescribed  
59 by Canon.
- 60 3. The mode of identifying and determining those other clergy (deacons, presbyters, and  
61 other bishops) entitled to voice and vote in convention shall be prescribed by Canon.
- 62 4. Provision may be made in the Canons for the denial of vote, but not voice, at  
63 Convention to the lay delegates from congregations which have failed to submit the  
64 Annual Parochial Report.
- 65 5. Provision may be made in the Canons for the denial of vote, but not voice, at  
66 Convention to the lay delegates from congregations which have failed to provide  
67 evidence, adequate to the ecclesiastical authority, of the annual audit required by canon.
- 68 6. Provision may be made in the Canons for the denial of vote, but not voice, at  
69 Convention to the lay delegates from congregations which have failed to pay  
70 assessments levied upon such congregation by the authority of convention.
- 71 7. No person under ecclesiastical discipline, whether clergy or lay, shall be entitled to  
72 membership.
- 73 8. The Convention shall be the sole judge of the election and qualification of its members.

74 **Section C. Officers of convention**

75 **1. President of Convention**

76 a) The Bishop Diocesan shall be president and presiding officer at all conventions. In  
77 the absence of the Bishop Diocesan, the Bishop Coadjutor, if there be one present,  
78 shall preside at convention.

79 b) If there be no Bishop Diocesan or Bishop Coadjutor to preside as called for in  
80 Article III. Section C.1.a, then the senior presbyter present (in order of length of  
81 canonical residence in the diocese) shall call the convention to order and preside  
82 until the convention shall nominate and elect a president pro-tempore.

83 **2. Secretary of Convention**

84 a) The annual convention shall elect a Secretary of Convention.

85 b) The mode of nomination, qualifications for office, duties, and term of office shall be  
86 prescribed by canon.

87 **3. Treasurer of Convention**

88 a) The annual convention shall elect a Treasurer of Convention.

89 b) The mode of nomination, qualifications for office, duties, and term of office shall be  
90 prescribed by canon.

91 **4. Chancellor of Convention**

92 a) The annual convention shall elect a Chancellor of Convention.

- 93           b) The mode of nomination, qualifications for office, duties, and term of office shall be  
94           prescribed by canon.

95           **Section D. Conduct of Convention**

- 96           1. **Quorum:** A quorum for the transaction of business shall consist of one third of the  
97           clergy entitled to vote and at least one lay delegate from each of one third of the  
98           congregations in union with convention. In the absence of a quorum a majority of those  
99           present may adjourn the convention from time to time.
- 100          2. **Voting.** The members shall deliberate in one body and each member with voting  
101          privileges shall have one vote. A majority of votes cast shall be required to adopt any  
102          measure, unless otherwise specified in this Constitution or in the Canons.
- 103          3. **Voting by orders:** On the call of any five members, not all of whom may represent the  
104          same congregation, or when called for in the Constitution or Canons, a vote by orders  
105          shall be taken. In a vote by orders the clergy delegates and lay delegates vote separately  
106          and a concurrent majority of votes cast in both orders shall be required to adopt any  
107          measure, unless otherwise specified in this Constitution or in the Canons.
- 108          4. **Elections:**
- 109               a) All elections to any office under this Constitution or the Canons of this diocese shall  
110               be by written ballot.
- 111               b) All delegates must vote for the number of persons to be elected to the various  
112               offices.
- 113               c) In order to be elected a person must receive a majority of votes cast unless otherwise  
114               specified in this Constitution or in the Canons. When the Constitution or Canons call  
115               for an election by the clergy and lay delegates voting separately then, in order to be  
116               elected, a person must receive a concurrent majority of votes cast in each order,  
117               unless otherwise specified in this Constitution or in the Canons.
- 118               d) If in any election only one person should be nominated for that office, then the  
119               election may be had by acclamation and no written balloting is required.
- 120               e) If any office remains unfilled after three ballots the Convention may decide to elect  
121               persons to the remaining offices by a plurality of votes cast rather than by requiring  
122               a majority of votes cast or may decide to drop from the ballot the person with the  
123               lowest number of votes. Any motion to make such alteration in the election process  
124               shall require a majority of three fourths.
- 125               f) Any person elected to any office in the Diocese of Northwestern Pennsylvania shall  
126               assume office at the close of the convention at which they are elected.
- 127               g) Any person elected or appointed to any office in the Diocese of Northwestern  
128               Pennsylvania or in any of its congregations shall continue in office until their  
129               successor is chosen and shall at all times well and faithfully discharge the duties of  
130               their office to the best of their ability.
- 131               h) Any person elected or appointed to any office in the Diocese of Northwestern  
132               Pennsylvania, or in any of its congregations or other organizations, when they leave  
133               office shall deliver to their successor all records and documents appertaining to that  
134               office in whatever form they may exist.

