

VESTRY HANDBOOK

2011

A Handbook for the Vestry of Saint Stephen's Episcopal Church in
Forest, Virginia

The ABC's

Vestry Handbook: The ABCs

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Overview of Vestry Responsibilities

- Share with the rector in promoting the spiritual welfare of the parish
- Aid rector in the institution, conduct, and development of the program of the church both within and without the parish
- Be agent and legal representative in all matters concerning property: maintain the buildings and furnishings, maintain other property (parking lot, grounds, etc.), provide adequate insurance
- Be responsible for the finances of the parish, raising money, prompt payment of salaries and bills, prudent care of trust funds, endowments and bequests, sale and transfer of securities and other assets, maintain records, annual report, budget (approve expenditures and recommend and approve salaries)
- Recruit, encourage, train, and guide candidates for Holy Orders
- Represent the parish in its relations with the rector
- Serve as a "Council of Advice" for the rector when requested
- Elect a rector if there is a vacancy

Introduction to the Vestry

Congratulations on your election to the vestry of Saint Stephen's Church, Forest, Virginia. Your willingness to serve is greatly appreciated.

Understandably, you may have many questions about what this new role means. The basic handbook for the vestry is designed to help answer some of those questions in terms of canonical responsibility and role as an elected leader in the church.

To be eligible to serve on the vestry you need to be already, and continue to be during your time of service, a confirmed adult communicant in good standing. Being in "good standing" means that you attend the worship services of this church regularly and that you make and keep a regular financial commitment to the general operating fund of the church. You have been chosen because you are believed to be a reasonable person who will use your unique gifts to strengthen the church and who will work well with other members of the vestry and the rector.

The vestry and rector function best when they work together. This does not mean we will not have at times disagreements. But when we do disagree with one another, we are to remember our calling to speak the truth *in love*, to listen attentively for what will best serve the common good and fulfill our mission, to pray earnestly for God's will for our common life, to vote our conscience which has been shaped by prayer and reasoned reflection, and, finally, to honor the outcome of the team's decision.

Through the handbook reference is made to and, in many cases, excerpts are given from the canons of The Episcopal Church and the canons of The Diocese of Southwestern Virginia, all of which are to be in compliance with federal and state statute. The canons (together with scripture and the Book of Common Prayer) give us a framework for our organizing and managing our life together.

Each parish will have particular customs that it observes. These customs vary and can be legitimately changed as needed, but all practices must also be in compliance with canon and statutory law and in accord with our calling as Christians to love one another.

Canonically, the vestry is charged primarily with *temporal* responsibilities: they are the legal representatives and agents of the church in all matters concerning the property, and the vestry has fiduciary responsibility. The vestry also addresses the relationship of the parish to its clergy.

Canonically, the rector is charged primarily with *spiritual* responsibility: worship and spiritual "jurisdiction." The rector, by canon, has "use and control" of the church facilities, access to all records held on behalf of the church, and is the presiding officer of the vestry.

Obviously therefore, there is *substantial overlap between the “temporal” and the “spiritual.”* For the parish to thrive, the vestry and rector must work cooperatively in the support of each other and in fulfilling both their interrelated and different responsibilities.

Different churches structure their organizations in different ways. As a church of converts our assumptions are often formed by our experience in other church bodies, so it sometimes is a surprise that in The Episcopal Church the rector is not an “employee” of the vestry but a co-equal partner, with different yet overlapping responsibilities. We rightfully remember that all of us, the rector included, are accountable one to another under the headship of the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is also a popular misconception that a vestry member is somehow a “representative” of a particular interest group or cause within the parish. You have been chosen to be a mature Christian who, mindful of the needs of all God’s people, exercises leadership through the use of reason and the power of prayer and who works together with other chosen leaders to build unity and fulfill the mission of the church.

This handbook is not all-inclusive but covers general responsibilities that normally arise in the course of vestry service.

Thank you for your service.

Thank you for helping us fulfill the mission of the church which the Book of Common Prayer (855) defines as “to restore all people to unity with God and each other in Christ.”

Thank you for sharing with us in helping Saint Stephen’s Church fulfill its mission to be “a growing Christian community that receives and shares the transforming love of God through worship, discipleship, fellowship, ministry, and mission.”

Almighty and everliving God, source of all wisdom and understanding, be present with those who take counsel in Saint Stephen’s Church for the renewal and mission of your Church. Teach us in all things to seek first your honor and glory. Guide us to perceive what is right, and grant us both the courage to pursue it and the grace to accomplish it; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Alcohol: Use of at St. Stephen's Church

The following guidelines are given for the serving and use of alcoholic beverages at Church functions or on Church property within the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia:

1. Any beverage which contains alcohol must always be clearly labeled as such; this applies to any food (such as fruit compotes, desserts, etc.) where the alcohol has not been evaporated (i.e., "cooked out").
2. Whenever alcohol is served, in any form, non-alcoholic alternatives must always be offered. Non-alcoholic beverages must be served with the same attractiveness and accessibility as those containing alcohol, so that people who choose not to drink alcoholic beverages need not feel embarrassment, discomfort, or inconvenience in exercising their preference.
3. Although beverages and other foods containing alcohol may be offered together with non-alcoholic alternatives, they must never be promoted in such a way as to imply that partaking of them is any kind of social requirement.
4. All other applicable federal, state, and local laws and ordinances, including those governing the serving of alcoholic beverages to minors and the use of any mind-altering drugs, except those prescribed by a physician within the strict limits of the prescription, must be observed.
5. Care must be taken to ensure that responsible persons are in control of the serving of alcoholic beverages. The group or organization sponsoring the activity or event at which alcoholic beverages are served must also assume responsibility for those persons who might become intoxicated; such responsibility includes providing transportation for anyone whose driving might be impaired.
6. It is the duty of the Priest-In-Charge of the congregation, or in his absence, the Senior Warden and the Vestry, or person-in-charge of the Conference Center, Convocation Meeting, and all Diocesan functions to assume responsibility for the dissemination of and the observance of these guidelines.
7. Any questions regarding the interpretation or application of these guidelines should be referred to the Bishop or the Commission on Alcohol.

Approved by Executive Board
April 1979

The Anglican Communion

The Anglican Communion, the third largest Christian communion of churches behind Roman Catholics and Orthodox Christians, comprises more than 80 million members in 44 regional and national member churches around the globe in more than 160 countries. The Archbishop of Canterbury is the titular head of the Communion.

Annual Council

Each year clergy and lay delegates meet together to conduct the business of the Diocese and to share in fellowship, education, and mission. The Annual Council is usually held the last weekend in January from Friday night through Sunday afternoon. The parish usually has Morning Prayer on the Sunday of Council, as most, if not all, clergy are required to attend Council. The cost for the hotel and registration fees are paid by the parish for clergy and lay delegates and alternates.

Annual Meeting (of Saint Stephen's Church)

The Annual Meeting of the parish has been usually held around the first Sunday in Advent (or a Sunday near it with the agreement of the vestry).

Diocese of Southwestern Virginia. Canon 14 Of the Election of Vestries

Sec. 1: (a) Each parish shall elect a vestry of not less than three nor more than twenty- four members.

(b) Those persons eligible for election as vestry members shall be as follows: adult confirmed communicants of the parish, in good standing, who have been regular worshipers in the parish in the year preceding election and regular contributors to its financial support by pledge, subscription, or some other method by which they shall be known to the treasurer of the parish. The rector or clergy member in charge, or if there be neither, the senior warden, after consultation with the treasurer of the parish, shall determine whether a nominee is eligible for election under this section.

(c) The election of members of a vestry shall be held annually in accordance with the provisions of this canon. Voting shall be by ballot, in such form or by such method as shall be approved by the meeting. No member of a vestry shall be elected for a term of longer than three years. Having served a three-year term no member of a vestry shall be eligible for re-election until the expiration of one year, or such longer period of time not to exceed three years as may be determined by each parish.

