

# Diocese of East Tennessee Constitution

## ARTICLE X. WARDENS AND VESTRY

**Sec. 1.** Each Parish of the Diocese shall elect or select a Vestry, consisting of adult Confirmed Communicants in Good Standing, who shall be registered communicants of the Parish at the time of election or selection. The time and manner of such election, and the number of Vestry members, shall be prescribed by Canon.

**Sec. 2.** The Vestry shall elect a Senior Warden and a Junior Warden out of its own body. At its option, however, a Parish, by by-law, may permit the selection of the Senior Warden by other procedures. The Vestry shall also elect a Secretary and Treasurer, and delegates to the Convention, all of whom shall be Confirmed Communicants in Good Standing; and shall exercise all other powers vested in a Vestry by the usages of the Church. Members of the Vestry shall continue in office until a new Vestry is chosen. In all meetings of the Vestry the Rector shall preside, or, in the absence of the Rector, the Senior Warden, or, in the absence of the Rector and Senior Warden, one designated by the body.

# Diocese of East Tennessee Canons

## TITLE IV CANON 1

**Sec. 3.** Each Parish in union with The Diocese shall, on the first convenient day in each calendar year, or within the quarter preceding that year, elect or select by a method set out in the Bylaws of the Parish a Vestry, consisting of not less than 6 nor more than 18 persons, having qualifications prescribed in Article X of the Constitution, to serve for that year and until their successors are elected or selected and have qualified; provided, however, that each Parish shall, by resolution adopted at any Parish meeting, upon prior notice, by a majority vote of the qualified voters present at the meeting, provide for a rotation in office of members of the Vestry by either of the following methods:

- (a) retaining a one-year term, but prohibiting a person from serving more than three consecutive one-year terms, or
- (b) making provision for a term in office of three years, one-third of the members of the vestry to be elected or selected each year to serve three-year terms. After expiration of three years consecutive service, a vestry member shall not be eligible for re-election or re-selection until at least one year shall have expired, nor shall a vestry member who has been elected or selected to serve a full term on the Vestry and who has subsequently resigned from that position be eligible for re-election or re-selection until at least one year shall have expired from the date of resignation. A Senior Warden and Junior Warden shall be elected or selected from the members of the Vestry, either by election by the Vestry or by some other selection procedure permitted by the Bylaws of the Parish.

**Sec. 7.** The Rector shall have the exclusive charge of all things affecting the spiritual interests of the Parish subject only to the Bishop. It shall be the duty of the Rector to take order concerning the worship of the Church, together with all that appertains thereunto. The Rector may appoint, from time to time, fit persons to assist in all duties which may lawfully be performed by Lay

## Excerpts from Diocesan Documents pertaining to the Roles of Vestry and Rector

persons; shall be, at all times, entitled to access to the Church, to open the same for public worship, for catechetical or other religious instructions, marriages, baptisms, burials, and all other offices authorized by the Church; shall have spiritual direction and control of all Sunday Schools, Parish Schools, and other educational and charitable associations connected with the Parish; and shall preside at all Parish and Vestry meetings.

**Sec. 8.** The Vestry shall administer the temporal affairs of the Parish; shall elect and call the Rector, unless otherwise set forth in these Canons, shall provide for the regular and well-ordered worship of Almighty God, and shall cooperate with the Rector in all efforts to develop the spiritual life of the Parish. The Vestry shall, at all times, keep the church in proper condition for its uses, and likewise give proper care to all buildings and grounds belonging to the Parish. A quorum shall consist of not less than a majority of all the members of the Vestry in office immediately before a meeting begins.

## Diocese of East Tennessee Letters of Agreement

### **ROLES OF VESTRY AND RECTOR**

The respective roles of Vestry and Rector are broadly defined by the Canons of The Episcopal Church and may be modified by Canons of the Diocese of East Tennessee and the laws of the State of Tennessee. All ministries other than those reserved to ordained leadership (such as administering the sacraments) are understood as shared by the Rector and laity of the Parish and shall be carried out in a mutually supportive manner. In order to faithfully engage in the work of ministry in The Episcopal Church, the Rector and Vestry pledge to conform to the Diocesan and national canons concerning church property and land, holding all real and personal property of the Parish in trust for the benefit of the Diocese of East Tennessee of The Episcopal Church, and they further pledge not to seek by overt or covert means to subvert or remove the Parish or any property from the Diocese of East Tennessee or The Episcopal Church. Specific responsibilities of Rector and Vestry are agreed as follows:

### **RECTOR RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Rector shall lead the Parish as pastor, priest and teacher, sharing in the councils of this congregation and of the whole Church, in communion with our Bishop. By word and action, informed at all times by the Holy Scriptures, the Book of Common Prayer, and Constitution and Canons of The Episcopal Church and our Diocese, the Rector shall proclaim the Gospel, love and serve Christ's people, nourish them, and strengthen them to glorify God in this life and in the life to come.

The Rector shall maintain a regular schedule of worship services and preaching, education, pastoral care and pastoral offices, calling upon the sick and shut-in and visiting newcomers.

The Rector shall select and hire, within financial resources provided by the Vestry, support staff to assist with liturgy, pastoral care, teaching, and youth programs. The Rector shall supervise all

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parish staff in the exercise of their responsibilities and ministries, for which they shall be accountable to the Rector.

The Rector shall function as Chair of the Vestry and support the Vestry in its responsibilities.

A Discretionary Fund is to be established under the Rector's sole control from designated funds from the budget and gifts given for the purposes of the Discretionary Fund. The Discretionary Fund shall be established and maintained in accordance with the canons of The Episcopal Church and the Diocese of East Tennessee, as well as the Chancellor's guidelines, which are attached to this document.

The Rector shall oversee and control the use of all buildings, grounds and furnishings of the Parish within guidelines agreed upon by the Vestry.

### **VESTRY RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Vestry shall serve as agents and legal representatives of the Parish in all matters concerning its corporate property and the relations of the Parish to its clergy.

The Vestry shall lead the laity to support and cooperate with the Rector in pursuit of Parish goals and performance of its ministries.

The Vestry shall support the Rector, personally and organizationally.

The Vestry shall provide the financial resources to maintain the building, grounds and furnishings of the Parish and to carry out its ministries.