

*Following is a recommended template of Bylaws, prepared to assist parishes in drafting their own Bylaws. This template has been reviewed and approved by the Chancellor of the Gulf Atlantic Diocese and the Standing Committee. Parishes may add or delete from this template as they see best fits their particular needs, but items and passages that are in **BOLD** are required by either Provincial and/or diocesan Canons.*

Approved at ____Date____ Special Parish Meeting

BYLAWS OF _____ ANGLICAN CHURCH
____City____, ____State____

Preamble

These Bylaws are adopted to provide for the orderly administration of the affairs of the Clergy, Wardens, and Vestry of _____ Anglican Church, ____City____, ____State____ (the Parish), and are to be applied consistent with and subject to the Articles of Incorporation of the Parish. **This parish agrees to abide by the Constitution and Canons of the Anglican Church in North America and the Gulf Atlantic Diocese with which it has affiliated, and in cases of conflict between these bylaws and those of Province or Diocese, canons of the Province and Diocese shall prevail.**

Article 1

Purposes & Restrictions

This nonprofit ecclesiastical corporation is organized for religious purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and the corresponding provisions of any subsequent Federal tax laws.

Article 2

Persons Qualified to Vote

A qualified elector of _____ Anglican Church shall be:

- 1) Eighteen years of age or older;
- 2) A baptized member of the Parish who has signed the Membership Covenant (see the Appendix);
- 3) Free from ecclesiastical censure;
- 4) Attends worship weekly (unless reasonably prevented);
- 5) A member who has contributed his or her time, talents and treasure to the expenses or needs of the Parish for at least one year prior to the date of the vote or election; and
- 7) Shall be committed to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, to the Holy Scripture as the foundation and authority for our life together and containing all things necessary to salvation, and to orthodox teaching defined by Scripture and confessed in the historic Creeds.

These qualifications shall be distributed as part of the notification of Annual Parish Meetings.

Article 3

Meetings

Section 1. Annual Parish Meeting.

There shall be an Annual Parish Meeting of the congregation in the month of _____ at a time, date and location specified by the Rector (or, in the absence of the Rector, the Vicar). The Annual Parish Meeting shall precede the _____ meeting of the Vestry.

Section 2. Special Parish Meetings.

Special Parish Meetings may be called by the Rector (or, in the absence of the Rector, the Vicar) or by majority vote of the Vestry.

Section 3. Notice of Meetings.

Notice of the Annual Parish Meeting and Special Parish Meetings shall be given to members of the Parish by the Rector/Vicar or the Vestry in any reasonable manner at least two weeks prior to such meetings. Notice of a Special Parish Meeting shall include a statement of the purpose of the special meeting.

Section 4. Presiding Officer.

The Rector shall preside at all Parish Meetings and in the absence of the Rector, the Vicar, the Senior Warden and Junior Warden in succession shall preside. The presider may appoint a warden or other vestry member to chair the meeting if desired.

Section 5. Quorum.

A majority of the members of the Parish qualified to vote shall constitute a quorum for the purpose of transacting business at any parish meeting.

Article 4

The Vestry

Section 1. Membership.

The Vestry shall consist of the Rector, the Vicar (when there is one) and _(between 5 & 12)_ confirmed members of the Parish who meet the qualifications of Article 2 and who shall be elected by the members of the Parish, ___ of whom shall be elected each year, and serve in accordance with the Articles of Incorporation of the Parish and these Bylaws.

Section 2. Qualifications for Lay Members of the Vestry.

In addition to the qualifications contained in Article 2, lay members of the Vestry:

- a. Shall be committed to orthodox doctrine (as defined by the Scriptures and expressed in the Apostles and Nicene Creeds and the 39 Articles of Religion), godly discipline (for the purpose of living holy lives as described in the Scriptures and modeled by the saints of the Church), holy worship (after the ancient liturgical pattern expressed in the various Books of Common Prayer - especially embodied in the 1662 version) and Anglican order (defined by the Chicago Lambeth Quadrilateral and Jerusalem Declaration of 2008).
- b. Shall be a confirmed member of _____ Anglican Church and a qualified elector of the Parish for at least one year.