Sec. 2 All confirmed communicants and adult baptized members belonging to the parish, who for three months preceding have been regular worshipers in the parish and regular contributors to its financial support by pledge, subscription, or some other method by which they shall be known to the treasurer of the parish, shall be entitled to vote in the election. The following persons may vote by absentee ballot in any election in which they are qualified to vote:

(a) Any person who will, in the regular and orderly course of his or her business, profession, or occupation, or while on vacation, be absent from the county or city in which the parish is located on the day and at the time that the election is held.

(b) Any person who is ill or physically unable to attend the election. All persons wishing to cast absentee ballots shall make application therefore to the chair of the teller committee or senior warden who shall, in consultation with the rector or clergy member in charge determine the eligibility of the applicant to cast an absentee ballot. All absentee ballots shall be secretly made in writing, sealed in a signed envelope and delivered to the chair of the teller committee or senior warden at least twenty-four (24) hours prior to the beginning of the election.

Sec. 3 The election shall be held on the first Monday in Advent, or on such other date as may be

determined by the vestry. Notice shall be sent to the Bishop that such election has been held, and the persons elected shall take office January 1st following. If the election be not held until after January 1st, the persons elected shall take office immediately. If the election be unduly delayed, the same may be held and at such time as the Bishop may order. Retiring vestry members and vestry officers shall continue in office until their successors are elected. A meeting of the parish may be duly convened upon the call of the rector or clergy member in charge of the parish, or of the vestry, or of three members of the parish, provided that due notice be publicly given of said meeting. The rector or clergy member in charge of the parish, when present, shall preside at all parish meetings, except in matters of personal concern or where necessity requires that a chair be elected in the usual manner. Ten percent of the qualified voters of the parish shall be required to constitute a quorum to transact business.

Sec. 4 Due notice of the time and place of election shall be given to every parish in which an election of vestry members is to be held. Sec. 5 The presiding officer shall appoint, or the electors shall choose, three of their own number to act as tellers and judges of the election, and these shall decide as to the qualifications of the voters and of those persons to be elected to the vestry according to the requirements of this canon.

Audit

Each parish is required to have an annual audit of its books which is to be turned into the Diocese by 31 August.

The booklet is available online at <http://resources.dioswva.org/index.html>.

This booklet contains material to assist your parish with the review of financial records and controls for 2010. ***If your parish has an audit or review prepared by a CPA***, this document is not necessary. A copy of the CPA-prepared report to the parish will be more than satisfactory.

Please note that a copy of the review or audit is due to Evans House on or before August 31, 2011. All this material is also available on the diocesan web site, www.dioswva.org in the Resources section.

Thank you so much for your attention to this process.

Please be sure to call on me if I may be of assistance to you in this or any other matter.

Sincerely,

Alan N. Boyce
Canon for Administration

Parish Audits

The Canons of the Episcopal Church, adopted by General Convention, require that certain standard business methods be observed "by every Diocese, Parish, Mission and Institution connected with this Church" [Title 1, Canon 7]. The Finance Committee of each Diocese is responsible for administering this Canon [Sec. 1 (5)].

Accordingly, the Finance Committee of the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia sets forth minimum standards for the audit of parish and mission accounts, as follows:

1. Auditor. The books may be audited by a Certified Public Accountant, a Licensed Public Accountant or an Audit Committee approved by the Vestry. In lieu of an audit by a Certified Public Accountant, ***under diocesan Canon 8, the use of an audit review committee must be approved by the bishop, acting with the advice and consent of the Standing Committee.***

[a] Such Audit Committee should consist of ***a minimum of two people with a business or financial background*** sufficient to enable them to perform a responsible audit.

[b] ***No person should serve*** on the Audit Committee who has access to or handles any parish funds or who has any connection with keeping the parish accounts. ***No paid staff*** should serve on the Audit Committee.

2. ***Small Accounts. Parishes having income of less than \$3,000 for the year*** may be audited by an ***accountant bookkeeper in no way connected*** with the account, in the event no Certified Public Accountant is available.

The Audit. The audit is an objective and impersonal evaluation of the Church's various procedures relating to finances. It should be so conducted as to reveal any errors in the handling of funds or the keeping of accounts and to suggest ways to improve fiscal procedures in the future. The year-end financial statements being audited are to be appended to the audit report. Parishes are to utilize the audit guidelines as set forth by the diocese.

Diocese of Southwestern Virginia, Canon 7. Of Business Methods in Church Affairs

Sec. 1. In every Diocese, Parish, Mission, and Institution, connected with this Church, the following standard business methods shall be observed:

(1). Funds held in trust, endowment and other permanent funds, and securities represented by physical evidence of ownership or indebtedness, shall be deposited with a National or State Bank, or a Diocesan Corporation, or with some other agency approved in writing by the Finance Committee or the Department of Finance of the Diocese, under a deed of trust, agency or other depository agreement providing for at least two signatures on any order of withdrawal of such funds or securities.

But this paragraph shall not apply to funds and securities refused by the depositories named as being too small for acceptance. Such small funds and securities shall be under the care of the persons or corporations properly responsible for them.

This paragraph shall not be deemed to prohibit investments in securities issued in book entry form or other manner that dispenses with the delivery of a certificate evidencing the ownership of the securities or the indebtedness of the issuer.

(2). Records shall be made and kept of all trust and permanent funds showing at least the following:

- (a) Source and date.
- (b) Terms governing the use of principal and income.
- (c) To whom and how often reports of condition are to be made.
- (d) How the funds are invested.

(3). Treasurers and custodians, other than banking institutions, shall be adequately bonded; except treasurers of funds that do not exceed five hundred dollars at any one time during the fiscal year.

(4). Books of account shall be so kept as to provide the basis for satisfactory accounting.

(5). All accounts of the Diocese shall be audited annually by an independent Certified Public Accountant. All accounts of Parishes, Missions or other institutions shall be audited annually by an independent

Certified Public Accountant, or independent Licensed Public Accountant, or such audit committee as shall be authorized by the Finance Committee, Department of Finance, or other appropriate diocesan authority.

All reports of such audits, including any memorandum issued by the auditors or audit committee regarding internal controls or other accounting matters, together with a summary of action taken or proposed to be taken to correct deficiencies or implement recommendations contained in any such memorandum, shall be filed with the Bishop or Ecclesiastical Authority not later than 30 days following the date of such report, and in no event, not later than September 1 of each year, covering the financial reports of the previous calendar year.

(6). All buildings and their contents shall be kept adequately insured.

(7). The Finance Committee or Department of Finance of the Diocese may require copies of any or all accounts described in this Section to be filed with it and shall report annually to the Convention of the Diocese upon its administration of this Canon.

(8). The fiscal year shall begin January 1.

Sec. 2. The several Dioceses shall give effect to the foregoing standard business methods by the enactment of Canons appropriate thereto, which Canons shall invariably provide for a Finance Committee or a Department of Finance of the Diocese.

Sec. 3. No Vestry, Trustee, or other Body, authorized by Civil or Canon law to hold, manage, or administer real property for any parish, Mission, Congregation, or Institution, shall encumber or alienate the same or any part thereof without the written consent of the Bishop and Standing Committee of the Diocese of which the Parish, Mission, Congregation, or Institution is a part, except under such regulations as may be prescribed by Canon of the Diocese.

Sec. 4. All real and personal property held by or for the benefit of any Parish, Mission, or Congregation is held in trust for this Church and the Diocese thereof in which such Parish, Mission or Congregation is located. The existence of this trust, however, shall in no way limit the power and authority of the Parish, Mission or Congregation otherwise existing over such property so long as the particular Parish, Mission or Congregation remains a part of, and subject to, this Church and its Constitutions and Canons.

Sec. 5. The several Dioceses may, at their election, further confirm the trust declared under the foregoing Section 4 by appropriate action, but no such action shall be necessary for the existence and validity of the trust.

Diocese of Southwestern Virginia, Canon 8, Of Finances.

Sec. 1 The fiscal year shall begin January first.

