

CANONICAL AND PARISH RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE VESTRY

The Clergy and Vestry, who have different roles, lead the Parish.

Canonical Responsibilities of the Vestry

The Vestry serves as the “agents and legal representative of the Parish in all matters concerning its corporate property and the relations of the Parish to its Clergy”. (I.14.2)

- Stewardship of the money and property of the Parish
 - Funds and securities must be deposited in an approved bank
 - Withdrawals require 2 signatures
 - Appropriate accounting books and records of funds must be kept
 - If responsible for \$500 in funds, must be bonded
 - Accounts must be audited annually
 - All buildings and contents must be adequately insured
 - Compliance with reporting obligations to Diocese
- Calling a new Rector when there is a vacancy
- Acts for the Parish between annual Parish meeting with in canonical limits

Role and Responsibilities of the Vestry

- Shared Duties
 - Helps discern the vision toward which God is driving the community
 - Articulates and communicates the vision
 - Supports the vision
 - Holds the community accountable for realizing the vision
 - Keeps the Mission of the Church (*to restore people to unity with God and each other in Christ*) and congregation (*to grow in the knowledge and love of God as revealed in Jesus Christ*) before the Parish
 - Develops short and long range plans
 - Reflects with the Clergy to assess how they are meeting their duties.
- Individual Duties:
 - Regularly prepare for, attend, and participate in Vestry meetings
 - Learn about the mission, goals, programs, services, activities, strengths, and needs of the congregation, Diocese, and National Church
 - Maintain confidentiality on sensitive topics
 - Serve the congregation as a whole rather than any specific group
 - Encourage complainants to talk directly with the person(s) involved; avoid taking sides; inform Rector or Wardens of serious concerns
 - Avoid even the appearance of a conflict of interest
 - Study financial statements and ask questions
 - Take on leadership roles or other tasks willingly and enthusiastically
 - Help identify new leaders
 - Contribute to the congregation
 - Assist in stewardship education

Role and Responsibilities of the Rector

- Rector is the Presiding Officer of the Vestry
 - Conducts Vestry meetings
 - Is the liaison to Vestry on Diocesan and National Church issues and concerns
- Responsible for
 - Worship
 - Spiritual life of the Parish
 - Selection and supervision of assisting clergy
 - Use and control of all church buildings and property
 - Education in scripture and church doctrine
 - Stewardship education
 - Baptism and confirmation preparations
 - Participation in Diocesan Council

Role and Responsibilities of the Wardens

- Approve annual parochial reports
- Announce and inform Bishop upon visitations
- If Rector is absent or disabled and is unable to give consent to another member of the clergy to officiate at a Service, one of the Wardens gives this consent to permit Clergy to Officiate
- Notify Bishop when no worship services held for 30 days when Parish is without a Rector
- Inform Bishop of Rector's neglect of services or refusal to officiate

CANONICAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE VESTRY

- The National Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church (TEC) may be found and downloaded at our Diocesan website under Resources:
<https://www.dioms.org/governance/index.html>
- The Canons the Episcopal Diocese of Mississippi may be found at our Diocesan website under Resources: <https://www.dioms.org/governance/index.html>

National Canons Excerpt from The Vestry Resource Guide (p.11):

The canons of The Episcopal Church stipulate that the vestry shall:

- "Be agents and legal representatives of the congregation in all matters concerning its corporate properties and the relations of the congregation to its clergy" (Title I. Canon 14, Section 2).
- Ensure that standard business methods, as outlined in The Episcopal Church's Manual of Business Methods in Church Affairs, will be observed (Title I. Canon 7, Section 1).
- When a congregation is without a rector, the officers of the vestry are responsible for the continuation of worship, including the calling of a new rector (Title III. Canon 9, Section 3).
- The vestry has responsibility for nominating persons for holy orders (Title III. Canon 5, Section 2).

Excerpts from the Canons of the Episcopal Diocese of Mississippi

B - PARISHES

CANON 21

Parishes and Their Organization

SECTION 1.

