

2021 Vestry Training Notes Part One - 2/27/2021 (to accompany PowerPoint)

What is a Vestry

- “Vestry” originally referred to the room in the church “in which the vestments, vessels, and other requisites for Divine worship are kept and in which the clergy robe” (*The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*).
- However, since the vestry was the room in which church business meetings took place, the word also came to mean “an elective body...composed of the rector and a group of elected parishioners administering the temporal affairs of the parish” (*Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*).

National Church Canons

Canon 13: Of Parishes and Congregations

Sec. 1. Every Congregation of this Church shall belong to the Church in the Diocese in which its place of worship is situated; a Member of the Clergy serving a Cure having Congregations in more than one jurisdiction shall have such rights, including vote, in the Convention of the jurisdiction in which the Member of the Clergy has canonical residence as may be provided in the Canons of that diocese and may be granted seat and voice in the jurisdiction(s) in which the Member of the Clergy does not have canonical residence.

Sec. 2

1. (a) The ascertainment and defining of the boundaries of existing Parishes or Parochial Cures, as well as the establishment of a new Parish or Congregation, and the formation of a new Parish within the limits of any other Parish, is left to the action of the several Diocesan Conventions.
2. (b) Until a Canon or other regulation of a Diocesan Convention shall have been adopted, the formation of new Parishes, or the establishment of new Parishes or Congregations within the limits of existing Parishes, shall be vested in the Bishop of the Diocese, acting by and with the advice and consent of the Standing Committee thereof, and, in case of there being no Bishop, of the Ecclesiastical Authority.

Sec. 3

1. (a) Where Parish boundaries are not defined by law, or settled by action of the Convention of the Diocese under Section 2 of this Canon, or are not otherwise settled, they shall be defined by the civil divisions of the State as follows:

2. (b) Parochial boundaries shall be the limits as fixed by law, of a village, town, township, incorporated borough, city, or of some division of any such civil district, which may be recognized by the Bishop, acting with the advice and consent of the Standing Committee, as constituting the boundaries of a Parish.
3. (c) If there be but one Church or Congregation within the limits of such village, town, township, borough, city, or such division of a civil district, as herein provided, the same shall be deemed the Parochial Cure of the Member of the Clergy having charge thereof. If there be two or more Churches or Congregations therein, it shall be deemed the Cure of the Members of the Clergy thereof.
4. (d) This Canon shall not affect the legal rights of property of any Parish or Congregation.

Canon 14: Of Parish Vestries

Sec. 1. In every Parish of this Church the number, mode of selection, and term of office of Wardens and Members of the Vestry, with the qualifications of voters, shall be such as the State or Diocesan law may permit or require, and the Wardens and Members of the Vestry selected under such law shall hold office until their successors are selected and have qualified.

Sec. 2. Except as provided by the law of the State or of the Diocese, the Vestry shall be agents and legal representatives of the Parish in all matters concerning its corporate property and the relations of the Parish to its Clergy.

Sec. 3. Unless it conflicts with the law as aforesaid, the Rector, or such other member of the Vestry designated by the Rector, shall preside in all the meetings of the Vestry.

Excerpts from Diocesan Canons			
1	Annual Meeting is when	Within 60 days (on or before January 31 st)	Set by Rector with approval of vestry
2	How many on the Vestry	No fewer than five (ed. Most 9-12)	Determined by parish articles of incorporation/by laws
3	Vestry eligibility	May not be employed or engaged by the parish, may not be the spouse or immediate family member of any person employed/engaged by the parish TEC Canon 14- mode of selection, number and term of office	Exclusion does not apply to the Rector/vicar who is a member of the vestry Deacons shall be deemed as engaged by the parish Clergy actively involved in ministry of the parish shall be deemed engaged by the parish

