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## V. Parishes and Missions

A. Parish Vestries and the Cathedral Chapter. In accordance with the relevant laws of the Commonwealth of Kentucky, the responsibility of the vestry is to regulate the temporal affairs of a congregation and to cooperate with the clergy for the spiritual welfare of the people (Title I, Canon 14 of the *Canons of the General Convention* [2006] and Canons 15, 21, 22 & 23 of the *Canons of the Diocese of Kentucky* [2006]).

1. The vestry is a group of neither less than three nor more than twenty-one lay adult communicants who are elected at the annual congregation meeting. Members of the vestry elect from the vestry membership persons to serve as the senior warden, junior warden and secretary. From the membership of the congregation, the vestry elects a treasurer for the congregation.

2. The management of Christ Church Cathedral, Louisville, is placed with its Chapter, of which the bishop is the president. The chapter serves the function of a parish vestry. The bishop, in consultation with the dean of Christ Church Cathedral, appoints a senior warden from the lay members of the chapter. The diocesan convention annually elects a member at large from another congregation of the diocese to serve on the cathedral chapter for a three-year term.

B. Missions and Bishop's Committees. Mission and ecclesiastical communities are recognized and are governed in accordance with Canon 18 of the *Canons of the Diocese of Kentucky* (2006).

C. Deaneries. Deaneries consist of geographical groupings of congregations. Currently within the diocese there are two deaneries: the Four Rivers Deanery and the Twin Rivers Deanery. Diocesan deaneries function to provide collegial life support and, where appropriate, enhanced joint ministry in their respective regions. The clergy of each deanery select their own deanery leader. The frequency of deanery meetings and functions is determined by the deanery constituency.

D. Congregation By-Laws. Each congregation must develop and adopt a systematic set of congregation by-laws or policies which specify the authority and governance of the congregation. Each congregation should have policies and procedures that provide rules for voting by vestry members. These by-laws or policies will be discussed with the canon to the ordinary and chancellor who will certify their compliance with diocesan and General Convention canons. A copy of each congregation's by-laws must be filed with the diocesan staff.

E. Records and Reports. Congregation records are often a central—and sometimes the only—source of information about congregation members and the congregation. Not only do congregation records supplement individual civil records and provide the basis for the annual report on the state of the church, also they provide a factual history that can become the basis for future congregation planning. Therefore it is vital that records be kept in an orderly and consistent fashion, that they be current, and that they be protected against loss. All congregation records should be maintained and kept at the congregation, and they should be stored in a secure container (Title 1, Canon 6, Sec. 1-4 of the *Canons of the General Convention* [2006]).

1. Service and Congregation Registers. It is necessary that both service and congregation registers be filled out accurately and as soon as possible after any congregation activity such as worship services, baptisms, marriages, burials, etc. In view of the fundamental value of congregation registers, it is strongly recommended that they be adequately protected from fire or other damage by being stored in fireproof and water resistant containers and/or electronically stored at a secure off-site location.

2. Parochial Reports. The Parochial Report is the most important single source by which the diocese and the General Convention measure the vital statistics, financial health and growth of congregations. Therefore, it is essential that the report be completed accurately in accordance with the required format and submitted to the diocesan office no later than February 1<sup>st</sup> each year. Though the Parochial Report must be submitted online, a paper copy must be filed in the diocesan office along with additional required documentation (Canon 28, Sec. 3 of the *Canons of the Diocese of Kentucky* [2006]).

3. Property Deeds and Insurance Documents. Deeds and current property insurance documents must be adequately protected from fire or other damage by being

stored in fireproof and water resistant containers and/or electronically stored at a secure off-site location. Copies of all church property deeds should be filed with the diocesan staff. Congregations which do not participate in the diocesan property insurance group plan should file a copy of their insurance documents with the diocesan staff.

F. Establishing a New Congregation. Any congregation, clergy person, or lay person interested in initiating the formation of a new congregation within the diocese must discuss this intention with the bishop, and upon the bishop's direction, the Department of Mission and Evangelism. The specific canonical guidelines for this process must be followed. Although the bishop is always interested in the establishment of new congregations, the interests of existing congregations must be considered, and new congregations must propose plans showing financial stability or progress toward financial stability. All feasible new congregation starts will be encouraged and supported (Canon 18 of the *Canons of the Diocese of Kentucky* [2006]).