- c. Shall accept the principle of tithing in giving and be willing to commend this principle to the congregation by both word and example
- d. Shall accept active leadership, including responsibility for decision making that represents the entire Parish, and invest the time necessary in the ministry of leadership, including attendance at worship, Vestry meetings, committees, special events, and other activities, as required.
- e. Shall, if called upon, serve on the Parish's Committees as well as Boards of affiliated corporations of the Parish.
- f. May not be an employee or unpaid member of the staff of the Parish or any affiliated corporation during his or her term of office.
- g. Members of the same immediate family (spouses, parents, children, siblings, and in-laws) may not serve on the Vestry at the same time.

Section 3. Meetings.

A quorum shall consist of more than half of the lay members of the Vestry.

- a. Regular Meetings. The Vestry shall meet monthly, the Rector presiding, unless the Rector and Senior Warden determine there is no business to transact, whereupon the regular meeting may be cancelled.
- b. Special Meetings. The Rector, Vicar, Senior Warden, or Junior Warden may call a special meeting of the Vestry at any time or shall call a meeting upon the request of four members of the Vestry.
- c. The Rector, Vicar, and lay members of the Vestry shall be given a minimum of 24 hours notice of any meeting.

Section 4. Term of Service.

- a. Members of the Vestry shall be elected at the Annual Parish Meeting for a term of three years, after which they are ineligible for reelection for one year. Upon election, newly elected Vestry shall serve an interim period from the Annual Parish Meeting of their election through the month following the Annual meeting of the Vestry with voice but no vote. At the subsequent meeting of the Vestry, the newly elected Vestry shall be seated with both voice and vote, and the term of the outgoing Vestry members shall end.
- b. Vacancies on the Vestry. The Vestry may fill any vacancy by appointing a qualified member of the Parish to serve any such unexpired term
- c. Members of the Vestry shall continue in office until their successors are seated with voice and vote.

d. Copies of the by-laws will be distributed to the Vestry at the first meeting following the Annual Parish Meeting.

Section 5. Committees.

a. Areas of Ministry - Mission, Discipleship, Parish Life, Worship, and Administration.

b. Vestry Committees - Personnel, Properties, Stewardship, Finance.

c. The Finance Committee. This standing committee of the Vestry shall consist of the Chair, to be elected annually by the Vestry from its membership, the Wardens, the Treasurer, and two parishioners who are not members of the Vestry. The two parishioners that will serve on the Finance Committee shall be nominated by the Rector and elected by the Vestry. The functions of the Finance Committee shall be to advise and consult with the Vestry on all matters relating to the financial affairs and condition of the Parish, including, without limitation, all responsibilities assigned to the Treasurer, the investment of the Parish funds, the annual audit or review of the books and records of the Parish, the recommendation of an annual budget to be adopted by the Vestry, and the management of that budget.

Section 6. Other Committees.

On the basis of the needs of the Parish, the Rector, Vicar and Vestry shall determine the number and duties of other committees of the Vestry. The chair of the committees shall be appointed annually by the Rector and Senior Warden. Additional members may be appointed at any time by the Rector to fill vacancies or at the request of the chair to appoint additional personnel for the work of the committees.

Article 5

Officers

Section 1. Officers Designated.

The officers of the Parish shall consist of the Rector, the Vicar, Senior Warden, Junior Warden, Secretary, and Treasurer.

Section 2. The Senior Warden, a member of the Vestry, shall be appointed by the Rector or Vicar with the Vestry's confirmation. He or she shall preside at meetings of the Vestry in the absence of the Rector and Vicar, and shall assist and serve the Rector and Vicar for the good of the Parish.