It shall be lawful for any number of adult persons, no less than forty, confirmed Lay Communicants of this church in the Diocese of Mississippi, to organize themselves as a Parish. To do so, they shall proceed in the manner following:

SECTION 2.

- (a) Notice shall first be given to the Bishop, or, if there be no Bishop, to the President of the Standing Committee, of the desire thus to associate and organize; and said notice shall be in writing in duplicate, and shall be signed by the persons, respectively, who propose to organize. The notice shall contain such information in the premises as may enable the Bishop (or the Ecclesiastical Authority) to judge the propriety of the act; and shall contain the following article:

"We, whose names are hereunto affixed, deeply sensible of the truth of the Christian religion, and conscientiously attached to the Doctrine, Discipline and Worship of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America, and being earnestly desirous of establishing its authority and securing its holy influence for ourselves, our families, and our neighbors, and those to come after us, do hereby respectfully ask the permission of the Bishop (or Ecclesiastical Authority) of this Diocese to associate and organize ourselves and others as a Parish of the said Church in the Diocese of Mississippi, under the name and title of _____; and we hereby solemnly promise and declare that the said Parish shall be incorporated and forever held under the Ecclesiastical Authority of the Bishop of Mississippi, and of his/her successors in office, and in conformity with the Constitution and Canons of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America and the Constitution and Canons of the Diocese of Mississippi, the authority of

which we do hereby recognize, and bind ourselves to make them a part of the Charter and By-Laws of the Parish, and to whose Liturgy, Doctrine, Discipline, Rites and Usages we promise at all times, for ourselves and successors, corporate obedience and conformity. Furthermore, we solemnly engage and stipulate that all real estate of which the said Parish may become possessed shall be secured forever against alienation from the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America unless with the consent of the Bishop or Council of the Diocese."

- (b) If the Bishop, acting by and with the advice and consent of the Standing Committee, or, if there be no Bishop, the Standing Committee approve the proposed organization, he shall give written certification to that effect, and said approval, together with other papers, shall be transmitted to the Secretary of the Diocese.

SECTION 3.

Upon receipt of approval of the proposed organization, the Cleric, who shall have been appointed by the Bishop to hold services, shall give notice, on some occasion of public service at least two weeks previous to the time of meeting, that the persons desirous of organizing themselves as a Parish will meet at a time and place specified for the purpose of incorporating themselves, adopting a Charter and By-Laws for the Parish, and electing two Wardens and not less than three nor more than eleven Members of the Vestry, duly qualified as per Section 2 of Canon 23.

SECTION 4.

- (a) At the time of the organizational meeting, the Cleric aforesaid shall preside; he/she shall appoint a Clerk and a book shall be provided for the records and minutes, in which shall be first entered in full (1) the notice to the Bishop, with the names attached to the same; (2) the approval of the organization; (3) proof of public notice given for the organization; and (4) a record of any other papers and actions of importance to the history of the organization, which may have been previously taken. Secondly, entry shall be made in the minutes of the names of the persons who attended the organizational meeting and are qualified to vote, in accordance with Section 2 (a) of Canon 22. And thirdly, there shall be recorded the actions taken by the congregation at this meeting, including: (1) a copy of the Parish Charter and By-Laws as adopted; (2) the names of the Wardens and Members of the Vestry elected; (3) a financial statement for the year just preceding; (4) a copy of all land deeds and a description of all real property, together with the insurance coverage thereon; and (5) a copy of the budget adopted for the first year of operation as a Parish, which budget shall include the anticipated income from pledges and other sources, and the total of all present indebtedness together with the schedule for the repayment of same, all of which shall show the said congregation to be self-supporting.
- (b) The proper title of an organized Parish is the name of the Parish, or "the Rector, Wardens and members of the Vestry" of such a Parish; and they are the trustees, corporate and politic.

SECTION 5.

All of the acknowledgments and records required shall be duly made, and the whole proceedings of the organizational meeting shall be certified by its presiding officer and clerk, and a copy of all the above records shall be sent to the Bishop, together with an application for admission into union with the Council of the Diocese; all of which shall be accomplished at least one month before the meeting of the Annual Council.