4	What if no one is elected	Continue in office until successors are elected/qualified or until removed from office- with or without cause- this requires a vote or agreement in writing by a majority of all members of the parish entitled to vote- (called parish meeting) and the notice of this meeting to recall a member or members of the Vestry must state the purpose of the meeting and the specific members sought to be removed- must be done by separate vote for each person to be removed. If removal is voted and passed, the vacancies created shall be filled by members at the same meeting	
5	Removal of a vestry person	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May be removed from office- with or without cause- • May be removed by the members of the parish: this requires a vote or agreement in writing by a majority of all members of the parish entitled to vote- (called parish meeting) and the notice of this meeting to recall a member or members of the Vestry must state the purpose of the meeting and the specific members sought to be removed- must be done by separate vote for each person to be removed. If removal is voted and passed, the vacancies created shall be filled by members at the same meeting • May be removed by a 2/3 vote of the Vestry, with consent of the Rector and Ecclesiastical Authority • If removed, ineligible to stand for re-election until the next annual meeting • If removed, the former vestry person shall turn over any and all records of the vestry in his/her possession 	
6	If vestry vacancy occurs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rector shall appoint successor with the consent of the remaining members of the vestry- this person. This appointee shall serve until the next annual meeting 	
7	Senior Warden	Appointed by Rector, must be 18+ and confirmed communicant in good standing	Annual (or term set by parish)
8	Junior warden	Elected by vestry	Annual (or term set by parish)
9	Secretary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elected annually • Take and record the minutes of the vestry proceedings • Attest the public acts of the vestry • Preserve all records and papers belonging to the parish • Perform other duties as shall be legally assigned 	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faithfully deliver to the successor all books and documents belonging to the parish • Does not have to be a member of the vestry
10	Treasurer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elected annually to perform the duties incumbent on the office • Shall be bonded in a suitable amount • Books and accounts shall be audited annually (or at any time the vestry so directs) • May be the same person as the Secretary • Does not have to be a member of the vestry
11	Wardens (both implied)	Take charge of the property of the church, see that all things are provided for orderly worship
12	Vestry duties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take charge of the church property • Keep church property fully insured • To prepare a budget providing for the necessary requirements and expenditures of the parish • Regulate all temporal concerns • To elect (and with approval of Bishop) and to call a rector • To provide for the rector's maintenance • To keep order in the church during worship • Act as helpers to the rector (as laity for the welfare of the church)
13	Vestry meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shall be held annually (to receive reports of officers and committees, pass on the same, to turn over the affairs of the parish to the newly elected vestry) • May have other meetings at regular times, or when called by the Rector, senior warden (in Rector's absence but with Rector's knowledge) or at the request of two vestry persons • The Bishop (ecclesiastical authority or bishop's designee) may call a vestry meeting (and preside) at any time • Only members present in person (or present by 2 way electronic voice or voice/video) may vote at a meeting • No proxy votes allowed, no vestry person may cast the ballot of another vestry person • Open to all of the members of the parish

14	Executive session meetings during regular vestry meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May be held for personnel matters or • With the consent of the Bishop (ecclesiastical authority) 	
15	Called special meeting of the corporation- agenda must be announced and stuck to!	at least 30 days notice	Ecclesiastical authority may shorten (but not less than ten days)
16	Who can vote	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -16 years or older -Enrolled in parish register -Faithful in worship past year -Faithful in working, praying, giving in previous year 	If someone's eligibility to vote is challenged- Rector or senior warden appoints a committee of 3 shall determine eligibility- this decision is final/binding
17	Absentee ballots allowed?	If by illness or physical condition	Must receive prior written approval by Bishop or Bishop's designee
18	RECTOR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shall preside at meetings (or designee appointed) • Spiritual concerns of the parish are under the exclusive direction of the rector, subordinate to the Bishop and the Constitution and Canons • If removed or suspended, the rector ceases to be a member of the vestry or church committee. Bishop may suspend elections, fill vacancies, and may appoint a senior warden, until in the Bishop's discretion such actions are no longer necessary 	
Below are the actual Diocesan Canons if you need them for reference!			

Diocese of Central Florida Canons relating to Vestry:

Canon XVII Wardens, Vestry and Electors

Section 1.

In every Parish in this Diocese there shall be an annual election to fill the expired terms of members of the Vestry by ballot within 60 days before or on the 31st day of January, the actual date to be set by the Rector with the approval of the Vestry. The Vestry shall consist of no fewer than five as may be fixed by the Parish Articles of Incorporation or Bylaws, and who shall continue in office until their successors are elected and qualified. Such election shall be conducted as provided in the Bylaws of the Parish. From the Vestry, one shall be appointed Senior Warden by the Rector and one shall be designated and elected by the Vestry to serve as

Junior Warden, each to serve a term of one year. Nothing herein contained shall prevent a Parish from establishing terms of office of more than one year, provided the term of one or more members of the Vestry shall expire each year.

