
Constitution

ARTICLE I Territorial Limits

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7 This Diocese as established by the Sixty-seventh Convention of the Diocese of North Caro-
8 lina, in May 1883, at Charlotte, embracing all that portion of the territory of the State of North
9 Carolina, which includes the counties of Hertford, Bertie, Martin, Pitt, Greene, Wayne, Samp-
10 son, Cumberland, Hoke and Robeson, and all the counties lying between these counties and
11 the Atlantic Ocean, shall be known as the Diocese of East Carolina.
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ARTICLE II Accession to Constitution of Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America

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19 The Churches in this Diocese accede to the Constitution and Canons of that branch of the Holy
20 Catholic Church known as the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America,
21 and recognizes the authority of the General Convention thereof.
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ARTICLE III Time and Place of Meeting of Annual Convention

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27 Section 1. There shall be an Annual Convention to meet within the Diocese at such time and
28 place as may be determined by the Convention, or in the event of no such determination, at
29 such time and place as may be agreed upon by the Bishop and Executive Council.
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32 Section 2. But the time and place of such meeting may be changed or Special Conventions
33 may be called by the Bishop and Executive Council, subject nevertheless to such Canoni-
34 cal provisions as may hereafter be made; provided that no Special Convention shall be called
35 without at least thirty days notice, which notice shall be mailed by the Secretary of the con-
36 vention at least twenty days before the meeting of such Special Convention to each member
37 of the clergy entitled to a seat in the Convention, and to each Clerk of such Parish as has no
38 Rector in charge, and to the Clerk of each Mission that has no missionary in charge, and shall
39 specify the business and purpose for which said Special Convention is to be held; and no other
40 business shall be proposed or acted upon except by a concurrent vote of two-thirds of both
41 orders present, voting by orders.
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44 Section 3. Election shall be held by the several Vestries, or at the option of each Vestry, by the
45 congregation, for delegates to special Conventions, but in the event of the failure to elect such
46 delegates, those who were elected to the preceding Annual Convention - subject to the provi-
47 sions of Article IV, Sections 3 and 4 of this Constitution - shall hold over.

ARTICLE IV
Personnel of Convention

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5 Section 1. The Convention shall be composed of the two Orders - Clerical and Lay. The
6 Bishop of the Diocese, or in the Bishop's absence, the Bishop in charge as representing the
7 Episcopal Authority shall, if present, preside at all meetings of the conventions. The Bishop
8 Coadjutor and the Bishop-Suffragan, if there be such, shall be entitled to seats and votes in the
9 Convention, and if there be none such present, the Convention shall elect its presiding officer.
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12 Section 2. (a) Every member of the Clergy of the Church Canonically resident in the Diocese
13 shall be entitled to a seat and vote in the Convention (b) The Convention may grant seat and
14 voice in the Convention to: (i) Clergy not canonically resident, but serving churches within
15 the diocese for an extended period; (ii) Military chaplains serving within the diocese; (iii)
16 Clergy who are guests of the convention.
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19 Section 3. (a) Each church within the Diocese, whether a parish or mission, shall be entitled
20 to be represented by lay delegates according to the number of its confirmed communicants in
21 good standing of sixteen years of age or older, as follows: from 10 to 50 such communicants,
22 1 lay delegate; from 51 to 100 such communicants, 2 lay delegates; from 101 to 300 such
23 communicants, 3 lay delegates; from 301 to 500 such communicants, 4 lay delegates; over 500
24 such communicants, 5 lay delegates. The number of confirmed communicants in good stand-
25 ing of sixteen years of age or older shall be determined from each church's parochial report as
26 of December 31 preceding the annual Convention. Each church's delegates shall be chosen by
27 the Vestry, or at the option of the Vestry, by election by the congregation, from the confirmed
28 communicants in good standing of sixteen years of age or older of the church. (b) When the
29 Ecclesiastical Authority has recognized an Episcopal College or University Campus Ministry
30 as a community of faith, the Campus Ministry shall be entitled to elect a student lay delegate
31 as its representative to the Annual Convention. The student lay delegate shall be an adult con-
32 firmed communicant in good standing in this Church elected by the Campus Ministry from its
33 membership.
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37 Section 4. Each church shall be entitled to select one alternate lay delegate for each of its lay
38 delegates, such alternate delegates to be chosen in the same manner as the delegates.
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41 Section 5. (a) It shall be lawful for the Convention to exclude or suspend from Lay represen-
42 tation any Parish or Mission neglecting or refusing to appoint delegates to the Convention for
43 two successive years, or neglecting or refusing to comply with any lawful requirement of the
44 Convention; providing, that a vote of a majority of all the clergy present in the Convention,
45 and two-thirds of the lay delegates present in the Convention shall be required for such exclu-
46 sion or suspension. (b) Any Parish or Mission which fails to keep or cause the keeping of the
47 records or to file or cause the filing of the reports required by the canonical provisions shall