CANON 22 **Parish Meetings**

SECTION 1.

- (a) A meeting of the Parish congregation shall be held annually on the 1st day of January, or as soon thereafter as practical unless the By-Laws otherwise provide. At this meeting the Rector shall

preside, or if the Cure be vacant, the Senior Warden, the Junior Warden, or the Clerk of the Vestry, in the order named. In the absence of these officers, the meeting shall elect its chairman.

- (b) Special meetings of the Parish congregation may be called either by the Rector, or by a majority vote of the Vestry; but in either case, the call shall specify the purpose or purposes for the meeting, and no other business shall be transacted.
- (c) Notice of the time and place of annual or special meetings shall be given at a public service of the congregation at least two weeks prior to the date of such meeting.

SECTION 2.

- (a) At all such elections and in Parish meetings, those qualified to vote shall be persons present who are sixteen years of age or over and who are canonically enrolled Lay Communicants in good standing of the Parish.
- (b) Not less than twenty persons qualified to vote in Parish meetings shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business of any duly or properly called Parish meeting, either annual or special. Provided, however, that any Parish by its Charter or By-Laws may adopt a rule fixing the requirements for a quorum in said Parish so long as the same is not in conflict herewith. Should there not be a quorum present at any duly or properly called Parish meeting, the same may be adjourned by the presiding officer thereof from time to time until a quorum be present.

CANON 23 The Vestry

SECTION 1.

- (a) The Vestry of every Parish shall consist of the Rector when there is one, two Wardens, and not less than three nor more than eleven Members of the Vestry; except that Parishes with more than three hundred Communicants may, if they so elect, have not more than fifteen Members of the Vestry. The Wardens and Members of the Vestry shall be confirmed Communicants, at least twenty-one years of age, canonically resident and actually residing in the Parish and entitled to suffrage at its annual meeting at which they are elected.
- (b) The Wardens and Members of the Vestry shall be elected for such terms and on such conditions as may be provided in the By-Laws of the respective Parishes, and shall hold office until their successors are elected and shall have qualified; provided, however, that the principle of rotation shall be followed in all instances and that in no case shall a Warden or Member of the Vestry serve more than six consecutive years as a Warden or Member of the Vestry.
- (c) In the event of a vacancy in the office of Warden or Member of the Vestry, caused by death, removal, resignation, or inability to serve, the Vestry may, in its discretion, elect a qualified person to fill the unexpired term of said Warden or Member of the Vestry.

SECTION 2.

- (a) The Vestry shall fix the date, time and place of regular monthly meetings.
- (b) Special meetings may be called by order of the Rector, or, in case of the vacancy or absence of the Rector or his/her inability to act, by one of the Wardens, acting according to seniority, at any time deemed expedient; provided that all members of the Vestry be notified; or when requested in writing by a majority of the Vestry; which writing shall be sent to the Rector, Wardens and other Members of the Vestry, and shall declare the object or objects of such meeting.
- (c) A meeting of the Vestry to be valid shall have present either the Rector, or in case of his/her absence or inability to act, one of the Wardens. Still, in case of the vacancy or absence of the Rector and both Wardens, a meeting shall be valid when a quorum of the Vestry is present; and, a

presiding officer being chosen from the number present, business may be transacted; provided the meeting has been called according to the above Section 2 (b).

SECTION 3.

The Vestry shall elect and call the Rector in accordance with the provisions of the Canons of the General Church. (See also Canon 35 Section 2) The Vestry shall see that all things needed for the public services are provided; shall collect and disburse all money due and received for Church purposes, and shall have the same audited annually; shall pay with punctuality the stipulated salaries of the Clergy and others; shall inform themselves of the order and time of all collections required by the Canons of the Diocese, and of assessments which may be imposed by the Council, and take measures for the obedient fulfillment and due liquidation of these (see Canon 33 - "Penalties"); shall provide adequate insurance coverage; and before the close of each parochial or ecclesiastical year, if the treasury be deficient, the Vestry shall collect, as far as practicable, by subscription or otherwise, a sum sufficient to liquidate all the current expenses of the Parish.

