

**THE CONSTITUTION OF THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF FORT WORTH
Amended and Restated, Adopted in Diocesan Conventions 1982-2018**

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PREAMBLE

We, the Laity, Bishops, Priests and Deacons of The Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America (“The Episcopal Church” or “the Church”), resident in that portion of the State of Texas constituting what is known as the Episcopal Diocese of Fort Worth (“the Diocese”), do hereby ordain and establish the following constitution, as duly amended and restated.

TITLE I: AUTHORITY

ARTICLE I.1. AUTHORITY OF GENERAL CONVENTION

The Church in this Diocese accedes to the Constitution and Canons of The Episcopal Church (“General Constitution and Canons”) and recognizes the authority of the General Convention of the Church.

ARTICLE I.2. AUTHORITY IN THE DIOCESE

Subject to Article I.1, the authority of the Church in this Diocese is vested in the Diocesan Convention, the Bishop, and the Standing Committee.

TITLE II. DIOCESAN CONVENTION

ARTICLE II.1. MEMBERS

The Diocese entrusts its legislation to a Diocesan Convention consisting of the following Members who shall be qualified and have seat, voice, and vote, if any, as determined in the Diocesan Canons:

- 1. Bishops.** The Bishop, and the Bishop Coadjutor, Bishops Suffragan and Assistant Bishops, if any, of the Diocese, shall each be Members of the Diocesan Convention.
- 2. Priests and Deacons.** All Priests and Deacons who are canonically resident in the Diocese, who are not under ecclesiastical discipline, and who have not, in contemplation of removal from the Diocese, applied for their Letters Dimissory, shall be Members of the Diocesan Convention.
- 3. Lay Delegates.**

- 1. Adult Lay Delegates.** Each Parish and Mission in union with the Diocesan Convention shall be entitled to Adult Lay Delegates and Alternate Adult Lay Delegates determined by the number provided by Diocesan Canons. Adult Lay Delegates and Alternates chosen by and representing the Parishes and Missions of the Diocese, which may, in accordance with the Constitution and Canons of the Diocese, be entitled to such representation, shall be Members of the Diocesan Convention.

2. Youth Delegates. Youth Delegates chosen by and representing the Parishes and Missions of the Diocese, which may, in accordance with the Constitution and Canons of the Diocese, be entitled to such representation, shall be Members of the Diocesan Convention.

4. Lay Diocesan Officers. Lay Diocesan Officers as identified in the Diocesan Canons and who are not otherwise Members of the Diocesan Convention shall be Members of the Diocesan Convention.

5. Mission Station Representatives. Each Mission Station of the Diocese may select a representative who shall be a Member of the Convention.

ARTICLE II.2. MEETINGS OF THE DIOCESAN CONVENTION

1. Annual Meeting. The Diocesan Convention shall assemble annually in a city located within the Diocese, as provided in the Diocesan Canons.

2. Special Meetings. The Bishop or a majority of all members of the Standing Committee may call a special meeting of the Diocesan Convention, giving at least thirty (30) days' notice thereof. At any special meeting of the Diocesan Convention, the only business to be transacted shall be specified in the Notice of the call, except that additional items of business may be transacted by unanimous consent of the Diocesan Convention at that special meeting.

ARTICLE II.3: CONGREGATIONS IN UNION WITH DIOCESAN CONVENTION

Every Parish and Mission which shall have been created or admitted as a Parish or Mission of the Church in this Diocese, in accordance with the Constitution and Canons of the Diocese, shall be deemed to be in union with and entitled to representation in the Diocesan Convention, unless otherwise provided in this Constitution or the Diocesan Canons.

ARTICLE II.4. DIOCESAN CONVENTION AUTHORITY BETWEEN MEETINGS

There shall be an executive council, as provided in the Diocesan Canons, consisting of Laity and Clergy, which council shall, between meetings of the Diocesan Convention, carry out the policies, programs, and directives of the Diocesan Convention.

ARTICLE II.5. ASSESSMENTS

The Diocesan Convention shall have authority to raise money by Assessment or other means upon the Parishes and Missions of the Diocese, as specified in the Diocesan Canons. The Diocesan Convention shall prescribe such regulations and penalties as it may deem expedient to secure the prompt payment of Assessments, as specified in the Diocesan Canons.

TITLE III. ECCLESIASTICAL AUTHORITY

ARTICLE III.1. BISHOPS

- 1. Bishop.** The Bishop shall be the Ecclesiastical Authority of the Diocese.
- 2. Episcopal Elections.** The nomination, election, and consent process for a Bishop, a Bishop Coadjutor, or a Bishop Suffragan for the Diocese shall be as provided in the General Constitution and Canons and the Diocesan Constitution and Canons. Election by the Diocesan Convention shall be by ballot and achieved upon a concurrent vote of two-thirds (2/3) of those present and entitled to vote in each order.
- 3. Assistant Bishops.** The Bishop may call an Assistant Bishop in accordance with the General Constitution and Canons.

