



# *Trinity Episcopal Church*

Nichols, Connecticut

## *Constitution And By-Laws January 17, 2016*

CANONS OF THE DIOCESE OF CONNECTICUT  
And  
BY-LAWS OF TRINITY EPISCOPAL CHURCH (NICHOLS), TRUMBULL

PREAMBLE: The parish of Trinity Episcopal Church (Nichols) in Trumbull, Connecticut, as a constituent part of the body known as the Diocese of Connecticut of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America, accedes to, recognizes, and adopts the Constitution and Canons of that body, and acknowledges its authority accordingly; therefore, the By-Laws of the Parish are intended to be subordinate and supplemental thereto.

I. MEMBERS

Canon I Section 4.

A) All persons who have received the Sacrament of Holy Baptism with water in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, whether in this Church or in another Christian Church, and who's Baptism has been duly recorded in this Church are members thereof. Members sixteen years of age and over are to be considered adult members. 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 the Church.

B) It is expected that all adult members of this Church, after appropriate instructions, will have made a mature public affirmation of their faith and commitment to the responsibilities of their Baptism and will have been confirmed or received by a bishop of this Church or by a bishop of a Church in communion with this Church.

C) Any adult member of the Church, registered as such in any Parish, shall become an adult member of such Parish, provided that no person may be a member of more than one Parish or Worshiping Community in the Diocese at any time. The requirements of this shall be deemed to be met by any adult member by having been registered in the Parish register of said Parish, or by having been confirmed or received by a bishop in communion with this Church in the Parish, or by having been transferred to the Parish upon presentation of the certificate required by the Canons of the General Convention in the manner prescribed by these Diocesan Canons.

Canon 1 Section 5.

Any person who has become and is a member of any Parish shall remain so until the relationship is terminated by death or by written notice of withdrawal. Members of the Parish entitled to vote at any Parish meeting are those adult communicants who, for at least six months prior to that meeting have been faithful attendants at the services of the Church in the Parish, unless for good cause prevented, faithful contributors to its support, and faithful in working, praying, and giving for the spread of the Kingdom of God; these facts to be determined in each case by the Vestry in accordance with the provisions of these Canons.

Canon 1 Section 8.

The property and all business affairs of the Parish shall be subject to the direction, management, and control of the Vestry; except that the disposition of the real estate of the Parish and the borrowing or lending of money shall not be within the control of the Vestry, unless granted by special vote of the Parish subject to Canon IV, Section 3.

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## II. PARISH MEETINGS

Canon 1 Section 9.

A) Each Parish shall hold an annual meeting of the Adult Communicants in good standing entitled to vote on a date set by the Vestry to elect Wardens, members of the Vestry, Clerk, Treasurer, and lay delegates to Annual Convention, and to transact such other business as may legally come before such meeting. Special Parish meetings shall be called by vote of the Vestry, or upon written request of 10% of the voting members of the Parish. All Parish meetings may be conducted in person or by any means of audio or visual systems by which all participants may simultaneously communicate with each other during the meeting. An individual participating in a Parish meeting by means of audio or visual systems that permit simultaneous communication with the other participants shall be deemed to be present at the meeting.

B) The notice of all Parish meetings shall be signed by the Clerk, or in the absence of the Clerk, by one of the Wardens, and shall be communicated by the Clerk to every member of the Parish, at least one week before the time of the meeting. The notice of all Parish meetings, except the annual meeting, shall contain a statement of the objects for which the meeting is called, and at all meetings the Rector or Priest in Charge of the Parish, if present, shall preside. All Vestry meetings may be conducted in person or by any means of audio or visual systems by which all participants may simultaneously communicate with each other during the meeting. An individual participating in a Vestry meeting by means of audio or visual systems that permit simultaneous communication with the other participants shall be deemed to be present at the meeting.

BY-LAW 1. An Annual Meeting of Trinity Parish shall be held on the Third Sunday of January, for the purpose of electing Wardens, members of the Vestry, Clerk, Treasurer, Associate Treasurer (if required), and Parish Representatives, and for transacting such other business as may legally come before such meeting.

BY-LAW 2. The usual order of business at any Parish meeting insofar as appropriate shall be:

- Invocation
- Presentation and adoption of roll of voting members.
- Minutes of last Parish Meeting.
- Report of the Rector.
- Report of the Treasurer.
- Other reports.
- Election of Wardens, Members of the Vestry, Clerk, Treasurer, and Associate Treasurer
- Election of delegates and alternates (also called Parish representatives) to Diocesan Convention and other Diocesan organizations as may be required.
- Election of Nominating Committee.
- Old Business (if any).
- New Business proper to come before the meeting.
- Benediction

BY-LAW 3. Fifteen percent (15%) of the legal voting members shall constitute a quorum at any Parish meeting.