1 be denied any representation at the next Annual Convention and each one thereafter until such
2 records are brought current and such reports are filed. However, if good cause is shown in the
3 opinion of the Convention delegates, the Parish or Mission may be relieved of the penalty pre-
4 scribed by this paragraph by a vote in favor of such relief by two-thirds of the delegates voting
5 on the question. If a vote by orders is called for, relief of the penalty must carry by two-thirds
6 of the votes cast in each order.
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9 Section 6. If any Parish or Mission shall neglect or decline to appoint Lay Delegates, or shall
10 have been excluded or suspended from the right of doing so by the Convention, or if any or all
11 those appointed shall not be present, such Parish or Mission shall nevertheless be bound by the
12 acts of the Convention.
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15 Section 7. In a vote by Orders and Parishes in any session of the Convention, no delegation
16 from any church shall have a vote if such church has not been represented in at least one of the
17 last three, consecutive, regular annual meetings of the Convention.
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20 ARTICLE V
21 Powers of Convention
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23 Section 1. The Convention shall be sole judge of the election and qualification of its own
24 members. It shall have power to adopt Rules of Order for its own members. It shall have
25 power to adopt Rules of Order for its own government, elect officers and raise funds, and shall
26 have such other legislative powers as may be necessary and proper for the well-being of the
27 Diocese.
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30 Section 2. The Convention shall have no power to pass any Canon infringing the Episcopal
31 Authority, but may adopt resolutions of advice or inquiry or institute any proceedings deemed
32 necessary for the purpose of impeachment of the Bishop.
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35 ARTICLE VI
36 Quorum
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38 To constitute a quorum for the purpose of ordinary business the presence of a majority of all
39 clergy entitled to seat and vote (exclusive of non-parochial clergy) and of a majority of the lay
40 delegates entitled to representation in the Convention shall be necessary. Any fewer number
41 shall be competent to receive reports and to adjourn.
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ARTICLE VII
Voting by Convention

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5 Section 1. (A). Unless otherwise provided, voting upon all questions before the Convention
6 shall be by Delegates, with a simple majority of all ballots cast to determine the issue. (B).

7 Upon any question before the Convention the two Orders shall vote separately,

8 (i) when required by this Constitution or by the Canons or

9 (ii) when any Lay or Clergy delegate moves for a vote by Orders after the introduction
10 of the question and before the question is called for a vote, seconded by a member of
11 the other Order, and with the approval of a majority of the Convention. Such motion
12 shall take precedence over any other motion on the floor and is not subject to debate.