Sec. 2 All accounts having to do with receipts and expenditures of money of all diocesan organizations, including parishes, missions, and other institutions, shall be audited at the close of each year by a certified public accountant, provided, however, that if the amount of income for the year as shown by the account shall be less than three thousand dollars, or if a certified public accountant be not available, the audit may be made by an accountant bookkeeper in no way connected with the subject matter of the account. Notwithstanding the above, accounts of parishes, missions, and other institutions having income for the year of three thousand dollars or more may, with the previous written consent of the Bishop of the diocese acting with the advice and consent of the Standing Committee, be audited by an audit or other appropriate committee of such parish, or mission or other institution.

Sec. 3 From time to time as may be deemed expedient, or at the direction of the executive board of the diocese, the treasurer of the diocese shall send to each clergy member in charge and to each treasurer of a congregation of the diocese a statement showing the amount of the congregation's support of the work of the diocese and the general church with the amount paid in and due on each.

Sec. 4 No special appropriation shall be made nor any expense authorized by Council, which shall involve the expenditure of more than one hundred dollars, unless the same shall have been first referred to a special finance committee of the Council, or in default of such action by such committee until the resolution authorizing such expenditure of funds be offered in open Council and laid over until the following day before action shall be taken upon such resolution.

Canons

In this handbook, the canons are referenced and sometimes cited in whole or in part.

Copies of national church and Diocesan Canons are available in the parish office and online:

The Episcopal Church canons:

[\(https://www.churchpublishing.org/general_convention/\)](https://www.churchpublishing.org/general_convention/)

The Diocese of Southwestern Virginia canons:

http://www.dioswva.org/governance/constitution_and_canons.html

The canons in The Episcopal Church and Diocese of Southwestern Virginia are the result of the reasoned and prayerful reflection of bishops, clergy, and lay people about how we shall govern our life together in the Body of Christ to understand our mutual responsibilities and best fulfill our common mission.

“Canons” is spelled with one “n” and not two, like the weapon. Canons are therefore not weapons to be used against one another, but rather they serve as a guide to ensure that governance is not the arbitrary whim of a despot but rooted in “the rule of law.”

The rubrics (rules for worship in the italicized fine print of the Book of Common Prayer) have the same weight as canon law.

While there may be some overlap in practice, each denomination has its own particular “polity” or governing policies. One is not necessarily better than the other but rather a reflection of the way, in our case, Episcopalians choose to live together. As we are a church of converts, those choices of The Episcopal Church may come as a surprise even to those who have been elected to the vestry!

Cemetery Regulations & Guidelines

Saint Stephen's cemetery or "churchyard" is overseen by the cemetery committee, a sub-committee of the Building and Grounds team, headed by the junior warden. Mr. Eddie Coleman and his grounds crew work for the chair of the cemetery committee, who is currently Gene Goley.

There shall be a Cemetery Committee of the parish, the chair of which shall be appointed annually by the Vestry. The Cemetery chairperson shall be a communicant member of the congregation in good standing, but need not be a member of the Vestry. The Committee chairperson shall appoint such members of the Committee as shall be necessary for its functions. The Junior Warden and Rector of the parish are members, ex-officio.

The chairperson of the Committee shall be responsible for a current and accurate record of all occupied and reserved grave sites in the cemetery, and of all available sites.

The Committee shall be responsible for the physical upkeep and appearance of the cemetery and Church grounds including graves, monuments, and markers, and plantings. The Committee shall exercise oversight and control over Cemetery plantings, and the erection of monuments, markers, and fences. No markers or monuments may be placed in the cemetery without prior consultation with and approval of the Committee. All plantings, trees, and shrubbery become property of the parish.

The Committee shall also be responsible for the physical upkeep and maintenance of the Church parking lots and driveways.

All receipts for reservations of grave sites, and contributions to the Cemetery and its upkeep, shall be deposited in the investment fund known as *The Cemetery and Grounds Investment Fund of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church*, the income of which shall be used as required to fulfill the responsibilities of the Committee and its chairperson. The deposit and management of the fund shall be at the designation of the Vestry and shall conform to the applicable Canons of the Episcopal Church and the statutes of the Commonwealth of Virginia. Designated gifts to specific projects affecting the grounds and cemetery are not limited to the expenditure of income alone. Major and exceptional expenditures require Vestry approval.

The Cemetery committee will send a copy of these guidelines to any family reserving or using a plot in the future.

Granting of reserved space for interment is restricted to Confirmed Communicants in good standing. The number of reservations granted will not exceed a number equal to the Communicant, plus spouse, plus any children unmarried at the time of the grant. At the time of application, the Rector will attest to the number of reserved spaces.

A minimum fee of \$350.00 per grave site is requested at the time of approval for occupancy or reservation of the burial site for members in good standing.

Gravesite reservations that appear outdated, or where there seems to be no expectation of use, may be annulled by the Committee after prudent effort to contact the applicants to determine their intentions.

These Regulations and Guidelines as approved by the Vestry on October 17, 2005, shall not be construed so as to disqualify or negate any agreement for occupancy or reservation of burial sites made under previous Rules and Regulations for the Cemetery.

The Cemetery Committee requests a copy of any Certificates of Cremation. This will be kept as part of the Parish's records.

(Adopted by the Vestry, 17 October 2005)

Conflict in the Church

Differences of views in and of themselves are neutral and can be a catalyst for positive growth. We value differences and our responsibility to speak to those differences in a way that is respectful and mindful of our mission "to restore all people to unity with God and one another."

The vestry should exercise responsibility in strengthening the unity of the church. Each member is a duly elected and empowered leader to work for reconciliation among all God's people, including between individual members or groups and the rector.

We each have a right to our opinion and to speak to that opinion. We have a responsibility to speak the truth in love and to strengthen the unity of the church in the bonds of peace.

The following process for addressing conflict (based on Matthew 18) has the unanimous endorsement of the rector and vestry:

1. Address any concern and seek resolution directly with the person with whom there is a concern.
2. If the concern is not resolved to satisfaction, seek a neutral party to facilitate the conversation.
3. If the concern is not resolved to satisfaction, request permission to address the concern to the vestry and rector.
4. If the concern is still not resolved to satisfaction, make a determination whether one can live in peace with the situation as it is or whether one needs to withdraw from the parish and seek another community of faith.

Debt

The parish can engage only a certain amount of debt before being required to seek approval of the Bishop who receives the advice and consent of the Standing Committee of the diocese.

The Diocese of Southwestern Virginia. Canon 20. Of Parochial Indebtedness

Sec. 1 No indebtedness shall be incurred by a parish without the approval of the Bishop acting with the advice and consent of the Standing Committee except:

- (a) Indebtedness for capital expenditures, e. g., permanent improvements and acquisitions of or additions

to real property or equipment, where the amount of such indebtedness plus indebtedness of every kind already existing shall not exceed one hundred and fifty per cent of the average annual revenues of such parish during the past three years.

(b) Indebtedness for current expenses where the amount of such indebtedness, plus all indebtedness heretofore incurred for current expenses and still existing, shall not exceed 20 per cent of the total current revenues of such parish during the preceding fiscal year; and the payment of all such indebtedness shall be provided for in the budget of the next ensuing fiscal year with reasonable expectation of its payment out of the revenues of said year.

Sec. 2 For the purposes of Section 1 hereof, revenues shall be the total operating revenues of the parish, excluding amounts received from or for endowments or from bequests, reported in the parochial report specified in the canon entitled "Of Parish Registers and Parochial Reports."

Sec. 3 Where approval is required, the parish shall also submit for approval by the same authority a plan for amortization or other method of payment.

Sec. 4 This canon shall not apply to the refinancing of existing loans.

Delegates

Delegates for Convocation meetings and the following year's Annual Council are to be chosen by 31 March by the vestry. Annual Council is normally held the last weekend in January at the Hotel Roanoke.

The fees for Annual Council and associated costs (meals, parking, etc.), exclusive of alcoholic beverages, are reimbursable for delegates and alternates.

To receive reimbursement, the costs should be presented to the Parish Office along with receipts.

Diocese of Southwestern Virginia, Canon 2, Of Lay Delegates and the Evidence of their Appointment

Sec. 1 It shall be the duty of each congregation to send to the Council the number of lay delegates to which it is entitled in accordance with its status as of the close of the previous meeting of Council. These elections shall be held no later than March 31 each year.