SECTION 4.

Before the annual Parish meeting, the vestry shall cause to be written and delivered to the Rector, or if there be none, to the Wardens, a full, accurate and faithful statement of the number of meetings held by the Vestry during the year, and the number of such meetings attended by each Warden and Member of the Vestry. At the annual Parish meeting, said statement shall be presented and read to the parishioners there assembled and the statement duly filed and recorded in the Minutes and Records of the Parish. The statement shall also declare what money, lands or other property had been received during the preceding year, and from what source; what money has been expended, and for what objects; and what property has been purchased, exchanged, or mortgaged, and for what purposes.

SECTION 5.

It is the duty of the Wardens and Members of the Vestry to preserve order and decorum in and around the church building on all occasions whatever, and especially during the time of Divine Worship, and to admonish persons guilty of any unseemly levity or rudeness.

SECTION 6.

When at any time the Parish is without a Rector, the Parish shall become the spiritual care of the Ecclesiastical Authority.

CANON 24 **Wardens**

SECTION 1.

The Wardens shall be distinguished as Senior and Junior, although all duties belong to both. They shall see that the Parish duly provides the church with a standard lectern Bible, containing the Apocrypha, and copies of the Book of Common Prayer and the Church Hymnal, of proper size of the standard editions, for use in the sanctuary, chancel and nave; that the Parish provides proper linens for the altar, and the elements of bread and wine meet for the celebration of the Holy Communion; proper and suitable vestments for the Clergy, servers and choir. It shall be their duty to see that the alms and other offerings of the people are gathered in decent basins provided for that purpose. Further, the Wardens shall be responsible for all other things necessary for the regular and well-ordered worship of Almighty God, and shall cooperate with the Rector in all efforts to develop and set forward the spiritual life of the Parish.

SECTION 2.

The Wardens shall have a care that the church building be kept in good repair and clean, as becometh the House of God, and that any other Parish buildings and the premises around them be maintained in proper order.

CANON 25
Parish Clerk and Treasurer

SECTION 1.

A Parish Clerk and a Treasurer, who may or not be members of the Vestry, shall be annually elected by the Vestry, and who shall serve until their successors in office are chosen.

SECTION 2.

It shall be the duty of the Clerk to attend all meetings of the Vestry; to keep the minutes of its proceedings, and to enter and attest the same in a suitable book; to preserve their journals and records; to attest the public acts of the Vestry; and perform such other duties as may be legally assigned him/her. It shall be his/her further duty to enter in the records of the Vestry the annual account of the temporal condition of the Parish, including the annual report of the Treasurer. He/She shall deliver into the hands of his/her successor all books and papers relative to the affairs of the Church which may be in his/her possession.

SECTION 3.

It shall be the duty of the Treasurer to receive all moneys collected under the authority of the Vestry, the reception and disbursement of which is not otherwise provided for; and in case there is no collector appointed by the Vestry, he/she shall also collect the same.

SECTION 4.

The Treasurer is authorized to expend moneys for the purposes and to the extent adopted in the Parish budget, but shall not disburse other funds except on Order by the Vestry. The Treasurer shall keep and maintain a full and accurate account of all funds received and disbursed by him/her, in accordance with the provisions of Canon 29, and shall present to the Vestry monthly reports of the same, and an annual report before the 10th day of January.

SECTION 5.

The Treasurer, if he/she be not a member of the Vestry, shall attend its meetings when requested and be guided by its advice in all matters pertaining to the duties of his/her office, and shall be ready to answer all questions as to the state of the treasury; and his/her books and papers shall always be subject to the inspection of the Rector or Wardens of the Vestry in session.

CANON 26
Parish Register

SECTION 1.