Section 3. The Junior Warden, a member of the Vestry, shall be elected by a majority vote of the Vestry at the _____ meeting, or at any such time as is needed to fill a vacancy in the office. The Junior Warden shall have such duties as requested by the Vestry.

Section 4. The Secretary shall be a confirmed member and qualified elector of the Parish and shall be elected by a majority vote of the Vestry at the _____ meeting, or at any such time as is needed to fill a vacancy in the office. The Secretary shall have the duty of

ensuring that the minutes of all Vestry and Parish meetings are accurately recorded and maintained and of performing such additional duties as requested by the Vestry.

Section 5. The Treasurer shall be a confirmed member and qualified elector of the Parish and shall be elected by the Vestry at the _____ meeting, or at any such time as is needed to fill a vacancy in the office. The Treasurer shall have custody of all Parish funds and securities, shall keep, or cause to be kept, accurate accounts of the properties and financial transactions of the Parish, and shall submit to the Vestry a monthly statement of receipts, disbursements, and cash on hand and in such form as the Vestry shall direct. The Treasurer shall also prepare a statement of financial condition of the Parish for the Annual Parish Meeting, and shall prepare for an annual audit or review of all books and records concerning the financial affairs of the Parish according to the policies of the Diocesan Audit Committee, and perform such additional duties as requested by the Vestry. The bookkeeping functions and the authorized signature(s) on any church account(s) shall not be done by the same person.

Section 6. Terms of Office. The term of all lay officers shall be one year. Officers may be reappointed or reelected.

Article 6

Absence from Meetings

A lay member of the Vestry or officer who has a total of four unexcused absences from regularly scheduled meetings of the Vestry in any twelve month period of the member's or officer's term shall automatically forfeit his or her membership on the Vestry or office (if not a Vestry member).

Article 7

Nominations for Vestry

Section 1. Election Committee.

Each year there shall be established an Election Committee consisting of the outgoing Vestry members, and the seated Junior Warden (whether out-going or not). The Junior Warden shall serve as chair of the Election Committee. The Election Committee shall be established (three months prior to the Annual Meeting). Copies of these by-laws shall be distributed to the Election Committee.

Section 2. Qualifications.

To serve on the Vestry, a person must conform to the qualifications set forth in Article 4 Section 2 of these Bylaws. The Election Committee, in consultation with the Rector and Treasurer, is responsible for determining if a proposed candidate is qualified. Election Committee members are not eligible for nomination to serve on the Vestry.

Section 3. Nominations by Members of the Parish.

Nominations for Vestry may be made by any qualified elector of the Parish. Nominations must be made in writing using the nomination forms provided for this purpose, and provided to the Election Committee at least two months prior to the next Annual Parish Meeting. All

nominees must meet the qualifications set forth in Article 4 Section 2 of these Bylaws. The person nominating must have obtained the nominee's written consent to his or her name being placed in nomination.

Section 4. Nominations by the Committee.

The Election Committee shall review all nominations for Vestry and shall publish a slate of nominees to fill the positions being vacated. All nominees who meet the qualifications will be added to the slate with no restriction on the total number of nominees. The Election Committee shall publish the slate of nominees, with a brief biographical sketch of each nominee, to the members of the Parish at least three weeks prior to the Annual Parish meeting.

Article 8

Elections for Vestry

Section 1. The Election Committee.

The Election Committee or rector shall supervise elections at Parish meetings.

Section 2. Candidates for Election.

Only those nominated according to the procedures set forth in Article 7 of these Bylaws shall be candidates for election. Nominations from the floor shall not be permitted.

Section 3. Ballots or Lots. *(Choose one option and delete the other)*

(Option 1): Voting for Vestry shall be by secret written ballot, each voting member of the Parish being entitled to one vote for each vacancy.

(Option 2): Vestry shall be chosen by lot, but must be confirmed by the majority of electors present.

Section 4. Election Procedure; Election Committee.

(Option 1): The nominees receiving the greatest number of votes shall be declared elected to the available vacancies for the Vestry.

