

Resolutions from Diocesan Convention 2011

Resolution 1

Absentee Ballots (as amended)

Submitted by: Vestry of St. John's Episcopal Church, Charleston

Defeated

Resolved, That this convention authorize changes to Title III, Canon 1, Sections 5(b) and 5(i) allowing absentee ballots to be cast by members in good standing who are unable to attend the annual congregational meeting.

Explanation: Currently Title III, Canon 1, Section 5 of the Canons of our diocese require that persons casting votes must be physically present at the annual meeting. The relevant sections of Title III, Canon 1 are as follow:

Section 5(b) states. "...this committee shall take the ballot and declare the result. No vote shall be cast by proxy. The number of persons of which the Vestry is to be composed shall be determined by the competent voters who assemble."

Section 5(i) states. "...the members of the congregation present at the Congregational Meeting shall cast ballots for the election of members of the Vestry, each person being entitled to vote for as many candidates as there are members of the Vestry to be elected."

And while these sections specifically name Vestry elections, they also effect the election of delegates to diocesan convention.

We are living longer that may have been anticipated when the Canons were written and as a result have congregants who have been active in the life of the church for 60.70.80+ years who are now home-bound due to their own physical limitations or care-taking responsibilities for spouses, other relatives or friends, making it impossible for them to even attend an annual meeting. As a result, even as they continue to support the church financially, they are unable to cast a vote under the current Canons.

We are not proposing that votes be cast by proxy, that is, a vote cast by a person present at the meeting on behalf of another person. We are proposing the absentee ballots, obtained in advance of the congregational meeting, filled out and returned in time to be counted with those ballots cast at the congregational meeting, be authorized.

Therefore we propose that the language of Title III, Canon 1, Sections 5(b) and 5(i) be modified to allow for absentee voting with ballots made available from the parish office, with the knowledge of the Rector or Priest-in-Charge, and returned in time to be counted with those ballots gathered at the congregational meeting.

Mr. Dinsmore reported that the Committee moved the Resolution with the recommendation that the Resolution not be passed. The motion was seconded with discussion followed.

Beth Marquart-St. John's, Charleston spoke in favor of the Resolution. Her comments included that at the previous night's Hearing, the section of the original resolution providing absentee ballots to traveling business people was stricken from the resolution now on the floor. The intent of the of the resolution is to provide shut-in parishioners the privilege to be a part of the Annual Meeting.

Fr. Bill Thomas-St. Matthew's, Charleston rose to request that vote on this resolution be by Orders. The Bishop, seeing ample support of the request existed, declared the vote would be by orders.

The Rev. Julie Murdock-St. Thomas-a-Becket, Morgantown rose to speak against the passage of the resolution.

A call for the votes by Orders resulted in Resolution 1 failing in both Clergy and Lay Orders.

Resolution 2

Establishing the First Sunday of Lent as Episcopal Relief & Development Sunday (as substituted)

Submitted by The Very Rev. William Thomas, St. Matthew's, Charleston; Mr. Griffin Callahan, Jr., St. Andrew's, Mullens

Be it resolved, that the Diocese of West Virginia celebrate Episcopal Relief and Development Sunday on the First Sunday of Lent or another convenient Sunday during the Lenten season.

Be it further resolved, that the Diocese of West Virginia adopt the Lenten materials that support through prayer and study the life-saving work offered to help a hurting world through Episcopal Relief and Development.

A motion was made by Fr. Thomas , seconded by Mr. Callahan to substitute this resolution for the original Resolution 2. Motion passed.

A motion from the floor was moved and seconded in favor of passage of the substitute resolution regarding Establishing a Sunday in Lent as Episcopal Relief & Development Sunday. Motion passed.

Resolution 3

Policy regarding full-time clergy compensation

Submitted by Clergy Compensation Working Group of the Commission on Ministry, The Rev. Mark Seitz, Chair, St. Matthew's, Wheeling; Mr. Jan Callen, Trinity, Martinsburg, The Rev. G.T. Schramm, Trinity, Shepherdstown; The Rev. Julie Harris(Commission Chair), Trinity, Martinsburg

Resolved, that the Diocese of West Virginia adopt the following policy regarding Full-time compensation:

Minimum Full-time Stipend for clergy newly ordained be set at an annual rate of \$33,500, with and annual automatic increase of \$500 in recognition of up to 12 years of service.

That an annual Cost of Living raise be considered, based on the suggested rate from the US Bureau of Labor Statistics

Additional merit raises are encouraged, but optional, at the discretion of the Vestry and as the congregational budget can afford.

That a housing allowance be set commensurate with the local average rental plus utilities but be no less than \$15,000.

Fifty percent (50%) of the amount of SECA be paid by the congregation, with is .0765 of the stipend and housing combined.

That the congregation covers the cost of health insurance through the Church Medical Trust. This may be negotiated if the clergy person is covered under a spouse's policy or under a retirement policy from retirement in another profession. It is expected, if medical coverage is not needed, that an agreed upon amount will be offered in an 403b account for the clergy person.

That the canonically required pension of all compensation above \$200/month be covered by the congregation.

That a minimum of \$1000 for Continuing Education be set aside each year; that the Letter of Agreement stipulate how much can carryover from one year to the next, and for how many consecutive years, this being agreed upon between Clergy person and Vestry.

That the cost of Fresh Start (which is mandatory for the first two years of a new call) be covered by the congregation.