- (a) In every Parish and organized Mission the Warden(s) shall provide, as required by the Canons of the General Church, a Parish or Mission Register.
- (b) The Rector, or Vicar, or if the cure be vacant, one of the Wardens, shall record the required data.

SECTION 2.

Whenever a Cleric shall perform any Official Act in a Parish or Mission not under his/her charge, the records required by this Canon shall be made in the Register of that Parish or Mission.

SECTION 3.

The Rector, or Vicar, shall maintain so far as practicable a list of all families and adult persons in his/her cure, which list shall remain in the Parish, or Mission, for the use of his/her successor.

SECTION 4.

It shall be the duty of every Cleric performing an Official Act in any place where there is no Parish or Mission to report the same promptly, giving all necessary details of information, to the Office of the Bishop.

SECTION 5.

In accordance with the provisions of the Canons of General Convention, a Letter of Transfer shall be issued for any Communicant or baptized person in good standing requesting the same upon his/her removal from one Cure to another.

SECTION 6.

It shall be the duty of every Cleric in charge of a Parish, Mission, Mission Station, Chapel or Congregation to keep a Register of Church Services for that congregation.

SECTION 7.

(a) Every person charged with the responsibility of making entries in Parish or Mission Registers and their Registers of Church Services shall do so with all possible accuracy.

(b) The Registers, of both kinds, shall be open at any time to the inspection of the Bishop, and he/she may call for any information which they contain. And it shall be the duty of the Bishop to see that the Registers, throughout the Diocese, are regularly, carefully and accurately kept and preserved.

CANON 27

Parochial Reports

On or before the first day of March each year, the Cleric in charge of every Parish, Mission and Mission Station, or in case the Cure of same is vacant, one of the Wardens, shall make an accurate Parochial Report to the Ecclesiastical Authority, as required by the Canons of the Diocese, upon the form adopted by the General Convention and furnished by the Secretary of the Diocese.

C - PARISH AND MISSION FINANCES AND PROPERTY

CANON 28

Voluntary Proportionate Giving

SECTION 1.

Voluntary Proportionate Giving shall be the method by which the Parishes and organized Missions will fund the mission and ministry of the Diocese of Mississippi.

SECTION 2.

(a) The Mission Committee of every Mission and the Vestry of every Parish shall determine annually what proportion (percentage) of its income it will give to the work of the Church outside the Mission or Parish, with the goal of eventually giving away an amount equal to what it spends on itself. Included in the proportion shall be the pledge of financial support to the Diocese by the Mission or Parish.

(b) In October of each year, each Mission Committee and Vestry shall report to the Diocesan Office the proportion of its income it wishes to pledge to the Diocese for the following year.

SECTION 3.

After its Every Member Canvass (by whatever name), but no later than December 10th, each Mission Committee and Vestry shall report to the Diocesan Office the expected dollar amount of its pledge, based upon the stated proportion of anticipated income.

SECTION 4.

For the purpose of this Canon, income shall be defined as plate offerings, pledges to the operating budget, and any other undesignated receipts from whatever source.

SECTION 5.

Pledge payments for each month shall be made to the Diocesan Office on or before the tenth day of the following month. As determined each year by the Mission Committee or Vestry, the amount of each monthly payment shall be calculated either (1) by applying the constant percentage to the actual income received during the previous month, or (2) by dividing the estimated annual dollar amount by twelve. If the latter schedule is adopted, a semiannual evaluation shall be made to ensure that the pledge payments reflect the stated percentage of the actual income received.

CANON 29

Business Methods in Church Affairs

SECTION 1.

In every Parish, Mission, and institution connected with the Church in the Diocese of Mississippi, the following standard methods shall be observed:

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

(2) All annual reports required by the Canons of the Diocese or of the General Church shall be made to the proper authorities on or before the first day of March.

(3) Trusts and permanent funds and all securities of whatsoever kind shall be deposited with a Federal or State bank, or with the Trustees of the Diocese, or with some other agency approved in writing by the Committee on Finance of the Diocese, or as otherwise lawfully provided.