Sec. 2 The election of lay delegates shall be in accordance with the following paragraphs of this section: (a) A parish having not more than 200 communicants in good standing shall be entitled to two delegates and two alternates. For each 150 communicants in good standing, or fraction thereof, in excess of 200 communicants 2 canons (close of council 2010) in good standing, a parish shall be entitled to one additional delegate and one additional alternate. Such delegates and alternates shall be elected by the vestry unless the parish at a meeting duly convened, by resolution duly adopted authorizes the election of such delegates and alternates by the voting members of the congregation as defined in Canon 14, Section 2. The communicant strength of a parish shall be determined by the most recent timely filed parochial report. (b) Delegates and alternates shall be communicants of the parish who meet the eligibility requirements for vestry election set forth in Canon 14, section 1(b).

Sec. 3 The election of lay delegates to the Council shall be certified at once by the rector or clergy member in charge and the secretary or one of the wardens of the parish; if there be no rector or clergy member in

charge, by the secretary and one of the wardens.

Sec. 4 The certificate of election shall be made on such form as shall be presented to the congregations by the secretary of the Diocese, from time to time, for such purpose. But the Council shall have the right, if it deems proper, to receive other evidence of election if the need thereof arises.

Sec. 5 The secretary of the diocese shall prepare a list of certified persons, which list shall be used in the organization of the Council and received as evidence that the persons therein named are entitled to seats. No parish shall be entitled to representation in Council unless its parochial report and parish audit report shall have been received by the secretary of the diocese by the date specified in the canon entitled "Of Parish Registers And Parochial Reports," except that this provision may be waived by a majority vote of the Council. If the right of any lay delegate to membership is questioned, the matter shall be referred to a committee on elections for examination and report.

Sec. 6 In case any delegates shall be unable to attend the Council to which they were elected, their places shall be filled by an alternate, properly elected; such change being made known to the secretary of the diocese by any other delegate from the same parish, or if from a mission, by any other delegate to Council, prior to the alternate being recognized as a delegate by the Council. Sec. 7 The reasonable expenses of lay delegates and alternates to Council shall be paid by the parish whom they represent. Sec. 8 The lay members of the Standing Committee and of the Executive Board, not otherwise delegates, shall have seat and voice at the Council.

Diocese of Southwestern Virginia

One of three Episcopal regions in Virginia (the others being the Dioceses of Virginia and Southern Virginia). The diocese roughly stretches from Staunton to Lynchburg to Altavista and then all the way to the farthest point in Southwest Virginia. The Right Reverend F. Neff Powell is the diocese's fifth bishop. The mission of the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia is to challenge and support the creativity of our congregations in Christian growth and global responsibility.

Disciplinary Rubrics

The church has a responsibility to protect its members as it fulfills its mission to restore all people to unity with God and one another. The Book of Common Prayer (page 409) has a rubric which allows for strong action to encourage holiness of life and to protect and encourage unity in the Body of Christ. The canons of the church allow for "due process" when this discipline is (rarely) enacted.

Disciplinary Rubrics

If the priest knows that a person who is living a notoriously evil life intends to come to Communion, the priest shall speak to that person privately, and tell *him* that *he* may not come to the Holy Table until *he* has given clear proof of repentance and amendment of life. The priest shall follow the same procedure with those who have done wrong to their neighbors and are a scandal to the other members of the congregation, not allowing such persons to receive Communion until they have made restitution for the wrong they have done, or have at least promised to do so. When the priest sees that there is hatred between members of the congregation, *he* shall speak privately to them, telling them that they may not

receive Communion until they have forgiven each other. And if the person or persons on one side truly forgive the others and desire and promise to make up for their faults, but those on the other side refuse to forgive, the priest shall allow those who are penitent to come to Communion, but not those who are stubborn. In all such cases, the priest is required to notify the bishop, within fourteen days at the most, giving the reasons for refusing Communion.

The Episcopal Church

The Episcopal Church is part of the Anglican Communion of churches throughout the globe. It has 100 dioceses in the United States and ten dioceses in other countries, outlying United States territories, and the Convocation of American Churches in Europe. It is governed by General Convention which is comprised of two houses, Bishops and Deputies. General Convention meets once every three years and during the interim the Presiding Bishop together with the Executive Council conduct much of the business of The Episcopal Church.

Facilities: Use of

The facilities are often made available to community public service organizations, generally, and are used as part of our outreach to the community.

- An organization, using the facilities for the first time, must make application in writing, submitting an organizational statement of purpose, indicating the purpose of the organization and the manner in which service is given to the community.
- There shall be on file in the Church Office prior to use of the facilities, the name of the person, address, and telephone number, who assumes responsibility for the organization's use of the facilities. If a key is given, that individual will be responsible for the possession, safe-keeping, and return of the key at the end of occupation. No key copies may be made.
- Care must be exercised in using the facilities. Each use must end with trash being placed in secure trash bags and placed in secure receptacles outside the kitchen back door. Physical damage will be the financial responsibility of the using organization.
- Use of the facilities requires that all utensils must be cleaned and returned to storage. Spills must be wiped up. Lights must be extinguished and the facilities secured and locked after each use.
- It is suggested that each using organization provide its own liability insurance. Saint Stephen's Church assumes no liability responsibility outside of its own insurance coverage.
- In certain instances, the fee schedules for use of the facilities may be modified or waived.
- "The Use of Alcohol at Church Functions" guidelines of the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia (contained in this handbook) shall apply to all uses of Church facilities. Please ask for a copy of the guidelines where necessary.

Financial Responsibilities

Purpose

Provide written guidance to members of the committees for the authorization of the expenditure of funds with Saint Stephen's Episcopal Church, Forest, VA

Intent

Inform the congregation and the members of the various committees as to their level of discretion in committing funds on behalf of Saint Stephen's.

Sources

Funds that are disbursed on an ongoing basis are generally available through designated funds or budgeted from the church's operating budget. *Designated funds* are limited in their use to a purpose as specified at the time of the gifting. *Operating funds* are determined as part of the budgeting process and are for the general use of the church as determined by the vestry and rector. Operating funds do not carry over from year to year.

Guidance

The following guidelines are provided with the specific intent to aid and not impair day-to-day operation of the church. In emergency situations, the rector, senior warden, junior warden, or member of the vestry will act by their best judgment on behalf of the church. To support budget planning, a list of planned expenditures should be provided to the vestry as part of the normal budget process and should be approved as part of the budget approval process. If on the approved list, expenditures of greater than \$1000 need not be approved a second time by the vestry. It is recommended that such lists be updated on a quarterly basis and any changes submitted to the vestry for approval prior to the commitment of funds.

Designated Funds

Cemetery Fund: The cemetery and grounds committee with the concurrence of the junior warden may expend up to \$1000 for a single expense without prior approval from the vestry. Emergency approval for expenditures in excess of \$1000 should be requested from the junior warden, senior warden, or rector. Non-emergency expenditures in excess of \$1000 shall be approved by the vestry.

Memorials: With responsibility (Canon II.9.5) for worship, together with appurtenances and furniture, the rector determines the appropriateness of memorial fund expenditures. The rector should discharge this duty in consultation with the memorials committee and, when applicable, the family of any memorialized member. The rector, together with the memorials committee, should develop a list to be shared with the vestry of desired purchases and associated costs. The rector has discretion to commit available memorial funds from the vestry-approved list. For items not already approved, a planned expenditure of greater than \$1000 should be presented to the vestry for approval.

Operating Funds

Outreach, Christian Education, etc. Planned expenditures submitted and approved as part of the budget process may be expended as necessary. Any desired expenditure in excess of \$500, not part of the approved list, must be submitted to the vestry for approval prior to the commitment of the expenditure.

Guidelines were updated in 2007.

Funds of the Church

Saint Stephen's Church has several funds in addition the general operating fund. Some of these funds are restricted and some are unrestricted. It is the fiduciary responsibility of the vestry to manage the church's resources in order to fulfill the ministry and mission of the church.

