



The Report of the Constitution and Canons Committee, 2017

To: The 2017

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 5 times between May and August 2017. The result of that work is one proposed amendment of the Constitution and several amendments to the Canons in the areas of “The Committee for the Nomination of Bishops” and the Ordination Committee and the ordination process. We also present one Constitutional amendment carried over from 2016, which requires a second vote. This amendment pertains to procedures when faced with the “Disability or Impermissible Absence of the Bishop.” In addition we bring one new Constitutional amendment for a first vote, and ** amendments to the Canons. In brief, these changes include:

- Constitution Article 4: regarding the “Authority, Composition, and Operation of the Synod”
- Title 1A. Canon 5. Section 4: Regarding the “Committee on Nominations for Bishops,”
- Title III. Canon 1: Regarding “The Ordination Committee and Examining Chaplains”
- Title III. Canon 2: Regarding “Postulants for Holy Orders”
- Title III. Canon 3: Regarding “Candidates for Holy Orders,” and
- Title III. Canon 5: Regarding “Presbyters and their Ordination.”

During our meetings, we enjoyed vigorous discussion on many topics. This included conversation 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. This topic will undoubtedly generate more discussion in the committee in 2018.

The committee also spent time looking at clergy attendance patterns at Synod, and analyzing the factors that make achieving a quorum difficult at times. One of the proposed canonical changes comes as the result of much discussion around this topic.

A large part of our time was directed to conversation 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 time for examining these parts of the Canons is now, in advance of our need to employ them. The Constitution and Canons Committee has brought several changes to the table this year in what is thought to be 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 2017, 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