



**A HANDBOOK FOR VESTRY
MEMBERS AND LEADERS OF
CONGREGATIONS
IN THE DIOCESE OF DALLAS**

by

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ABBREVIATIONS AND NOTES

This handbook makes reference to a number of sources.

1. References to common legal and directive sources will be included in the body of the text, and take the following forms:

ECUSA before a citation designates a reference to either the Constitution or to the Canons of the Episcopal Church in the United States of America. For example:

ECUSA Article 1Refers to the Constitution, Article 1.

ECUSA Title I, Canon 2Refers to the Canons at the place cited.

DOD before a citation designates a reference to either the Constitution or to the Canons of the Diocese of Dallas. It also may stand before a reference to the Customary. For example:

DOD Article 1Refers to the Constitution, Article 1.

DOD Canon 12.2Refers to the Canons at the place cited.

DOD Customary p. 25Refers to the Customary at the page cited.

JGC before a citation refers to the Journal of the General Convention.

JGC 2000 v. 2, p. 829Refers to the Journal, with the year, followed by the volume and page numbers.

JDC before a citation refers to the Journal of the Diocesan Convention.

JDC 2001 p. 128Refers to the Journal, with the year, followed by the page number.

BCP before a citation refers to the Book of Common Prayer, 1979.

BCP p. 855Refers to the Book of Common Prayer and page number.

2. References to other works cited will be noted by a footnote at the bottom of the page.

A. INTRODUCTION

So, you have been elected to the Vestry? What do you do now? What is a Vestry, anyway? Isn't it just a sort of board of directors? What is expected of you? And what can you expect?

These are important questions. Some persons who serve on a Vestry have done that particular work before. Some have known others who have served on a Vestry and have a vague idea of what is involved. Some are completely new to the idea.

No matter how much or how little experience you have had with the inner workings of a congregation, this handbook is for you. Please read it through. Keep it on hand as you begin your service and while you are serving.

We will try to present to you all the relevant information that you will need to feel comfortable with your role in the life of the Church and help you become a competent member of the Vestry. We will organize the information in a most helpful way.

By the way, in many Dioceses the name of "Vestry" is reserved to those congregations known as "parishes", and the term "Bishop's Committee" is used of those congregations known as "missions." In the Diocese of Dallas, however, the term "Vestry" is applied to that body which functions as the "agent and legal representative" of either parish or mission churches. (DOD Canon 15.4; see also DOD Canon 14.1)

Let's begin, then, by placing the work of the Vestry in its proper context. Service on the Vestry is a ministry. Grasping the nature of this ministry will be the key to doing this work well and constructively for the glory of God and the benefit of God's People.

B. A SHORT HISTORY OF THE VESTRY

Imagine that you are a member of a colonial Church back in the days of the American Revolution. Before the outbreak of the War, your congregation was simply part of the Church of England. Likely as not, if you had a priest, he might actually have come from England. His “living” was likely paid for by some society or other in the home country. Even if your priest had been born in the colonies, he would have spent some time in England getting an education that would equip him for service in the Church. Support and maintenance of Church buildings derived from fees paid for pews by members (called “pew taxes”) and rental income from farm land or houses dedicated as Church property.

Most congregations in the colonies, however, had no priest. For example, in Connecticut just after the War, a meeting of all the clergy was held. There were 40 congregations in that colony at the time and there were some 40,000 persons who counted themselves “Anglican.” But there were only 14 ordained clergy!

Even more startling was the fact that there was no bishop anywhere in the colonies. From time to time, the Bishop of London exercised oversight of the churches in the colonies, but this was sporadic at best. And from 1748, not even the Bishop of London seemed to demonstrate much attention to the colonial congregations.

For the most part, where congregations of the Church of England grew and carried on ministry in the American colonies, they did so because of dedicated and generous lay people. Morning Prayer was the typical form of Sunday worship. The day to day care of Church buildings and Church people fell to lay folk supplemented by the occasional visit of a priest when and where possible.

Because the life, work and worship of these early colonial churches depended so much on the laity, it is not surprising that these congregations turned to a small group of members to take leadership and bear responsibility for their property and activities. This group came to be known as Vestry. The name derives from the place in the Church building where they met, usually the only space available besides the area used for worship: the vesting room. So important was the work of the Vestry that in many colonial towns this body became for all intents and purposes the city council, paving and repairing roads, looking out after the needy and poor, caring for public buildings, and so forth.

After the War, these colonial congregations faced a crisis hard to imagine in our own day. In the first place, they were on their own. All ties with the Church of England were now gone. Worse yet, many neighbors and even friends of those who had been members of such congregations were now hostile, and any connection with the former home country was suspect. In the period immediately following the War, countless numbers of “Anglicans” left their homes and went either to England or to Canada – some even went to territories, like Florida, under Spanish control.

In colonial times, many congregations had acquired title to lands from the King to be used for the benefit of their religious work. After the War, the question of who owned what became acute. Without an organized structure to hold and use these properties, the rights of the congregations were in doubt.

It began to dawn on many loyal members of these congregations that some form of organization was important not only to protect property but to promote the life of the Church itself. In the absence of some such organization, the future of the former Church of England congregations was far from certain.

The story of the emergence of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States is too complex to relate here. Suffice it for our purposes to note that, even before the end of the American Revolution, church members began to take steps to organize a church that could stand on its own in the new nation. Between 1785 and 1789, meetings were convened that would move these steps along including the creation of a constitution and canons, electing and putting forward bishops for ordination, and the writing of an *American Book of Common Prayer*. These meetings were attended by both lay and clergy representing each of the nine States of the new union.

This last point – inclusion of the laity along with clergy in the governance of the new Church – deserves more than passing notice. The fact is that one of the greatest controversies in organizing the Episcopal Church centered on whether and how the laity should share in the Church's structures. Some churchmen, most especially those from Connecticut (like Samuel Seabury, the first bishop consecrated for the American Church), believed that the laity should *not* be included. After all, the name already in use broadly to describe the former Anglican Church in America was "Episcopal," which of course meant bishops. But there was at the same time considerable hostility to the idea of importing the episcopate on the English model, even if the bishops were home-grown. William White, the second bishop consecrated for the American Church, once observed that only in the earliest colonial period did anyone actively seek to have consecrated bishops. As it was in his day, however, many had given up on the idea, and no doubt many others were angered at the indifference of English bishops to their plight in America and were determined not to go down that path if at all possible.

In any event, the Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church adopted in 1789 came to give a prominent place to lay leadership in the Church even as it also incorporated a full fledged episcopate. The principles upon which the new Church was organized can be summed up as follows:

- 1) There would be a national organization.
- 2) The state assemblies (eventually called Dioceses) would be its component parts.
- 3) Its governing body would be composed of two "houses": the Deputies, made up of clergy and laity, and the Bishops.
- 4) Each state assembly (Diocese) would retain sovereign authority to conduct its own affairs.

- 5) The governing body, called General Convention, would meet once every three years.
- 6) Bishops would be at first ex-officio members of the Convention; they were later given power to initiate and veto legislation.
- 7) Persons who were admitted to Holy Orders would have to declare their subscription to the authority of Holy Scripture and pledge their obedience to ecclesiastical authority.
- 8) Finally, the Convention adopted a Prayer Book on the English model for its liturgy, making changes only where necessary to accommodate the new political circumstances.

The Vestry has often been called the unique American contribution to Church governance. The role of laity in the affairs of the Church even at the local level reflected not only the American experience, where lay Christians were crucial to the survival and health of the Church before independence; it also was important theologically, since, indeed, all the baptized are responsible to God for the carrying out of the mission of the Church and for stewardship of the resources God has given the Church for this mission.

Vestries, as we have seen, were important to the Episcopal Church even in colonial times before there *was* an Episcopal Church. Oddly enough, however, it was not until 1904 that a provision on Parish Vestries was included in the national Canons. This was due no doubt to principle four set out above: each Diocese would make its own rules with respect to Vestries. But with the changes that had come about in American legal standards, especially with respect to corporations and like entities, it was thought that a new Canon was required.

Here is the relevant Canon on Parish Vestries: (ECUSA Title I, Canon 14)

Section 1. In every Parish of this Church the number, mode of selection, and term of office of Wardens and Members of the Vestry, with the qualifications of voters, shall be such as the State or Diocesan law may permit or require, and the Wardens and Members of the Vestry selected under such law shall hold office until their successors are selected and have qualified.

Section 2. Except as provided by the law of the State or of the Diocese, the Vestry shall be agents and legal representatives of the Parish in all matters concerning its corporate property and the relations of the Parish to its Clergy.

Section 3. Unless it conflict with the law as aforesaid, the Rector, *or such other member of the Vestry designated by the Rector*, shall preside in all the meetings of the Vestry.

Except for the words in italics, this Canon has remained the same since 1904. (The original term for “Members of the Vestry” was “Vestrymen.” The latter term was changed to reflect more contemporary interest in gender-neutral terms, but does not change the substance of the Canon.) Since 1904, there have been several legal tests of

this Canon – particularly with respect to the power of the Vestry to dispose of property. In every case, this Canon has been held to be clear and has been upheld in such disputes. We shall explore this Canon later. For now, let us observe that the Canon is sufficient to demonstrate the importance of the office of a member of the Vestry and grows out of the dignity which the laity possesses in the life, work and governance of the Episcopal Church.

More than any other church in the worldwide Anglican Communion, the Episcopal Church is deeply rooted in a representative form of church government. Lay participation in the governance of the church is a hallmark of our identity. Authority is conferred through representatives duly elected by the people. Decisions on parish matters are not made at congregational meetings, except to elect Vestry representatives.

You were chosen by a majority of the members of your parish to serve on the Vestry. It is both an honor and a great responsibility. As a Vestry member, you are a servant-trustee, a steward over the household of faith. And you are an inheritor of a fine and honorable tradition.

C. ORGANIZATION OF THE CHURCH

The Anglican Communion

The Anglican Communion is a worldwide fellowship of autonomous Churches who all in some way trace their heritage through the Church of England. They share certain distinguishing characteristics. For example, all of these Churches have some form of the historic episcopate, that is, they all have bishops who stand in the Apostolic Succession. Furthermore, these bishops must be recognized and be in communion with the Archbishop of Canterbury.

There are many church bodies who claim to be in some sense “Anglican.” They may use forms of worship derived from or based on various editions of the Book of Common Prayer, have “bishops, priests and deacons,” use vestments, and in other ways resemble Episcopal or Anglican Church practices. There are over 30 such bodies in the United States alone. However, none of these bodies and none of their bishops is recognized by the Archbishop of Canterbury, and none are accountable to any structure outside themselves.

There are at the present time some 39 autonomous Churches organized in countries all over the world, comprising well over 600 dioceses and over 80 million communicant members, who belong to the Anglican Communion. Occasionally, these autonomous Churches are called “Provinces.”

The Anglican Communion is not a single judicatory. The symbolic head of the Communion is the Archbishop of Canterbury. But it is important to note that each constituent Church in the Communion is self-governing. The Archbishop of Canterbury exercises no legislative or judicial authority over any Church other than, of course, the Church of England. The Archbishop is, literally, “first among equals,” sharing leadership of the Communion with his fellow bishops and exercising a moral and spiritual influence among the Churches which are in communion with him.

The Anglican Communion is held together not only by the Archbishop of Canterbury, but also by the Lambeth Conference of Bishops, the Primates Meeting, and the Anglican Consultative Council. These, together with the ministry of the Archbishop of Canterbury, are called the “instruments of unity.”

- The Lambeth Conference is a meeting of all the bishops of the Communion which is held every ten years and at the invitation of the Archbishop of Canterbury. This Conference allows bishops to consult together on matters of concern to the whole Church, establish policies that promote common mission and accountability, and articulate common understandings.
- The Primates Meeting is composed of the Archbishops (or “Primates”) of the autonomous Churches and meets yearly to deal with matters of common concern and mission.

- The Anglican Consultative Council is a body of representatives, composed of both lay and clergy persons, sent to it by their own Churches. The ACC also promotes unity and mission among the Churches.

The Anglican Communion is defined, not by specific rules, but by a common commitment to work together for the glory of God and the extension of the Gospel.

The Episcopal Church

The Constitution of the Episcopal Church defines this Church in the following way:

The Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America, otherwise known as The Episcopal Church . . . , is a constituent member of the Anglican Communion, a Fellowship within the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church, of those duly constituted Dioceses, Provinces, and regional Churches in communion with the See of Canterbury, upholding and propagating the historic Faith and Order as set forth in the Book of Common Prayer. (ECUSA Preamble to the Constitution)

This statement reveals some very important understandings of the Church as a whole. First, we see ourselves as part of a larger whole, that “one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church” spoken of in the Creeds of the Church. Furthermore, we are intent on “upholding and propagating the historic Faith and Order” of the Christian Church as a whole. We have come to know the “historic Faith and Order” through a specific tradition, namely that which is expressed in the *Book of Common Prayer*, and more specifically the tradition growing out of the Church of England which produced it. It is our self-understanding and our commitment to be a “constituent member of the Anglican Communion,” which means in turn that we desire to be “in communion with the See of Canterbury.” And, finally, we understand ourselves as “duly constituted” in the same way that other “Dioceses, Provinces, and regional Churches,” who are also in the Communion, are.

The Preface to the American *Book of Common Prayer* makes clear our common indebtedness to the Church of England, which “under God,” resulted in our “first foundation and a long continuance of nursing care and protection.” (BCP p. 9) Even though the Episcopal Church in the United States has continued to grow and develop its own structures and Prayer Book as necessitated by the life and needs of this independent nation, the Preface also states “that this Church is far from intending to depart from the Church of England in any essential point of doctrine, discipline, or worship”. (BCP p. 11)

The mission of the Church is defined in the Catechism as follows: “The mission of the Church is to restore all people to unity with God and each other in Christ.” (BCP p. 855)

Thus the Episcopal Church has a single mission which is to be carried out in the nation in which it has been planted and organized in concert with other Christians all of whom are centered on the Apostolic Faith and who have derived their sense of that faith and order

from a common root, the Church of England. We cannot act alone, even though we are autonomous. We belong to a larger Communion and we desire to remain faithful to the “doctrine, discipline and worship” of those other Churches which also belong to this Communion. Our Prayer Book and our Constitution and Canons have been created in order to facilitate our mission and ensure our commitment.

The Episcopal Church in the United States is comprised of 100 dioceses, all of which have acceded to the Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church, and which use the *Book of Common Prayer*. The Order of the Church is determined by the Rubrics of the *Book of Common Prayer*, by the Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church’s General Convention, and by the Constitution and Canons of the Diocese. Offenses against these standards of Order are matters of grave concern, and the clergy of the Church are liable for presentment when these standards are not adhered to.

The central authority of the Episcopal Church is the General Convention. It meets once every three years. The General Convention is made up of two houses, the House of Bishops and the House of Deputies. All bishops of the Church, whether active or retired, are entitled to seat, voice and vote in the House of Bishops. Every Diocese is entitled to send a deputation to the House of Deputies, and each Diocese is entitled to the same number of Deputies regardless of size: there are normally four clergy Deputies and four lay Deputies from each diocese of the Church. In all matters coming before the Convention, a concurrent vote of the two houses is required in order to pass any proposal. A negative vote by either house results in the failure of the proposal. Within the House of Deputies, most routine matters are decided by a voice vote. In important matters requiring a vote by orders, the lay and clergy votes are counted separately, and each diocese records a single vote. So, if the lay deputies vote one way, and the clergy deputies vote the other, the single vote is recorded as a “no” vote. Similarly, if the lay deputies are divided, or the clergy deputies are divided, the vote is recorded as a “no” vote. The overall procedure requires that proposals or changes be overwhelmingly supported in order to be enacted, and this is a safeguard against precipitous change.

The General Convention has specific authority to approve the Book of Common Prayer, approve the hymnal, adopt Canons, or amend the Constitution and Canons of the General Church. The House of Bishops elects a Presiding Bishop and the House of Deputies confirms the election. The General Convention also approves a budget to fund the work of the General Church.

The Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church is the chief pastor and primate of the Episcopal Church. He or she has responsibility for leading the Church at the General Church level, initiating and developing policy and strategy. The Presiding Bishop takes order for the ordination and consecration of new bishops, insuring that the canonical procedures are complied with. He or she also presides at all meetings of the House of Bishops. More generally, the Presiding Bishop represents the Episcopal Church to the larger society, and is responsible for speaking “God’s word to the Church and to the world.” (Canon I.2.4(a)(2)) The Presiding Bishop visits every Diocese and consults with

the bishops of the Church; reports on the state of the Church at every General Convention, and appoints various leaders to carry out specific functions.