Belcher Fund

A gift of Margaret and Howard Belcher was invested with Vanguard to support the building and maintenance needs of Saint Stephen's Church. The vestry agreed to a 3 percent use per year.

Cemetery & Grounds Fund

The St. Stephen's Yard & Cemetery Fund was established by Vestry action on April 1, 1960, to be the perpetual care fund for the cemetery and yards at St. Stephen's Church. An account was established with First & Merchants National Bank which changed names several time. The fund is currently invested with Bank of America. The income from the investments in the bank's mutual funds is distributed quarterly. Additional capital is received periodically from individuals who wish to be buried in the St. Stephen's Cemetery and from others who have family or friends buried there.

DuVal Radford Fund

Through the will DuVal Radford, this fund provides 50% of the net annual income "to be expended by the vestry for capital improvements to church real property, including yard and cemetery, or for the maintenance, repairs, and improvements thereof." The fund is administered through Suntrust. The amount received varies but has often been around \$3000 annually.

Endowment Fund

A fund established by the vestry and invested through the Diocese to support the ministry and mission of Saint Stephen's Church. Through a non-restricted bequest made in 2006, \$15,000 was added to this fund.

Mildred Patterson Fund

Through the will of Mrs. Patterson, this is an unrestricted gift given periodically to the church by the trustees of the fund. The amount varies but has often been around \$2000 annually.

Mount Dye Music Fund

The Mount Music Fund was established in July 1983 by an agreement between the sisters of William Dye Mount as a memorial to their late brother. Mrs. Eliza M. Thomas and Mrs. Florence M. Beazley gave St. Stephen's Church approximately \$36,000 with two stipulations as detailed in their July 5, 1983 letter to the Vestry.

"1. The church will agree that the funds will be placed for professional investment management at First & Merchants National Bank, Lynchburg, Virginia under a trust arrangement."

"2. The income from the fund will be used for the music program of the church, including, but not by way of limitation, expenditures for sheet music, musical instruments, supplies and services of musicians and music directors. Any income not used for purposes relating to the music in the church shall be reinvested."

The Vestry resolved to move the funds to the Diocesan Pooled Investment Fund in late 1990 and did so in early 1991. Mr. duVal Radford discussed the move of the funds with the benefactors and the bank. The

original terms of the agreement still apply regardless of the location of the funds. The income from the investments is distributed quarterly.

Rectory Fund

The St. Stephen's Church Rectory Fund was established by Vestry action in 1986 upon the sale of the St. Stephen's Rectory. The net sale amount was \$57,101. An account was established with Wheat First Securities and shares of the Massachusetts Financial Service Total Return Mutual Fund were purchased. The Vestry resolution provided for one-half of the income (i.e., total of the dividends, interest, and capital gains distributions) to be reinvested as a hedge against inflation. The remaining half of the total income was to be used to offset the cost of the Rector's housing.

The Vestry resolved to move the funds to the Diocesan Pooled Investment Fund in late 1990 and did so in early 1991. The income from the investments is distributed quarterly.

In 2010 based on the recommendation of the Finance Committee and as part of the 2011 budget approved by the vestry, a decision was made to use part of the rectory fund to meet an expected shortfall.

Sherman Woolridge Fund

Through the will of Sherman Woolridge, Saint Stephen's Church received an unrestricted gift of 1/5th share of assets, including property which as of 2010 was valued for a total of 1.2 million and zoned for commercial sale.

Vanuaken Mission and Outreach Fund

Proceeds from the will of Sheldon Vanuaken are invested with the Diocese and support the mission and outreach of Saint Stephen's Episcopal Church.

Laity

All people of the church are ministers of the church by virtue of their baptism. Christians are called to live together in unity and are accountable one to another. There are canonical expectations for our lives, be we clergy or lay.

The Episcopal Church Title I, Canon 17, "Of Regulations Respecting the Laity"

Sec. 2 (a) All members of this Church who have received Holy Communion in this Church at least three times during the preceding year are to be considered communicants of this Church. (b) For the purposes of statistical consistency throughout the Church, communicants sixteen years of age and over are to be considered adult communicants.

Sec. 3. All communicants of this Church 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 considered communicants in good standing.

The Diocese of Southwestern Virginia. Canon 12. Of the Duties of the Members of the Church

The members of this church should conform to its teachings and to the creed upon which it is founded and should as far as in them lies, live in the exercise of those Christian principles and duties prescribed in the Holy Scriptures and illustrated in the Book of Common Prayer and should further instruct their families and those dependent upon them in the like duties and principles, both by example and precept. They should use all sober and godly conversation, should daily exercise family worship, be charitable in act and word, and celebrate and keep holy the Lord's Day, giving all due attention to the services of the church and to public worship.

Ministry Teams

Historically some of the parish teams and committees have been more active than others. The following is a non-comprehensive list of ministries. Ideas for and leadership of new ministry initiatives are welcome. One should share ideas with the rector for expanding new or strengthening existing ministry.

Buildings & Grounds

Responsible for the maintenance and preservation of the Parish property, buildings, and grounds. The chair is the junior warden. A sub-committee of this standing committee is the cemetery committee, appointed annually by the vestry.

Christian Education

Responsible for assisting the rector in the Christian education of the parish on all levels. Members of this committee, by virtue of office are the rector, the Church School Director, and Church School Staff members. Important duties of this committee are the Nursery, Church School, and the development of new avenues for Christian Education.

Communication

Responsible for communicating within the parish and with the community.

Evangelism, Visitation, and Hospitality

Responsible for attracting and integrating new members into the congregation.

Finance

Responsible for the development of the program budget of the parish to be submitted to the vestry for approval. Also responsible for periodic reports to the Vestry on income and expenditures as they relate to the Annual Budget. The chair of the Standing Committee is a vestryperson. The rector and the treasurers are members ex-officio.

Men's Ministry

Responsible for the development and implementation of men's ministry to and outside the parish.

Nursery

Responsible for oversight, under the rector, of the nursery staff and facility.

Outreach

Responsible for developing and implementing individual and corporate areas of Christian ministry (outreach) to needs in the communities we serve.

Parish Life

Responsible for fellowship and for various ministries, including bereavement, within the parish.

Women's Ministry

Responsible for the development and implementation of men's ministry to and outside the parish.

Worship

Responsible for organizing and implementing worship. The rector chairs the worship committee and appoints its members.

Youth

Responsible for ministry to and with our young people of all ages.

Music

The music is under the authority of the rector.

The Episcopal Church. Title II, Canon 5. Of the Music of the Church

It shall be the duty of every Member of the Clergy to see that music is used as an offering for the glory of God and as a help to the people in their worship in accordance with the Book of Common Prayer and as authorized by the rubrics or by the General Convention of this Church. To this end the Member of the Clergy shall have final authority in the administration of matters pertaining to music. In fulfilling this responsibility the Member of the Clergy shall seek assistance from persons skilled in music. Together they shall see that music is appropriate to the context in which it is used.

Parochial Report

A report of the state of the parish and its finances is to be made and filed by 1 March.

Diocese of Southwestern Virginia, Canon 18, Of Registers and Parochial Reports

Sec. 2 Every clergy member or person in charge, for each congregation for which such person is responsible, shall send to the Bishop or, if there is no Bishop, to the secretary of the diocese, for the president of the Council, (1) the parochial report, which shall be submitted not later than the first day of March of each year; and (2) the parish audit report, which shall be submitted not later than the thirty-first day of August each year; each report to be for the year ending the preceding 31st of December These reports shall be submitted in such form as shall be prescribed by the Bishop or the Council and provided by the secretary of the diocese.

Petty Cash

Petty cash shall be kept in a secure place and expenditures recorded together with applicable receipts.

Property: Alienation of

It is held that all property of each parish is held in trust for their respective diocese and The Episcopal Church. Some churches over the past couple of decades have attempted “to leave” The Episcopal Church and take “their” property with them. In most cases, the courts have ruled in favor of The Episcopal Church.

