

Rules of Procedure

Approved by Executive Council 3/4/17, reaffirmed by Executive Council 3/23/19

The Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Fort Worth

1. **Presiding Officer:** The Presiding Officer of the Convention shall be the Bishop, or in his/her absence, the Presiding Officer shall be the person designated in Title I Canon 4.1 of the Diocesan Canons. The Bishop or such other person is referred to in these Rules of Procedure as the "Presiding Officer." The Presiding Officer may call to the chair any qualified person to relieve him/her temporarily. The Presiding Officer shall have full power and authority to take such action (consistent with the Constitution and Canons of the Diocese) as deemed necessary to expedite the orderly disposition of the business of the Convention.

2. **Prayer:** After the Convention is called to order by the Presiding Officer, an opening prayer shall be offered by the Presiding Officer or someone designated by the Presiding Officer.

3. **Quorum:** The Chairman of the Credentials Committee shall report the number of Clergy and Lay Delegates in attendance and whether or not there is a quorum. If there is a quorum, the Presiding Officer shall recommend an Order of Business to be adopted by the Convention. Then the Convention shall proceed to such business. In the absence of a quorum, the Convention shall transact no other business other than to recess or stand adjourned from time to time until a quorum is present.

4. **Order of Business:** If there is a quorum, the Convention shall proceed to the business of the Convention pursuant to the Order of Business recommended by the Presiding Officer and adopted by the Convention. The Presiding Officer shall have the authority, in the Presiding Officer's discretion, to deviate from such Order of Business adopted as the exigencies of the occasion may require.

5. **Secretary:** The first order of business shall be the nomination of a Secretary by the Presiding Officer and election by the Convention. Assistant Secretaries may be appointed by the Presiding Officer.

6. **Parliamentarian:** The Convention shall be conducted in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised (11th edition or current). The Presiding Officer shall appoint a Parliamentarian to advise on parliamentary questions arising during the Convention.

7. **Debate:** A member having received recognition of the Presiding Officer shall give his/her name and church represented.

8. **Titles:** Any person addressing the Presiding Officer while the Convention is in session shall address the chair as "Right Reverend" or "Bishop N." if the Bishop is the Presiding

Officer. If some other person is the Presiding Officer, the address shall be, “Mr./Madam Chairman” or “Chairman N.”

9. **Microphones:** A member making a motion or brief statement shall use the nearest microphone. A member making a report or speaking at length on any subject shall use the microphone at the lectern at the front of the meeting place.

10. **Dispatch of Business:** The Presiding Officer, within a reasonable length of time before convening the Convention, shall appoint, from among the members of the Convention, a Committee on the Dispatch of Business, consisting of a Chairperson and not more than four (4) other members. It shall be one of the duties of this Committee to prepare an Order of Business.

11. **Resolutions:** Resolutions shall be delivered to the Resolutions Committee of the Convention as provided in Title I Canon 2.4.2.3 of the Diocesan Canons. Any resolutions which are not delivered to the Resolutions Committee in accordance with the foregoing Canon may be considered pursuant to Title I, Canon 2.4.2.7 of the Canons (Suspension of Deadlines).

12. **Special Order:** Any item of business of the Convention may be set as a special order of business taken up out of its regular order at any time by the concurring majority vote of the members of both orders.

13. **Voting:** At every meeting of the Diocesan Convention, and except as otherwise provided in the Constitution or these Canons, all members entitled to vote shall deliberate as one body. Each Member of the Convention with right of vote who is present shall be entitled to one vote on each question.

Unless a different vote is expressly required in another article of the Constitution or in the Canons, a majority of the aggregate number of votes shall be the decision of the question. In non-episcopal elections having more than two candidates per office, where a vote by orders or supermajority are not required by the Constitution or Canons, any candidate receiving less than 10% of the vote shall be dropped from the ballot, should additional ballots be required to elect. The Diocesan Convention may, by unanimous consent after three (3) ballots without an election for that office, provide that a plurality of all votes cast by the qualified voters shall be decisive. A concurrent majority in both orders shall be necessary to carry the question whenever a vote by orders is expressly required in the Constitution or the Canons or upon written request submitted to the Secretary at the time the vote is called on any question, by any seven (7) voting Members of the Diocesan Convention, representing not fewer than three (3) Parishes or Missions of the Diocese. All elections shall be by ballot unless the Diocesan Convention adopts a voice vote for one or more specific elections. The Presiding Officer shall appoint an Election Committee to count the ballots and report to the Convention.