BY-LAW 4. Except as may be otherwise provided herein or by Canon, all questions shall be decided by a majority of eligible voting members present at a Parish meeting. No person may vote by proxy.

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BY-LAW 5. When meeting in person, voting on questions shall be by voice vote or a show of hands, at the discretion of the chair, provided that upon demand of three (3) members, voting shall be by written ballot. In the event of a contest in the election to a Parish office, voting shall be by written ballot. Election shall be by simple majority of the votes cast, provided that if there be but one candidate or slate of candidates presented, the Clerk may be directed by unanimous vote to cast one ballot for such candidate or slate. When meeting by means of audio or visual systems, the Clerk shall provide a method by which those present may cast their ballots without revealing their votes.

BY-LAW 6. At the Annual Parish Meeting a Nominating Committee composed of the Rector, the retiring members of the Vestry and two voting members of the Parish elected by the previous Annual Meeting shall present a slate of candidates to fill the vacant offices of the Parish for the ensuing year. Officers and members of the Vestry continuing in office shall not be eligible to serve on the Nominating Committee.

BY-LAW 7. Nominations from the floor shall be accepted at a Parish election after the report of the Nominating Committee has been made to the meeting, provided previous consent has been obtained from persons so nominated.

BY-LAW 8. Any question of parliamentary procedures not herein covered shall be governed by Robert's Rules of Order, Revised Edition.

### III. OFFICERS AND VESTRY

Canon 1 Section 6.

A) The officers of a Parish shall be a Rector or Priest in Charge, a Vestry composed of two Wardens and such number of other members of the Vestry as the Parish shall determine, a Clerk, and a Treasurer, who may be members of the Vestry; and the Rector or Priest in Charge, shall preside at all meetings of the Vestry. Only Adult Members of the Parish may serve as Warden or as a member of the Vestry.

B) The members of the Vestry, the Clerk and the Treasurer must be communicants in good standing and shall be elected at the annual Parish meeting from the members of the Parish who are eligible to vote in accordance with these Canons. The Wardens must be communicants in good standing and shall be elected at the annual Parish meeting from members of the Parish so eligible to vote; Vestry terms shall be for three years or as defined by Parish bylaws. Any vacancy in the office of the Warden or on the Vestry during the course of the year may be filled at a special Parish meeting or the Vestry may appoint an individual to fulfill the unexpired term until the next annual meeting.

C) The term of any Warden, member of the Vestry or Parish officer except the Rector or Priest in Charge may be terminated at any time by vote of the annual Parish meeting or of any special Parish meeting called for the purpose, provided that notice of such proposed action is included in the call of such meeting and notice is given simultaneously to the person affected thereby, and that such person be given due opportunity to be heard at such a meeting. A vacancy occurring as a result of such action may be filled by election at the same or subsequent Parish meeting.

Canon 1 Section 7.

A) The Parish Clerk shall be Clerk of the Vestry ex officio; shall be sworn to the faithful discharge of the Clerk's duties; shall make and preserve a full record of the proceedings of all Parish meetings and of the meetings of the Vestry; shall, under the supervision of the Vestry, keep an accurate roll of the members of

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the Parish and of those entitled to vote, and have such roll present at every Parish meeting; and shall be custodian of the files, records and archives of the Parish.

B) The Vestry of each Parish shall from time to time, and always within one month preceding the annual Parish meeting, revise the roll of members of the Parish and of those entitled to vote at Parish meetings, in accordance with the provisions of these Canons, and such roll shall be presented by the Vestry to the annual Parish meeting, and when adopted by said meeting shall be the roll of that meeting.

BY-LAW 9. The officers of Trinity Parish shall be the Rector or Priest in Charge, a Vestry composed of two Wardens, a Clerk, and a Treasurer and such number of other members of the Vestry as the Parish shall determine at each Annual Meeting. The Clerk and the Treasurer may be members of the Vestry and shall have voice and vote with the Vestry. No one shall be elected to the offices of Warden, Clerk, Treasurer, or Vestry member who is not a Communicant of the Church and a voting member of the Parish.

BY-LAW 10. The Wardens shall not be limited in the total number of terms they may serve, but they may not serve more than five consecutive terms, except that one additional term may be permitted a Warden if one Warden retires or resigns in the year in which the other Warden is completing a fifth consecutive term.