The Diocese of Southwestern Virginia. Canon 21. Of the Alienation of Property

It shall not be lawful for the trustees of a parish or mission, in whom is vested the title to any real property, to encumber, alienate, or lease for more than three years real property belonging to the parish or mission which they represent without the previous written consent of the Bishop of the diocese acting with the advice and consent of the Standing Committee. It is the intention and purpose of this canon to place all unconsecrated real property under the same provision as church or chapel property as provided by the canons of the Episcopal Church regulating the alienation or encumbrance of consecrated church property.

Rector

The rector has spiritual jurisdiction of the parish. The rector administers the sacraments, proclaims the Gospel, and serves as the ordained pastor and teacher to the congregation. The rector serves as the chief executive officer and, by canon, presides at vestry and parish meetings, casting the deciding vote in case of a tie, except in matters of personal concern. A key role for the rector is that of vision casting and mission building, “equipping the saints for ministry.” The rector is to be a servant leader.

The Episcopal Church, Title III (Ministry), Canon 9, “Of the Life and Work of Priests”

Sec. 5. Rectors and Priests-in-Charge and Their Duties

(a) (1) The Rector or Priest-in-Charge shall have full authority and responsibility for the conduct of the worship and the spiritual jurisdiction of the Parish, subject to the Rubrics of the Book of Common Prayer, the Constitution and Canons of this Church, and the pastoral direction of the Bishop.

(2) For the purposes of the office and for the full and free discharge of all functions and duties pertaining thereto, the Rector or Priest-in-Charge shall at all times be entitled to the use and control of the Church and Parish buildings together with all appurtenances and furniture, and to access to all records and registers maintained by or on behalf of the congregation.

(b) (1) It shall be the duty of the Rector or Priest-in-Charge to ensure all persons in their charge receive Instruction in the Holy Scriptures; in the subjects contained in An Outline of the Faith, commonly called the Catechism; in the doctrine, discipline, and worship of this Church; and in the exercise of their ministry as baptized persons.

(2) It shall be the duty of Rectors or Priests-in-Charge to ensure that all persons in their charge are instructed concerning Christian stewardship, including: (i) reverence for the creation and the right use of God's gifts; (ii) generous and consistent offering of time, talent, and treasure for the mission and ministry of the Church at home and abroad; (iii) the biblical standard of the tithe for financial stewardship; and (iv) the responsibility of all persons to make a will as prescribed in the Book of Common Prayer.

Diocese of Southwestern Virginia, Canon 14.

Sec. 8 . . . The clergy member in charge when present, shall preside at all meetings and be entitled to cast the deciding vote in case of a tie, except in the case of personal interest. All meetings of the vestry shall be subject to call by the clergy member in charge. In case, however, of failure to call a meeting at the request of two members of the vestry, such members may, if they deem it necessary, themselves call a meeting.

Rector: Election of

The parish follows the procedure of the Diocese for discernment, search, and, with the Bishop's authorization, call of a new Rector or of a Priest-in-Charge.

The Diocese of Southwestern Virginia, Canon 15. Of the Duties of Vestries

Sec. 2 A rector, assistant, or clergy member in charge of a parish shall be elected by the votes of the majority of the vestry, given by ballot. In the election of an assistant, the nomination shall be made in writing by the rector. The election of a rector or clergy member in charge must be made after open nomination of a previous meeting of the vestry, duly convened. Written notice of the time and place of the meeting of the vestry at which such election is to be held, with a statement of such purpose, shall be given to each vestry member. Before such election, sufficient evidence in writing from the ecclesiastical authority shall be had that, so far as is known and believed, the individual named is a qualified presbyter or deacon of this church.

Sec. 3 The call of the clergy member-elect shall be in writing and must express any special conditions, together with the stipulation of salary or support, which stipulation, when the clergy member is settled, shall constitute a binding contract, and the salary or support, as accruing, is to be an acknowledged debt recoverable by process of law if necessary; provided that amount may be increased or diminished as the parties may from time to time agree, due notice of which shall be given to the ecclesiastical authority by the secretary of the vestry.

Rector: Housing Allowance for

A Housing Allowance resolution is to be made in advance of the receipt of payment.

By Internal Revenue Code, Section 107, a priest is allowed to exclude from gross income: (1) the rental value of a home furnished to him or her as part of his or her compensation; or (2) a housing allowance paid to him or her as part of his or her compensation, to the extent used by him or her to rent or provide a home and to the extent such allowance does not exceed the fair rental value of the home, including furnishings and appurtenances such as a garage, plus the cost of utilities.

See parish office files for examples of previous housing allowance resolutions.

Rector: When Pastoral Relationship Can Be Dissolved

Like all relationships, that between the rector and congregation endures various strains and stresses. As Christians, we are to seek reconciliation and healing in the Body of Christ and to work through disagreements. By Letter of Agreement with the rector, the

vestry has pledged itself to seek mediation if serious difficulties arise between the rector and vestry.

Dissolving the relationship between rector and congregation is a painful and costly process for both the rector and the congregation. But when all attempts, including formal mediation, have not resulted in a desired outcome, the following canons relate to the process of involving the bishop and diocese in the process for (1) reconciling the relationship and (2) dissolving the relationship. At each step in the process, care should be exercised to ameliorate damage to the clergy and to the parishioners individually and collectively.

Canons Pertaining to Dissolution of a Pastoral Relationship

Sec. 12. Reconciliation of Disagreements Affecting the Pastoral Relation

When the pastoral relationship in a parish between a Rector and the Vestry or Congregation is imperiled by disagreement or dissension, and the issues are deemed serious by a majority vote of the Vestry or the Rector, either party may petition the Ecclesiastical Authority, in writing, to intervene and assist the parties in their efforts to resolve the disagreement. The Ecclesiastical Authority shall initiate such proceedings as are deemed appropriate under the circumstances for that purpose by the Ecclesiastical Authority, which may include the appointment of a consultant. The parties to the disagreement, following the recommendations of the Ecclesiastical Authority, shall labor in good faith that the parties may be reconciled. Whenever the Standing Committee is the Ecclesiastical Authority, it shall request the Bishop of a neighboring Diocese to perform the duties of the Ecclesiastical Authority under this Canon.

Sec. 13. Dissolution of the Pastoral Relation Except upon mandatory resignation by reason of age, a Rector may not resign as Rector of a parish without the consent of its Vestry, nor may any Rector canonically or lawfully elected and in charge of a Parish be removed therefrom by the Vestry against the Rector's will, except as hereinafter provided.

Sec. 14. If for any urgent reason a Rector or Vestry desires a dissolution of the pastoral relation, and the parties cannot agree, either party may give notice in writing to the Ecclesiastical Authority of the Diocese. Whenever the Standing Committee is the Ecclesiastical Authority of the Diocese, it shall request the Bishop of another Diocese to perform the duties of the Bishop under this Canon.

Sec. 15. Within sixty days of receipt of the written notice the Bishop, as chief pastor of the Diocese, shall mediate the differences between Rector and Vestry in every informal way which the Bishop deems proper and may appoint a committee of at least one Presbyter and one Lay Person, none of whom may be members of the Parish involved, to make a report to the Bishop.

Sec. 16. If the differences between the parties are not resolved after completion of the mediation, the Bishop shall proceed as follows:

(a) The Bishop shall give notice to the Rector and Vestry that a godly judgment will be rendered in the matter after consultation with the Standing Committee and that either party has the right within ten days to request in writing an opportunity to confer with the Standing Committee before it consults with the Bishop.

(b) If a timely request is made, the President of the Standing Committee shall set a date for the conference, which shall be held within thirty days.

- (c) At the conference each party shall be entitled to representation and to present its position fully.
- (d) Within thirty days after the conference or after the Bishop's notice if no conference is requested, the Bishop shall confer with and receive the recommendation of the Standing Committee; thereafter the Bishop, as final arbiter and judge, shall render a godly judgment.
- (e) Upon the request of either party the Bishop shall explain the reasons for the judgment. If the explanation is in writing, copies shall be delivered to both parties.
- (f) If the pastoral relation is to be continued, the Bishop shall require the parties to agree on definitions of responsibility and accountability for the Rector and the Vestry.
- (g) If the relation is to be dissolved: (1) The Bishop shall direct the Secretary of the Convention to record the dissolution. (2) The judgment shall include such terms and conditions including financial settlements as shall seem to the Bishop just and compassionate.