(4) 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 conditions are to be made

d) How funds are invested

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

(6) All accounts 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 Diocesan Committee on Finance, no later than June 1 of each year; and a report that the audit has been done shall be submitted promptly to the Bishop.

(7) Treasurers and custodians, other than banking institutions, shall be adequately bonded; except Treasurers of funds that do not exceed \$500.00 at any one time during the fiscal year.

(8) All their buildings and their contents shall be kept insured in such amounts and against such hazards as the Rector, Wardens, and Members of the Vestry, or as the Vicar and Mission Committee, shall deem advisable.

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

(10) The Vestry of every Parish and the Mission Committee of every Mission shall appoint a committee of not less than three persons to be known as the "Compensation Review Committee;" and it shall be the duty of said committee to review annually with the Rector or Vicar the compensation to be paid the Clergy and all lay employees in the ensuing year, to the end that all Clergy and lay employees shall receive fair and equitable compensation. The word "compensation" as used in this Canon shall include not only stipend, but also allowances for housing, utilities, travel, insurance, and any other customary allowances. In cases where two or more Parishes or Missions contribute to the total compensation paid to a Rector, Vicar or lay employee, the Compensation Review Committees of all the Parishes and Missions involved shall jointly review, by meeting, correspondence or telephone conversation, the total compensation of the Rector, Vicar or lay employee.

(11) At the time of filing the Parochial Report required by Canon 27, the Rector and Treasurer of every Parish and the Vicar and Treasurer of every Mission shall append to such report a certificate that the mandatory annual review of compensation has taken place.

SECTION 2.

Effective January 1, 1993, all Parishes and Missions of this Diocese shall provide pension or retirement benefits to such of their lay employees as may be designated by the Executive Committee, under such terms and conditions as may be approved by the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee may require other organizations, subject to the Ecclesiastical authority of this Diocese, to provide such benefits to their employees at such time and under such conditions as it shall determine.

CANON 30 Indebtedness

SECTION 1.

No indebtedness shall be incurred by a Parish, Mission or congregation without the approval of both the Bishop and Standing Committee, except:

- (a) Indebtedness for permanent improvements, replacements or additions to real estate or equipment, where the amount of such indebtedness, plus indebtedness of every kind already existing, shall not exceed 150 percent of the average annual receipts of such Parish, Mission or congregation during the past three years.
- (b) Indebtedness for current expenses where the amount of such indebtedness, plus all indebtedness theretofore incurred for current expense and still existing, shall not exceed 20 percent of the total current receipts of such Parish, Mission or congregation 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 receipts for the next two years.
- (c) Provided that in computing receipts under subsections (a) and (b) hereof, amounts from or for endowments, or from or by bequests, shall not be included unless the same shall be income from an endowment or bequest, which income is not specially designated. Nor shall there be considered in this calculation any receipts for expenditures other than those for normal, parochial operating expenditures.
- (d) The Bishop and the Standing Committee will be provided documentation supporting an exception under 29.1.a., b. and c. prior to entering into such indebtedness.

SECTION 2.

Provided that under any circumstances under which approval is required, it shall be granted only when the payment of all indebtedness shall be provided for in a plan of amortization or other method of payment to be submitted to an approved by the same authority.

SECTION 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 (save for the refinancing of an existing loan) without the written consent of the same authority.

CANON 31
Consecrated Church Buildings

SECTION 1.

No church or chapel shall be consecrated until the Bishop shall have sufficiently certified that the building and the ground on which it is erected have been fully paid for and are free from lien or other incumbrance; and that such building and grounds are secured from the danger of alienation, either in whole or in part, from those who profess and practice the Doctrine, Discipline and Worship of this Church, except in the cases provided for in Sections 2 and 3 of this Canon.

SECTION 2.

It shall not be lawful for any Vestry, Trustee, or other body authorized by law of any State or Territory to hold property for any Diocese, Parish or congregation, to encumber or alienate any consecrated church or chapel, or any church or chapel which has been solely used for Divine Service, belonging to the Parish or congregation which they represent, without the previous consent of the Bishop, acting with the advice and consent of the Standing Committee of the Diocese.