(Option 2)

Vestry members may be chosen by lot. The Chair of the Election Committee shall place all of the qualified nominees published in the Slate of Nominees into a vessel and randomly shuffle the entries. A time of prayer over the nominees is observed and a volunteer from the qualified electors present will draw names sequentially to fill each position plus two alternates.

Section 5. Tellers. *(Option 1 only)*

The Chair of the Election Committee shall be responsible to appoint tellers to count ballots at Parish elections and to certify the results of the elections to the Vestry.

Section 6. Proxies. *(Option 1 only)*

There shall be no voting by proxy.

Section 7. Absentee Voting. *(Option 1 only)*

Absentee voting shall be allowed for members who are unable to attend the Annual or a Special Parish meeting. In order to obtain an absentee ballot, the member who is requesting the ballot for themselves must request the ballot in writing to the Junior Warden, Chair of the Nominating Committee, and the ballot shall be provided to the member requesting the ballot or mailed to their address. Any absentee ballot shall be returned to the Junior Warden or Parish Office on or before the date of the Annual Meeting or Special Meeting.

Article 9

Rules of Procedure for Vestry meetings

Robert's Rules of Order or some other agreed on method shall be observed on all pertinent matters of parliamentary procedure not covered by these Bylaws or by the Articles of Incorporation of the Parish.

Article 10

Attending Vestry Meetings

Members of the congregation shall be welcome at any meeting of the Vestry (except when the Vestry shall declare itself in executive session) but without voice or vote. At the invitation of the presiding officer, or of one of the Wardens or Chair of any standing committee yielding for the purpose, others may be permitted on the floor.

Article 11

The Rector Search Committee

In the event of a vacancy of the position of Rector, the Wardens shall appoint, from among the Church's qualified electors, a Search Committee. The duties of the Search Committee shall include, but not be limited to, preparing a parish profile, interviewing candidates proposed by the bishop's office, and recommending to the Vestry one or two candidates to be considered for the position of Rector. The Vestry shall then select the Rector by a two-thirds vote.

Article 12

The Rector, Assisting Clergy, and Lay Employees

Section 1. The Rector.

- a. The call of the Rector shall be in writing in a letter of agreement between the Rector and the Vestry and must clearly express the job description and any special conditions together with the understandings as to salary and benefits, including vacation, continuing education, sabbaticals and other time off. The salary and benefits may be changed, but shall always be reduced to writing, signed by both parties, and included in the Vestry Minutes.
- b. **The Rector shall not be called or dismissed from this church without the consent of the Vestry and the concurrence of the Bishop of the Diocese. If conflicts in the pastoral relationship develop and reasonable attempts at reconciliation have been unsuccessful, and if either the Rector or a majority of the Vestry believe the pastoral relationship to be imperiled or hindered, either or both shall present the matter to the Bishop. Both the Rector and the Vestry shall participate cooperatively in the process.**

Section 2. Assisting Clergy.

All assisting clergy of this church shall serve under the direction of and at the pleasure of the Rector. No assisting clergy may be called or dismissed from this church without prior consultation with the Bishop.

Section 3. Lay Employees.

Lay employees of this church shall serve under the direction of and at the pleasure of the Rector.

Article 13

Amendment of Bylaws

Section 1. Amendments to these Bylaws may be proposed in writing to or by the Vestry and, in either event, published by the Vestry to the members of the Parish at least two weeks prior to any duly noticed and called Annual or Special Parish meeting. Any such proposed amendment may be adopted by a majority vote of the members of the Parish attending and qualified to vote at the Annual or Special Parish meeting at which the proposed amendment is noticed for consideration.

Section 2. No amendment or addition to these by-laws shall be made or adopted which is in conflict with the Constitution and Canons of the Gulf Atlantic Diocese or the Anglican Church in North America. In case of conflict with these by-laws, diocesan and provincial Constitution and Canons shall prevail.