Sec. 17. In either event the Bishop shall offer appropriate supportive services to the Priest and the Parish.

Sec. 18. In the event of the failure or refusal of either party to comply with the terms of the judgment, the Bishop may impose such penalties as may be set forth in the Constitution and Canons of the Diocese; and in default of any provisions for such penalties therein, the Bishop may act as follows:

- (a) In the case of a Rector, suspend the Rector from the exercise of the priestly office until the Priest shall comply with the judgment.
- (b) In the case of a Vestry, invoke any available sanctions including recommending to the Convention of the Diocese that the Parish be placed under the supervision of the Bishop as a Mission until it has complied with the judgment.

Sec. 19. For cause, the Bishop may extend the time periods specified in this Canon, provided that all be done to expedite these proceedings. All parties shall be notified in writing of the length of any extension.

Sec. 20. (a) Statements made during the course of proceedings under this Canon are not discoverable nor admissible in any proceedings under Title IV provided that this does not require the exclusion of evidence in any proceeding under the Canons which is otherwise discoverable and admissible.

(b) In the course of proceedings under this Canon, if a charge is made by the Vestry against the Rector that could give rise to a disciplinary proceeding under Canon IV.1, all proceedings under this Canon with respect to such charge shall be suspended until the charge has been resolved or withdrawn.

Sec. 21. Sections 13-20 of this Canon shall not apply in any Diocese which has made a provision on this subject in its Canons which is consistent with this Canon.

Rector: Vacancy in

The Bishop is normally aware of any vacancy that occurs in a parish with a rector's resignation, but it is the Wardens' responsibility to inform the Bishop if vacancy occurs. The arrangement for a Supply Priest, Interim Rector, or a Priest-in-Charge is made according to set diocesan guidelines. The Diocesan Transitions Officer will assist with all questions that exist as to the appropriate process for supply or interim priest and the search process for a Rector or Priest-in-Charge.

The Diocese of Southwestern Virginia, Canon 15. Of the Duties of Vestries

Sec. 1 When a parish becomes vacant the wardens or other proper officers shall certify the fact to the Bishop. If the authorities of the parish shall for thirty days have failed to make provision for the services, it shall be the duty of the Bishop to take such measures as may be deemed expedient for the temporary maintenance of divine services therein. It shall be the duty of the Bishop, upon receiving notice that parish is to become or has become vacant, to notify all clergy of this church canonically resident in the diocese of that fact in writing within ten days so that they may in turn notify the Bishop in writing of a desire to be considered by the vestry of that parish as available for election as rector.

Safeguarding God's Children

We want all people to be safe from harm at any time but especially while engaged in church-sponsored activities. This is especially true of our young people under the age of 18. The Diocese of Southwestern Virginia has certain expectations for those who are around or who are working directly with our youth: resources.dioswva.org/index.html. There is available through the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia and we have available in our office specific training materials designed to prevent abuse and create a safe atmosphere for youth.

Trustees

Trustees are required by Virginia code to hold real property. Samples of documents required for instating and removing trustees on available in the parish office files

Diocese of Southwestern Virginia. Canon 17. Of the Trustees and Title to Real Estate

It shall be the duty of the vestry of each parish and each mission holding real property to elect not fewer than three (3) trustees and to report to the Bishop of the diocese the names of the trustees in whom is vested the legal title to any and all real property owned by the said parish or mission, together with reference to the court order book wherein the court order appointing such trustees is entered. In the event of a vacancy it shall be the duty of the vestry to elect and to cause the appointment by the court of a successor trustee or trustees as the case may be, and to report to the Bishop the names of such successor trustee or trustees within thirty days after the entry to an order by the court appointing new or additional trustees of said parish or mission, together with the date of the entry of said order of appointment and reference to the court order book where said order is recorded. In order to be eligible to serve as a trustee, a person must be a communicant in good standing of this church. If any person elected as a trustee shall, after his or her election, cease to be a communicant in good standing of this church, then it shall be the duty of the vestry to declare a vacancy and to elect and to cause the appointment by the court of a successor trustee to replace such person.

Code of Virginia. Section 578

Appointment of trustees to effect the purposes of conveyances, etc.; validation of certain appointments. – The circuit court of the county or the circuit or corporation court of the city, or the judge thereof in vacation, wherein there is any parcel of such land or the greater part thereof may, on the application of the proper authorities of such church diocese, religious congregation, church, or religious society or branch or division thereof, from time to time appoint trustees, either where there were, or are, none or in place of

former trustees, and on such application and without notice to the trustee or trustees change those so appointed whenever it may seem to the court or judge proper to effect and promote the purpose and object of the conveyance, devise, or dedication, and the legal title to such land shall for that purpose and object be vested in the trustees for the time being and their successors. All such changes and appointments heretofore [before March 31, 1966] made are hereby validated, ratified, approved and confirmed. (Code 1919, Section 39; 1962, c. 516; 1966, c.216.)

Vestry

In each self-sustaining church (as opposed to a “mission” which is supported by the Diocese) the vestry has leadership responsibility, especially in temporal matters and for the relationship that exists between the rector and congregation. As has been noted in the introduction, there is much that is shared between the rector and the vestry and needed cooperation between the two in order for the congregation to thrive.

The Episcopal Church. Title I, Canon 14. “Of Parish Vestries”

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.

The Diocese of Southwestern Virginia, Canon 15. Of the Duties of Vestries

Sec. 4 It shall be the duty of the vestry to cooperate with the rector or clergy member in charge of the parish for the promotion of the spiritual welfare of the parish, to see that such person is properly supported and that his or her salary and pension fund premium be paid regularly and punctually; to report to the diocese, prior to December 15 of each year, the amount which the parish will contribute to the support of the work of the diocese and general church for the next calendar year and to see that such amount will be paid in regular installments no less frequently than quarterly; to sustain and further the church's mission; to make and execute all contracts for the erection, furnishing, and preservation of the church edifice and other church property; to present annually to the Council a full statement of the financial condition of the parish; to provide for the appointment of trustees, under the laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia authorized to hold the legal title of the church property; and generally as constituted agents of the congregation to transact all its temporal business.

Sec. 6 Every person chosen as vestry member shall before acting as such, subscribe to the following declaration and promise, and this declaration and promise shall also be subscribed to in case of re-election:

“I do believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God and to contain all things necessary to salvation; and I do yield my hearty assent and approbation to the doctrines, worship and discipline of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America; and I promise that I will faithfully execute the office of vestry member (vestry committee member) of Church in _____ city/county, according to my best knowledge and skill.”

Sec. 7 At its regular meeting after election the vestry shall proceed to organize by the election of a secretary, two wardens, and a treasurer of the parish. The wardens shall be chosen from the members of

the vestry. All meetings shall be opened with prayer, and a majority of those elected shall constitute a quorum.

Vestry: Clerk

The clerk is responsible for the minutes of the vestry meetings. These minutes are to include who was present and absent at meetings, what the general shape of the meeting was (agenda), and any resolutions that were made during the meeting together with their disposition (pass or fail).

Diocese of Southwestern Virginia. Canon 16. Of the Duties of the Wardens and Other Officers of the Church

Sec. 2 It shall be the duty of the secretary of the vestry to keep correct entries of all proceedings of the vestry; and, when there is no rector or clergy member in charge of the parish, to enter upon the parish register usually kept by the rector or clergy member in charge all baptisms, specifying the Christian names and surnames of the parents, with the name and date of birth and baptism of the person baptized; also all marriages, deaths and funerals, with the dates and names of parties, and in like manner all confirmations administered in, and communicants lost or gained by the parish, and furnish a report of the same to the Bishop of the diocese.