13 When a vote by Orders is required, each clerical member shall be entitled to one vote
14 and each lay member to one vote, and a concurrence of majorities of both Orders shall
15 be necessary to a decision.
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17 (C). A vote by Orders and Parishes is required in the election of a Bishop, or Bishop Co-
18 adjutor, or a Bishop Suffragan, as provided by Article XIII. A vote by Orders and Parishes
19 is required to amend this Constitution, as provided by Article XVI. If a vote by Orders and
20 Parishes is required, each clerical member shall be entitled to one vote and each Parish shall
21 be entitled to the same number of votes as the number of its lay delegates. For example, a Par-
22 ish with five lay delegates shall be entitled to five votes, and a Parish with four lay delegates
23 shall be entitled to four votes. A vote by Orders and Parishes shall be conducted in this man-
24 ner: First, a quorum for the purpose of voting shall be necessary. A quorum for voting by
25 orders and Parishes shall mean the presence of a majority of all clergy entitled to seat and vote
26 (exclusive of non-parochial clergy), and the presence of delegates of two-thirds of the Parishes
27 entitled to representation and vote. Second, the vote shall be taken by first calling the roll of
28 the clergy with each clerical member depositing his or her ballot with the Tellers, and then
29 calling the roll of the Parishes with one lay delegate depositing the ballots of the parish with
30 the Tellers. Third, a majority of both Orders on the same ballot shall be required for an elec-
31 tion or an affirmative vote to amend the Constitution.
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35 Section 2. All elections shall be by ballot unless otherwise unanimously ordered.
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ARTICLE VIII
Officers of Convention

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41 Section 1. The Convention shall annually elect a Secretary, a Treasurer, a Chancellor and a
42 Historiographer.

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44 Section 2. Should there at any time be no such election, then the officers last before elected
45 shall hold over until such election shall be had.
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1 Section 3. Should the office of Secretary, Treasurer, Chancellor or Historiographer become
2 vacant at any time preceding the annual election, the Ecclesiastical Authority shall have the
3 power to fill the vacancy till such time as election shall be held.
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6 ARTICLE IX
7 Standing Committee
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9 Section 1. The Standing Committee shall consist of three Clergy of the Diocese and three lay
10 persons, confirmed communicants in good standing sixteen years or older and residents of
11 the Diocese. The members of the Standing Committee shall be elected by the Convention for
12 three year terms, with one Clergy and one lay person elected annually; provided that the num-
13 ber elected and the terms may be varied initially to produce such staggered terms. No mem-
14 ber who has served on the Committee shall be eligible for reelection, or appointment to fill a
15 vacancy, until one year after the expiration of that term. The Committee shall elect its Presi-
16 dent and Secretary annually and shall have the power to fill any vacancy that may occur on the
17 Committee until the next annual Convention. However, a person otherwise qualified to serve
18 on the Standing Committee who is appointed to fill a vacancy until the next Annual Conven-
19 tion may be elected to complete any remaining time on that term or to a full term immediately.
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23 Section 2. In case of the absence or inability of the Bishop, the duties assigned to the Bishop
24 by this Constitution shall be performed by the Bishop-Coadjutor (if there be one), in so far as
25 it is not inconsistent with the Constitution and Canons of the General Convention.
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28 Section 3. When there is no Bishop authorized to act, the Standing Committee shall be the
29 Ecclesiastical Authority of the Diocese. The Standing Committee acting as Ecclesiastical Au-
30 thority may invite the temporary services of other Bishops and, for due cause, may change the
31 time or place of the Annual Convention, and may also summon Special Conventions, and shall
32 do so upon the call of one-third of the Clergy of the Diocese, or of one-third of the Parishes in
33 union with the Convention, as appearing upon the lists of the Journal last before published.
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36 Section 4. No Vestry, Trustee, Board of Directors or other Body authorized by Civil or Canon
37 law to hold, manage, or administer real property for any Parish, Mission, Congregation, or
38 Institution of this Diocese shall purchase, mortgage, incumber or alienate, enter into a deed
39 of trust or accept donation of the same or any part there of without the written consent of the
40 Bishop and the Standing Committee of this Diocese.
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ARTICLE X
Organization of Missionary Congregations

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5 Section 1. Any ten or more confirmed communicants in good standing of sixteen years of age
6 or older may organize themselves into a Mission, and be received into union with the Conven-
7 tion, by taking such steps as may be provided for by Canon.