The House of Bishops meets more frequently than the General Convention. At the present time, the bishops gather twice each year, once in the Spring and once in the Fall. Essentially, these meetings serve the purpose of allowing the bishops to confer on matters of policy and concern to the whole Church, and promote the unity of the Church. Occasionally, the House of Bishops will issue a pastoral letter to the congregations which may be required to be read by the clergy at public services of worship.

Each Diocese must accede to the Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church. This is done by a Diocesan Convention when it creates its own Constitution and Canons. After that, the Convention of the Diocese exercises the authority of the Diocese itself. Each Diocese has an annual meeting of its Convention, which is composed clergy and lay delegates:

- Clergy delegates are entitled to seat, voice and vote on the basis of their being canonically resident in the Clericus of the Diocese.
- Lay delegates are elected by their congregations. The number of lay delegates to which a congregation is entitled are set forth in the Constitution of the Diocese.

Routine matters in the Convention are decided by a voice vote of the whole. Important matters may require a “vote by orders” in which the clergy and lay delegates vote separately as in the case of the General Convention. In order for proposals to pass, the orders must concur – that is, both the clergy and the laity voting separately must approve the proposal. We will have more to say about the organization of the Diocese in a subsequent section.

Over the past thirty years or more, it has become customary for either the General Convention or the Diocesan Conventions to pass “resolutions” taking a stance on various matters. The status of such “resolutions” is open to question. Victorious parties tend to view resolutions favorable to them to be binding. Those who are on the losing side tend to the notion that they are merely “recommendatory.” The truth is, unless changes are made to the *Book of Common Prayer*, or the Constitution and Canons of the Church or of the Diocese, resolutions have only the strength of the bodies who pass them. Resolutions rarely ever resolve anything. But, as Bishop Stanton has often observed, they do tend to divide the Church into “winners” and “losers.” And “that does not serve the mission of the Church.”

Provinces of the Episcopal Church

There are 9 subdivisions of the Episcopal Church, called “Provinces.” This term should not be confused with the same term referring to the autonomous members churches of the Anglican Communion. When used in the context of the Episcopal Church, the word “Province” denotes a geographical cluster of dioceses.

Provinces in the Episcopal Church are established by Canon, though individual dioceses cannot be compelled to be associated in a Province without its consent. The Provinces

gather occasionally in a meeting called a Synod. Delegates to the Provincial Synods are elected by their respective Diocesan Conventions. The Provinces of the Episcopal Church are free to engage in mutual ministry in ways defined by each Synod. Usually, a bishop serves either as President or Vice President of each Synod, and this bishop in turn serves as a “council of advice” to the Presiding Bishop. Provincial Synods have no specific legislative or executive power.

The Executive Council of the Episcopal Church

There is an Executive Council of the Episcopal Church which is charged with carrying out the programs and policies of the General Convention. The Executive Council is composed of 38 persons who are elected, and 5 persons who serve *ex officio*, or by reasons of their office. Twenty persons are elected by the General Convention itself. Of this number, four are bishops, four are priests or deacons, and twelve are lay persons. In addition, 18 persons are elected by the provincial synods. The Presiding Bishop and the President of the House of Deputies, in addition to the Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer of the Executive Council, serve as *ex officio* members. They have a voice but no vote. The Presiding Bishop presides at meetings of the Executive Council.

Essentially, the Executive Council performs two important functions. It approves the expenditure of money and the disposal of property for the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society, for which the Executive Council serves as the Board of Directors. The Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society is the name of the corporation formed to carry out the work of the Church. On behalf of the General Convention, the Executive Council oversees the work of the Church at the General Church level, and implements the strategy and policy of the General Convention. In this regard, it is the responsibility to put together and propose a budget for carrying out the priorities and initiatives of the General Convention.

Budgets

The budget for the Episcopal Church is created by the Executive Council and modified and enacted by the General Convention. According to the Canons, the Budget is made up of two large sections: the Canonical portion, and the Program portion. (The Canonical portion is described in Title I, Canon 4, Section 6(b); the Program portion is found in Section 6(c).)

The Canonical portion provides for the “contingent expenses of the General Convention, the stipend of the Presiding Bishop together with the necessary expenses of that office, the necessary expenses of the President of the House of Deputies, including the staff and Advisory Council required to assist in the performance of the duties and matters related to the President’s office, and the applicable Church Pension Fund assessments, and also the corporate requirements for the administrative support of the Domestic & Foreign Missionary Society offices.” In other words, the canonical portion of the budget supports those aspects of the Church’s life *required* by Constitution and Canons of the Church itself.

The Program Portion is discretionary. It is not *required* in any strict sense, but represents the specific initiatives and programs of the General Convention. The Program Portion of the budget can change from Convention to Convention while the demands of the Canonical Portion will remain basically unchanged because mandated by the structures of the Church itself.

Revenue to support the budget of the Episcopal Church is “generated” by a “single asking” made to the dioceses by the General Convention. (ECUSA Title I, Canon 4, Section 6(d)) The “asking” is based on a general formula that applies to all the dioceses. The decision of the dioceses to support the budget and in what amount lies with the dioceses themselves. The “asking” is not an assessment. The Canons provide that if a shortfall should occur in the revenue portion of the budget, the Executive Council is directed to fulfill the Canonical Portion first, and then apportion the rest of the income to the Program Portion.

The dioceses are in turn required by Canon to notify each parish and mission of the amount of the “asking” of such dioceses. (Title I, Canon 4, Section 6(h).)

Historian John Booty, a priest of the Episcopal Church, has observed that

If the original polity of this church at first seemed patterned after the states-rights polity of the confederation of the colonies, the government after 1919 seemed more and more to emulate the federal government with its concentration of power, its great responsibilities, its growing bureaucracy, and its continuing dependence upon the will and whims of those responsible for its existence.¹

Booty says, “the great power of the General Convention was and remains its control of the budget of the Presiding Bishop and [Executive] Council.” He goes on to say, “Dioceses and parishes can indicate their approval or disapproval of its policies and activities by giving or withholding the money necessary for its work.”² He draws a parallel between the relationship of the dioceses to the General Church with the relationship between individual parishioners and their parishes: “ordinary people in parishes . . . provide the basis upon which all else exists.”³

At the present time (in the year 2002), the Budget of the Episcopal Church is based on a revenue amount that totals \$45,885,000. Of this amount, income from the dioceses is set at \$28,577,000, or about 62% of the total income. (*Journal of the General Convention 2000*, vol. 2, p. 869. The balance comes from other sources, such as investment and interest income.) The “asking” formula is based on 21% of the total income to the dioceses, with a minor adjustment which reduces that income by \$100,000 in each case.

¹ John Booty, *The Church in History*, vol 3 of The Church’s Teaching Series (New York: The Seabury Press, 1979), p. 72.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

At the present time, the Diocese of Dallas has approached the “asking” made of it by the General Convention in the following way: 21% of the income of the Diocese is set aside as money dedicated to mission and ministry beyond the Diocese itself. Of this amount, 75% is committed to the support of the General Church; 25% is set aside for special initiatives generated by two or more parishes of the Diocese working together – this is called the Parish Cluster Fund. Parish Cluster Funds cannot be used to support any effort or project that benefits the Diocese of Dallas, nor can it be used to make up shortfalls in operating funds. Instead, these funds are used for mission projects, either domestic or foreign. Given this basic situation, the Diocesan Convention has repeatedly affirmed its intention to do two things: 1) respond to the “asking” of the General Convention at a level below its assigned formula; and 2) to pay the commitment it does make in full each year.

The Diocese sets its own budget in the following way. The Convention elects an Executive Council which in turn appoints a Finance Department. In Spring of each year, the Finance Department holds hearings which elicit needs and opportunities for ministry requiring budgetary support. In late Summer, a proposed budget is presented to the Executive Council, which amends and refines the budget. The Executive Council sends the proposed budget to the Diocesan Convention for consideration. Pre-Convention meetings by the Convocations of the Diocese discuss the proposed budget. The Convention exerts its own influence on the budget, adopting changes and amendments and adopting the finished product.

Revenue for the support of the Diocesan Budget is obtained from the parishes and missions of the Diocese by means of an “assessment.” The assessment is based on a formula which takes into account the size of the congregations affected. There are four basic classifications. The assessment amount is based on the averaged income of parishes and missions over the previous three years. The lowest assessment rate is 13%, and the highest assessment rate is 16%. Between 1999 and 2002, the rate of assessment for all four categories was reduced by 2%.

It should be noted, of course, that all percentages and figures mentioned in the preceding paragraphs are subject to change and adjustment.

Relationship between the Diocese and General Church

Some people have suggested that the relationship between the dioceses and the General Church is analogous or parallel to the relationship between congregations and the diocese of which they are a part. The difference between these two sets of relationships, however, should not be minimized.

In the first place, the historical fact is that the diocese is more basic and essential to the work of the Church than are General Church structures. Dioceses predate larger national or regional structures. The diocese is the basic local unit of the Church. Although individual congregations provide the “front-line” for the Church’s mission, they derive their status as churches from their union with all other Christians in a geographical community, and from their union with their bishop. Their financial support of the bishop

is the sign or token of their joint responsibility for the mission of the Church in their area, and commitment to a common vision and mission. That is why their financial contribution is called an “assessment.” Without that support, there would be no local Church.

Secondly, the influence of the congregations in a diocese on, for example, the budget of their diocese, is greater than, say, the influence of a diocese on the “growing bureaucracy” of the General Church. This is due precisely to the way in which representation is apportioned to congregations at the diocesan level as compared to the way depositions are provided at the General Church level. Dioceses are far more responsive to local concerns, priorities and initiatives than the General Church either should or can be. The historical fact is that the General Convention was created with a limited scope and function, namely providing a structure to provide for good order among the dioceses. The dioceses were originally understood to be competent to handle mission and ministry at the local level and sovereign so far as the ordering of their local life was concerned. The General Church was necessary only to provide a coherent structure for electing and authenticating bishops, to provide a means for the dioceses to undertake those things together which they could not do alone, and to provide such instruments as the *Book of Common Prayer*, and the *Hymnal*. The contemporary Church has recognized the need for limited scope and function in its principle of subsidiarity. This principle is articulated in a document known as *the Virginia Report*, and says, in part: “subsidiarity means that a ‘central authority should have a subsidiary function, performing only those tasks which cannot be performed effectively at a more immediate or local level.’” (*Being Anglican*, “The Virginia Report,” p. 258.)

Conclusion

Leaders of the Church, including members of the Vestries of the congregations, need to understand the processes by which the Church makes its decisions.

D. ORGANIZATION OF THE DIOCESE

Diocese

A diocese is the fundamental geographical unit of the church. It is the only ecclesiastical entity whose boundaries are precisely defined by Canon law. There are 102 dioceses in the Episcopal Church in the United States.

The Diocese of Dallas consists of the twenty-five (25) counties of Bowie, Camp, Cass, Collin, Dallas (excluding the portion of the city of Grand Prairie that is in Dallas County), Delta, Denton, Ellis, Fannin, Franklin, Grayson, Henderson, Hunt, Kaufman, Lamar, Morris, Navarro, Rains, Red River, Rockwall, Titus, Upshur, Van Zandt, and Wood.

The Diocese, as of 2001, has 38,642 baptized members in 77 parishes/missions.

The Parish is by canon law subordinate to the Diocese, and a congregation may call itself "Episcopal" only because it is in union with the Bishop and the Diocesan Convention, and accedes to the Constitution and Canons of the Diocese in which it is located. (DOD, Const & Can, p. 41)

Diocesan Convention

As noted in the previous chapter, the central authority of the Diocese resides in the Diocesan Convention. The Constitution of the Diocese of Dallas requires that the Annual Convention be held on the third Friday in October, at the Cathedral Church. The Bishop may suggest another place or time provided the Standing Committee gives consent. (DOD Article 3) Special meetings of the Convention are also possible if called by the Bishop or a majority of the Standing Committee. (DOD Article 4)

The Diocese has an annual meeting of its Convention, which is composed of clergy and lay delegates:

- Clergy delegates are entitled to seat, voice and vote on the basis of their being canonically resident in the Clericus of the Diocese.
- Lay delegates are elected by their congregations. The number of lay delegates to which a congregation is entitled are set forth in the Canons of the Diocese.

According to DOD Canon 2.1, the delegates are apportioned according to the size of the congregations, as follows:

<i>100 communicants in good standing or less</i>	<i>1 Delegate</i>
<i>101 communicants in good standing to 200</i>	<i>2 Delegates</i>
<i>201 communicants in good standing to 300</i>	<i>3 Delegates</i>
<i>301 communicants in good standing to 500</i>	<i>4 Delegates</i>
<i>501 communicants in good standing to 750</i>	<i>5 Delegates</i>
<i>751 communicants in good standing to 1,050</i>	<i>6 Delegates</i>

<i>1,051 communicants in good standing to 1,400</i>	<i>7 Delegates</i>
<i>1,401 communicants in good standing to 2,000</i>	<i>8 Delegates</i>

For the purposes of this Canon, the communicants must be “confirmed.” The number of delegates to which a congregation is entitled may be modified on the basis of the congregation’s support of the Diocesan budget. The Canons provide a scale which may result in the total number of delegates to which a congregation would otherwise be entitled being reduced, based on the percentage of the assessment actually paid to the Diocesan budget. The scale is as follows:

<u>Percentage of Assessment Paid</u>	<u>Percentage of Delegates Seated</u>
<i>90 or more</i>	<i>100</i>
<i>80 to 89.99</i>	<i>80</i>
<i>70 to 79.99</i>	<i>60</i>
<i>60 to 69.9</i>	<i>40</i>
<i>50 to 59.99</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>Less than 50</i>	<i>10</i>

Each congregation at its Annual Meeting elects its delegates. It also elects an equal number of Alternate Lay Delegates, so that if the elected Delegates cannot attend the Convention, the Alternates may take their place. (DOD Canon 2.2-3)

Lay Delegates to the Convention must be certified *in writing* by the secretary or clerk of each Vestry, or in the absence of such a person, by one of the Wardens or the Rector (or Vicar) of the congregation. (DOD Canon 2.2) If at the time the Convention convenes, a congregation has a vacancy in its delegation, the Rector (Vicar) of the congregation may fill such vacancies. (DOD Canon 2.4)

Delegates elected by each congregation in communion with the Diocesan Convention serve until their successors are elected. They represent their congregations at Annual Meeting of Convention, and at Special Meetings of Convention if there are any.

When the Diocesan Convention gathers, the first order of business, after asking God’s blessing and guidance of the Convention, is to receive a “credentials” report where the exact number of clergy and lay delegates entitled to be seated and required to do business is given. If sufficient numbers of delegates are registered and present, the Convention is declared to be organized and ready and competent to do business.

Routine matters in the Convention are decided by a voice vote of the whole. Important matters may require a “vote by orders” in which the clergy and lay delegates vote separately as in the case of the General Convention. In order for proposals to pass, the orders must concur – that is, both the clergy and the laity voting separately must approve the proposal.

The Diocesan Convention must elect officers, adopt and amend articles to the Constitution and the Canons, receive reports concerning its ministries, receive the

Bishop's address on the state of the Diocese and his charge concerning the mission of the Diocese, and adopt a budget to underwrite the ministry and mission of the Diocese.

The Bishop presides at the Meetings of Convention. Should there be no bishop, or the Bishop is unable to act, the President of the Standing Committee presides. (DOD Article 7)

Convocations

Dioceses are typically subdivided into subordinate units. In many places, these are called Deaneries or Regions. In the Diocese of Dallas we call these units "Convocations." The Diocese of Dallas is subdivided into 6 regional Convocations. Diocesan Canon 33 defines Convocations.

The Bishop determines how the Convocations are formed, but the Diocesan Convention must "concur" in this determination. (DOD Canon 33.1)

Each Convocation is made up of the Clergy who hold cures in the Convocation, and the Lay Delegates to the Diocesan Convention from congregations in the Convocation. These persons elect a Chair of the Convocation, who represents the Convocation on the Executive Council of the Diocese. The Chair may be either a member of the Clergy or a Lay Person. If the latter, the Chair need not be a *voting* member of the Convocation, but must be "confirmed Communicant in good standing" of one of the congregations in the Convocation. The Chair holds this position for two years. (DOD Canon 33.2-3)

The Convocations are permitted to undertake any functions or acts which "promote the mission of the Church in the Convocation." (DOD Canon 33.4) Some such functions might be building networks of support for clergy and laity, and providing shared worship and education opportunities.