Section 3. The parish retains the right to disassociate from the diocese or province at any time by a two thirds vote of the qualified electors at an Annual Parish Meeting or Special Parish Meeting.

Article 14

Stewardship

Section 1. All assets, of every kind and nature, held by _____ Anglican Church are, and shall be, irrevocably dedicated to and inured to the benefit of the charitable, educational, and religious purposes of the _____ Anglican Church Inc, and used according to the requirements of the Internal Revenue Code #501(c)(3). Each gift or contribution received by _____ Anglican Church shall be deemed restricted and designated by the donor to advance charitable, educational, and religious purposes of _____ Anglican Church.

Section 2. In the event of dissolution or termination of _____ Anglican Church, the parish's property shall be distributed as directed by the Vestry of _____ Anglican Church in accordance with applicable law of the State of _____.

Section 3. _____ Anglican Church shall provide support for the Office of Bishop and the Diocese. The level of support shall be determined by the Vestry and reported to the diocese by October 1st for the subsequent diocese fiscal year. All contributions to the Diocese shall be voluntary.

Article 15

Election of Lay Delegates to Diocesan Synod

Section 1. _____ Anglican Church will send the number of delegates to Synod allotted by the Diocese. Churches with average Sunday attendance under 100 will have one delegate, the Sr. Warden. Churches with worship attendance between 100 and 199 will send their Sr. Warden and one other delegate. Churches with worship attendance between 200 and 299 will send their Sr. Warden and two other delegates; and so forth up to 5 extra delegates for churches of 500 or more.

Section 2. Additional delegates (beside the Sr. Warden), when appropriate, will be elected at the Annual Parish Meeting. Delegates must meet the same qualifications as members of Vestry and will be elected in the same manner.

Officers & Vestry:

The Rev. _____, Rector

_____, Vestry

_____, Senior Warden

_____, Vestry

_____, Junior Warden

_____, Vestry

_____, Secretary & Treasurer

_____, Vestry

Appendix Membership Covenant

God has called me, chosen me, redeemed me, sanctified me, and blessed me with every spiritual blessing in the heaven lies where Christ is seated at the right hand of the Father.ⁱ I believe in the name of Jesusⁱⁱ, have accepted Him as my Savior, submitted my life to Him as Lordⁱⁱⁱ and become a child of God^{iv}.

I have repented of my sins and have been baptized in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.^v Thereby, I have been baptized by the Spirit into the one Body of Christ^{vi} and empowered for ministry and mission.^{vii} I have had my life in Christ confirmed and strengthened through the laying on of a bishop's hands (confirmation).^{viii}

I have read the Jerusalem Declaration and agree with its teaching.

In response to what the Lord has done for me, I commit myself (to the best of my ability) to the following pattern of life:

- I will seek daily to abide in Christ^{ix} through personal disciplines such as prayer, Bible reading, fasting, solitude, etc.
- I will seek to grow always in the “grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ”^x through weekly worship and faithful participation in a small group.^{xi}
- I will offer deliberately my Spirit-empowered gifts for the building up of the Body of Christ.^{xii}
- I will give generously and cheerfully to the work of the kingdom.^{xiii}
- I will choose to believe the best of my brothers and sisters in Christ, offering them the same charitable assumption I hope to receive from them.^{xiv}
- I will “proclaim the excellencies of Him who called [me] out of darkness into His marvelous light,”^{xv} knowing that the Spirit empowers me as a witness,^{xvi} and Christ declares His people to be the light of the world.^{xvii}

This commitment is the basis of my active involvement in the life, ministry and mission of _____ Anglican Church. When I fall short, I invite the loving admonition and caring correction of the members of the Body.^{xviii}

ⁱ 1 Cor. 1:2; Eph. 1:3-10

ⁱⁱ Jn. 1:12

ⁱⁱⁱ Acts 2:36

^{iv} Jn. 1:12

^v Acts 2:38; Mt. 28:19,20

^{vi} 1 Cor. 12:13

^{vii} Acts 1:8; 1 Cor. 12:4-11;