Section 2.

The Rector, or the Vestry by vote of at least a majority of its members, may call a Special Meeting of the members of the corporation upon notice of at least 30 days. The manner and form of notice shall be subject to the approval of the Ecclesiastical Authority and the Ecclesiastical Authority may shorten the time of notice to no less than 10 days. Such notice shall state the matters to be considered at such meeting in appropriate detail. Only those matters set forth may be considered at the Special Meeting.

Section 3.

Only communicant members of a Parish who are 16 years of age and over, whose names are duly enrolled as such in the register of the said Parish, and who for the previous year have been faithful in corporate worship, unless for good cause prevented, and have been faithful in working, praying and giving for the spread of the Kingdom of God, are to be entitled to vote on all matters coming before the Parish for a vote including the election of Vestry members. The vote of no person shall be questioned unless his or her right to vote shall be first challenged by a qualified elector. In the event of such challenge, the right of such person to vote shall be passed upon by a Committee of three appointed by the Rector (or in the event there shall be no Rector, then by the Senior Warden), and the findings of such Committee shall be final and binding. Only members entitled to vote at the meeting of the Parish at which a vote is to be taken and who are present may vote or member who is unable to attend due to illness or physical condition and who received prior written approval from the Bishop or the Bishop's designee to vote by absentee ballot.

Section 4.

A person shall be eligible to serve as a Warden or member of the Vestry who is entitled to vote on matters coming before the Parish or Mission, at least 18 years of age, and a confirmed communicant in good standing. No person employed or engaged by the Parish or Mission, nor the spouse or immediate family member of any person employed or engaged by the Parish or Mission, except for the Rector or Vicar, shall be eligible to serve as a member of the Vestry. For purposes of this Section 4:

- (a) A Deacon serving a Congregation shall be deemed to be engaged by the Parish or Mission;
- (b) Clergy who are not employed by the Parish or Mission, but are actively involved in the ministry of the Parish or Mission, shall be deemed to be engaged by the Parish or Mission;

(c) A postulant or candidate for ordination shall be deemed to be engaged by the Parish or Mission.

Section 5.

It shall be the duty of the Wardens to protect the church property and to see that all things needed for the orderly worship of God and for the administration of the sacraments and ordinances of the church be provided. The Rector shall preside at all meetings of the Vestry. In the absence of the Rector, or at the Rector's request, the Senior Warden shall preside at the meetings of the Vestry. In the absence of both, the Junior Warden shall preside. The person presiding at a meeting of the Vestry may appoint another to preside at that meeting.

Section 6.

It shall be the duty of the Vestry to take charge of the property of the church and keep the same fully insured, to prepare a budget providing for the necessary requirements and expenditures of the Parish, to regulate all temporal concerns, to elect and with the approval of the Ecclesiastical Authority, call a Rector, to provide for the Rector's maintenance, to keep order in the church during the celebration of divine worship, and in general to act as helpers to the Rector in whatever is appropriate to lay persons for the furtherance of the welfare of the church; it being understood always that the spiritual concerns of the Parish are under the exclusive direction of the Rector, in subordination to the Ecclesiastical Authority, and Constitution and Canons of the Diocese.

Section 7.

The Vestry shall annually elect a Secretary, whose duty it shall be to take and record the minutes of their proceedings, attest the public acts of the Vestry, preserve all records and papers belonging to the Parish, perform such other duties as shall be legally assigned and faithfully deliver into the hands of the successor all books and documents of the Parish. The Vestry shall also annually elect a Treasurer to perform the duties incumbent upon that office, who shall be bonded in a suitable amount. The books and accounts shall be audited annually and at any other time the Vestry may direct. The offices of Secretary and Treasurer may both be held by the same person. Neither the Secretary nor the Treasurer need be a member of the Vestry.

Section 8.