The Bishop

The bishop is the chief pastor and chief missionary of the diocese. The Book of Common Prayer makes clear that "It is the bishop's prerogative, when present, to be the principal celebrant at the Lord's Table, and to preach the Gospel." (BCP pp. 322, and 354) This fleshes out the notion that the bishop is chief pastor of the diocese in his or her charge.

Furthermore, the Book of Common Prayer and Canon Law make clear that bishops are the "ordinaries," or those who alone are able to ordain new leaders for the Church. This, together with the role of the bishop in Confirmation, fleshes out the notion that the bishop is the chief missionary of the Diocese.

These are not the only expectations with respect to bishops in the Episcopal Church. The Rite of Ordination of a Bishop in the Book of Common Prayer declares that bishops are "called to guard the faith, unity and discipline of the Church." Bishops should serve to see that the Christian faith we have received as a people is preserved in its faithfulness to

the Apostolic Teaching contained in Scripture and the sacramental tradition of the Church, and to exercise a role that will bring people together in upholding and extending this faith. Of course, this means both that the bishop will be the primary teacher of the Diocese and apply and, if necessary, enforce the Canon Law of the Episcopal Church and of the Diocese in order that the mission of the Church moves forward.

The Bishop is required by canon law to visit each parish at least once every three years. The Bishop's "official" visitations are scheduled annually, as opportunity permits. Given the number of congregations in this Diocese, the Bishop is assisted by retired bishops who serve as surrogates and who carry out ministries assigned by the Bishop. The Bishop also welcomes opportunities to make visitations on special occasions other than the official visitation. The Bishop often teaches, preaches, meets with the Vestry, celebrates new ministries, dedicates new buildings, and engages Church members in other ways. The bishop also works with parishes seeking new clergy and congregations in conflict. In general, the bishop's primary contact is with the clergy of the diocese.

The purpose of the bishop's official visitation is to be present as the chief pastor of the diocese to teach, preach, celebrate the Eucharist, baptize and confirm if there are candidates, and examine the parish register. The bishop is not a visiting dignitary or guest in the parish, but comes as the leader of the church in the diocese to learn of the parish's vision of mission and ministry, to hear the hopes and concerns of the parishioners and to remind the congregation that it is part of a national and worldwide church, called to mission and ministry in some areas of the world where most members of that congregation are never likely to go.

Types of Bishops

Bishops come in many types, though all bishops in the American Church are chosen in the same way. The Constitution of the Episcopal Church permits every Diocese to establish the precise rules for the election of bishops. (ECUSA Article II) The general pattern, however, is this:

- 1) A call for an election of a bishop is issued by the appropriate party, called the Ecclesiastical Authority.
- 2) Permission for an election of a bishop must be obtained from a majority of the Standing Committees and the bishops of dioceses "exercising jurisdiction."
- 3) Candidates meeting certain qualifications are elicited from other bishops of the Church, from among members of the Diocese, both clergy and lay, and in some cases from clergy profiles kept by the Church Deployment Office in New York.
- 4) After a number of candidates who have been screened in some fashion have been determined, they are presented to a special Convention of the Diocese, where additional candidates may be nominated from the floor.
- 5) The Convention elects a bishop from the candidates presented, and the person elected must have obtained a majority vote among the clergy and laity voting by orders.

- 6) Once elected, the bishop-elect must pass both a psychological and medical examination, and the bishop-elects status as a priest of the Church and other qualifications set out by the Constitution must be certified.
- 7) The bishop-elect must also receive the consents of a majority of the Standing Committees and bishops with jurisdiction from the other dioceses of the Church.
- 8) When all these requirements have been met, the Presiding Bishop gives order for the consecration of the new bishop.

Bishop Diocesan: Also known as the *Ordinary*. This Bishop is the Bishop of the Diocese and exercises jurisdiction over a specific geographical territory. The Bishop Diocesan is the Ecclesiastical Authority, presides at meetings of the Convention of the Diocese and the Executive Council, and is the chief executive officer for the Diocesan administration.

Bishop Coadjutor: The Bishop Coadjutor has the “right of succession.” This type of bishop is generally elected when the Bishop Diocesan knows that he or she will retire from office and desires to insure a smooth transition from one administration to another. As part of the grounds for an election, the Bishop Diocesan must cede part of his jurisdiction to the Bishop Coadjutor – that is, he or she must give specific responsibilities and authority over certain diocesan functions to the Bishop Coadjutor. Bishops Coadjutor are, therefore, also classified as “bishops having jurisdiction.” When the Bishop Diocesan does in fact retire, the Bishop Coadjutor automatically becomes the Bishop Diocesan.

Bishop Suffragan: Bishops Suffragan are elected by the Diocese, as are the previous two types, but serve as assistants to the Diocesan and carry out duties as assigned by him or her. Bishops Suffragan do not, therefore, exercise jurisdiction. Bishops Suffragan continue in office even if the Diocesan retires, resigns or dies. Some Bishops Suffragan serve the whole Church: for example, the Bishop Suffragan for the Armed Forces. Such bishops are elected by the House of Bishops and serve under the Presiding Bishop.

Assistant Bishop: This is generally a bishop who has resigned a previous cure, but who is called by a Diocesan to serve in his or her Diocese. The status of the Assistant Bishop must be approved by the Diocesan Convention. Assistant Bishops serve at the pleasure of the Diocesan and do not remain in office when the Diocesan retires, resigns or dies.

Assisting Bishop: This is generally a bishop who has resigned a previous cure, and may well be retired, and who is called by the Diocesan to assist on a part-time basis in his or her Diocese. The Assisting Bishop need not be approved by the Convention. As with Assistant Bishops, they serve at the pleasure of the Diocesan and do not continue in office when the Diocesan departs.

Rules Concerning Bishops

The Constitution of the Episcopal Church makes the following provisions concerning bishops:

- 1) A bishop-elect must have attained the age of 30 years before being ordained and consecrated.

- 2) A bishop must be ordained and consecrated by at least three other bishops in the Apostolic Succession.
- 3) A bishop must confine the exercise of his or her office only to his or her Diocese, unless requested to perform Episcopal acts by the Ecclesiastical Authority of another Diocese. The House of Bishops or the Presiding Bishop at its direction may request such action in places there is not yet an organized Diocese.
- 4) A bishop may not resign without the consent of the House of Bishops.
- 5) A bishop already serving a Diocese may be elected to be a bishop of another Diocese. However, a Bishop Diocesan or a Bishop Coadjutor must have served at least five years in one place before being elected by another Diocese. This restriction does not apply to Bishops Suffragan.
- 6) At the age of 72, all bishops must resign their jurisdictions.

The Canons of the Episcopal Church specify certain other rules regarding Bishops and their duties:

- 1) Bishops must maintain a record of all official acts, and these records are the property of the Diocese.
- 2) Bishops performing any ecclesiastical act outside their own Dioceses must obtain permission to do so from the Ecclesiastical Authority of the appropriate Diocese.
- 3) A Bishop must actually reside in the Diocese he or she serves.
- 4) The Bishop Diocesan must not be absent for more than three months from the Diocese without the permission of the Convention or the Standing Committee.
- 5) If the Bishop Diocesan leaves the Diocese for more than 6 months, he or she must authorize the Bishop Coadjutor, the Bishop Suffragan, or the Standing Committee to act as Ecclesiastical Authority.
- 6) The Bishop Diocesan may authorize the Bishop Coadjutor, the Bishop Suffragan, or the Standing Committee to act as Ecclesiastical Authority at any time; and this authority to act remains in place until revoked by the Diocesan.
- 7) The Bishop Diocesan must visit every congregation in his or her Diocese at least once in three years.
- 8) At these visitations, the Bishop “shall preside at the Holy Eucharist and at the Initiatory Rites, as required, preach the Word, examine the records of the Congregation ... and examine the life and ministry of the Clergy and Congregation...”
- 9) Bishops Diocesan may deliver a “Charge to the Clergy of the Diocese and a Pastoral Letter to the people of the Diocese on points of doctrine, discipline, or worship.” The Bishop may also require pastoral letters to be read by the clergy to the congregations.
- 10) The Bishop Diocesan must make a report on the state of the Diocese at every annual Diocesan Convention.

There are other responsibilities of the Bishop with respect to the parish calling process, situations of conflict between the parish and its clergy, and disciplinary matters which will be covered later in this handbook.

The Executive Council of the Diocese

The Executive Council of the Diocese oversees and carries out the ministry and mission of the Diocese, and serves as the executive authority of the Diocesan Convention between its meetings.

The Bishop presides at all meetings of the Executive Council. In his absence, the President of the Standing Committee presides. The Executive Council meets monthly during the year, except in July.

The Officers of the Diocese are full members of the Executive Council. These are: the Bishop, the Bishop Coadjutor and/or Bishop(s) Suffragan (if any), the President of the Standing Committee, the Treasurer of the Diocese, the Presidents of the Episcopal Young Churchmen, The Episcopal Church Women, and the Episcopal Church Men (if there be any), and the Chair of each Convocation.

In addition, there are eighteen members of the Executive Council elected by the Diocesan Convention. Of these, 6 are elected from members of the clergy, and 12 are elected from lay person who are communicants in good standing of the congregations of the Diocese. These persons are elected for three year terms on a rotating basis, 2 clergy and 4 lay persons each year. Persons who have served a full three year term cannot be re-elected. Vacancies in office are filled by the Executive Council, and persons elected this way serve out the unexpired term.

The Executive Council works through departments determined by the Bishop with the consent of the Council. Such departments may include members who are not elected members of the Executive Council itself.

At the present time, the Executive Council's Departments and their responsibilities are:

- **Finance Department:** This department oversees the finances of the Diocese and supervises the budget process. They must also approve loans sought by congregations when these affect the use of property.
- **Evangelism Department:** This department serves to remind the Executive Council of our obligation to be missionaries for Jesus Christ, and to examine the programs and emphases of the Diocese with respect to this mission. They also plan and sponsor means of equipping and enabling effective evangelism.
- **Program Department:** This department oversees the various program emphases of the Executive Council and related ministries within the Diocese. They also receive budgetary requests and make recommendations on these to the Finance Department.
- **Outreach Department:** This department oversees the work of ministries not directly under the control of the Executive Council but related to the Diocese. The Outreach Ministries supported by the Diocese represent missionary initiatives which the Diocese believes important to our witness in the community. They receive budgetary requests and make recommendations to the Finance

Department. The Outreach Department also administers funds of the Parish Clustering Program, making recommendations to the Executive Council.

- **Mission Department:** This department oversees the Mission Stations and Organized Missions of the Diocese, making recommendations to the Bishop and the Executive Council on support of such congregations. They also support such missions by planning workshops and providing resources to mission congregations.

The Executive Council supervises the work of these departments. The Chairs and members of the departments are appointed by the Bishop, and serve at his pleasure. In addition, **committees** may be established by the Executive Council, and **commissions** may be established by the Bishop. All departments, committees and commissions report their work to the Executive Council and must keep records of their proceedings, correspondence and plans.

“On or before the August meeting of the Executive Council in each year,” the Finance Department submits a budget for the work of the Diocese for the ensuing year to the Executive Council. The Executive Council then makes adjustments to the budget and adopts a proposed budget to be sent to the Diocesan Convention. The proposed budget must be sent to every congregation of the Diocese at least 10 days prior to the meeting of the Convention, but it has been customary for many years to deliver the budget well before this minimum time requirement.

The Canons require that the Executive Council not only consider the amount of funds necessary for meeting the “opportunities and needs of the Diocese,” but also “a worthy share in the program of the National Church for the next fiscal year.” (DOD Canon 5.6)

The Executive Council is given power “for serious cause” to adjust and alter the budget adopted by the Convention of the Diocese. (DOD Canon 5.6)

The Standing Committee

The Standing Committee of the Diocese is mandated by the Canons of the Episcopal Church. The Standing Committee serves several purposes: 1) a council of advice to the Bishop; 2) the body of the Diocese which must consent to the elections of bishops by other dioceses; 3) the official body which approves candidates for ordination placed before it by the Bishop; 4) the official body which investigates charges brought to it against members of the clergy and which alone makes a presentment against such clergy if warranted by the evidence; 5) the body which serves as the Ecclesiastical Authority of the Diocese when there is no bishop, or the bishop is unable to act; and 6) the body which may be vested with other specific responsibilities by the Canons of the Episcopal Church.

Standing Committees generally are permitted to govern themselves by setting their own rules.

In the Diocese of Dallas, the Standing Committee is composed of 6 members, three of whom must be clergy canonically resident in the Diocese, and three of whom must be lay persons who are communicants in good standing from among the congregations of the Diocese. Members of the Standing Committee are elected at the Annual Meeting of the Diocesan Convention on a rotating basis: one lay person and one clergy person each year, to serve a three year term.

When a member of the Standing Committee resigns or otherwise leaves office, the majority of the Standing Committee elects a replacement to serve out that unexpired term.

Members of the Standing Committee who have been elected for a full three year term may not succeed themselves.

The Board of Trustees of the Episcopal Corporation

The Corporation of the Episcopal Diocese of Dallas is empowered as a nonprofit benevolent and charitable organization to receive, hold, manage and administer funds and properties for the use and benefit of the Diocese and its institutions. The Corporation holds title to all property of the congregations of the Diocese for the benefit and use of those congregations. And any property acquired by the congregations must be conveyed to the Corporation. As a result, congregations may not encumber or alienate any property without the prior approval of the Corporation. (DOD Canons 38 and 39)

The Board of Trustees is made up of seven members nominated by the Bishop and elected by Diocesan Convention. They serve to insure that properties and monies given to serve Christ and his Church in this Diocese are effectively accounted for and responsibly used.

Diocesan Staff

The Canon to the Ordinary

This position is tasked by the Bishop to assist him in the administration of his Office, to provide for clergy development, clergy deployment, congregational development and pastoral relations. The Canon frequently represents the Bishop and the Diocese at ecumenical and ecclesiastical functions. The Canon also supervises the work of the Diocesan Staff, and coordinates the work of the Executive Council and its departments. *(The Rev. Paul E. Lambert holds the position of Canon to the Ordinary.)*

Canon Missioners

There are at present three Canon Missioners, clergy persons who work on the Bishop's Staff with responsibilities in distinct areas of missionary concern.

- **Canon Missioner for Strategic Development.** He assists the Bishop in the development and implementation of the Strategic Plan of the Diocese, consults

with clergy and congregations on the implementation of the Plan at the local level, advises on Church growth methods, and serves as a resource and liaison to the Strategic Development Council of the Diocese. *(The Rev. Canon Neal O. Michell currently holds this position.)*

- **Canon Missioner for Christian Education, and also for Youth Ministries.** She assists the Bishop in developing and implementing resources and strategies for Christian formation at the diocesan and local levels. She oversees the work of the Diocese of Dallas Youth Commission, and plans and coordinates youth camps and conferences. *(Deacon Pam Dunbar currently holds this position.)*
- **Canon Missioner for Urban Ministries.** She works most closely with the Cathedral Church of St. Matthew, and supervises and coordinates the Bishop's Camp for urban children around the Cathedral, and the Summer in the City program which engages young people of the Diocese in outreach to the Cathedral community. She also assists the Bishop in extending the ministry of service to local congregations and consults with clergy and vestries on methods for so doing. *(Deacon Diana Luck currently holds this position.)*
- **Missioners for Canterbury Ministries:** The Chaplains to the colleges and universities in the Diocese are members of the Bishop's staff. One of them is designated Chief Missioner for Canterbury Ministries. *(The Rev. Canon Barbara Kelton currently holds this position.)*

Other Missioners

- **Missioner for Finance and Budget:** This person oversees the day to day financial operations of the Diocese, and serves as a resource to the Bishop and the Finance Department in regard to the budget and finances of the Diocese. She also advises and consults with the trustees of the Corporation of the Diocese and the trustees of the Fund for the Endowment of the Episcopate. *(This position is held by Ticoy Young.)*
- **Missioner for Diocesan Services:** He oversees the property belonging to the Diocese, coordinates maintenance of the Diocesan Office, coordinates data reporting and processing from the congregations to the Diocese and from the Diocese to the General Church, administers the various insurance programs of the Diocese, and consults with clergy and congregations on a wide variety of property and developmental issues. *(This position is held by David Gibbs.)*
- **Missioner for Communication:** This person is the editor of *Esprit*, the Diocesan newspaper, and webmaster of the Diocesan website. He also serves as press secretary on behalf of the Bishop to outside media. He oversees the production of video and other media presentations. *(This position is held by James Goodson.)*

Administrative Assistants

- **The Administrative Assistant to the Bishop:** She coordinates the Bishop's calendar, schedules visitations, coordinates the work of assisting bishops as needed, supervises the work of the Diocesan Staff on behalf of the Bishop. She also serves as a resource to congregational administrators and secretarial personnel. *(Pollyann Matson currently holds this position.)*

- The **Administrative Assistant to the Canon to the Ordinary:** She coordinates the Canon's calendar, and supports the Canon in supervising the clergy development, deployment, and Commission on Ministry work. *(Ellen Gunn currently holds this position.)*

Secretary of Convention

The **Secretary** of the Convention of the Diocese is nominated by the Bishop and elected by the Diocesan Convention. He is responsible for keeping records of all actions of the Convention, and for assembling reports of all Diocesan agencies and institutions. He records all elections of Rectors and the appointments of other Clergy. He also reports the work of the Convention to the General Church. *(This position is currently held by Ron Brown.)*

Treasurer of the Diocese

The **Treasurer** of the Diocese is nominated by the Bishop and elected by the Diocesan Convention. He chairs the Finance Department of the Executive Council. He makes regular reports on the finances of the Diocese and oversees the budget formulation process. He is available to give advice on a wide range of topics to treasurers of the congregations. *(Tom Gress currently holds this position.)*

Chancellors

The Chancellors are attorneys appointed by the Bishop to serve the Bishop and the Diocesan Convention. There is generally a Chancellor who is assisted by several Assistant Chancellors. One of the Assistant Chancellors is appointed as the **Parliamentarian** of the Diocesan Convention.

