

Resolution for the Creation of a Committee to Review Canonical Terminology and Congregation Status

BE IT RESOLVED, that the 55th Annual Convention of the Diocese of the Central Gulf Coast affirms the mission of the Church to welcome all people to be one body in Christ, seeking and serving Christ in all persons through prayer, worship, the proclamation of the Gospel, and the promotion of justice, peace, and love; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this Convention urge all members of the Diocese of the Central Gulf Coast to pray for the Holy Spirit's guidance as we discern the effective directing of ministry and conducting of business as an expression of our common mission; and be it further

RESOLVED, that, pursuant to Article IX of the Articles of Incorporation which calls for the Canons to be subject to amendment from time to time, this Convention commit to a season of renewal for the Canons of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of the Central Gulf Coast, as the guiding documents of this Diocese as it pursues its mission; and be it further

RESOLVED, that, in order to facilitate this prayerful work, this Convention urges the Bishop to utilize his authority under Rule IV of the RULES OF ORDER to appoint a committee whose task is to:

Listen for the Spirit, study Scripture, and pray for the Church

Review the requirements outlined in Canons 15, 16, 17, and 20 to ensure consistent application and effectiveness of assigning Congregation status

Consider specifically Canon III.4.D as to the meaning and intent of "status as a Parish in union with the Diocese"

Review the terminology of the Canons which refer to the various titles assigned to clergy and their effectiveness toward conducting the business of Convention

Consider changes in the Canons which provide clarity regarding the use of technology as appropriate tools for conducting the business of the Diocese

Develop specific recommendations for the Diocese and its constituent Mission Stations, Missions, and Parishes to achieve a more accurate and appropriate expression of its union, ensuring that every Congregation, regardless of size, is empowered to contribute fully to our shared mission

Meet by the Nativity of St. John, the Baptist (June 24th, 2026) to establish the working structure for the committee and beginning the work, that the committee delivers a report to the 56th Annual Convention of its discernment, findings, and recommendations, along with such resolutions as may be necessary to implement those recommendations, following all time constraints as governed by Rule VI of the RULES OF ORDER; and be it further

RESOLVED, the committee be composed of at least seven and no more than twelve members, to be appointed jointly by the Bishop and the Standing Committee through an open nomination

process assuring that the members represent the diversity of the diocese in geography, demographics, talents, and order of ministry, including those at a critical distance from the power structures of the diocese, that the members be named no later than the Day of Pentecost (May 24th, 2026), that the committee select its own chair and other officers; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Standing Committee shall make such resources available to the committee as are necessary to enable this resolution to be implemented energetically and successfully.

Rationale:

The Canons of the Diocese are the guiding covenant for our union. However, since their adoption in 1971 they have remained mostly unchanged. Fifty years ago, the perception of what constituted congregational development regarding size, growth, and financial stability was quite different than it is today. Additionally, the language of the Canons regarding the roles of clergy and their relationship to Congregations has become antiquated and at times cumbersome to the efficient conducting of business of the Diocese.

The purpose of this Committee is to prayerfully consider revisions that bring our Canons into modern context; concluding their work at the gathering of the 56th Annual Convention of the Diocese, at which the report of their work, along with any recommendations and resolutions, will be presented for review and consideration.

Proposed by the Rev. John Talbert, St. John's Episcopal Church, Mobile