Vestry: Election

Each year three (or more) vestry members are elected at the Annual Meeting of the parish (usually around the First Sunday of Advent) to serve a three-year term. Once having served a full term in office, a vestry member must take at least one year off before being eligible for election again to the vestry.

Between annual meetings the vestry itself has the responsibility to choose qualified replacements based on a death, resignation, or removal for other reason of a vestry member.

The Episcopal Church. Title I, 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.

The Diocese of Southwestern Virginia, Canon 15. Of the Duties of Vestries

Sec. 1: (a) Each parish shall elect a vestry of not less than three nor more than twenty- four members.

(b) Those persons eligible for election as vestry members shall be as follows: adult confirmed communicants of the parish, in good standing, who have been regular worshipers in the parish in the year preceding election and regular contributors to its financial support by pledge, subscription, or some other method by which they shall be known to the treasurer of the parish. The rector or clergy member in

charge, or if there be neither, the senior warden, after consultation with the treasurer of the parish, shall determine whether a nominee is eligible for election under this section.

(c) The election of members of a vestry shall be held annually in accordance with the provisions of this canon. Voting shall be by ballot, in such form or by such method as shall be approved by the meeting. No member of a vestry shall be elected for a term of longer than three years. Having served a three-year term no member of a vestry shall be eligible for re-election until the expiration of one year, or such longer period of time not to exceed three years as may be determined by each parish.

Vestry: Election of Officers

The vestry chooses its officers, electing wardens from among its own membership and a treasurer and secretary that can be but need not be members of the vestry.

The Diocese of Southwestern Virginia, Canon 15. Of the Duties of Vestries

Sec. 7 At its regular meeting after election the vestry shall proceed to organize by the election of a secretary, two wardens, and a treasurer of the parish. The wardens shall be chosen from the members of the vestry. All meetings shall be opened with prayer, and a majority of those elected shall constitute a quorum.

Vestry: Executive Committee

In between vestry meetings, an “executive committee” consisting of the rector, wardens, and treasurer has responsibility for making decisions which are shared with the rest of the vestry through email.

Vestry: Meetings

The rector and vestry set the time and place of vestry meetings. Currently such meetings take place in the Parish Hall on the Fourth Tuesday of a month and usually last one to two hours. The vestry often chooses not to meet during the summer months and usually meets briefly after the election of new members in December. Periodic vestry meetings may be called to deal with a specific topic. Each year there is often at least one vestry “retreat,” a specific time, often on a Saturday, set aside to plan, to develop a team, and to envision how we will work to fulfill the mission of the church.

The meetings are usually run in an informal style which follows an agenda. Robert's Rules of Order may be utilized from time to time as deemed appropriate by the chair or requested by a majority for a given action or resolve. The hope is to work by consensus, not necessarily unanimity, and that the resolve of the consensus is becomes the position of the whole vestry.

Meetings are generally open to visitors who have seat but not voice, unless recognized by the chair. Should for the beneficial conduct of business it be thought that the meeting should at any point be closed, a motion to move to executive session may be made.

Addressing a Vestry Meeting by Individual or Group Spokesperson

At times, various members or groups may wish to address the vestry and rector. They should request permission to be on the agenda, together with the subject matter, indicating any request that is to be made. The chair will indicate the manner and length which they are to be heard. Any persons not previously on the agenda may be recognized for a given length of time, usually no more than two minutes, designated by the chair.

Vestry: Removal

It is to be assumed that vestry members during their time in office will do all they can to remain a communicant in good standing (through regular attendance at parish worship services and regular financial contribution to the general budget of the church). Life situations change and talking with the rector and wardens may be helpful in determining whether or not one should continue in service or resign from the vestry. There are two methods for involuntary removal from the vestry, one is for six consecutive absences and the other occurs when a determination is made by the rector and vestry that a member has abrogated responsibility for the conduct of office. The latter would be rare, require a majority vote of the vestry after giving opportunity for the member to speak to her or his concerns.

Diocese of Southwestern Virginia. Canon 14. Sec. 9

If for any reason a vestry member fails to attend six consecutive and duly called meetings of the vestry, his or her seat shall automatically and immediately become vacant. The vestry in that event shall elect a member to fill the vacancy and complete the unexpired term. The vestry may re-elect the same member.

The Episcopal Church Title I, Canon 17, "Of Regulations Respecting the Laity"

Sec. 8. Any person accepting any office in this Church shall well and faithfully perform the duties of that office in accordance with the Constitution and Canons of this Church and of the Diocese in which the office is being exercised.

Vestry: Treasurer

The treasurer works for the vestry (and its finance committee) to ensure that financial reports are up to date and accurate. The vestry remains the group with fiduciary responsibility and determination of how funds are managed. It is hoped that the treasurer is able to attend vestry meetings. The treasurer maintains open communication with the rector, who under canon has authority to see all records held

for and on behalf of the church. The treasurer shall assist in the development of the parochial report (due 1 March) and the annual audit (due 31 August).

Diocese of Southwestern Virginia. Canon 16. Of the Duties of the Wardens and Other Officers of the Church

Sec. 3 It shall be the duty of the treasurer of the parish to take charge of all offerings and income collected for the expenses of the parish and to disburse the same under the direction of the vestry. The treasurer shall also take charge of all offerings made for special purposes, except communion alms, and disburse the same for the purposes for which they were made by the parish, and shall make a report thereof to the vestry.

Vestry: Vacancy

Vacancies between Annual Meetings are filled by a majority of the vestry electing a qualified candidate.

Diocese of Southwestern Virginia. Canon 14.

Sec. 8 Vacancies occurring in the vestry shall be filled by a vote of the remaining members. . . .

Vestry: Wardens

Historically, the senior warden was known as the “rector’s warden,” as that warden has traditionally shared in the leadership of the parish, including vision setting and administration. The junior warden was known as the “people’s warden,” with a focus on oversight of building and grounds. The hope is that the wardens will work closely and cooperatively with the rector in leading the vestry and congregation in fulfilling the mission of the church.

Wardens have a leadership responsibility that might best be described as being within the vestry “a leader among leaders.” The senior warden especially will want to maintain regular, ongoing communication with the rector in order to be fully apprised of parish life and what may be needed at any given time.

Communication with the Bishop and Diocese Normally through Wardens

Vestry communication with the Bishop is usually done through the wardens who, except for emergent cause, make known the nature of the communication in advance to the rector and vestry. Where there are allegations that would lead to legal charges (state or church) against the rector or anyone else, anyone is encouraged to speak directly to secular authorities and/or the bishop.

Wardens Have Authority in the Absence of a Rector

In the absence of a rector (who has resigned or died), the wardens have additional responsibilities for leadership in the parish.

Diocese of Southwestern Virginia. Canon 16. Of the Duties of the Wardens and Other Officers of the Church

Sec. 1 It shall be the duty of the wardens to keep watch over all church property; to make proper provision for every occasion of public worship; to collect the offerings of the people; to take charge of the font and communion plate; to provide, out of the funds of the parish under the direction of the vestry, a sufficient supply of vestments and books to be used in public worship, and also the elements for the celebration of the Holy communion; to attend to the accommodation of the congregation with seats; and to maintain order and decorum during the time of public worship; and to assure that the vestry annually review the salary and allowances received by the rector, assistants and/or clergy member in charge.

The Wardens have a responsibility to report to the Bishop when the parish becomes vacant at the resignation of a rector.

The Diocese of Southwestern Virginia, Canon 15. Sec. 1 (see Rector: Vacancy).

Voluntary Proportionate Giving (Diocesan "Assessment")

Each parish is expected to support the work of mission and ministry of the wider church, including the Diocese of Southwestern Virginia. In this Diocese we do not have "required" assessments, but rather "voluntary proportionate giving" amounts suggested by the Diocese based on a three-year average of the pledge and plate receipts as filed in the parish's Parochial Report. Churches the size of Saint Stephen's are asked to contribute 10 percent of this plate and pledge average for the Diocese which in turn makes a pledge to the work of the mission and ministry of The Episcopal Church.

The VPG commitment is due to the Diocesan office on the official form by 15 December of each year.