The Chancellors serve the Bishop and the Convention as noted. They are available, however, to offer advice to congregational chancellors and priests in charge when questions concerning the interpretation and implementation of the Canons of the Episcopal Church or the Diocesan Convention arise.

E. ORGANIZATION OF CONGREGATIONS

Congregations of the Episcopal Church are classified in one of three ways:

- Mission Stations
- Organized Mission Churches
- Parish Churches

Mission Stations

A Mission Station is any group of people desiring to receive the sacramental ministrations of the Church and to engage in the mission of evangelism and service in their community seek the aid and assistance of the Bishop. The Canons vest the authority for establishing Mission Stations in the Bishop. The mode and method of providing for the ministry, leadership and governance of Mission Stations is determined by the Bishop. Reports concerning the life and work of Mission Stations are made each year to the Annual Meeting of the Diocesan Convention. Mission Stations do not have representation at the Diocesan Convention.

Organized Missions

An Organized Mission is a congregation of at least 50 baptized persons, all of whom must be at least 18 years of age and a majority of whom must be confirmed members of the Episcopal Church, who have applied for union with the Diocesan Convention and who have subscribed to the Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church and of the Diocese of Dallas. The Canons vest the authority to establish Organized Missions in the Bishop.

When the requisite numbers of persons have gathered and agreed to make application to the Bishop for recognition as an Organized Mission, they must submit a letter stating their intentions and conformity in a form, called a “declaration,” prescribed by the Canons of the Diocese. (Canon 15.1) This declaration must be signed by the required number of qualified persons. If the Bishop approves this application, a certificate of this approval is sent to the Secretary of the Diocesan Convention, along with the application itself. Once that is done, the Mission is said to be organized and “in union with the Convention” of the Diocese.

An Organized Mission is required to hold an Annual Meeting each year. The Annual Meeting elects from 6 to 9 members of the Mission Vestry. The Vestry “promotes the temporal and spiritual interest of the Mission.”

Mission Vestries have more latitude in their makeup and the conduct of their affairs than is true of Parish Vestries. For example, while Parish Vestry members must be confirmed adult communicants in good standing of their Parish, Mission Vestries may include persons who are not confirmed communicants. Furthermore, Mission Vestry members

need not rotate their terms of office. These differences are based on the need of Missions to be more flexible as they are growing and developing.

On the other hand, the Organized Mission is more directly under the supervision and direction of the Bishop than are Parish congregations. The Bishop appoints the Mission clergy, called a Vicar; and the Bishop also appoints the two Wardens. The Mission Vestry is required to submit whatever reports are required by the Bishop, including their monthly financial reports. Mission Vestries elect a Secretary and a Treasurer, and these persons generally provide the necessary reports to the Bishop's Office.

To become a Parish congregation, the Organized Mission must have been in existence and functioning for a period of at least one calendar year. It may then apply for Parish status.

Canon law provides that the Mission Vestry must make the application, and the application must be signed by the Wardens and Vestry members. At the time application is made, the Vestry must give evidence that the Mission is able to support itself in all respects, including the support of a full-time member of the clergy and the payment of the assessment to the Diocese established by Convention. Other considerations such as regular worship services throughout the year, Christian education, pastoral care and visitation; stewardship of time, talents and financial resources; and evangelism and outreach to the community in which it is located also important.

The application is submitted to the Bishop, and if he approves, he forwards it with the supporting evidence to the Executive Council of the Diocese. The Executive Council does not vote on the application, but may make comments with respect to the application and evidence. The application, Bishop's approval, supporting evidence and comments of the Executive Council are then presented to the Secretary of the Diocesan Convention for action at the next Convention. The Diocesan Convention votes to give approval for admitting the Mission to Parish status.

Parish Churches

A Parish Church is a self-supporting congregation of people governed by a Vestry of confirmed adult communicants in good standing of the Episcopal Church which subscribes to the Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church and of the Diocese of Dallas. Parish churches have considerable authority over their own work and ministry, the choice of their leadership, the choice of their Rector and assisting clergy, and their property.

Parish By-Laws: Parishes may, in fact, have their own by-laws. It is recommended that Parishes be incorporated under the laws of the State of Texas. Sample forms for the by-laws of a Parish are available from the Diocesan Office, and should be considered carefully. Although the Parish may adopt by-laws to reflect its own sense of order and ministry, it should be noted that the by-laws so adopted cannot conflict with the Constitution and Canons of either the Episcopal Church or the Diocese of Dallas.

Consultation with the Chancellor of the Diocese is highly commended before by-laws are adopted.

Parish Meetings

The central event in the life of a Parish is the Annual Parish Meeting. This Annual Meeting must be held before the last day of February every year. Customarily, Annual Meetings occur in January. (DOD Canon 13)

Section 13.1 The Annual Meeting of each of the Parishes of this Diocese shall be held not later than the last day of February. Due notice of said meeting, and its time and place, shall be given by the Rector or, if there be no Rector, by the Wardens.

The conduct of the Annual Meeting is governed by the By-laws of the Parish, where they exist. (It should be noted that the By-laws of the Parish must be in conformity with the Canons of the Episcopal Church and the Diocese of Dallas.)

The Annual Meeting is important because this is where the members of the Parish elect the Vestry, who thereafter bear the authority of the congregation in legal and financial matters, and their relations with the clergy serving the Parish. The Diocesan Canons set out the qualifications of those who may vote in the Annual Meeting:

Section 13.2 Qualified voters at Parish Meetings shall be confirmed persons in good standing of the Parish eighteen (18) years of age or older.

This Canon specifies several important points:

- The voters are those who are actually present at the Parish Meeting, whether the Annual Meeting or Special meetings. Absentee voters are not provided for.
- No quorum is established by Canon: those qualified persons actually in attendance at the Annual or Special Meeting constitute the body competent to do the business assigned to it.
- The voters must be confirmed persons “in good standing”: that is, those are regular in attendance at worship and in supporting the work and ministry of the congregation.
- The voters must be at least 18 years of age. Younger confirmed members of the congregation are not eligible.

The Annual Meeting is also important because it presents an opportunity to review the work of the congregation for all its members at a single place and time. Beyond reporting mere statistics, the Annual Meeting may be an occasion of celebrating the life and work of the Parish members, and of setting new directions and initiatives.

Canon 14.4 sets out the mode of electing members of the Vestry. This Canon also makes clear that the members of the Vestry must be elected “by the qualified voters present” at the Annual Meeting. Some parishes have implemented a ballot distribution prior to the Annual Meeting and only announce the election results at the meeting. This practice is contrary to the Canons.

Canon 13.4 sets out the bare minimum of what must be covered at the annual parish meeting:

Section 13.4 At the Annual Parish Meeting, the Rector or Minister and the Senior Warden or, in case of his inability to act, the Junior Warden, shall present a full and faithful account of the condition of the Parish.

(a) The account of the Rector shall include [1] the number of persons baptized and confirmed during the preceding year, [2] the present number of confirmed persons in good standing and families, specifying the number of removals and additions that have taken place, [3] the number of marriages and funerals, [4] the number of services held, [5] the number of parochial calls made, [6] the number of teachers and students in the Church School, and [7] the amount of the Communion Alms received by him, with such statement of the expenditures of same as he may deem proper.

(b) The account of the Senior Warden shall include [1] what money, lands, or other property have been received during the preceding year, from what source, and the value of same, [2] all offerings, the purpose for which each has been made being separately stated, [3] for what object the offerings have been expended, and the amount being stated, [4] what property has been purchased, exchanged, mortgaged, sold or otherwise alienated or encumbered, and for what purpose, [5] what debts have been contracted and what debts previously contracted are owing, [6] and what improvements have been made, with the cost thereof.

(c) Following such meeting, these statements shall be delivered to the new Vestry, to be examined by them and entered in the record book of the Parish.

Beyond these “bare bones,” the Annual Meeting may take whatever form the Rector and Vestry together decide, or that the Parish By-laws prescribe.

Special meetings of the Parish are permitted by the Canons:

Section 13.3 A special meeting of the Parish may be called by the Rector and Wardens by giving notice of at least one (1) week in advance of its time and place. In case of a vacancy in the Rectorship, the Wardens may call the meeting.

Due consideration of the calling of a special meeting should be given, however. Special meetings of the Parish should not be contemplated in the face of controversies or as a means of resolving conflict. In the first place, such sorts of meetings rarely if ever are effective in resolving difficult issues or conflicts. More importantly, our polity is not congregational in character. Canon law vests the authority to act in all legal and temporal matters concerning the congregation, including matters of dispute and conflict, in the Vestry. Issues of a spiritual or sacramental nature are vested in the Rector. Finally, matters of conflict between the Parish and the Rector are specifically assigned to the Vestry and, at either their request or the request of the Rector, the Bishop. Our experience as a Church supports the wisdom and balance of such a delineation of authority. It would

appear that little is to be gained and a great deal lost by drawing the congregation as a whole into matters of contention.

However, on the positive side, special meetings of the congregation may be helpful and fruitful when the Rector and Vestry seek to initiate new work and/or seek to enlist the members in supporting such ministry as the leadership has determined is appropriate.

Vestry Structure

No matter the classification of the congregation as Mission Station, Organized Mission, or Parish, there are commonalities to the way business is done by all Vestries. The following discussion reflects what is the norm for Parish churches, but will be helpful to any other congregation type. Remember that in the case of Mission Stations and Organized Missions, the Bishop bears responsibility for things assigned below to Rectors; and remember, too, that these two types of congregations have greater flexibility in applying the rules.

The Annual Meeting of a Parish sets the number Vestry members when it is organized, and only the Annual Meeting may change the number of Vestry members subsequently.

The Vestry is made up of members who must have certain qualifications in order to be elected: (DOD Canon 14.10)

- Must be at least 18 years of age
- Must be a confirmed communicant in good standing
- Must be a financial “contributor of record” – that have made a pledge to the support of the congregation

Members serve three year terms, generally, on a rotating basis: one third of the Vestry retire in each year. The Vestry may apply to the Bishop to “suspend” the process of election or rotation Vestry members and must present “good and sufficient” reasons, in the estimation of the Bishop, for so doing. (DOD Canon 14.7) The policy of the Bishop is to follow the canonical provisions in most cases in this respect, and he is reluctant to “suspend” any of those provisions. The case for doing so should, therefore, be weighty.

The Rector of a Parish names a Senior Warden. The Vestry itself elects the Junior Warden. Both of these persons must be members of the Vestry. (In the absence of a Rector, the Vestry elects a Senior Warden who serves in the interim period. Once Rector is settled, he or she names a Senior Warden.) (DOD Canon 14.5)

The Vestry elects a person as Secretary or Clerk. This individual keeps the records of the Vestry, its minutes and actions, and certifies the Parish’s elected delegates to the Diocesan Convention.

The Vestry also elects a Treasurer, who makes regular reports to the Vestry on the finances of the congregation.

The Secretary (Clerk) and the Treasurer need not be members of the Vestry. (DOD Canon 14.5)

The Wardens of the Vestry jointly bear responsibilities set out by DOD Canon 14.9:

- To see that the Church building is kept from all secular uses
- To see that the Church building is kept in good repair
- To keep the Church doors open at the time of stated worship services
- To preside at meetings of the Vestry in the absence of the Rector, according to seniority (Sr. Warden first, then the Jr. Warden)

Vestry Responsibilities

Traditionally, the Wardens serve as a council of advice to the Rector.

Property: The Vestry as a whole takes “charge of the property of the Parish and its endowments.” (DOD Canon 14.11) The Vestry is responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of the property.

According to Article 13 of the Diocesan Constitution,

The title to all real property acquired for the use of the Church in this Diocese, which includes all Parishes, Missions and Diocesan Institutions, shall be held in the name of “Corporation of the Episcopal Diocese of Dallas” (known as the “Diocesan Corporation”), pursuant to, and in all ways administered, dealt with, and disposed of as specified in the Canons of the Diocese

But the title to property is held by the Diocese *in trust* for the benefit of the Congregation. This in no way inhibits the right of the Rector and Vestry to the control of the property for the purpose of carrying out the mission and ministry of the congregation. Indeed, the principle involved in this joint responsibility is to see that the property of the congregations is used in a prudent and responsible manner.

Title I, Canon 7, Section 4 of the Canons of the Episcopal Church makes this explicit:

All real and personal property held by and for the benefit of any Parish, Mission or Congregation is held in trust for this Church and the Diocese thereof in which such Parish, Mission or Congregation is located. The existence of this trust, however, shall in no way limit the power and authority of the Parish, Mission or Congregation otherwise existing over such property so long as the Parish, Mission or Congregation remains a part of, and subject to, this Church and its Constitution and Canons.

In practice, this means that no property may be encumbered or alienated by a Vestry on its own authority. Title I, Canon 7, Section 3 of the Canons of the Episcopal Church specifies that either encumbrance or alienation of the property receive prior written approval of the Bishop, and approval of the Standing Committee. The Diocese of Dallas also requires that approval be given by the Finance Department of the Executive Council, and by the Trustees of the Corporation of the Diocese. (DOD Canon 39.5)

When a Church or Chapel has been dedicated and consecrated, it may not be destroyed or disposed of for “any worldly or common use” without prior consent of the Standing Committee of the Diocese.

Other Responsibilities

1. The Vestry serves to “regulate all [the congregation’s] temporal concerns.” (DOD Canon 14.11) In general, this means that the Vestry oversees the business aspects of the congregation: the construction and application of a budget, payment of bills, care of the facilities, and relations with its clergy and employees.
2. The Vestry elects a Rector. In the Parish Church, this is in many ways the Vestry’s most important responsibility. Tradition and Canon Law grants a considerable measure of autonomy to the Parish Vestry in making this selection. They should work to observe the Canons and in close cooperation with the Bishop. But the choice of a Rector cannot be dictated to the Vestry by any outside source. The importance of this choice is underscored by the fact that once elected, the spiritual jurisdiction of the Parish is vested in the Rector. Care therefore needs to be exercised by Vestries in respect to the responsibility, and it should only be undertaken with prayer.
3. The Vestry provides for the support of the Rector and other clergy who are called to serve in the congregation.
4. The Vestry is responsible for “paying all Canonical Assessments on the Parish.”
5. The Canons of the Diocese specify that the Vestry are “to act as helpers to the Rector in whatever is appropriate to Lay persons for the furtherance of the Gospel.” (DOD Canon 14.11) This provision is an important advance over the Canons of the Episcopal Church, which specify only that the Vestry “shall be agents and legal representatives of the Parish in all matters concerning its corporate property and the relations of the Parish to its Clergy.” (ECUSA Title I, Canon 14, Section 2) It envisions a cooperative and supportive concept of ministry with and under the Rector. Although no Canon can *mandate* cooperation, let alone total agreement, of all Vestry members with the Rector, it is clearly in the best interests of the ministry of a congregation that its leaders see and understand themselves as a team. Vestry members should take seriously this concept as expressed in the Canons, and live into its spirit.
6. The Vestry is responsible for submitting, with the Rector, a testimonial in support of confirmed communicants of the congregation seeking Holy Orders to the Bishop and Commission on Ministry of the Diocese. (ECUSA Title III, Canon 4, Section 4(d)) The Vestry, as representatives of the congregation, bear a solemn responsibility to know and support the individual seeking Holy Orders – this is more than a *pro forma* approval. The testimonial needs to be in the canonical form prescribed by the Canon. A majority vote in favor of the testimonial needs to be secured, and the members voting affirmatively must sign the testimonial.