Cost of cell phone, amount of mileage reimbursement, and other related church business costs are to be negotiated as a part of the Letter of Agreement (see Diocesan boilerplate)

And be it Resolved that all congregation in the Diocese of West Virginia need to be in full compliance with the policy by January1, 2013

A second to the motion to adopt Resolution 3 was received from the floor and the motion passed.

Resolution 4

Policy regarding part-time compensation

Submitted by Clergy Compensation Working Group of the Commission on Ministry, The Rev. Mark Seitz, Chair, St. Matthew's, Wheeling; Mr. Jan Callen, Trinity, Martinsburg, The Rev. G.T. Schramm, Trinity, Shepherdstown; The Rev. Julie Harris(Commission Chair), Trinity, Martinsburg

Resolved, that the Diocese of West Virginia adopt the following policy regarding part-time clergy compensation:

The amount of compensation will be defined by the full-time clergy compensation prorated by the percent of a full-time position for which the clergy has been engaged.

The cost of the compensation will not exceed more than 40% and be not less than 10% of the projected income of the congregation.

The compensation as determined above will be prioritized to provide as needed by the clergy:

Medical insurance or reimbursement

Retirement benefit either through the Church Pension Fund (if applicable) or through individual means {i.e. IRA, 401K, or 403b contributions}

Continuing Education Funds

Stipend, SECA and/or Housing Allowance

And be it resolved that all congregations in the Diocese of West Virginia are to be in full compliance with the policy by January1, 2014 unless an exception has been granted by the Bishop.

Explanation: This resolution is the first to be offered to set guidelines for compensation for clergy serving in part-time positions in this diocese. This effort is complicated by the significant diversity of circumstances of the congregations and clergy involved. The resolution proposes to meet this complicated reality by providing significant flexibility and yet establishing a standard to be met.

The resolution calls for a dollar amount of total compensation to be determined as a percent of a full-time position to which the clergy has been called. In addition the compensation is to be limited to no more than 40% and less than 10% of the congregation's income. This dollar amount of compensation would then be used to meet the needs of the clergy person with priority given first to medical, second to retirement, third to continuing education and lastly to stipend and/or housing.

As an example if total cost of a full-time clergy position was \$80,000 and a clergy person was serving in a half-time position then the resolution would call for the total compensation to be \$40,000 as long as the amount was not more than 40% nor less than 10% of the congregation's anticipated income. The congregation would then work with the clergy person to provide it needed: first, either medical insurance or medical expense reimbursement, second retirement benefit either through the Church Pension fund or another method of

retirement savings, third continuing education funding and lastly some stipend and/or housing allowance as allowed for seminary trained clergy.

The resolution does not go into effect until January, 2014 in order to give the congregations and clergy involved time to work through the changes it might require with the added provision that individual situations may be appealed to the Bishop for exception to this policy.

A second to the motion to adopt Resolution 4 was received from the floor and the motion passed.

Resolution 5

Parish Health Ministry

Submitted by the Diocesan Health Ministry Commission

Be It Resolved, that the Diocesan Convention urges the congregations of the Episcopal Diocese of West Virginia, which have not already done so, to explore and implement health ministry as an organizing concept or vital component of outreach and pastoral care of the congregations by 2012; and

Be if furthered Resolved, that the Diocesan Convention encourages congregations to raise awareness of health ministries and promote the understanding that health includes body, mind and spirit.

Explanation: Health ministry plays a unique and critical role in facilitation of the overall health of clergy, staff and congregation. Health ministry looks different from congregation to congregation, reflecting the unique needs, interests and resources of the faith community.

The Diocese of West Virginia Health Ministry Commission supports those seeking to implement and those already engaged in health ministry and parish nursing and provides resources to local congregations.

The 76th General Convention passed legislation AO77 that urges congregations of the Episcopal Church to explore and implement health ministry and raise awareness of health ministries as part of outreach and pastoral care of the congregation. To ratify that, we offer this resolution.

A second to the motion to adopt Resolution 5 was received from the floor and the motion passed.

Resolution 6

Urge Legislature to regulate and oversee the practice of "fracking" as it relates to the Marcellus Shale Drilling (as admended)

Submitted by the New Southern Deanery, The Very Rev. Michael Snider, Dean; Melanie L. Dragan, Lay President

Resolved, That 'the members of' the Diocese of West Virginia strongly urge members of the West Virginia Senate and House of Delegates to pass legislation which will regulate the practice of "fracking" also known as horizontal drilling, as it relates to Marcellus Shale Drilling in West Virginia for the protection of those currently working and living in this Great State as well as for our future generations.

Be it further resolved, that 'the members of' the Diocese of West Virginia urge members of the West Virginia Legislature to enact sound regulatory policies that will protect the environment: air, soil, water, and wildlife of our Great State for the enjoyment of its citizens and future generations.

Explanation: We believe that the environmental lessons of the past should be taken into consideration by our legislative body in order to safely regulate horizontal drilling or “fracking” by the Marcellus Shale Industry for the betterment of our State and its citizens. We understand the economic importance of Marcellus Shale Drilling for our state and we are not meaning to regulate the natural gas industry out of business, but the importance of sound regulatory policies are needed to protect and preserve our environment: the air, soil, water, wildlife, its current citizens and those of the future generations.

Snider moved and Dragan seconded the amendment to the resolution. Motion passed.

A motion and second from the floor was received to approve Resolution 6 as amended. Motion passed.