G. Requirements for Approval of New Construction. All proposed plans for new buildings (church buildings, congregation houses [halls] or schools) as well as all major renovations should be reviewed by the diocesan Committee on Church Architecture and Allied Arts. This Committee review is required if the diocesan entity responsible for the construction is applying for financial assistance from the diocese or receives diocesan operations subsidies. It is then the duty of the committee to advise Trustees and Council. Also, proposed financial plans for the construction must be reviewed by the Department of Finance and Stewardship. Please know that before the financing for any project is obtained, if the alienation or encumbrance of any real property or endowed funds is anticipated as part of the financial plan, such alienation or encumbrance must be approved by the bishop and Standing Committee (Title I, Canon 7 of the *Canons of the General Convention* [2006] and Canon 15, Sec. 6 and Canon 35 of the *Canons of the Diocese of Kentucky* [2006]). When new construction is first being considered, the bishop and canon to the ordinary should be notified.

H. Clergy Deployment.

1. Notification of Diocese. When a clergy person desires to leave a congregation the consent of the vestry must be obtained (Title III, Canon 9, Sec. 13 of the *Canons of the General Convention* [2006]). Upon receipt of consent from the vestry, the bishop and canon to the ordinary must be notified of the circumstances and the anticipated date of departure. This includes clergy who wish to discern a call to other positions, those receiving new calls, and those leaving for any other reason (i.e. retirement). At this point the bishop and the canon will work with the vestry of the affected congregation to negotiate the transition (Canon 23, Sec. 2 of the *Canons of the Diocese of Kentucky* [2006]).

2. Search, Discernment and Calling Process.

a. Rector. The bishop should be contacted as soon as it is known that a rector, vicar or priest-in-charge vacancy will exist. A specific discernment process must be followed in the search for a new rector, vicar or priest-in-charge. This process will be

directed by the diocesan deployment officer. Normally, assisting clergy members on a congregation staff are not eligible for consideration as rector.

b. **Interim Priest.** In most cases during the search process for a rector, an interim priest temporarily fills the office of rector. The bishop approves the congregation's call of an interim priest. Therefore the vestry should work very closely with the bishop and the diocesan deployment officer to create and evaluate a list of candidates and to negotiate the letter of agreement. Normally, the interim priest is not eligible for election as rector of the congregation in which the interim is serving.

c. **Priest-in-Charge.** In response to a specific congregation's need, the diocesan bishop, with the agreement of the vestry or bishop's committee, may appoint a priest-in-charge to serve that congregation. The priest-in-charge is appointed by and is responsible to the bishop. Compensation and other agreements are negotiated by the vestry or bishop's committee must be approved by the bishop and are included in a letter of agreement.

d. For more information go to the *Diocese of Kentucky Search and Discernment Manual* in **Appendix 9**.

**I. Episcopal Visitations.** The *Canons of the General Convention* [2006] require the bishop to visit each congregation once every three years (Title III, Canon 12, Sec. 3[a]). However, it is the normal practice in this diocese for the bishop to visit each congregation annually. The purpose of the visitation is to preach the Gospel, celebrate the Eucharist, administer initiatory rites, and to take counsel with the vestry for the mission and ministry of that congregation. The clergy member in charge and the vestry should design the visitation in consultation with the bishop, using the bishop's visitation form in **Appendix 10**. This is an opportunity for the bishop to receive preparatory information from the congregation. Upon conclusion the visitation a report of baptisms, confirmations, receptions, etc., should be submitted using the form in **Appendix 11**.

**J. Use of Church Facilities.** The *Canons of the General Convention* (2006), state that "... the Rector shall, at all times, be entitled to the use and control of the Church and Congregation buildings..." (Title III, Canon 9, Sec. 5 [a][2]). Notwithstanding, vestries are encouraged to create, with the concurrence of the rector, a usage policy that will be distributed to all groups who desire to use church facilities. This policy should include a fee schedule, usage eligibility criteria and alcohol usage restrictions consistent as stated in this policy manual. Under certain circumstances it will be appropriate to require the users to provide an insurance liability waiver (Section VII, A). A facilities reservations calendar should be maintained at the church office.