The organization of the Vestry and the way it does its work will be discussed in a subsequent chapter.

Meetings of the Vestry

There is no rule with respect to the meetings of the Vestry. Customarily, Vestries meet monthly, with exceptions during holiday periods (Summer and Winter). If a Vestry member is absent “without valid excuse” for a period of three months, the Vestry may remove that member and elect a replacement to serve out his or her term. (DOD Canon 14.8)

The Rector presides at the meetings of the Vestry, but may designate another member of the Vestry to do so. (ECUSA Title I, Canon 14, Section 3) In many congregations, the Rector designates the Senior Warden to preside. In such cases, the Rector may always resume his or her presidential role.

The Vestry *may not* meet without the presence of the Rector, unless he or she has given consent to such a meeting. This restriction inheres in the fact that the Rector is the president of the Vestry.

Meetings of the Vestry must be opened with prayer for God’s guidance and blessing upon their deliberations. The Rector should also consider instructing the Vestry in the Scriptures and in the spiritual discharge of their duties. Business procedures require

- that the Vestry approve its minutes of previous meetings,
- hear and receive the Treasurer’s Report,
- and conduct such other business as is necessary for it to fulfill its responsibilities.

All actions of the Vestry must be recorded by the Clerk of the Vestry. Usually, actions of the Vestry take the form of motions

- which are made by at least one member of the Vestry and
- seconded by at least one other member.
- Motions are enacted by a majority vote of the members of the Vestry present and voting.

The By-laws of the Parish may alter any of the foregoing requirements. Where there are no By-laws, the preceding requirements form the minimum standard to which the Vestry must conform.

F. BUSINESS METHODS IN CHURCH AFFAIRS

Accounting Policies and Procedures, & Audits

The responsibility and accountability for the stewardship of church money and property required of the Vestry and Treasurer are described in the canons. (ECUSA Title I, Canon 7; DOD Canon 29) The Department of Finance (see **Finance Department** above, p. 24) assists parishes in identifying and implementing these areas of responsibility.

Business Methods and Accounting Principals: The responsibility and accountability for stewardship of church money and property is delineated in Title I, Canon 7, of the Canons of the Episcopal Church, and Canon 29 of the Diocese of Dallas. General Convention approved certain business methods and accounting principles and practices in 1979, to be implemented in every parish and diocese. By resolution, the General Convention authorized the publication of the Manual of Accounting Principles and Recording Practices for Episcopal dioceses, parishes and missions. The General Convention authorized the Executive Council to revise and update the Manual periodically. The current edition is now titled the *Manual of Business Methods in Church Affairs* and is available in paper or CD format.

Full-disclosure reporting: Non-profit organizations have the responsibility of reporting to their contributing sources (which includes the parishioners in a parish) all the assets, liabilities and fund balances belonging to the organization. Full disclosure requires that all funds of a parish, regardless of source, structure or separation of management, should be reported on a single set of financial statements with appropriate supporting exhibits and data relating to the various fund balances. These include, for example: operating funds; endowment and trust funds; discretionary funds; ministry funds, funds of parish organizations; real estate funds including land, buildings, furniture and equipment and the cost of any improvements. The expenditures within a fund should be properly outlined.

Annual audit: An independent certified public accountant, or an audit committee selected according to guidelines recommended by the Diocesan Finance Department shall audit all accounts of parishes and missions annually. All audit reports, including any memoranda issued by the auditors or audit committee regarding internal controls or other accounting matters, together with a summary of action taken or proposed to be taken to correct deficiencies or implement recommendations contained in the memoranda, should be filed with the Bishop not later than 30 days following the date of the report, and in no event later than September 1st of each year, covering the financial reports of the previous calendar year. (ECUSA Title I, Canon 7, Section 1(g))

It is expected that the larger parishes will comply with an audit by a CPA. If the parish uses an audit committee, it is recommended that the parish conduct a CPA audit every three years. Audit guidelines and procedures may be obtained from the Diocesan Office.

Business methods for trust and permanent funds: Parish trust funds, permanent funds and securities must be deposited with a bank, diocesan corporation or other approved agency. Two signatures must be required for withdrawal of any funds or securities. Records of trust funds must be kept, showing source and date, terms governing use of principal and income, frequency and recipients of reports of condition, and how the funds are invested. (ECUSA Title I, Canon 7, Section 1)

Financial reporting: The Finance Department of the Diocese may require copies of any or all accounts of a congregation. (ECUSA Title I, Canon 7, Section 1(i)) All congregations must prepare financial statements on a monthly basis. The standard financial statements required of each congregation are:

- Statement of assets and liabilities resulting from cash transactions (balance sheet)
- Statement of cash receipts and expenditures
- When applicable at Dec. 31st, analysis of changes in fund balances.

Budgeting of a congregation's income and expenses is essential to proper planning and control. The monthly financial reports to the Vestry must compare actual income and expenditures with the budget.

Cash basis accounting: Congregations should keep their records and prepare financial reports on the cash basis. This does not preclude the use of accrual basis accounting by those desiring to do so.

Fiscal year: The fiscal year shall begin Jan. 1st. (ECUSA Title I, Canon 7, Section 1(j))

Operating Fund Deficit: If the treasury is deficient, the Vestry shall collect, as far as practicable, by subscription or otherwise, a sum sufficient to liquidate all of the current annual obligations of the parish.

Stipends, Salaries and Pensions

Payment of compensation: The Vestry shall pay with punctuality, at the intervals agreed, the stipulated stipend of the Clergy and the salaries of employees. The stipend includes the cash portion as well as allowances for housing and utilities. (See **Clergy housing allowance** below, p. 42)

Clergy pension: All parishes must pay the Church Pension Fund assessments due on the stipends and other compensation of the Clergy. (ECUSA Title I, Canon 8, Section 3)

For any member of the Clergy who is engaged in compensated church work for a period of three consecutive months in the same church and receives a minimum of \$200 per month, assessments must be paid on his or her behalf at 18 percent of that compensation by that church. This applies to full-time, part-time, supply or interim work. For purposes of calculating clergy pension assessments, use the cash stipend, housing allowance, utilities allowance and any compensation for self-employment (Social Security) taxes. If the parish provides living quarters rent-free, the housing amount is figured as 30 percent

of the cash stipend, utilities allowance and any compensation for the self-employment tax combined. NOTE: That all changes to the Clergy person's stipend at any time MUST BE REPORTED TO THE CHURCH PENSION GROUP in New York in order to fully protect the Clergy person.

Lay pension: All Lay employees who work a minimum of 1,000 hours annually should be provided retirement benefits through participating in the Episcopal Church Lay Employees Retirement Plan or in an equivalent plan, the provisions of which are at least equal to those of ECLERP. If the plan is a defined benefit plan, the congregation's contribution shall be not less than 9 percent of the employee's salary, and if the plan is a defined contribution plan, the parish shall contribute not less than 5 percent of the employee's salary and agree to match employee contributions up to another 4 percent of the employee's salary. The parish may impose a minimum age of 21 years and a minimum employment period not to exceed one year of continuous employment before an employee would be eligible to participate. (Resolution D165a of General Convention, 1991)

Other Payments and Alms

Offerings: The Vestry shall inform themselves of the orders and times of ALL offerings required by the canons of the diocese and take measures for the obedient fulfillment and due liquidation of these obligations.

Alms and Contributions: Undesignated (non-pledged) funds received at Holy Communion on one Sunday in each calendar month shall be deposited with the member of the Clergy in charge of the congregation to be used for "such pious and charitable uses" as "thought fit" by the member of the Clergy. Commonly called "Discretionary Funds" or more preferably, "Ministry Funds," these monies belong to the congregation but are disbursed by the member of the Clergy. The Clergy should report, generally, on the use of these funds to the Treasurer or other person designated by the Vestry. They may not be used for the personal gain or benefit of the member of the Clergy or his or her family.

When a member of the Clergy who has a Ministry Fund departs the congregation, he or she must give a final accounting of the Fund and return the balance to the Parish Treasurer for use by his or her successor.

When there is no member of the Clergy in charge of the congregation, the Vestry shall appoint a person to serve as Almoner to receive and disburse these funds. (ECUSA Title III, Canon 14, Section 2(f))

Bishop's visitation: It is customary that the plate offering received at the time of the Bishop's visitation be designated to the Bishop's Ministry (or Discretionary) Fund. These funds should be forwarded to the Office of the Bishop as soon after the visitation as practicable.

Parochial Reports

Each congregation is required to submit an annual report on the appropriate parochial report form by January 20th of the succeeding year. The original must be sent to the Diocesan Office where it will be entered into the Diocesan data base and then transmitted to the General Church Office.

By the way, seating at the Diocesan Convention is allocated on the order in which Parochial Reports are received from the congregations. A congregation's seating is closer to the dais the earlier the Report is received by the Diocesan Office.

General Insurance Information

A majority of our churches insure with the Church Insurance Company, 445 Fifth Avenue, New NY, 10016, (a part of the Church Pension Fund Group). Should you have questions on insurance protection, contact Mrs. Mary Ann Lyons, Regional Vice President, at the Regional Office, 6060 North Central Expy., Suite 220, Dallas, TX, 75206, or call 1(800)345-0295, (214)692-1303. Her e-mail address is mlyons@cpg.org.

Church Insurance covers only Episcopal Churches and institutions of the Episcopal Church. You may, of course, obtain coverage through other companies.

Fidelity Bond

The Diocese currently covers all churches in the Diocese to the extent of \$100,000 for each position where there is responsibility for handling church funds. Definition of "employee" under the policy is as follows:

- a) Any duly elected or appointed officer of the insured, whether or not compensated, while serving in such capacity during the policy period; and
- b) Any natural person, whether or not compensated, who renders service to the insured and while so serving, performs acts coming within the scope of the usual duties of any officer, clerk or other employee of the insured.

If a church wishes to insure any position within its parish or mission for an amount in excess of the \$100,000 coverage, additional insurance on any named position is obtainable at the expense of the individual church. Contact Mary Ann Lyons.

Property Insurance

The Canons of the Church require that "all buildings and their contents shall be kept adequately insured". Vestries and Bishop's Committees are charged with this responsibility and should review their church coverage annually. Building, improvements, additions or new buildings are situations that call for immediate protection. Coverage should be kept in line with current replacement costs. It is of particular importance that insurance policies covering church property have "CORPORATION OF THE DIOCESE OF DALLAS, as one of the insured parties along with the name of the parish, mission or organization. A minimum standard of one million dollars (\$1,000,000) for comprehensive liability protection MUST be maintained on all

Episcopal Church properties in the Diocese of Dallas. The property and comprehensive coverage are generally covered together in a “Pinnacle Policy”.

In addition to your base coverage, the Diocese adds further protection by carrying a \$50,000,000 million dollar umbrella liability policy overlaying each Church's basic one million dollar coverage. In order to be covered under that umbrella, the \$1,000,000 minimum must be met. Larger churches may wish to carry their own \$50,000,000 policy.

Workers' Compensation

The Diocese does not carry Worker's Compensation Insurance for Parish or Mission congregations. Each Parish and Mission must provide such coverage on their clergy and employees. Texas State Law requires that employers be responsible for medical costs incurred by employees with job related injury or illness. This includes the clergy! We therefore require that Worker's Compensation Insurance be purchased for employees.

Sexual Misconduct Coverage

This coverage is written as a part of the liability section of the Pinnacle Policy.

Other Coverages

Other coverages that should be included in your insurance program include:

- Auto liability and property damage
- Auto Non-owned
- Directors and Officers Liability/Employment Practices

Dealing with the IRS

Tax-exempt status: The Episcopal Church has been determined to be exempt from federal income tax as an organization described in Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954.

Reporting clergy earnings to IRS: All clergy in the service of congregations are considered employees for income tax purposes. They are considered self-employed for Social Security tax purposes only. Therefore, all clergy must file a 1040SE return and pay the self-employment tax. Only clergy who have exempted themselves from the Social Security system on the grounds of conscientious objection to the receipt of government-funded insurance are excluded from this requirement.

Clergy should not receive a Form 1099 for reporting income from parishes. They should receive a Form W-2 showing the stipend received. The W-2 compensation totals differ from that of a lay employee of the parish. The primary differences are:

- a) Social Security taxes are not withheld, because clergy are considered self-employed for Social Security reasons.
- b) Federal income taxes may be withheld or not, as the cleric wishes. The cleric may also request withholding to cover amounts due for self-employment tax.
- c) The income reported on the Form W-2 should include stipend and any other compensation which is considered “reportable” by the cleric. Expense Accounts and auto allowances would be examples of reportable compensation.
- d) Other income to be reported would be the value of group life insurance above \$50,000 and any gifts or bonuses from the parish. Gifts from individuals are not reportable so long as they are not for services rendered. Sabbatical expenses are generally reported as income.
- e) A housing allowance is not required to be reported on Form W-2, provided the entire amount of the allowance is excluded under Section 107 of the Internal Revenue Code. However, the IRS prefers that the housing allowance be reported on Form W-2 as a separate memo notation.
- f) The cleric should use Schedule C for reporting income and expenses related to self-employment, such as individual fees for performing marriages, baptisms and other personal services.

Accountable plan: An employee of a parish may establish an accountable or reimbursement plan with the parish for expenses paid or incurred by him or her solely for the benefit of the parish. Accountable plans can cover business expenses such as travel and automobile expenses paid or incurred by him or her solely for the benefit of the parish. Accountable plans can cover business expenses such as travel and automobile expenses, meals and lodging when away from home overnight; allowable educational expenses and other expenses, which are solely for the benefit of the parish.

Under an accountable plan, the vestry establishes a written plan and adopts a resolution up to the budgeted amount. The plan must require the employee to substantiate within 60 days all business expenses using an account book, diary or similar statement. The plan must require that the employee return any amount in excess of the substantiated expenses covered by this arrangement within 120 days. If the employee conforms to all of the above, the amounts paid to him or her may be completely excluded from the tax return and Form W-2.

Clergy housing allowance: The housing allowance is the most important single tax break available to clergy. Money spent by the cleric to provide, furnish and maintain a principal residence is excluded from federal income tax, subject to certain limitations. The vestry must pass a resolution stating the cleric's housing allowance prior to the first paycheck each year. The cleric advises the vestry of the amount of his/her compensation to be designated as housing allowance. There is no limit on the cleric's compensation that can be designated by a church as a housing allowance. The cleric is responsible for reporting to the Internal Revenue Service the lowest of the following amounts: a) actual cash spent; b) fair rental value of the house (if parish does not provide residence for cleric), fair rental value of the furnishings, maintenance, taxes, insurance, and utilities; or c) amount specified in the vestry minutes before the money is paid. The cleric should be

given a letter from the vestry stating the resolution for the IRS compliance and documentation.

Churches that fail to designate an allowance in advance of the first pay check each calendar year should do so as soon as possible in the new year. The allowance will operate prospectively. Churches should consider adopting a 'safety net' allowance to protect against the loss of this significant tax benefit due to the inadvertent failure by the church to designate an allowance. It is also recommended that the parish budget reflect a separate line item for the housing allowance. The amount of the housing allowance may be amended during the year if the original allowance proves to be too low. However, the amended allowance will only operate prospectively. Under no circumstances can a cleric exclude any portion of an allowance retroactively designated by a church. A housing allowance is excluded from federal income tax; however, it must be included in a cleric's self-employment earnings. Who is eligible for a housing allowance? The Tax Court ruled that a minister is one who satisfies all five of the following factors:

- 1) Administers sacraments
- 2) Conducts religious worship;
- 3) Management responsibility in a local church or religious denomination (control, conduct, or maintenance of a religious organization);
- 4) Ordained, commissioned, or licensed;
- 5) Considered to be a religious leader by one's church or denomination.

If a person serves as a "minister of music" or "minister of education", or serves in an administrative or other function of his/her religious organization, but is not authorized to perform all of the religious duties of an ordained minister in the church, even though he/she is commissioned as a "minister of the gospel," he/she cannot exclude from income a housing allowance or the value of a home provided.