135          5. **Other matters**

- 136               a) All actions of convention shall take effect upon the adjournment of that convention  
137               unless otherwise provided in the Constitution and Canons or in the act itself.
- 138               b) The convention may make provision in the Canons of the diocese for the adoption

139 and amendment of rules of order to govern and organize the convention for the  
140 conduct of its business.

141

142 **Article IV. The Standing Committee**

143 Section A. The annual convention shall elect persons to serve upon the Standing Committee of  
144 the diocese.

145 Section B. The Standing Committee shall consist of an equal number of clergy and lay  
146 members.

147 Section C. The number of members, mode of nomination, qualifications for office, duties, and  
148 terms of office shall be prescribed by canon.

149 Section D. The Standing Committee shall have authority to fill, for the unexpired term, all  
150 vacancies that may occur in its own body.

151

152 **Article V. Diocesan Council**

153 Section A. The Diocesan Council shall consist of the Bishop Diocesan, the Bishop Coadjutor,  
154 if any, the Secretary of Convention, the Treasurer of Convention, the Chancellor of  
155 Convention and such other persons, elected by the annual convention, as may be prescribed  
156 by canon.

157 Section B. The number of members, mode of nomination, qualifications for office, duties, and  
158 terms of office shall be prescribed by canon.

159 Section C. The Diocesan Council shall have authority to fill, for the unexpired term, all  
160 vacancies that may occur in its own body or among the officers of council, other than the  
161 bishop, that were elected by the convention.

162 Section D. The Diocesan Council shall be the board of directors of the Pennsylvania non-profit  
163 corporation known as The Diocese Of Northwestern Pennsylvania and shall have all the  
164 legal powers incident thereto and shall have the power to authorize any person to act on its  
165 behalf.

166 Section E. The Bishop Diocesan will be the chair and president of council and the corporation.  
167 A vice president for the council and corporation may be elected by council from among its  
168 members. The Secretary of Convention shall serve as secretary of the council and  
169 corporation. The Treasurer of Convention shall serve as treasurer of the council and  
170 corporation. The Chancellor of Convention shall serve as chancellor of the council and  
171 corporation.

172 Section F. It shall be the duty of the Diocesan Council to develop, prosecute, and oversee the  
173 mission and ministry of the church in the diocese, to develop a budget or budgets for the  
174 work of the diocese, to fulfill all other duties laid upon the Council by the corporate charter,  
175 by the Constitution and Canons, or by resolution of Convention, and to make full reports of  
176 its work to the Annual Convention.

177

178 **Article VI. Deputies to General Convention and Provincial Synod**

179 **Section A. Deputies to General Convention**

180 1. The Annual Convention, in the second year preceding that in which a stated meeting of  
181 the General Convention will be held, shall elect, by the clerical and lay members voting  
182 separately, deputies and alternate deputies to the General Convention.

183 2. The number of deputies, mode of nomination, qualifications for office, duties, and terms  
184 of office shall be prescribed by canon provided that a sufficient number shall be elected

185 so as to assure that the diocese have the full number of deputies permitted by the  
186 Constitution and Canons of The Episcopal Church.

187 **Section B. Deputies to the Provincial Synod**

- 188 1. The Annual Convention shall elect, by the clerical and lay members voting separately,  
189 deputies and alternate deputies to the Provincial Synod  
190 2. The number of deputies, mode of nomination, qualifications for office, duties, and terms  
191 of office shall be prescribed by canon provided that a sufficient number shall be elected  
192 so as to assure that the diocese have the full number of deputies permitted by the  
193 Constitution and Canons of The Episcopal Church and the ordinances of the Province.  
194

195 **Article VII. Canons**

196 Section A. Canons, not in conflict with this Constitution, may be adopted by the Convention to  
197 implement the provisions of this Constitution and to prescribe the operation of this Diocese.  
198 Such proposed Canons or amendments thereto may be adopted, which shall require a two-  
199 thirds vote of the members present and eligible to vote at such Convention.