Rom. 12:6-8

^{viii} Acts 8:14-17

^{ix} Jn. 15:1-5

^x 2 Pet. 3:18

^{xi} Acts 2:42-47

^{xii} Eph. 4:11-16; Rom. 12:6-8; 1

Cor. 12:4-11

^{xiii} Acts 2:42-47; 2 Cor. 9:6-8

^{xiv} Rom. 14:19; Mt. 7:12; Eph. 4:1-3

^{xv} 1 Pet. 2:9

^{xvi} Acts 1:8

^{xvii} Mt. 5:14-16; Phil. 2:14-16

^{xviii} Col. 1:28; 1 Thess. 5:12-1

The Jerusalem Declaration

In the name of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit:

We, the participants in the Global Anglican Future Conference, have met in the land of Jesus' birth. We express our loyalty as disciples to the King of kings, the Lord Jesus. We joyfully embrace his command to proclaim the reality of his kingdom which he first announced in this land. The gospel of the kingdom is the good news of salvation, liberation and transformation for all. In light of the above, we agree to chart a way forward together that promotes and protects the biblical gospel and mission to the world, solemnly declaring the following tenets of orthodoxy which underpin our Anglican identity.

1. We rejoice in the gospel of God through which we have been saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit. Because God first loved us, we love him and as believers bring forth fruits of love, ongoing repentance, lively hope and thanksgiving to God in all things.
2. We believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God written and to contain all things necessary for salvation. The Bible is to be translated, read, preached, taught and obeyed in its plain and canonical sense, respectful of the church's historic and consensual reading.
3. We uphold the four Ecumenical Councils and the three historic Creeds as expressing the rule of faith of the one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
4. We uphold the Thirty-nine Articles as containing the true doctrine of the Church agreeing with God's Word and as authoritative for Anglicans today.
5. We gladly proclaim and submit to the unique and universal Lordship of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, humanity's only Saviour from sin, judgement and hell, who lived the life we could not live and died the death that we deserve. By his atoning death and glorious resurrection, he secured the redemption of all who come to him in repentance and faith.
6. We rejoice in our Anglican sacramental and liturgical heritage as an expression of the gospel, and we uphold the 1662 Book of Common Prayer as a true and authoritative standard of worship and prayer, to be translated and locally adapted for each culture.
7. We recognise that God has called and gifted bishops, priests and deacons in historic succession to equip all the people of God for their ministry in the world. We uphold the classic Anglican Ordinal as an authoritative standard of clerical orders.
8. We acknowledge God's creation of humankind as male and female and the unchangeable standard of Christian marriage between one man and one woman as the proper place for sexual intimacy and the basis of the family. We repent of our failures to maintain this standard and call for a renewed commitment to lifelong fidelity in marriage and abstinence for those who are not married.
9. We gladly accept the Great Commission of the risen Lord to make disciples of all nations, to seek those who do not know Christ and to baptise, teach and bring new believers to maturity.
10. We are mindful of our responsibility to be good stewards of God's creation, to uphold and advocate justice in society, and to seek relief and empowerment of the poor and needy.
11. We are committed to the unity of all those who know and love Christ and to building authentic ecumenical relationships. We recognise the orders and jurisdiction of those Anglicans who uphold orthodox faith and practice, and we encourage them to join us in this declaration.
12. We celebrate the God-given diversity among us which enriches our global fellowship, and we acknowledge freedom in secondary matters. We pledge to work together to seek the mind of Christ on issues that divide us.
13. We reject the authority of those churches and leaders who have denied the orthodox faith in word or deed. We pray for them and call on them to repent and return to the Lord.
14. We rejoice at the prospect of Jesus' coming again in glory, and while we await this final event of history, we praise him for the way he builds up his church through his Spirit by miraculously changing lives.