

Title: Specifying the Manner of Election of Standing Committee Officers
Proposed by: Lionel Deimel

Resolved, that Section 4 of Article IX of the constitution be replaced with the following and that the existing Sections 5, 6, and 7 be renumbered as Sections 6, 7, and 8, respectively:

Section 4. The Committee, at its first meeting of each calendar year, shall elect a President and a Secretary from among its members. Clergy and Lay members of the Committee are equally eligible to serve as officers of the Committee. Persons so elected shall serve until the next such election.

Section 5. The Secretary shall keep a record of the proceedings of the Committee, and all books and papers kept by the Secretary relative to the Church shall be subject to examination by the Bishop and by the Convention.

Explanation: Although it is not clear that the current Article IX requires that the president of the Standing Committee be a member of the clergy, examination of the archives makes it clear that this was always a requirement and was not intended to be relaxed when Article IX was revised in 1950–51. Article IX specifies neither the terms of office for the president and secretary nor any restrictions on members' ability to be elected more than once during a single four-year term.

It has become the tradition in this diocese that the most senior clerical member of the Standing Committee is always "elected" president and the most senior lay member is always "elected" secretary, but this tradition is specified neither by the constitution nor by canon. (It is, however, set forth as a tradition in the Standing Committee's procedure manual.) This practice appears to be unusual, and perhaps even unique, among Episcopal Church dioceses.

There appears to be no compelling reason to require a clergy, rather than a lay, president, and an examination of the constitution and canons of other dioceses reveals that most do not have such a restriction, although some do. The primary objective of the proposed amendment is to allow a lay member of the Standing Committee to be president. Such a change has been discussed periodically within the committee, but no effort has been made to effect such a change until now.

The amendment also makes it clear that offices are elected for one-year terms. At present, officers serve for a single year during their four-year term in office. The amended article leaves it to the discretion of the members of the Standing Committee whether a member may serve in a given office more than once. This is consistent with the operation of other diocesan bodies (e.g., Diocesan Council).

That the president of the Standing Committee be a member of the clergy is arbitrary and unnecessary. Although it might be argued that our present tradition has the advantage of eliminating a potential source of conflict, it is contrary to our democratic traditions and ignores the preferences of Standing Committee members. Not everyone elected to the Standing Committee seeks the added burden of being an officer of the body, yet our present tradition necessarily imposes that burden in a member's fourth year on the Standing

Committee. The most senior members of the Standing Committee may not be the most qualified, willing, or able candidates.

The present Canon IX reads as follows:

Article IX

Standing Committee

Section 1. The Convention shall at the Convention of 1952 elect a Standing Committee, to consist of four members of the Clergy and four Lay persons as follows:

One member of the Clergy and one Lay person shall be elected for a period of four years; one member of the Clergy and one Lay person shall be elected for a period of three years; one member of the Clergy and one Lay person shall be elected for a period of two years; one member of the Clergy and one Lay person shall be elected for a period of one year. At each Annual Convention thereafter one member of the Clergy and one Lay person shall be elected for a period of four years. No member of the Standing Committee shall be eligible to succeed himself or herself until the next Convention following the expiration of term of office.

The Standing Committee, when there is no Bishop, Bishop-Coadjutor, or Suffragan Bishop, or no one of them is capable of acting, shall be the Ecclesiastical Authority of the Diocese.

Section 2. The Clerical members of the Standing Committee must be of those entitled to Seats in the Convention of the Diocese.

Section 3. The Lay members of the Committee must be communicants in some Parish of the Diocese in union with the Convention.

Section 4. The Committee, at their first meeting, shall choose a President from among the Clerical members, and a Secretary, either Clerical or Lay. The Secretary shall keep a record of the proceedings of the Committee, and all books and papers in their hands relative to the Church shall be subject to the examination of the Bishop and of the Convention.

Section 5. The Standing Committee shall fill all vacancies that may occur during the recess of the Convention, in their own body, or in any Committee appointed to sit during the recess of the Convention, and also in such offices as are held by annual election.

Section 6. The Standing Committee shall also be the council of advice to the Bishop.

Section 7. The Standing Committee shall have such additional rights and duties and powers as may be conferred by the Canons of the General Convention or of this Diocese duly enacted.