Meetings of the Vestry shall be held annually, to receive reports of officers and committees, pass on the same, and turn over the affairs of the Parish to the newly elected Vestry. Other meetings of the Vestry may be provided for at regular times or called by the Rector or, in the Rector's absence by the Senior Warden, or at the request of two members of the Vestry. The

Ecclesiastical Authority has the discretion to call a meeting of the Vestry of any Parish and preside at such meeting. Only members of the Vestry present at the meeting of the Vestry in person or by two-way electronic voice or voice and video may vote at a meeting. A member of the Vestry may not appoint a proxy or designate another person to vote for the Vestry member at any meeting of the Vestry. Meetings of the Vestry are open to the members of the Parish except that executive (closed) meetings of the Vestry meetings may be held for personnel matters or with the consent of the Ecclesiastical Authority.

Section 9.

All lay officers of a Parish shall hold their respective offices until the election and qualification of their successors or until removed in accordance with Section 10 below.

Section 10.

A Vestry Member, other than the Rector, may be removed from office pursuant to the following: (a) By the members of the Parish

1. (i) A member of the Vestry may be removed from office with or without cause by the vote or agreement in writing by a majority of all persons entitled to vote as determined under Section 2 of this Canon.
2. (ii) The notice of a meeting of the members of the Parish to recall a member or members of the Vestry shall state the purpose of the meeting and the specific Vestry members sought to be removed.

(iii) A proposed removal of a Vestry member at a meeting of the members of the Parish shall require a separate vote for each Vestry member sought to be removed. Where removal is sought by written agreement, a separate agreement is required for each Vestry member to be removed.

(iv) If removal is effected at a meeting, any vacancies created thereby shall be filled by the members at the same meeting.

(b) By the Vestry, Rector, and Ecclesiastical Authority

(i) A member of the Vestry may be removed from office upon the vote of that number of Vestry members constituting two-thirds (2/3's) of the number of Vestry members established in the Bylaws of the Parish with the consent of the Rector and the consent of the Ecclesiastical Authority.

(c) A Vestry member who is removed from the Vestry shall not be eligible to stand for reelection until the next annual meeting of the members.

(d) Any Vestry member removed from office shall turn over to the Vestry within 72 hours any and all records of the Vestry in his/her possession.

Section 11.

Should a vacancy occur on the Vestry during the year, the Rector shall appoint a successor with the consent of a majority of the remaining members of the Vestry, such appointee to serve until the next Annual Meeting.

Section 12.

In the event that the Rector or Vicar of a Congregation is removed or suspended, he or she shall cease being a member of the Vestry or Church Committee, as the case may be, and the Ecclesiastical Authority may suspend Vestry elections, may fill vacancies on the Vestry, and may appoint a Senior Warden for the Parish until, in the Ecclesiastical Authority's discretion, such actions are no longer necessary.

Notes from the Vestry Resource Guide (Episcopal church Foundation)

The Vestry shall

- Be agents and legal representatives of the parish in all matters concerning its corporate properties; and the relations of the parish to its clergy.
- Ensure that standard business methods as outlined, will be observed
- (When there is no rector) the officers of the vestry are responsible for the continuation of worship, including the calling of a new rector
- Be responsible for nominating persons for holy orders
- Be aware of their ongoing responsibilities and potential liabilities, including accidents and other incidents occurring on parish property or during Parish sponsored activities
- Be aware of their ongoing responsibilities and potential liabilities, Violation of fiduciary responsibilities especially those related to finances
- Violations of contracts, leases, or other legal agreements
- Wrongful termination and other employment practices
- Discrimination and sexual harassment and misconduct
- Ensure that the parish is adequately insured for property, liability, and directors and officers coverage
- Encourage and support the Rector including activities such as:
 - setting meetings to engage and honest conversation about what is and is not going well in the congregation,
 - paying attention to clergy wellness issues,
 - paying attention to clergy family wellness issues,

- encouraging clear and direct communication between the congregation, the vestry, and the Rector

