

DIOCESE OF CENTRAL FLORIDA
Fifty-Third Annual Convention
January 29, 2022

Resolution C-1: “An Equal Place in Governance” for Lay People on the Standing Committee

Presenter(s): The Rev. Charles Myers and The Rev. Kevin Bartle

Date: November 17, 2021

Amend:

Diocesan Articles of Incorporation, Article VII. Section 2 as follows:

There shall be a Standing Committee which shall be a Council of Advice to the Bishop. When there is no Bishop, the Standing Committee shall be the Ecclesiastical Authority for all proper purposes. The Standing Committee shall consist of four clerical and ~~three~~ **four** lay members who shall be elected in the manner and for the terms to be set forth in the Canons of the Diocese. They shall organize as soon as possible after each election and elect from their own body a President (who shall be a priest) and a Secretary. They shall meet on their own

adjournment from time to time and the President shall have power to summon special meetings. The Standing Committee shall be convened at the request of the Bishop and they may meet on their own accord in agreement with their own rules when they may be disposed to advise the Bishop. Vacancies in the Committee caused by death, resignation, or otherwise, shall be filled by vote of the Committee.

AND

Amend:

Diocesan Canon IX, Standing Committee, as follows:

The Standing Committee shall be composed of ~~seven~~ **eight** members, four clerical members and ~~three~~ **four** lay members. The four clerical members of the Standing Committee shall be elected for a 4-year term, with one such member's term expiring each year. The ~~three~~ **four** lay members of the Standing Committee shall be elected for a ~~3~~ **4**-year term with one such member's term expiring each year. Members shall not be eligible for re-election until one Convention year shall have elapsed after the expiration of such member's term. A member serving only a partial term is eligible for reelection to a full term. The election shall be by concurrent vote of both orders. The Standing Committee shall fill all vacancies on the Committee. The person filling such vacancy shall serve until the next Annual Convention.

In order to permit the continuity of one lay member's term expiring each year, on the year this amendment is ratified by Convention: (1) Existing lay members with unexpired terms will have their terms lengthened an additional year; (2) Newly elected lay members to both full and partial terms will have their terms lengthened an additional year; and (3) The lay member whose term expires that year will be appointed to serve an additional one-year term.

Note, the remaining portion of this Canon IX shall remain as is.

Rationale

Per Article IV of the Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church (2018 Revision), “The rights and duties of the Standing Committee, except as provided in the Constitution and Canons of the General Convention, may be prescribed by the Canons of the respective Dioceses. “The Catechism in the Book of Common Prayers defines “the ministers of the Church” as “lay persons, bishops, priests and deacons.” The role of “governance” is specifically defined for lay persons in the catechism and not in the descriptions of bishop, priest, or deacon. Inherent in the “Rights of the Laity” as found in the Canons of the Episcopal Church (1.17.5) is the proscription, “No one shall be denied rights, status, or access to an equal place in the life, worship, governance, or employment of this Church...except as otherwise specified by Canons.”

Currently the Diocese of Central Florida Constitution and Canons is structured in a manner in which:

1. Clerical members outnumber lay members; and
2. Clerical members’ length of terms are longer than lay member length of terms.

Comparing our constitution and canons to a cohort consisting of the domestic Communion partner dioceses, the following observations are made:

Diocese	Clergy Members	Clergy Term Length	Lay Members	Lay Term Length
Tennessee	4	3 years	3	3 years
Florida	3	3 years	3	3 years
Dallas	3	3 years	3	3 years
Albany	6	3 years	6	3 years
Springfield	4	4 years	4	4 years
Current Central Florida	4	4 years	3	3 years
Proposed Central Florida	4	4 years	4	4 years