Reference: Title I, Canon 5.1-5.3

14. Election of Deputies and Alternate Deputies to General Convention: For the election of the Clerical and Lay Deputies and Alternate Deputies to General Convention and the original slate reported by the Nominations Committee shall include the names of at least eight (8) qualified clergy candidates and eight (8) qualified lay candidates, plus those qualified candidates, if any, proposed from the floor of the Convention.

On the first Election Ballot Clergy and Lay Delegates with vote should each vote for (4) clergy nominees as Clerical Deputy and for (4) lay nominees as Lay Deputy; on successive ballots they should vote for the number of positions still unelected. The first four (4) clergy nominees with the highest number of votes in the majority shall be elected as Clerical Deputy in order of the majority votes received, and the first four (4) lay nominees having the highest number of votes in the majority shall be elected as Lay Deputy in order of the majority votes received.

The clergy nominees and lay nominees receiving the next highest number of majority votes shall be the First Alternate Clergy Deputy and First Alternate Lay Deputy, respectively. The candidates receiving the next highest number of votes, whether a majority or not, shall be elected as Alternate Clerical Deputy and Alternate Lay Deputy, in the order of votes received for each position, until all four (4) Clergy Alternate Deputy and four (4) Lay Alternate Deputy positions are filled.

If more persons receive a majority than positions to be filled, the positions will be filled by the four getting the highest number of votes in the majority, which will be in the order of total votes received.

Reference: Title I, Canon 5.4

15. Appointments: The Bishop shall have the authority to appoint all board members, trustees, committee members, and fill other positions which are not required to be elected or otherwise selected by the Constitutions or Canons of The Episcopal Church, The Constitution or Canons of the Diocese of Fort Worth, or other lawful authority.

16. Limitations on Debate: To expedite the business of the Convention, debates on any pending resolution or motion shall be limited to five (5) minutes per speaker, alternating sides, and one (1) person shall not speak more than once on the pending matter until all other persons who so desire have had an opportunity to be heard. The time for discussion shall be divided as equally as practicable between the proponents and opponents of the pending subject.

17. Reports: All reports which have been distributed in advance to all members of the Convention shall be presented by title only and not read; provided however, that any person presenting such a report may give a summary of it, requiring no more than five (5) minutes to deliver.

18. **Reconsideration:** A question having been decided shall not be reconsidered at the same annual convention without the consent of two-thirds (2/3) of the members present or without a motion to reconsider.

19. **Tellers:** The Presiding Officer shall appoint a sufficient number of tellers of elections to count ballots promptly and with reasonable dispatch. Additional tellers who are not members of the Convention may be appointed in order that the official tellers may not be obligated to absent themselves from the Convention while ballots are being counted.

20. **Motions:** No motion shall be considered as before the Convention unless seconded (unless such motion is made on behalf of a committee of the Convention, in which case the second to the motion is not required) and, when required by the Presiding Officer, reduced to writing.

21. **Table:** A motion to lay a motion on the table shall be decided without debate, but cannot be used to halt debate. "Call the question" is the appropriate motion to halt debate and requires a two-thirds (2/3) vote.

22. **Amendments:**

- a. No more than two (2) amendments may be considered at one time.
- b. Amendments of more than one sentence or twenty (20) words must be submitted as a substitute motion.
- c. When any proposed change to the Constitution or Canons is pending before the Convention, amendments thereto may be sent up from the floor, if within the judgment of the Presiding Officer, such amendments are germane to the pending changes and do not alter the purpose of such pending change.

23. **Adjournment:** A motion to adjourn shall always be in order when no member is speaking and shall be decided without debate. A motion to fix the hour or day to which the Convention shall adjourn takes precedence of a motion to adjourn and shall be decided without debate.

24. **Division:** If a question under debate contains distinct propositions, the same may be divided, at the request of any member (the Presiding Officer approving), and a vote taken separately.

25. **Appeal:** All questions of order shall be determined by the Presiding Officer. Any member may appeal from any decision of the Presiding Officer and on such appeal no member shall speak more than once without leave of the Convention.

26. **Record:** The proceedings of the Convention shall be recorded and permanently filed in accordance with the Canons.

27. **Suspension of the Rules:** Any of these rules may be suspended by the unanimous consent of the Convention or by two-thirds (2/3) concurring majority vote of the members of both orders.

28. Amendments to the Standing Rules of Procedure. Amendments these Standing Rules of Procedure for the next annual meeting and special meetings of the Convention may be recommended by the Committee on Constitution and Canons and adopted by the Executive Council and the Bishop no later than six (6) months before the first day of the next annual meeting of the Convention and distributed, in a manner approved by the Executive Council, immediately thereafter to the Members of the Convention. Any of these Standing Rules of Procedure may be suspended as provided in Rule 27.