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9 Section 2. The Bishop of the Diocese may, with the written consent of the Rector of any Par-
10 ish (a copy of which shall be filed with the Historiographer of the Diocese), establish, within
11 the limits of such Parish, Missionary Congregations, whose Ministers shall be independent of
12 the Rector and responsible to the Ecclesiastical Authority only; provided, that with the advice
13 and consent of the Standing Committee, the Bishop shall have power to establish such inde-
14 pendent Missionary Congregations without the consent of the Rector.
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ARTICLE XI
Authority of Rectors

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21 Section 1. Any Priest regularly called to the charge of a Parish and entering thereupon shall,
22 during the time of such charge, be held to be the Rector of said Parish.

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24 Section 2. The Rector is recognized as having, by virtue of office, the exclusive regulation,
25 subject to the Rubrics of the Book of Common Prayer, the Constitution and Canons of the
26 Church and this Diocese, and the pastoral direction of the Bishop, of all spiritual concerns of
27 the Parish; as being entitled at all times to have access to the Church building and to open the
28 same for services or instruction of this Church; to call meetings of the Vestry of congregation,
29 when present to preside at the same, and in case of a tie to give the deciding vote.
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ARTICLE XII
Canons for Trial of Clergymen

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36 The Convention shall pass Canons for the trial of members of the Clergy.
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ARTICLE XIII
Rule of Voting for Election of a Bishop
Bishop Coadjutor, or Bishop Suffragan

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43 In the election of a Bishop, or Bishop Coadjutor, or a Bishop Suffragan, the Convention shall
44 vote by ballot and by Orders and Parishes, as described in Article VII, Section 1, and the con-
45 currence of a majority of all the Clergy entitled to seats in the Convention and a majority of
46 the lay delegates voting by parishes (churches) shall be necessary to an election. All Clergy
47 who have been retired on account of age or disability and all non-parochial Clergy are entitled

1 to a seat and, if otherwise entitled thereto, to a vote in the Diocesan Convention, but their ab-
2 sence at any Convention shall not be counted in determining a constitutional majority.
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5 ARTICLE XIV
6 Qualifications for Voting in
7 Parochial and Mission Elections:
8 Definitions
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10 Section 1. The following definitions shall apply wherever these terms appear in this Constitu-
11 tion or in the Canons of the Diocese:
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14 (a) Member: A person who has received the Sacrament of Holy Baptism with water in the
15 Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, whether in this Church or in an-
16 other Christian Church, and whose Baptism has been duly recorded in this Church. (b) Adult
17 member: A member sixteen years of age and over. (c) Communicant: A member who has
18 received Holy Communion in this Church at least three times during the preceding year. (d)
19 Communicant in good standing: A member who for the previous year has been faithful in
20 corporate worship, unless for good cause prevented, and has been faithful in working, praying,
21 and giving for the spread of the Kingdom of God. (e) Adult communicant in good standing: A
22 communicant in good standing who is sixteen years of age or older.
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25 Section 2. Those entitled to vote in all Parish and Mission elections shall meet the following
26 qualifications:
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29 (a) Be an adult communicant in good standing in the Parish or Mission; and (b) Shall have
30 subscribed to the following declaration: I do hereby consent to be governed by the Constitu-
31 tion and Canons of the Church, as set forth in and by the General Convention of the Protestant
32 Episcopal Church in the United States of America, and by the Constitution and Canons of the
33 Diocese of East Carolina.
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37 ARTICLE XV
38 Method of Amending Canons
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40 No new Canon shall be passed, nor shall any existing Canon be amended, upon the day upon
41 which said new Canon or amendment may be proposed, without unanimous consent. Nor,
42 without a similar consent shall the question upon the passage of such Canon or amendment be
43 finally put without previous reference to a committee.
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1 ARTICLE XVI
2 Method of Amending the Constitution
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4 Any proposition to alter this Constitution shall be made in writing, and if approved by a major-
5 ity of the Convention, shall be submitted to the next Convention, and if then approved by a ma-
6 jority of each of the two Orders present, voting by Orders and Parishes as described in Article
7 VII, it shall become a part of this Constitution.
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10 ARTICLE XVII
11 When Amendments Become Effective
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13 All Constitutional amendments shall take effect from and after the adjournment of the Conven-
14 tion at which they shall have been ratified, unless it shall be otherwise ordered by a vote by
15 Orders.
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