



The Report of the Constitution and Canons Committee, 2018

To: The 2018 Synod of the Diocese of the Mid-Atlantic
From: The Diocesan Constitution and Canons Committee

The governing documents of the Diocese establish a Committee on Constitution & Canons and charge it to report annually to the Synod. The report is to include recommendations on any proposed amendments of those documents. (Const., Art. IX; Canons, Tit. IA, Canon 5, § 3.)

The committee met a total of 6 times between April and August of 2018. The focus of our work has centered around developing a more complete process for the election of a bishop. In looking at our own canons with Bishop John, we recognized the good foundation we had to build upon and the need for a much more complete and detailed process. The question that has been a driving force this season is, "How do we design a process that is concrete enough to be helpful and fluid enough to be open to the leading of the Holy Spirit in and through the varied voices of the diocese?" Additionally, we asked what sort of process would attract and recruit a highly qualified, diverse group of people to the committee; how do we ensure confidentiality for the nominees; how is confidentiality balanced with transparency and accountability in the hopes of producing a most excellent group of nominees.

The committee spent over a hundred of hours in discussion and research as we looked at our diocesan process regarding the election of a Bishop. Contact was made with several dioceses which have recently gone through a search process for a Bishop. The canons from numerous dioceses were examined as we studied the processes in place elsewhere. Conversations were initiated with members of nominating committees in several diocese where there has been a recent election. As a result of this work, the Constitution and Canons Committee brings substantial revisions and additions to Title 1A. Canon 5: Committees of the Diocese, Section 4: "Committee on Nominations for Bishops."

The committee is also presenting an addition to Title 1B, Canon 1, Section 3.C regarding "Vestry Member Eligibility, Qualifications, Duties, Oath, and Vacancies." This arises from in Title II, Canon 5 of the Diocesan Canons. During our meetings, we enjoyed vigorous discussion around Title II, Canon 5. "Of Standards of Morality and Ethics," and in particular Section 2 and 3 regarding the sanctity of marriage and the sanctity of life. A question that was posed is, "Is there a need for this to be incorporated into the requirements for service as a vestry person, much as adherence to the "Fundamental Declarations of the Province" is a requirement. After prayer and discussion, the committee felt it important to make an addition regarding the morality and ethics of those serving on vestries.

We also present one Constitutional amendment carried over from 2017, which requires a second vote. This amendment pertains to procedures for determining a quorum amongst clergy at Synod as found in Article 4: "Authority, Composition, and Operation of the Synod," Section 4: "Quorum for the Transaction of Synod Business."

The largest part of our time was directed to prayer, conversation, and research about the procedures in place regarding "The Committee on Nominations for Bishops." None of us likes to think about Bishop John's tenure as diocesan bishop coming to an end. The reality is that all human resources are finite, and every day takes us closer to the day when the diocese will need to begin the process of nominating the person we feel is called to be +John's successor. The Constitution and Canons Committee is bringing substantial changes to the table this year in what is thought to be the second year of a multi-year process of fine tuning the canons to give our diocese the tools it will need for the process to run smoothly.

Finally, I would be remiss if I didn't thank the incredible men and women who served on this committee in 2018, and our Chancellor, Scott Ward, who tirelessly provides wisdom and guidance. It is a privilege to serve alongside them, and under the oversight of Bishop John, who encourages us to do the work we are called to do.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Becki Neumann +". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

The Rev. Becki Neumann, Chairperson
Rector, Christ Church, Loudoun County