Guidelines for Clergy Discretionary Funds

<http://www.cfdiocese.org/guidelines-for-clergy-discretionary-funds/>

1	Source:	The Alms and Contributions typically from one Sunday in each calendar month, and other offerings for the poor, or a set amount budgeted by the Vestry for clergy discretionary use
2	If no rector	the Vestry shall designate a member of the Parish to fulfill this function.”
3	Ownership	Belongs to the church, in the name of the Church, so designated by corporate resolution of the vestry, using the church’s FEIN #, the account should not include any personal name.
4	# of signers	At least two other persons authorized to sign (in absence of clergy person- typically Senior Warden and Parish treasurer) in no case should the clergy spouse be a signer on this account
5	Confidentiality	Expenditures from the funds are at the sole discretion of the clergy; no authorization or “second signature” is appropriate. There should be some notation on the check and/or check register designating “gas help, food assistance, utility help, etc)
6	Departure of the Rector	As a church account, the Clergy Discretionary Fund’s assets remain with the parish or mission upon the departure of the member of the clergy who has been administering it.
7	Not to be used for business or personal expenses	The Discretionary Fund is principally a vehicle for providing assistance to persons in need. Miscellaneous expenses of ministry shall be reimbursed from a line item in the church’s budget titled “Professional Expenses” and thereby segregated from ministry funds.
8	Clergy should not reimburse themselves by RDF check-	When reimbursement to a member of the clergy is made from the Discretionary Fund, it is good policy (but not obligatory) that the check be signed by one of the lay officers authorized rather than by the clergy reimbursed.
9	Clergy family members excluded	Immediate family members of clergy should not receive assistance from a clergy family member
10	Post on w-2 or not?	Honoraria from weddings, funerals, and the like may either be received as contributions to the Discretionary Fund or as personal income of the clergyperson. The decision as to where such honoraria are placed is at the sole discretion of the clergy person.

11	Cash receipt if possible	A cash receipt should be signed by the recipient at the time of assistance, said receipt to be part of the clergy records.
12	Type of records to be kept	A contemporaneous and careful journal of expenditures from the Discretionary Fund should be kept by the clergy, showing the nature, date, and amount of each transaction and noting the ministerial purpose thereof. Such notes along with complete bank statements will be required at the annual audit.
13	Annual audit	The Rector, in consultation with the Vestry, shall designate the person(s) responsible for conducting the audit of the Discretionary Fund. <i>(usually this is the Sr. Warden)</i>
14	If endowed	If a Discretionary Fund is endowed, control of the principal remains with the Vestry or other designated Trustees.
15	Review	The Vestry shall establish review procedures for the Discretionary Fund.

Notes about the Diocesan Website - pertinent information for the Vestry

- Go to *Resources*, then *Administration and Policies*, then scroll down...
- 2019 Manual of Business Methods in church affairs
- Audit procedures
- Clergy compensation and Guidelines
- 2021 Health and Dental Insurance plans and rates
- Anti-racism training guidelines - for clergy and all in leadership
- Abuse prevention including Safeguarding God's children, people, and risk management, including guidelines for appropriate affection
- Guidelines for Disaster planning
- Ministry and ordination guidelines and steps
- Policies for alcohol
- Vacancy and search procedures
- Church expansion, renovation, and indebtedness guidelines
- Discretionary fund guidelines
- Sabbatical leave guidelines
- Sacramental guidelines for baptism, marriage and remarriage
- Under *Resources*, then go to *Resources for congregations tab*:
- Evangelism and Mission Resources
- Congregational Development resources
- Stewardship resources
- Additional vestry resources

Reminder:

ZOOM VESTRY TRAINING – PART TWO

March 13, 2021, 10:00a - Noon

- Outline for the Day 10:00a – Dealing with Rector-Vestry Conflict
- 10:45a – Clergy Compensation and Benefits
- 11:15a – The Road to Recovery after COVID-19 – What we can learn from those who have grown and even flourished in this season of COVID-tide
- 11:45a – Questions and Answers

- Closing prayer

Dear Lord, we elect, but you confer authority. We occupy roles, but you form hearts. We are sensitive to who has power and who wants power, but your Son took his place among the weak. Help us to care more about vision than about viewpoint, more about servanthood than about rules, more about mercy than about merit. Help us to have the courage to lead by serving and putting aside the world's easier ways. Help us to emulate the Apostles, not in the early days when they craved power and preference, but in the latter days after Calvary, when they prayed only for courage and wisdom. All this we ask in the name of one who led by serving and suffering, our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.