BY-LAW 11. Members of the Vestry, except to fill vacancies, shall be elected for a term of three years. No member of the Vestry shall be re-elected at the end of two full three-year terms of office, but only after an interval of at least one year. No two members of the same household may serve simultaneously on the Vestry.

#### IV. REGIONS, MISSIONARIES, AND MINISTRY NETWORKS

##### Canon X

Section 1. Six Regions shall be recognized within the Diocese, as delineated by the Mission Council. Regions are intended to build capacity, promote cohesion among the members of the Diocese, and catalyze adaptive change in the Diocese.

Section 2. Each Region will raise up a Missionary, clergy or lay, to be confirmed by the Mission Council, who will be accountable to the Region and the Mission Council, and under the supervision of the Bishops or their designee.

Section 3. The Mission Council shall cultivate and empower Ministry Networks consisting of members of the Diocese interested in collaborating around a shared passion. Ministry Networks are intended to build capacity, promote cohesion among the members of the Diocese, and catalyze adaptive change in the Diocese.

Section 4. The Budget of Convention shall provide resources to each Region and to Ministry Networks to support their participation in God's Mission.

Section 5. Each Region and Ministry Network will determine its own organizational structure and leadership to engage its members in collaborative ways to participate in God's mission and to allocate resources for its programs.

Section 6. The Regions and Ministry Networks shall provide information about their work to the Mission Council as requested by the Mission Council.

BY-LAW 12. Trinity Parish shall elect 2 Parish Delegates and 2 substitute delegates to the Diocesan Convention in accordance with Article II Section C of the Constitution of the Diocese. Any of these four Delegates who are not serving on the Vestry shall become, upon their election, ex-officio members of the Vestry with voice but without vote. Additionally, Trinity Parish shall elect such delegates and alternates to other Diocesan organizations as may be required. Delegates and/or alternates may serve concurrently as both Diocesan Convention and as additional Diocesan organization representatives. Members of the same household may serve as delegates simultaneously.

BY-LAW 13. It shall be the duty of the officers and members of the Vestry to familiarize themselves with the Constitution and Canons of the Diocese of Connecticut. It shall be the duty of the Clerk to study the Journal of Convention of the Diocese of Connecticut in each year, to report to the Vestry any amendments to the Constitution or Canons of the Diocese of Connecticut and to cause the above quoted portions of the Canons to be kept up to date.

BY-LAW 14. In accordance with annual guidance issued by the Diocese of Connecticut, the Vestry of Trinity Church shall have exclusive authority for determining the salary and/or compensation of the Rector by its adoption of regularly proposed annual budgets or through such special action as it may from time to time deem necessary.

#### V. VESTRY MEETINGS

BY-LAW 15. The officers of the Parish (Rector, Wardens, Clerk, and Treasurer) shall meet on the first Tuesday of every month at seven o'clock. The primary purpose of this meeting shall be to set the agenda for the monthly Vestry meeting.

BY-LAW 16. The Vestry shall meet on the third Tuesday of every month at seven o'clock in the evening; unless the time or date for a subsequent meeting is changed, or a meeting eliminated, by a majority vote of the Vestry. Any member of the Parish may attend any meeting of the Vestry and, when recognized by the Chair, may address the meeting.

BY-LAW 17. Special meetings of the Vestry may be called by the Rector, a Warden, or any three members of the Vestry. Announcement of any special meeting that is called shall be given in verbal, electronic, or written notice delivered at the residence of every member of the Vestry.

BY-LAW 18. A majority of the total Vestry membership in good standing at any given time shall constitute a quorum, provided either one Warden or the Rector be present. A determination that an individual member of the Vestry is not in good standing may be made only by the affirmative vote of a majority of all of the members of the Vestry as then constituted, excluding the member in question.

BY-LAW 19. At each regular meeting of the Vestry, the Treasurer shall render a written report showing the financial condition of the Parish.

BY-LAW 20. All matters considered at Vestry meetings shall be decided by majority vote of members of the Vestry present provided that the number of members present at a meeting constitute a quorum. Each officer and each member of the Vestry shall have one vote. No person may vote by proxy.

VI. AMENDMENTS

BY-LAW 21. Any by-law may be amended by a two-thirds majority of the voting members present at an annual or special meeting of the Parish, provided that the full text of such proposed amendment shall have been included in a notice of the meeting mailed, in writing or electronically, to every member of the Parish.

BY-LAW 22. These amended By-Laws shall become effective upon adoption by two-thirds of the voting members present at a Parish meeting, provided that the full text hereto shall be included in a notice of such meeting duly mailed, in writing or electronically, to every member of the Parish.