SECTION 3.

No church or chapel shall be removed, taken down, or otherwise disposed of, for any worldly or common cause, without the previous consent of the Bishop, acting with the advice and consent of the Standing Committee of the Diocese.

CANON 32
Vacant Church Property

The Trustees of the Diocese shall have the care of Church property not occupied or used by any Parish, Mission, or Institution connected with this Diocese; and shall keep a record of such in accordance with the authority and provisions of Canon 8, Section 1, and Appendix II.

CANON 33
Penalties

SECTION 1.

Whenever it becomes necessary for any Parish to receive financial support from the Diocese, or any other Parish or Mission, the Bishop or Bishop Coadjutor shall have the same control over said Parish as he/she now has and exercises over organized Missions, so long as this aid is extended to said Parish.

SECTION 2.

- (a) Whenever any Parish or Mission shall refuse or neglect for twelve consecutive months, without reasonable cause given, to pay in full its voluntary proportionate pledge to the Diocese, the Treasurer of the Diocese shall report such fact to the next meeting of the Executive Committee, specifying in such report the particulars of said delinquency. Written notice of his/her intention to make such report shall be given by the Treasurer of the Diocese to the Bishop and the Rector or Vicar and the Warden or Wardens of such Parish or Mission at least thirty days prior to the meeting of the Executive Committee, such notice to be accompanied by a copy of the proposed report.

- (b) Upon the presentation of such report, together with evidence that notice has been given as above provided, the Executive Committee, by a majority vote of those members present, may recommend to the next Annual Council the forfeiture of the rights of said Parish or Mission to representation in the same, and the Council, by a majority vote of the Delegates present, may accept said recommendation.
- (c) But any Parish or Mission so reported shall have the right to send one or more authorized lay representatives to appear before the Executive Committee at the time the said report is presented to present explanations in writing of the failure of the Parish or Mission to pay in full its voluntary proportionate pledge.
- (d) Any such Parish or Mission thus denied representation in the Council shall, upon payment of arrearage as vouched for by the records of the Treasurer of the Diocese, be readmitted to representation in the Council.

SECTION 3.

- (a) Any Parish or Mission presented in like manner to the Council by the Bishop and Standing Committee for violation of the General or Diocesan Constitution or Canons of the Church may, by a concurrent vote of two-thirds of each Order, be declared contumacious, and thereupon shall forfeit its right to representation in the Council.
- (b) But any such Parish or Mission may, upon application, and renewal of its vows of allegiance and obedience to the Doctrine, Discipline and Worship of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America and of the Diocese of Mississippi, and the presentation of restitution, insofar as applicable and practical, be re-admitted to representation in the Council by a concurrent vote of two-thirds of each Order.

SECTION 4.

If a Parish in union with the Council shall neglect or decline to appoint Delegates, or if those appointed neglect or are prevented from attending, or if it shall incur any suspension or forfeiture of privileges, owing to neglect of its voluntary proportionate pledge, or otherwise, it shall nevertheless be bound by all the acts of the Council, the same as if fully represented. So far as the case admits, this shall also apply to organized Missions.

CANON 34

Change of Status of Parishes and Missions

SECTION 1.

Whenever the Vestry of an existing Parish shall request either by petition signed by a majority of the members of said Vestry or by resolution adopted at a lawful meeting of said Vestry, that said Parish be remitted to the status of an organized Mission, the Bishop, acting with the advice and consent of the Standing Committee, shall present said petition and/or resolution to the next annual meeting of Council.

SECTION 2.

Whenever an existing Parish shall

- A. for the space of one full year:
 - a. cease to be self-supporting; or
 - b. fail to take the proper action to provide itself with the full regular services of a Cleric; or
 - c. fail to maintain regular religious services according to the Doctrine, Discipline and Worship of the Church; or

d. have fewer members than required for the organization of a Parish; or

B. for the space of two full years:

a. fail to elect a Vestry; or

b. fail to file a Parochial Report as required by the Canon, the Bishop shall report same to the Standing Committee of the Diocese with a request for advice thereasto.