Examples of the vestry resolution and letter from the vestry to the cleric stating the approval of the resolution, can be found in APPENDIX 3, p.70.

Discretionary (or Ministry) funds: The primary purpose of a discretionary fund is to permit a member of the Clergy to assist people in time of need, or to apply monies toward such other works as in the opinion of the minister will further the work of the Church.

The alms and contributions, not otherwise specifically designated, at the administration of Holy Communion on one Sunday in each calendar month might be allocated to the rector's discretionary fund. (ECUSA Title III, Canon 14, Section 2(f)) In some parishes, support for the discretionary fund is included in the annual operating budget.

The discretionary fund must be an account of the parish. Although the cleric may write checks and maintain the confidential records of the fund, the fund itself belongs to the parish. The bank account is in the name of the parish; i.e., "Christ Church Rector's Discretionary Fund" or "Christ Church Assistant Rector's Discretionary Fund" with the parish's tax identification number on the account. To preserve confidentiality, the cleric

can be the only signer. Discretionary funds remain at the parish when the cleric is called elsewhere. Discretionary funds are included in the annual parish audit.

Church building and financing

The vestry should notify the bishop of any plans for new construction and/or building renovations. The vestry may not encumber property with out proper approval of the appropriate diocesan committees.

If new construction or renovation of worship space is planned and an architect is not available, the diocese may suggest a qualified architect. If financing is required, the parish or mission must submit to the finance committee the following:

- Intention to initiate
- Schematic drawings and specifications
- Design development drawings and specifications
- Financial history and projections of future income with supporting data for those projections
- Letter from banking or loan institution with agreed upon financial details which include approval of the diocese
- Such other plans as shall be required by the commission.

Following construction, the parish should securely store as-built drawings and specifications.

G. RECTORS, CLERGY AND “SPIRITUAL JURISDICTION”

“The authority of and responsibility for the conduct of the worship and the spiritual jurisdiction of the Parish are vested in the Rector subject to the Rubrics of the Book of Common Prayer, the Constitution and Canons of the Church, and the pastoral direction of the Bishop.” (ECUSA Title III, Canon 14, Section 1(a))

This Canon begins the section of the Canons of the General Church entitled “Of Clergy and Their Duties.” It points up the singular importance of the role of the Rector in the life of a congregation.

The Canons of the Diocese of Dallas include the following provisions:

“The spiritual concerns of the Church are under the exclusive direction of the Rector, subject to the Ecclesiastical Authority and Canons of the Diocese.” (DOD Canon 14.11)

“The Rector of Minister has the spiritual oversight of the Parish or Mission, and he shall, at all times, be entitled to the use and control of the Church and Parish or Mission buildings with the appurtenances and furniture thereof.” (DOD Canon 17.2)

The division of labor between the Rector and Vestry, cast by the Canons in terms of “spiritual jurisdiction” and “temporal affairs” respectively, may seem to be an oversimplification. And in some senses it may well be. Surely in a healthy and effective ministry at the local level, both the Rector and the Vestry will cooperate in planning and implementing initiatives and programs in their respective areas of competence. But this division is important to examine in closer detail and is at all events to be taken seriously. Doing so may be an aid to greater health and effectiveness.

Spiritual Jurisdiction

Nowhere is the concept of “spiritual jurisdiction” spelled out in the Canons. On the other hand, there has been no legislative adjustment or judicial history associated with the Canon cited at the head of this section. This suggests that the concept, if not exact, is well understood.

Worship

Clearly the first element in this idea is that of setting and leading the worship services of the congregation. The Rector has authority to do these things, subject, of course, to the rubrical directions of the *Book of Common Prayer* and the directions of the Bishop.

Worship Services: Title II of the Canons of the Episcopal Church assert that “All persons within this Church shall celebrate and keep the Lord’s Day, commonly called Sunday.” (ECUSA Title II, Canon 1) The principal service of worship then must occur on Sunday. The Rector is vested with responsibility to set the time of this service, and of all other services either on Sunday or other days of the week.

The Rubrics of the BCP further assert that The Holy Eucharist is “the principal act of Christian worship on the Lord’s Day and other major feasts.” The Eucharist together with Morning and Evening Prayer are described as “the regular services appointed for public worship in this Church.” (BCP p.13)

Book of Common Prayer: The Constitution of the Church specifies that the Book of Common Prayer approved by the General Convention “shall be in use in all the Dioceses of this Church.” (ECUSA Article X) It is therefore mandatory that the Book of Common Prayer be used in every congregation of the Episcopal Church and in the Diocese of Dallas. The Canons also specify that only authorized editions of the Book of Common Prayer may be used; editions that have not been approved or editions of the whole or any parts of the BCP published with other materials (other than the Bible or Hymnal) may not be used “of authority” in this Church. (ECUSA Title II, Canon 3, Sections 5 & 8. (This matter will be discussed at more length below.) Special forms for special occasions are also authorized in the *Book of Occasional Services*.

Scriptures: With regard to the worship of the Church, it is also required by Canon that the “Word of God” be read and taught. The Canons specify which translations of the Scriptures may be used in the services of public worship. (ECUSA Title II, Canon 2) The Rubrics of the BCP presuppose that the Lectionaries will be followed in the manner prescribed. (BCP p. 888) At the discretion of the celebrant the Readings may be lengthened, but they cannot be shortened. There is, of course, a range of selections which may be made. But there are limits. For example, there may at the Eucharist be a reading from the Old Testament or from the New, but at least one *must* be chosen. The Gospel lesson is always read at the Eucharist. But what cannot be done on a continuing basis is to ignore the lectionary or substitute some other course of readings. (We will discuss unique events below.)

Music: Music may be a very desirable part of worship and an aid to spiritual devotion. The Canons specify that in this area, “the Member of the Clergy [in charge of a congregation] shall have final authority in the administration of matters pertaining to music.” (ECUSA Title II, Canon 5)

Consecrated Churches: Finally, the use of dedicated and consecrated churches and chapels of the congregations of the Diocese is limited to “Services, Rites and Ceremonies, or other purposes, either authorized or approved by this Church, and for no other use.” (DOD Canon 16) A consecrated church or chapel is one which is free of encumbrance and which the Bishop has set aside in a special service for the worship of God.

Within these limits, the Rector exercises considerable authority over the mode and conduct of the worship services. Although the Canons suggest that the Rector consult with experts in the area of music, and modern practice has led to the establishment of worship committees in many congregations, the Canons and more importantly the

tradition of the Church uphold the final authority, as well as responsibility, of the Rector for all matters pertaining to worship.

Special Situations Concerning Worship

Special Forms of Worship: Occasionally the General Convention authorizes special services or trial services to meet perceived needs. These can be implemented by the Rector with the approval of the Bishop. (ECUSA Article X) The Bishop, too, may “take such order as may be permitted by the Rubrics of the Book of Common Prayer or by the Canons of the General Convention,” and authorize special forms of worship, including services in languages for which General Convention has no authorized translation. It is important to note that this authority to initiate special forms of worship is limited to the General Convention and the Bishop of the Diocese.

Special Programs or Formats in Worship: In many congregations of the Episcopal Church, the texts for various rites, for example, the Holy Eucharist, or Baptism and Confirmation, are produced for the use of the congregation. In some places, the service is also projected on screens. Generally, the intention of such procedures is to make the services more “user friendly.” These procedures do not obviate the need to have sufficient copies of the Book of Common Prayer available to worshippers in the pews. Furthermore, it is required by Canon that the Ecclesiastical Authority (the Bishop) give public notice that such booklets and formats are not official (“not of authority”). (ECUSA Title II, Canon 3, Section 8) Furthermore, it is a requirement of the Diocese that public notice that the services published or formatted in this way are based on the Book of Common Prayer. Considering these two requirements, the solution is to include the following words in some prominent place in the program:

“This service is based on the Book of Common Prayer 1979. Only the Book of Common Prayer has authority in the worship of the Episcopal Church.”

Other Rites: From time to time Rectors may desire to use a previous rite in the Anglican tradition, or to instruct the congregation in historic forms of Christian worship. This may be done when permission is sought and received in writing from the Bishop.

Preaching Series: Some Rectors conduct preaching series in order to carry out their duty to instruct the people in the doctrines of the Christian faith. This may be done, of course, provided that the Gospel from the lectionary for any given Sunday is used as provided by the Book of Common Prayer.

Education

A second area of “spiritual jurisdiction” concerns education and formation of persons in the Christian faith and practice.

Instruction: Rectors are responsible for the instruction of “children, youth and adults” in the Holy Scriptures, in the subjects contained in the Catechism (“An Outline of the Faith, BCP p. 845 ff.), and in the “doctrine, discipline and worship” of the Episcopal Church.

They are also responsible for helping the members of the Church understand and exercise their ministry as baptized persons. (ECUSA Title III, Canon 14, Section 2(a))

Stewardship: Rectors are charged with the responsibility of instructing all members of the congregation in Christian stewardship. This concept is broadly understood, and includes

- reverence for and the right use of God's creation
- generous and consistent offerings of time, talent and treasure in support of the Church's mission
- the biblical standard of the tithe
- the responsibility of all persons to make a will.

Baptismal & Confirmation Preparation: Rectors are responsible for preparing persons for baptism and confirmation, as well as preparing parents and godparents of children who are to be baptized. (ECUSA Title III, Canon 14, Section 2(c) & (d))

Pastoral Care

Another area of "spiritual jurisdiction" concerns the pastoral care of the congregation.

Rectors are responsible to insure that all persons under their oversight receive the prayers, counsel and support of the Church in times of need, adversity, conflict and sickness. The responsibility of the Vestry is to insure that means are available for communicating the needs of persons in the congregation to the Rector. The Rector may and should develop lay assistance in carrying out this responsibility and, where possible, may call other clergy to this special work.

Marriage: Rectors must give counsel and direction, or see to it that means are provided to give such counsel, to persons seeking to have their marriages solemnized and blessed in the Church. Regulations specific to marriage are found in ECUSA Title I, Canon 18. All clergy must observe both the laws of the State in which they live and the Canons of the Church.

Rectors (and all other clergy) are responsible to support healthy marriages and to give special attention to those whose marriages are imperiled. They bear a special obligation to "protect and promote the physical and emotional safety" of married persons involved in abusive relationships, and to "labor that the parties [in imperiled circumstances] may be reconciled." (ECUSA Title I, Canon 19, Section 1)

Rectors must see that persons who have been previously married and whose marriages have been terminated, and who seek to establish a new marriage comply with the requirements of the Canons and the Customary of the Diocese. This includes receiving permission in writing of the Bishop to establish the marriage. (ECUSA Title I, Canon 19, Sections 2 & 3; DOD Customary pp. 22-25)

It should be noted that the Canons make clear that no priest of the Church can be compelled to officiate at a wedding. (ECUSA Title I, Canon 18, Section 4)

Buildings & Furnishings: Rectors have control of the buildings and furnishings of the Church for spiritual purposes. They may authorize the use of Church facilities for these uses, and must see to it that the interests of the congregation be balanced with such uses.

Disciplinary Rubrics: Rectors are responsible for the implementation of the Disciplinary Rubrics. (BCP p. 409) This is commonly called “excommunication.” The use of these rubrics is rare and must be occasioned by a significant breach of Christian practice on the part of anyone subject to it. Essentially, any person whose way of life is characterized by evil or destructive behavior may be barred from receiving communion until he or she gives evidence of “repentance and amendment of life.” The Rector must initiate this action by him- or herself, or approve such an action by members of the clergy under his or her authority. The Rector (or other member of the clergy) must speak to the individual, lay the problem before him or her, and seek a resolution of the behavior before employing the discipline. The Rector (or other member of the clergy) must report this action to the Bishop within fourteen days, and give reasons for taking the action.

Funerals and Burials: Rectors should see that the ministrations of the Church are promptly conveyed to persons at the point of death, and to their families at the time that arrangements are made for their funeral and burial. Rectors (and other clergy) are responsible to follow the Rubrics of the Book of Common Prayer concerning burial of the dead. Occasionally it is desired by surviving family members that other groups be included in the funeral. The Rector (or other clergy) are in charge of Christian funerals and competent to provide for or exclude such observances in services in the Church.

Administration

“Spiritual jurisdiction” involves carrying out the ministry of the Rectorate in a disciplined, transparent and accountable way.

Presidency: Rectors are the President of the Vestry and of all meetings of the Parish. (DOD Canon 17.1) He or she may cast a vote in the event of a tie vote on any matter. Furthermore, the Rector is the Chair of all guilds and societies, by whatever name designated, engaged in the work of the congregation. (DOD Canon 17.3)

The guilds and societies, by whatever name designated, serve at the pleasure of the Rector and may be changed or dissolved by him or her.

The Rector may not be excluded from any meetings of the congregation or Vestry, or of any committee, guild or society. Indeed, for the unity and fruitful ministry of the congregation, the Rector bears a responsibility for articulating the vision of the ministry and for instructing all persons in the doctrine, discipline and worship – in short the mission – of the Church at the local level and at all structures within it. This responsibility must be exercised with pastoral sensitivity and wisdom. The creation of boards, committees or departments which do not recognize and support the Rector’s presidency are inimical to the spirit of the Canons and are to be avoided.

Ministry Funds: Rectors receive and distribute funds designated by the Canons for charitable and other uses consistent with the ministry of the congregation. The vehicle for the use of such funds is called the Ministry Fund (or the Discretionary Fund). (ECUSA Title III, Canon 14, Section 14(f)) (See the provisions on Ministry Funds in Chapter F, above)

Records: Rectors are required to keep complete records with respect to

- Baptisms
- Confirmations and Receptions
- Marriages
- Burials
- Communicant members of the Church
- Inactive members of the Church (ECUSA Title III, Canon 14, Section 3)

Such records should be kept in well bound books dedicated to this purpose. Such books are available from several sources. These books are the permanent property of the Parish and should be safeguarded with care.

Bishop's Visitation: When the Bishop announces his visitation to the congregation, the Rector must announce this fact to the congregation. He or she presents the records of the congregation for the Bishop's inspection. The Rector should also coordinate a meeting of the Vestry and officers of the congregation with the Bishop. (ECUSA Title III, Canon 14, Section 2(e))

Pastoral Letters: When the House of Bishops, or the Bishop of the Diocese issues a Pastoral Letter or a Position Paper, with the requirement that it be read at public services of worship, the Rector must comply. (ECUSA Title III, Canon 14, Section 2(g)-(h); see also, Title III, Canon 25, Section 5) If there is no stated requirement that the Pastoral Letter or Position Paper be read at public services of worship, the Rector either read it or see that copies of the Letter are distributed to members of the congregation.

General Responsibilities

All clergy on their ordination promise to conform to the "doctrine, discipline and worship" of the Episcopal Church. They also promise obedience to their Bishop and others who may have authority over them and their work. (BCP p. 526 & 538)

No member of the clergy may officiate at services or preach or teach in a cure (or congregation) outside the one to which he or she is appointed without the consent of the member of the clergy in charge. (ECUSA Title III, Canon 14, Section 4)

No member of the clergy may officiate at services or preach or teach in a Diocese other than the one in which he or she is canonically resident for more than two (2) months, without a license of the Bishop of the Diocese concerned. (ECUSA Title III, Canon 16, Section 2)

Rectors may invite bishops of other dioceses of the Episcopal Church, provinces of the Anglican Communion, or who are retired to preach and officiate at services in this Diocese. They must, however, have received the permission of the Bishop in writing before issuing and acting on any such invitation. (ECUSA Title III, Canon 24, Section 2; DOD Customary p. 3)

H. CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION

Conflict occurs in all human societies no matter how large or small. The mark of a healthy Christian community is not the absence of conflict but the way in which it is confronted and resolved. As a part of our baptismal covenant we promise to love our neighbors as ourselves and to respect the dignity of every human being. These promises take form and flesh when we must deal with conflicts in the church. If we take them seriously, they will produce attitudes within us that will help us resolve conflicts in a healthy way.

Ministry of Conflict Transformation

We can learn to manage conflict in a fruitful way. A special ministry is available to the congregations and leaders of the Diocese of Dallas. This is called “The Ministry of Conflict Transformation.” All ministers of Conflict Transformation have been licensed by the Bishop and serves a term designated by him. All have completed a basic forty-hour course in mediation offered by a recognized instructional entity and are confirmed communicants in good standing in the Episcopal Church. The Conflict Transformation Ministers are available to Rectors and congregation leaders at no charge.