200 Section B. A Committee on Constitution and Canons is hereby established whose  
201 membership, mode of nomination, qualifications for office, duties, and terms of office shall  
202 be prescribed in the canons. The Committee on Constitution and Canons shall have  
203 authority to fill, for the unexpired term, all vacancies that may occur in its own body.  
204

205 **Article VIII. Election of bishops**

206 **Section A. Call for election and nomination process**

- 207 1. The requirements needed for the call to elect a bishop diocesan, a bishop coadjutor, or a  
208 bishop suffragan together with the method and process for nominating persons to the  
209 office of bishop shall be prescribed by canon.

210 **Section B. Qualification of voters**

- 211 1. In order to vote in the election of any bishop the members of convention shall meet the  
212 requirements of Article III, Section B, but with the following changes:  
213 a) It is required that all bishops, deacons and presbyters shall have been canonically  
214 resident in the diocese for at least one year preceding the convention.  
215 b) No member who is otherwise qualified shall be denied a vote in the election because  
216 of the provisions of Article III, Section B. subsections 4, 5, or 6.

217 **Section C. Voting**

- 218 1. Voting shall be by written ballot with the clergy and lay members voting separately.  
219 2. If at least two thirds of the clergy eligible to vote are present and at least two thirds of  
220 the full number of lay delegates are present then a concurrent majority of votes cast in  
221 each order shall be necessary to elect.  
222 3. If a lesser number of clerical or lay delegates are present than are called for in Article  
223 VIII, Section C subsection 2 but a quorum as specified in Article III, Section D  
224 subsection 1 exists then a concurrent majority consisting of three fourths of votes cast  
225 in each order shall be necessary to elect.  
226

227 **Article IX. The Cathedral:**

228 Section A. The Cathedral of St. Paul in the city of Erie, established as such through the  
229 amendments of the Charter of St Paul's Church, Erie, and thus established upon a Cathedral  
230 Foundation, according to the tradition of the Anglican Communion and in conformity with

231 the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, is a constituent part of the church and  
232 convention of the Diocese of Northwestern Pennsylvania. The Cathedral and the Cathedral  
233 Congregation shall be governed by the Chapter in accordance with the Cathedral Charter,  
234 the statutes and by-laws of the Cathedral, the Constitution and Canons of the Diocese of  
235 Northwestern Pennsylvania and the Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church.  
236

237 **Article X. Ecclesiastical Discipline**

238 Section A. An Ecclesiastical Court is hereby established in accordance with the Constitution  
239 and Canons of The Episcopal Church. The court's membership, mode of nomination,  
240 qualifications for office, duties, and terms of office shall be prescribed in the canons.

241 Section B. The Ecclesiastical Court shall have authority to fill, for the unexpired term, all  
242 vacancies that may occur in its own body.  
243

244 **Article XI. Amendments of the Constitution**

245 Section A. A proposed amendment to the Constitution shall be submitted in writing to the  
246 Secretary of Convention not later than 60 days prior to the meeting of an Annual  
247 Convention.

248 Section B. The proposed amendment shall be referred to the Committee on Constitution and  
249 Canons which shall report on the proposed amendment at that Annual Convention.

250 Section C. Voting on a proposed amendment shall be done by a vote by orders.

251 Section D. If the proposed amendment is approved by a concurrent majority of both orders, the  
252 proposed amendment shall lay over to the next Annual Convention where its consideration  
253 shall be one of the first orders of business. If again approved by a concurrent majority in  
254 both orders voting separately, then the Constitution shall be amended and the amendment  
255 shall take effect at the end of that Convention.

256 Section E. The Committee on Constitution and Canons shall review this Constitution during  
257 the year following every meeting of the General Convention of The Episcopal Church and  
258 propose amendments to this Constitution as they deem necessary or advisable.