

The Report of the Constitution and Canons Committee, 2016

To: The 2016 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 four times between April and August, 2016. The result of that work is one proposed amendment of the Constitution and for amendments of the Canons. In brief, these changes include:

- Constitution Article VII. Section 2. Line 4, regarding the “Disability or Impermissible Absence of the Bishop”
- Canons Title 1A. Canon 2. Section 10, regarding “Diocesan Delegates to the Provincial Assembly and Provincial Council”
- Canons Title Ia. Canon 4. Section 1, regarding “Officers of the Diocese”
- Canons Title Ia. Canon 5. Section 4.B, regarding “Sources and Contents of Nominations” (of a bishop)
- Canons Title Ia. Canon 5. Section 4.C, regarding “Screening of Nominations” (of a bishop)

The committee is also recommending a procedural change that will allow for “each member of the Synod (Lay, Clerical, and ex officio), each member of each committee of the Diocese and of the Synod, and each member of the Ecclesiastical Trial Court” to make “regular reaffirmation” of the Fundamental Declarations of the Province, as called for in Article I of the Constitution. This change would become effective for Synod, 2017.

The Committee also discussed the amendment to Synod 2015 Resolution Two: Proposed Amendment of Canon III.6. There was agreement among committee members that adequate training and preparation for lay ministries is important. It was the sense of the committee that a canonical change is not the best vehicle for providing training, but that a better avenue for training would be provision for training opportunities and the sharing of training resources. The rationale for this thinking is rooted in the committee’s understanding that this type of preparation will play out differently in parishes of varying sizes and in church plants and missions. It is also noted that the diocesan approach to the creation of the canons has historically been one of minimalism and subsidiarity. The Committee consulted with The Rev. Tom Herrick, Canon for Church Planting. His input was similar to that of the committee. Following the June 14th clergy lunch Bishop John forwarded an email to all those clergy who were in attendance. The purpose of the email was to call forth any discussion and opinion regarding the 2015 proposed amendment. No discussion was forthcoming. In conclusion, the C&CC has no plans to

reintroduce the proposed amendment at Synod 2016. We do recommend that at Synod 2016 an opportunity be created for those interested to meet to share resources, and possibly to be coached in the effective preparation of those involved in lay ministries as described in the proposed amendment from 2015.

It has been a privilege to serve the diocese through the work of this committee.

Respectfully submitted,

The Rev. Becki Neumann, Chairperson
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