One of the goals of this ministry is to educate members of the Church on how to deal with conflict. They can offer workshops, small group instruction, and methods for identifying and dealing with potential and actual conflict. This educational function of the Ministry of Conflict Transformation does not presume that a conflict exists within the congregation. It is pro-active.

Another goal of this ministry is to assist the Bishop and the clergy and lay leaders in dealing with conflict already evident. This conflict may be incipient or advanced, and may concern tensions between individuals or groups in a congregation, or between the Vestry and its Rector. The point of such assistance is to resolve the conflict, of whatever nature, at the lowest possible level and with as little distress to the mission of the Church as possible.

Those who may access the services of this ministry are: Rectors, Wardens and Vestry (with approval of the Rector), and the Bishop.

When contact is made between the Ministry and either Rectors or Vestry, the contact is confidential and is not reported to any other authority (e.g., the Bishop). No records or reports are made of any proceedings that may result from this contact. The relationship and work of the ministry is based on firm and explicit ethical and procedural guidelines. The Bishop has encouraged this development, supports its confidentiality, and recommends the use of this ministry whenever in the opinion of the leaders of a congregation such a ministry would be helpful.

On occasion, a conflict may rise to a crisis in the relationship between the Rector and the Vestry of a congregation. In such cases, the Bishop may require that the Ministry of Conflict Transformation be employed. This is in fulfillment of the canonical requirement that Bishops seek means to resolve such disputes. (ECUSA Title III, Canons 20 & 21; DOD Canon 20)

Rectors and Vestries may desire to seek other forms of outside help in the resolution of conflict. They are encouraged to do so with a commitment to seek above all the good of the whole congregation.

Dissolution of the Pastoral Relationship

If matters of conflict between the Rector and Vestry cannot be resolved by other means, either or both parties may ask the Bishop to intervene and to adjudicate the matters in dispute. (DOD Canon 20; see also ECUSA Title III, Canons 20 & 21; the Canons of the Diocese of Dallas take precedence in terms of detail.)

It is important to note that a Rector who has been settled in a parish cannot be dismissed by the Vestry. (“Settled” here means canonically elected, approved by the Bishop, and registered by the Secretary of Convention *and* the Registrar of the Diocese.)

If either the Rector or the Vestry desires the dissolution of the canonical pastoral relationship, they must give written notice to the Bishop. In the event the Vestry requests intervention by the Bishop, the request must be an official action of the Vestry.

The Bishop will seek to reconcile the parties. If, after six months, the matter cannot be settled amicably, the Bishop convenes the Standing Committee. The parties may appear before the Standing Committee and present their “facts and arguments.” The Bishop then consults with the Standing Committee. After that, the Bishop “shall make such an order” (called a “Godly Judgment”) as he deems just, based on what is in the “best interest of the church.”

The order of the Bishop is canonically described as the “final and conclusive determination of all matters of difference.” The Rector and the Parish, “and every member thereof” is required to “submit to and abide by” it. (DOD Canon 20.3)

The Dismissal of Clergy other than the Rector

The Canons vest the authority for calling, retaining and dismissing assistant clergy within a congregation in the Rector. The Vestry, of course, must give approval for issuing a call to such a person, and the Rector must conform to the Canons in all respects to issuing a call. This includes notifying and consulting with the Bishop. (ECUSA Title III, Canon 14, Section 1(a); DOD Canon 21)

Assisting clergy – whatever may be their titles – serve at the pleasure of the Rector, and only during his or her period of service.

If the Rector determines to dismiss assistant clergy, he or she must notify and consult with the Bishop prior to taking action.

If a Rector resigns his or her cure, the Vestry may request of the Bishop that an assistant may continue in the service of the congregation. The Bishop and Vestry will determine what the conditions of this service will be. Otherwise, all assistant clergy are expected to resign their appointments at the time when the Rector resigns.

I. SEARCHING FOR A RECTOR

Introduction

When the rectorate of a parish becomes vacant due to resignation or retirement, the Wardens must notify the Bishop within three (3) days.

The Bishop will consult with the Wardens on the procedures that will be followed in the ensuing period. It is important to underscore the fact that no steps can be taken by the Vestry with regard to securing either temporary or more permanent pastoral oversight unless and until this consultation takes place. If the Wardens fail to notify the Bishop in a timely fashion of this vacancy and appropriate pastoral leadership is secured, the Bishop may “take such measures as he shall deem expedient” to be sure that services of worship continue in the parish. (DOD Canon 18.1)

Under normal circumstances, a period that varies from a few weeks to several months will follow. This is called the “interim period.” The length of time depends on several factors, most notable among them being the degree of attention and organization which characterizes the Parish and its Vestry in the search process.

The Wardens and Vestry of the congregation must be sensitive to the anxieties that tend to characterize a body of people who are, sometimes suddenly, without leadership. It is important that the Wardens and Vestry communicate with the people clearly and regularly, and with confidence. The non-anxious attitude of the lay leadership of the parish will speak even more persuasively than the words any of them might use. The truth is the Church is all of the People of God, and our Lord Jesus Christ is the great high priest over each. Therefore, no congregation is without leadership. Then, too, the Bishop and his staff will be a ready resource to stand with the Wardens and Vestry and work with them to make an expeditious and prudent choice of ordained leadership for the future. What is called for among the congregation at this time is an attitude of trust and confidence in God and a spirit of prayer and surrender to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. These are more than words: Many congregations can testify to the amazing grace of God they experienced through thoughtfully and prayerfully engaging the search process in our Diocese.

Naturally, of course, the Wardens and Vestry bear responsibility to see that the congregation’s worship and ministries continue during the interim period. The Diocese has resource persons who will be available to help in assuring that this work goes forward.

One word of caution: Most rectors care very much for the congregations entrusted to their care, and this comes to the fore when they resign or accept a new call. At such times they may wish to help give counsel and assurance to the Wardens and Vestry about the search process. On rare occasions they even want to suggest possible successors. It is important that they and the Wardens and Vestry understand that once the resignation has been

tendered and accepted, their authority and involvement with the congregation is and must be limited. Words and actions that build confidence and assurance are in order. Involvement in the search process in any degree is not. The Wardens bear certain responsibilities canonically which must be carried out with reference to and in cooperation with the Bishop as the chief pastor of the congregation. Once the resignation has been accepted, the Wardens should be in touch with the Bishop and proceed only in consultation with him.

Clergy Service During the Interim Period

The Bishop will present to the Vestry a list of names from among the clergy to be considered as Interim Priest in Charge. The Vestry alone will determine which of the persons submitted will serve the Parish in the interim period. A letter of understanding will set out the specific expectations and limitations of the member of the clergy assigned to this service.

There are essentially three types of interim ministry which the Vestry will need to consider in consultation with the Bishop:

- Supply
- Interim
- Priest in charge under special circumstances

The differences have to do with the nature and extent of the work the member of the clergy will do while serving the vacant congregation.

A “Supply priest” is one who provides for the worship services at the congregation, who preaches and teaches on Sundays and perhaps a weekday, and offers pastoral care in times of emergency. This is the most limited of the choices, and may be most suitable for small congregations.

An “Interim priest” is one who carries on the work usually expected of a Rector, but who does not bear the authority to act as rector. The stipend associated with an interim priest is considerably larger than that associated with a supply priest, but so are the expectations of service rendered.

Neither the Supply priest nor the Interim priest may be considered by the Vestry as a candidate for the rectorate of the parish.

A “Priest in charge under special circumstances” is a member of the clergy chosen by the Vestry to serve in the interim period, but who may also be considered by the Vestry as a candidate for the rectorate. This sort of position is rare, and arises from the consultation between the Bishop and Vestry.

In parishes with several clergy on the staff, the Vestry may recommend to the Bishop that one of them be made the Interim priest. This may be done under the condition that the designated member of the clergy not be a candidate for the rectorate. If the Vestry or the designated member of the clergy desires to consider this person for the rectorate, the staff

member must resign his or her cure and be considered on an equal footing with all other candidates.

Compensation of the Supply, Interim, or Priest in charge will be determined in consultation with the Bishop or his designated representative.

The Search Process

During the search process, a member of the Bishop's staff will be assigned to work closely with the Vestry.

The first step which a Vestry must take as they begin the search process is the formation of a Prayer Committee, and the appointment of a Pastoral Guide – a priest or deacon who will serve the Vestry and search process as a Spiritual Advisor. It is common for a Vestry facing a search for a new rector to want to engage in the work to be done directly and quickly. Everyone must be reminded that the search for a rector is first and foremost a spiritual process and the whole process needs to be undergirded by intentional prayer, seeking God's guidance of all involved. The Prayer Committee will want to invite all members of the parish to participate in this offering of prayer.

In general and in addition to the Prayer Committee, the search process will require the formation of a Profile Committee, an Interview Committee, and a Transition Committee. The Profile Committee will work to understand the needs and ministries of the Parish and formulate a Parish Profile which will be used to communicate these needs and ministries to likely candidates. The Interview Committee will receive names from the Bishop and engage in preliminary screening and in determining those candidates who should be interviewed by the Vestry. The Vestry will, when the work of the Profile Committee and the Interview Committee has been completed, meet with, interview and evaluate the candidates for the rectorate. When all of this has been completed, the Vestry will vote to select the rector.

The Transition Committee will assist the new Rector on all aspects pertaining to his or her relocation. The Transition Committee may exercise considerable creativity with ways of welcoming the new Rector and his or her family in advance of his or her coming to the Parish. Following his or her arrival, the Transition Committee also assists the new Rector for a period of time in any ways he or she and they may determine will aid the transition to a new ministry.

Names of prospective candidates may come from a number of sources. When the Parish Profile is completed, the Bishop's Office will make use of the Church Deployment Office database at the Episcopal Church headquarters. Persons whose profiles match the Parish Profile will be presented to the Interview Committee. In addition, the Bishop will place names of members of the clergy whom he believes to be worthy of consideration on the same list. The Vestry may have names of clergy persons they wish to consider as well as names they have received from Parish members. These must be submitted to the Bishop and, if appropriate, will be submitted to the Interview Committee along with all others.

The list of “final candidates” must be screened by the Bishop’s Office. This screening may involve background checks and interviews between the Bishop and the individuals’ own bishops. In most cases, the Bishop or his designated representative will meet with candidates at the time they are interviewed by the Vestry.

It is highly recommended that the Vestry considering candidates for the rectorate have opportunity to see and experience the candidates as they lead in worship and preach. This may be done in a variety of ways, and the Bishop’s Office will assist in making arrangements for these opportunities.

Selection of a New Rector

When the time arrives that the Vestry will select a new rector, the Bishop or a member of his staff will be present to offer the Eucharist. The Senior Warden will then preside at the meeting. The Vestry must vote by a two-thirds majority of its members in order to select a candidate as rector.

When a selection has been made, the Wardens will notify the Bishop of this fact. Given the structure of the search process in the Diocese of Dallas, the Bishop usually gives consent immediately.

Once selected and the Bishop’s consent is given, the name of the person is forwarded by the Bishop to the Secretary of Convention and the Registrar of the Diocese. Once this is done, the parish has a new rector.

A service of Celebration of a New Ministry, also called an “Institution,” will be arranged at a time convenient to the Parish and the Bishop. This service gives an opportunity to the members of the congregation to welcome and officially recognize the new rector. However, significant as the service may be for the life of the parish, it is the case canonically the new rector enters upon his or her responsibilities and authority as soon as his or her name has been registered with the Secretary of Convention and the Registrar of the Diocese. The service of Institution is not, strictly speaking, required.

Mission Stations and Organized Missions

Mission Stations and Organized Missions do not, generally, go through the same sort of search process. In these cases, the Bishop bears a more direct responsibility for making appointments. However, it is the policy of the Bishop to work closely with the vestries of such churches and offer them opportunities to interview and make recommendations concerning candidates for Vicars. Wardens and Vestry members of such congregations should read and note parts of the preceding chapter which might apply to them.

Conclusion

The Bishop and his staff have a special concern for any congregation which finds itself with a vacancy in the rectorate, and are ready to work with the congregation from the moment that fact is known. It has been the policy of the Bishop that the character and traditions of the several congregations in the Diocese be respected. It is not the policy of the Bishop to impose on or compromise the integrity and responsibility of the Vestry of any Parish in the search process. Bishop Stanton believes that the most fruitful ministry occurs when the people of the local church prayerfully and spiritually seek God's guidance in the selection of new ordained leadership. Cooperation, communication and trust at all levels, Wardens, Vestry and Diocese, helps make certain this takes place.

J. UNDERSTANDING CONGREGATIONAL SIZE DYNAMICS

Leaders working effectively with a congregation must have a basic understanding of size dynamics in relationship to the congregation. A beginning booklet is *Sizing Up the Congregation*, by Arlin Rothauge. Rothauge divides congregations into four basic sizes: Family, Pastoral, Program, and Corporate. Building on Rothauge's sizes but carrying them further, Canon Kevin Martin of the Diocese of Texas has posited a size model between Arlin Rothauge's Pastoral and Program sizes, what he calls the Transitional Sized Church, with an Average Sunday Attendance (ASA) between 140 and 225. Using Martin's analysis, the names and respective Average Sunday Attendance are as follows: Family: 5-75; Pastoral: 76-140; Transitional: 141-225; Program: 226-400; Resource: 401+.

How clergy and vestries work together effectively differs depending on the size of the church.

The Family and Pastoral-sized churches are basically single-cell churches. Program and Resource-sized congregations are multi-matrix (more complex) in their make-up. The Transitional-sized church is a hybrid of the two sizes: 75% Pastoral and 75% Program. This is not a true size; hence, the name Transitional. Notice that 75% plus 75% adds up to more than 100%. This gives an idea of the challenge in pastoring a church of this size. How the leaders work with the single-celled church is vastly different from leading a multi-matrix congregation. Further, if the church has an established small church culture (ten or more years at that size) it is even more difficult to transition to a larger sized congregation.

First, let's discuss the three sizes and their general dynamics.

Think of the single cell congregation as existing primarily *to be*. As long as this church survives and is there for its parishioners, most people are happy. Relationship is a higher priority than any programs in this size of congregation. Pastoral care is THE ministry of this size church.

The multi-matrix congregation is more oriented to *doing*, namely, providing programs and ministries. The key word for the single cell congregation, then, is "healthy." Being effective in the ministries and programs for the larger congregation is as important as being healthy, but health in the multi-matrix congregation is defined by having successful programs. For the multi-matrix congregation, successful programs are the key to excellence.

In a Family-sized congregation, the priest functions as the chaplain to the congregation. In a Pastoral-sized congregation, the priest is the central leader, the *pater familias*. However, both of these churches are highly relational. In the Program and Resource-sized congregations, ministry is done through programs, and pastoral care is done primarily by the laity.

The transitional-sized church is moving from high priest-presence in the daily lives of the congregation and a volunteer staff, to a high clergy presence among the staff. In the former, the priest functions as a shepherd. In the latter, the priest functions as a ranch foreman.

Now, let's apply this understanding to the ways in which vestries function in these three types of churches.

In the Family and Pastoral-sized churches, the vestry functions as the unpaid staff of the rector or vicar. Thus, vestry meetings function as staff meetings for the pastor. The vestry works with the rector or vicar to oversee the day-to-day operations of the church. Thus, the vestries of these smaller churches tend to micro-manage, because they are effectively the staff of their priest, concerned with the daily details of the running of the church.

In an established Program-sized congregation, the staff guides the day-to-day functions of the parish. Thus, the rector of the Program-sized church spends his or her time leading the staff. Operations flow fairly smoothly because there are generally enough staff to lead the basic ministries of the church.

How one works with a vestry and how vestries function in a family and a pastoral-sized church are vastly different. This model explains the reasons why so many churches don't succeed at going from the pastoral size to the program size. It's not a clean shift. A management style that works well for the Pastoral-sized church is ineffective for the Program-sized church. As the church grows, what used to work no longer works.

This shift in leadership styles is highlighted in the Transitional-sized Church. The rector has to function as a Pastoral-sized church rector for 75% of the (established Pastoral) congregation and has to function as a Program-sized church rector for 75% of the (emerging Program) congregation.

The internal pressure of the pastoral size aspect of the church, namely to remain intimate, small and not complex, bumps up against the external pressure to develop programs, ministries, and greater complexity of the emerging Program sized congregation.

In the process, the rector must be the "non-anxious presence" and vision caster for the Transitional-sized church. He or she must assure them that there is, indeed, light at the end of the tunnel, and that it is not a train! It's amazing how much less stress there is in pastoring a church with an average Sunday attendance of 275 than there is in pastoring a church with an average Sunday attendance of 200.