Upon the advice of the Standing Committee so to do, the Bishop shall present said report, together with proof of notice thereof, to the next annual meeting of Council. Written notice that such report will be made to Council shall be given to the Vestry of said Parish or, if there be none, to two adult Communicants thereof, at least thirty days prior to the convening of said Council.

SECTION 3.

Upon presentation of either petition or report in accordance with the provisions of this Canon, by a majority vote of the Delegates present and voting, the Council may (a) suspend such Parish from union with the Council and from representation therein; or (b) change such Parish to the status of a Mission, Mission Station or Parochial Mission; or (c) declare such Parish inactive.

Should such Parish be declared inactive, written notice of the action of Council shall be given to the Trustees of the Diocese with a description of the real property of such Parish.

Should such Parish be changed to the status of Mission Station, the Bishop shall appoint a custodian who is to take custody of and exercise supervision and care over the property of said changed Parish.

Should such Parish be changed to the status of Parochial Mission, such change shall not be made without the prior written consent of the Vestry of the Parish or the Mission Committee of the organized Mission to which such changed Parish is to be assigned.

SECTION 4.

Any Parish heretofore admitted into union with the Council which shall have been changed to the status of a Mission, Mission Station or Parochial Mission as provided in this Canon, and which shall have regained its ability to function as a Parish, with prospect satisfactory to the Council of continuance thereof, and any Parish which has been suspended from union with the Council, may be restored to its former status by a majority vote of the Council, if such restoration be approved by the Bishop.

SECTION 5.

The provisions of Sections 1, 2 and 3 of this Canon, in so far as applicable, shall govern the change of status of a Mission, Mission Station or Parochial Mission. In all cases, if a Parish, Mission, Mission Station or Parochial Mission be declared inactive, the Communicants and Baptized Persons remaining shall be transferred to the nearest active Parish or Mission in union with this Council.

SECTION 6.

Any change in the status of a Parish or Mission which may affect its representation in the Council, shall become effective at the close of the Council at which it was made; provided, however, that upon the admission of a Parish or Mission into union with Council, the Lay Delegates of such Parish or Mission, upon presentation of their proper credentials, shall be given immediately the vote provided in Article VII and Canon 2.

CANON 35
Vacant Parishes

SECTION 1.

(a) Whenever the Cure of a Parish shall have become vacant (see Canon 23, Section 6) the Senior Warden shall, without delay, give notice thereof to the Bishop as follows:

The Right Reverend _____, Bishop of Mississippi
On behalf of the Vestry of _____ Parish, I hereby give notice to the Bishop of the Diocese
that the rectorate of the said Parish has become (or will become) vacant by the resignation of the
Reverend _____ taking effect _____, (date)
_____, Senior Warden

(b) The Bishop as Rector pro tempore shall afford the Vestry such assistance as may be in his/her power in filling the vacancy. In the meantime, he/she may appoint those of the Clergy in the Diocese, or any other qualified Cleric, who can with most convenience discharge the duty, to supply such vacancy, at such time as may be deemed convenient and proper. It shall be the duty of such a Parish thus supplied to defray all expenses incident to such occasional services; and, in all cases, the Clergy so sent shall have access to the church and other buildings.

SECTION 2.

(a) When the Vestry has elected a Rector, such election shall, without delay, be reported to the Bishop as follows:

Place _____ Date _____
The Right Reverend _____
Bishop of Mississippi

We, the Wardens, do hereby certify that the Reverend _____ has been duly elected Rector of _____ Parish.

_____, Senior Warden
_____, Junior Warden

(b) No election of a Rector shall be had until the name of the Cleric whom it is proposed to elect has been made known to the Bishop, if there be one, and sufficient time, not exceeding thirty days, has been given to him/her to communicate with the Vestry thereon, nor until such communication, if made within that period, has been considered by the Vestry at a meeting duly called and held for that purpose.