ARTICLE III.2. STANDING COMMITTEE

- 1. Duties.** There shall be a Standing Committee of the Diocese. When the Bishop is the Ecclesiastical Authority of the Diocese, the Standing Committee shall be the Bishop's Council of Advice. If there be no Bishop or Bishop Coadjutor or Bishop Suffragan canonically authorized to act, the Standing Committee shall be the Ecclesiastical Authority of the Diocese for all purposes declared by the General Convention. The Standing Committee shall keep a record of all its official acts and shall report its activities to the annual meeting of the Diocesan Convention. The Standing Committee shall perform all the duties incident to its office and such other duties as provided in the General and Diocesan Constitution and Canons.
- 2. Members.** The Standing Committee shall consist of three (3) Priests entitled to be Members of the Diocesan Convention and three (3) Lay Persons who shall be Confirmed Communicants in Good Standing of a Parish or Mission of the Diocese at least eighteen (18) years of age and who shall possess such other qualifications as may be prescribed in the Diocesan Canons.
- 3. Election.** Members of the Standing Committee shall be elected by ballot by a concurrent majority of each order at an annual meeting of Diocesan Convention. Members' staggered terms of office shall be for three (3) years or until their successors are elected.

TITLE IV. CHURCH PROPERTY

ARTICLE IV.1: CHURCH PROPERTY

The title to all real estate acquired for the use of the Church in this Diocese, including the real property of all Parishes and Missions, as well as Diocesan Institutions, shall be held subject to control of the Church in The Episcopal Diocese of Fort Worth acting by and through a corporation known as "Corporation of the Episcopal Diocese of Fort Worth." All such property as well as all property hereafter acquired for the use of the Church and the Diocese, including

Parishes and Missions, shall be vested in Corporation of the Episcopal Diocese of Fort Worth.

Corporation of the Episcopal Diocese of Fort Worth shall hold real property acquired for the use of a particular Parish or Mission in trust for the use and benefit of such Parish or Mission. The income from such property shall belong to such Parish or Mission, which will be responsible for expenses attributable thereto. Such property may not be conveyed, leased or encumbered by Corporation of the Episcopal Diocese of Fort Worth without the consent of the Rector, Wardens and Vestry of such Parish or Mission. Upon dissolution of such Parish or Mission, property held in trust for it shall revert to said Corporation for the use and benefit of the Diocese, as such.

All other property belonging to the Diocese, as such, shall be held in the name of the Corporation known as "Corporation of the Episcopal Diocese of Fort Worth", and no conveyance or encumbrance of any kind shall be valid unless executed by such Corporation and as may otherwise be provided by the Canons of the Diocese.

TITLE V. GENERAL PROVISIONS

ARTICLE V.1. DIOCESAN CANONS

- 1. Authorization.** Canons of the Diocese shall be adopted by the Diocesan Convention. Diocesan Canons shall not be inconsistent with this Constitution and the General Constitution and Canons.
- 2. Process.** The process for adding, amending, or repealing the Diocesan Canons shall be addressed in the Diocesan Canons.

ARTICLE V.2. AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

- 1. Accession.** The Constitution of the Diocese shall not be inconsistent with the General Constitution and Canons.
- 2. Proposals.** Articles in this Constitution may be adopted, amended or repealed by a majority of the votes by orders at two consecutive annual meetings of the Diocesan Convention. Proposals originating from outside the Committee on Constitution and Canons for the adoption of new Articles and for amendments to or repeals of existing Articles shall be submitted in writing to the Chairman of the Committee on Constitution and Canons at least ninety (90) days prior to the first day set for the next annual Diocesan Convention. The Committee on Constitution and Canons shall submit all proposed new articles and/or amendments and proposed repeals of articles to this Constitution to the Secretary, at least thirty (30) days prior to the first day of the Diocesan Convention, for timely distribution by the Secretary (a) to each person described in Article II.1 and (b) to the Wardens of each Parish and Mission in union with the Diocesan Convention. No additions, deletions, or amendments may be made thereafter to the proposals as distributed until upon proper motion from the floor of the Diocesan Convention.

3. Presentation to Diocesan Convention. The Committee shall report thereon to the Diocesan Convention on the first day of the meeting. Where any new article or an amendment to any article in the Constitution has been so presented to the Diocesan Convention by the Committee, amendments thereto may be made from the floor of the Diocesan Convention if within the judgment of the presiding officer of the Diocesan Convention such amendments are germane to the pending new Article or amendment. No other new articles, amendments to or repeals of any articles in the Constitution shall be considered at the Diocesan Convention except by unanimous consent of the Diocesan Convention.

4. Voting. If the proposal, together with any amendments pertinent thereto, receives a concurrent majority of the vote of both orders of the Diocesan Convention, it shall be printed in the Journal and shall lay over until the next annual meeting of the Diocesan Convention. If approved by a concurrent majority of the vote of both orders of the Diocesan Convention at the next annual meeting of the Diocesan Convention, the Constitution shall be altered or amended accordingly.

5. Effective Date. New articles and amendments to or repeals of articles in the existing Constitution shall take effect immediately upon the adjournment of the Diocesan Convention. Typographical errors may be corrected by the Committee on Constitution and Canons and reported to the next meeting of the Diocesan Convention.

ARTICLE V.3. ENABLING CLAUSE

The Constitution, as has been and may be subsequently amended and restated, shall commence and be in full force and effect on and after January 1, 1983.