A couple of shifts must take place for this transition to program size to occur (remembering, of course, that these size designations are descriptive of the dynamic that occurs when you have a certain number of people functioning together in a group).

1. The vestry shifts from the "unpaid staff" of the rector to a board that has three primary duties:

- a) casting vision with the rector, and
- b) communicating that Vision among the congregation;
- c) setting policy; and resolving disputes between individual staff members and the rector when the rector needs back-up.

The vestry of a Pastoral-sized church tends to spend their vestry meetings micro-managing the congregation. This is characteristic of a pastoral-sized church.

One way to help transition the vestry is to create an Executive Committee of the vestry, comprised of the Rector, Senior Warden, Junior Warden, and Parish Administrator (as you grow in complexity, the treasurer can no longer function as administrator; you need someone on site), and past Senior Warden. Then have the vestry authorize the Junior Warden to approve repairs up to \$1,000 and the Executive Committee to authorize expenditures up to \$2,000 and report these to the vestry (NOT seek their permission).

Also, put your financial report at the end of the vestry meeting so you spend more of your energy on vision, policy and direction and less on finances.

2. The vestry must shift *from* a micro-managing body that keeps the church from spending too much money *to* a permission-giving board that looks for new opportunities for ministry. Further, the rector of a transitional-sized church must educate the vestry as to the changes that are taking place in the administration and governance of the church.

3. The parish becomes increasingly staff-led. The rector must transition his or her volunteers into a staff. Many churches are staffed to plateau. The church must add staff strategically, not understaffing (which is often the case) and not inappropriately staffing (less often). Staff meetings, staff development, and staff planning are new skills that the transitioning rector must develop.

4. Rather than have ongoing committees (standing committees of the vestry), the vestry will want to make more and more use of short term task forces rather than ongoing oversight committees. Staff will want to draw in advisory task forces, but these must work for the staff person rather than the vestry person who may be on the advisory task force.

K. QUESTIONS AND (SHORT) ANSWERS

The following are some actual questions frequently or occasionally asked about the role and relationship of vestry, rector and diocese.

Q. Who calls a rector?

A. The vestry with the consent of the bishop calls the rector. The congregation may neither hire nor fire a rector.

Q. May the vestry fire a rector?

A. No. A rector has life tenure, and leaves a parish only by death, resignation (with the consent of the vestry) and removal under provisions of canon law. When both parties do not agree to a termination of the pastoral relationship, the bishop is at first a mediator and as a last resort an arbitrator, in which case the bishop's decision is final and must be obeyed by both parties.

Q. The rector is out of town and the vestry wants to have a meeting to discuss the rector's salary. May they do this?

A. No. The vestry meets at regularly scheduled times. Special meetings of the vestry may be called only by the rector or by a majority of the members of the vestry in writing, stating the purpose of the meeting. The rector always presides unless the rector asks the another member of the Vestry to do so.

Q A member of the parish wants to have a referendum on the rector's tenure at the annual parish meeting. Can this be done?

A. No. The vestry is the sole representative of the congregation in its relationship with the rector. The congregation may not vote on the clergy of the parish.

Q. Who hires the Assistant Clergy?

A. The rector, with the consent of the Vestry. The assistant always serves at the pleasure of the rector.

Q. Our organist has a Ph.D. in music and 15 years of experience in Episcopal churches. Our rector knows nothing about music and sings badly, even in the shower. Who has the final say about music in the parish?

A. The rector.

Q. Who hires and fires the organist?

A. The rector.

Q. Who elects the vestry?

A. The congregation at the annual parish meeting. A third of the vestry is elected each year and serves for a three-year term. The vestry fills vacancies.

Q. May the rector screen the list of candidates and remove those who do not agree with him or her about parish policy?

A. No. Any confirmed person who is regular in worship, is 18 years of age or older and has made and maintained a financial commitment to the parish in the previous year is eligible to serve on the vestry. There should always be opportunity for nominations to be made from the floor or for names of nominees to be submitted prior to the election, which will appear on the ballot if canonically qualified. It is very desirable for there to be at least two nominees for each vacancy to be filled.

Q. Does the congregation approve the parish budget at the annual meeting?

A. No. The vestry is fully responsible for the financial matters of the parish. At the same time it is incumbent on the vestry to give a full accounting to the congregation as to the financial health of the parish.

Q. May the treasurer or the vestry withhold the salary of the rector if they do not believe that the rector is doing his or her job?

A. No. Canon law states that the compensation agreed upon must be paid on the date agreed upon.

Q. What if there is no money to pay the salary?

A. The vestry is responsible for paying all salaries, either through soliciting additional financial contributions from the members or through borrowing the money needed. If long-term financial viability is problematic, then the parish may need to go to a part-time priest and/or become a mission, in which case the bishop is the rector.

Q. May the vestry reduce the rector's salary as an expression of disapproval?

A. No. The courts have held that the compensation agreed upon by the rector and vestry is a legal contract.

Q. When the rector leaves, may the assistant be a candidate for the position of rector?

A. No. It is the policy of the Bishop that assistants may not normally succeed to the position of rector in the parish in which they are serving.

Q. May the interim rector become a candidate for the position of rector?

A. No. It is a violation of the agreement made at the time the interim accepted the position, and it is a policy of the bishop that the interim may not become rector.

Q. How should a vestry respond to a rector who is not performing well or respond to a growing conflict between the rector and a faction of the parish?

A. Members of the vestry should voice their concerns to the rector either privately or in a vestry meeting. The rector should always be part of the conversation. If this is not fruitful, wardens have immediate access to the bishop and should contact him. Following this conversation, the bishop will contact the rector and arrange for a meeting.

Q. Must a parish financially support the mission of the diocese?

A. Yes. Canon law states that every parish must give financial support to the mission of the diocese through payment of its assessment.

Q. The assistant wants the vestry to designate 100 percent of her salary for housing. May they do this?

A. Yes. Any cleric employed by a parish may designate any percentage of his or her salary as housing, and the vestry must do this. The amount of housing claimed on the cleric's tax return must be the actual amount used for housing and supportable by the cleric if the IRS questions the amount in an audit.

Q. John Smith is an ordained Methodist minister employed by St. John's to do Christian education. May he claim part of his salary as housing allowance?

A. No. The IRS maintains that in order to qualify for the housing allowance exclusion; a person must be ordained and performing duties which are ordinarily the duties of a priest

Q. What do we get for the money we give to the diocese? You get:

- A bishop -that's what the word Episcopal means. Each priest is the representative of the bishop in a local congregation, and the bishop provides oversight to clergy and congregations and shares responsibility for the mission of the church in the nation and the world. The bishop ordains, confirms, teaches, and helps congregations get clergy, mediates disputes and is chief pastor of the diocese.
- A priest. Every priest goes through a lengthy and costly discernment and education process. Your money pays for the recruitment, selection, training and ongoing nurture of clergy. In some instances the diocese shares in the cost of transitional deacons and provides them with a yearlong training program.
- Support and consultation when the parish is without a rector, and seeking competent pastoral leadership.
- Support and consultation for your educational and youth ministry programs and access to a well-stocked resource center, which includes videos, curricula and other printed resource material.
- The *Esprit*, our diocesan newspaper, which is received by every family in the diocese at no charge.
- Administration of the Church Pension Fund, in which all clergy and many laity participate, and our insurance programs -health, life, dental and property.
- Trained intervention when there is a conflict in your parish.
- Help in planning new buildings through the diocesan Mission Committee, and low-interest loans to build them through the Diocesan Revolving Loan Fund.
- Support of outreach programs all over this diocese, which you would not be able to support and sustain by yourselves.
- Support of the General Church and world missionary efforts of our Church in our own country and around the world.
- The ministry of College Chaplains who minister to young adults when they are at college or university, whether they members of our Church or not, as well as staff and faculty.
- Various workshops and educational events sponsored by the Diocese:

- Clergy days, clergy and family retreats, clergy conferences
- Youth Events
- Wardens and Treasurers Workshop
- Christian Education Conferences
- Support and consultation concerning administrative and financial matters.

APPENDIX 1: GLOSSARY

Bishop: The word Bishop actually derives from the ancient Greek word EPISKOPOS. So do the words “Episcopal,” referring to government or rule by bishops, and “episcopate,” referring to the tenure of a bishop. EPISKOPOS can be literally translated “over seer” (EPI= “over” and SKOPOS= “seer”). It is equivalent to the Latin term “supervisor.” In its original sense it did not have any specifically religious meaning, but it came to be associated with the central leading figure in early Christian communities.

In the developing Church, the bishop was understood to be both the chief pastor of a local community and the chief missionary of an area. In both cases, the bishop supervised the work and faith of the Christian community and its extension in the community. At the earliest stage, there was one bishop for each congregation, and there was usually only one congregation in a given city.

When the Church grew very quickly under the first Christian emperor of the Roman Empire, Constantine the Great, the local bishops suddenly became the supervisors of whole cities and presided over several congregations. Because this circumstance made it impossible for the bishop to be in every congregation every Sunday, the presbyters, or priests, served as his delegated representatives in the various congregations. This basic structure of the Church has remained in place through the succeeding centuries and in all cultures where the Church has come to be planted by Roman Catholics, Orthodox and Anglican Christians.

Canon: Derives from the Greek word, KANON, and means “rule” or “standard.”

Canon Law: The rules or standards established by the competent legislative authority of a church.

Canon of the Cathedral: Usually clergy, sometimes lay people, whose life and ministry set a high standard. There are two types of Canons in this sense: 1) Residentiary Canons who hold the title by virtue of their work in the Cathedral Church; and 2) Honorary Canons, persons given the title by the Bishop for their contribution to the ministry of the Diocese. (The provisions for appointing Honorary Canons are set out in DOD Article 12, Section 5.)

Canon of Scripture: The standard of approved texts read as Scripture in the Church, and approved by competent ecclesiastical authority. The Canon of Scripture is defined in Article VI of the Articles of Religion, found in the BCP p. 868. The General Convention of the Episcopal Church determines which translations of the Canon may be read in services of public worship in the Episcopal Church. (ECUSA Title II, Canon 2)

Canon to the Ordinary: The title given to the Bishop’s primary assistant.

Cathedral: The word Cathedral derives from the Greek, KATHEDRA, meaning chair. It is the principal Church of the Diocese because it is the official chair or seat of the Bishop. The Cathedral as such is governed by a body known as the Chapter.

Cure: The responsibility to which a member of the Clergy is appointed. The Rector’s cure is a Parish. A Chaplain’s cure is the institution where the Chaplain serves.

Dean of the Cathedral: The title of the priest in charge of the Cathedral Church. It is a shortened form of the word “deacon” and connotes that the Dean “serves” the Bishop as his representative, exercising oversight of the Cathedral congregation. In the Diocese of Dallas, the Bishop nominates three clergy to the Chapter who elects the Dean from among them. The Dean is also the Rector of St. Matthew’s Parish.

Diocese: The word “diocese” comes from the Latin, and was originally used as a term of Roman political administration. It meant “district,” or “jurisdiction.” The singular, *diocese*, is pronounced: **DI-oh-sis**; the plural, *dioceses*, is pronounced: **DI-oh-sees**.)

Ecclesiastical Authority: A term which designates the person or persons authorized by the Constitution and Canons of either the General Convention or of the Diocese to act in official matters. When there is a Bishop of the Diocese (also known as the Ordinary), he or she is the Ecclesiastical Authority. In the Absence of a Bishop Diocesan, the Standing Committee becomes the Ecclesiastical Authority.

Province: A subdivision of an entity. In reference to the Anglican Communion as a whole, “Province” is used of autonomous churches in various geographical configurations usually, but not always, coterminous with a nation. Such Provinces are presided over by a bishop who is known variously as the Archbishop, Presiding Bishop, or Primus, and generically as the Primate of the specific Church. In reference to the Episcopal Church, “Province” refers to a grouping of dioceses on a geographical basis.

Rector: The word means “ruler.” The Rector is the duly elected and settled member of the Clergy in charge of a Parish congregation. Rector’s have tenure, which means they may not be dismissed without action of the Bishop.

Vicar: The term applied to the member of the Clergy in charge of a Mission Station or Organized Mission of the Diocese. The word means “representative” and the Vicar is the Bishop’s designated representative exercising leadership in such a congregation. Vicars serve at the pleasure of the Bishop.

Virginia Report, The.

Warden, Junior: The title borne by a lay person who has been elected to this position by the Vestry of a congregation. Also known as the **Peoples’ Warden**. In the Diocese of Dallas, this person must be a member of the Vestry.

Warden, Senior: The title borne by a lay person who has been appointed to this position by the Rector of a congregation. Also known as the **Rector’s Warden**. When the Rector is the Bishop (as in the case of Mission Stations or Organized Missions), the title is **Bishop’s Warden**. In the Diocese of Dallas, this person must be a member of the Vestry.

APPENDIX 2: CANONS AT A GLANCE

The following table will help you locate the relevant Constitutional and Canonical references on a range of topics.

FOR INFORMATION ABOUT:	ECUSA	DOD
Agent of the Parish, Vestry as	Title I Canon 14	
Annual Parish Meeting		Canon 13
Annual Parochial Reports		Canon 28 Customary p. 27
Assistant Clergy		Canon 21
Audits		Canon 29 Customary p. 27
Bonding		Customary p. 27
Business Methods Proper recording and use of trust funds/endowment bonding of treasurers adequate insurance required permission required to encumber property property to be held in trust	Title I Canon 7	Canon 29
Clergy: Professional Ethics		Customary p. 2
Conflict Transformation Ministry		Customary p. 13
Curates		Canon 21
Discretionary Funds	Title III Canon 14	Customary p. 4
Litruagy & Music		Customary
Liturgy: Rector's Authority	Title III Canon 14	Canon 17.2
Marriage	Title I Canon 18	Customary p. 21
Ministry Funds	(Title III Canon 14)	Customary p. 4
Music	Title II Canon 5	
Parish, Vacancy in Rectorate		Canon 18
Parish, Wardens and Vestry		Canon 14
Pension Funds		Canon 11
President of the Vestry	Title I Canon 14	Canon 17.1
Property: Title of	(Title II Canon 6)	Article 13
Rector, Calling of	Title III Canon 17	Canon 18
Rector: Disagreements with	Title III Canon 20-1	Canon 20
Rector: Dismissal		Canon 20
Sabbaticals (Clergy)		Customary p. 4
Sexual Misconduct		Customary p. 5
Team Ministry: Rector & Vestry		Customary p. 26
Title to Church Property		Article 13
Vacation Policy (Clergy)		Customary p. 4
Vestry, Duties & Responsibilities	Title I Canon 14	Canon 14
Vestry, General		Customary p. 26
Wardens		Canon 14

APPENDIX 3 SAMPLE RESOLUTION & LETTER

The following samples are for use by Vestries which provide their Clergy with a housing allowance in lieu of providing a residence for the Clergy and his/her family:

Sample Vestry Resolution

The Vestry on the 20th day of December, 1999, after discussion, agreed to pay a parsonage allowance to the Rev. John Smith; the following resolution was duly made, seconded, and approved:

RESOLVED, The Vestry of St. Swithin's Church, Dallas, Texas, which Church does not provide a residence for the Rector, the Rev. John Smith, a minister of the Gospel, establishes his total compensation at \$36,000 for the year 2000, and designates \$15,000 from that total compensation to be his parsonage allowance within the meaning of that term as used in Section 107 of the IRS Code of 1986.

Sample Letter to the Member of the Clergy

Dear Fr. John,

This letter advises you that at a meeting of the Vestry held on the 20th day of December, 1999, your parsonage allowance for the year 2000 was officially designated and fixed as follows:

Your total compensation will be \$36,000 for the year 2000. Of that figure, your designated parsonage allowance, within the meaning of that term as used in Section 107 of the IRS Code of 1986, will be \$15,000.

Under Section 107 of the IRS Code, an ordained minister of the Gospel is allowed to exclude from gross income the parsonage allowance paid to him as a part of his compensation to the extent used by him to provide a home. The amount of money excluded from federal income tax is the lowest of the following amounts: 1) Fair rental value of the house, furnished, plus utilities; 2) actual cash spent; 3) Amount specified in the vestry minutes before the money is paid.

You should keep an accurate record of your expenditures to rent or provide a home to be able to substantiate any amounts excluded from gross income in filing your federal income tax return.

(Signed, Clerk of the Vestry)