

Canon XV

Of Parishes

Section 1. Every Congregation regularly and canonically formed in this Diocese, for receiving the administrations of the Church and for the Worship of Almighty God, according to the faith and doctrine of the Church, and under the discipline and liturgy of the Church, shall constitute a Parish.

Section 2. No Parish shall be admitted into union with Convention unless it shall have submitted its Articles of Association, or Charter and By-laws, to the Bishop and Standing Committee two months previous to the meeting of the Convention, nor until the said Articles of Association, or Charter and By-laws, shall have been approved by the Convention. Neither the Articles of Association nor the Charter and By-laws of any Parish shall be changed without the consent of the Convention or of the Standing Committee.

Section 3. No Parish, incorporated or unincorporated, shall acquire, or commit itself to acquire, by purchase, exchange, or otherwise, any real estate without the consent, which will not be unreasonably withheld, of the Board of Trustees of the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh nor shall any such Parish, incorporated or unincorporated, alienate or encumber any real estate held by it or for its use without the consent, which will not be unreasonably withheld of the Board of Trustees of the Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh. In case any Parish, Church Association, or Corporation, shall be dissolved, it shall be the duty of the Bishop and the Standing Committee, thereupon to take such action as may be necessary and proper to vest all of its property, real and personal, in the said Board of Trustees for the Diocese of Pittsburgh.

Section 4. No consecrated Church or Chapel shall be removed, taken down or otherwise disposed of for any worldly or common use without the previous consent of the Bishop, acting with the advice and consent of the Standing Committee of the Diocese.

Section 5. No alterations in the Articles of Association, Charter, or By-laws, of any Parish shall be made unless approved by a majority of votes of the members of the Parish qualified to vote for members of the Vestry and who are present at a meeting called on due notice.

Section 6. The Convention may, by a two-thirds vote, dissolve its union with any Parish. Provided, however, that, except in such cases as may fall under Canon XXV, Section 5, notice of said proposed action shall have been given in the preceding Annual Convention.

Section 7. When any Parish in union with the Convention (1) shall not have been able to support and maintain a full-time resident member of the Clergy for a period of two consecutive years or such shorter period as the Bishop and Standing Committee shall determine or (2) shall have failed for two years for any cause to meet its assessment or (3) shall be designated a Transitional Parish by the Bishop and Standing Committee pursuant to recommendation of Council in accordance with Canon XII, Section 4 (d), then in any such case its status shall become that of a Transitional Parish and its status as so changed shall remain until such Parish shall again support and maintain a full time resident member of the clergy and shall again meet its assessment at the uniform formula rate.

Section 8. It shall be the duty of the Diocesan Council to report to the Secretary of the Convention before December 31st of each year, any change that may have occurred during that year in the status of any Parish under the preceding Section.

Section 9. Where, owing to the change in the character of the neighborhood in which a Parish is located or for any other reason it shall appear to the Bishop that the boundaries of the Parish should be changed, or that the site or location of any Church or Chapel should be changed, the Bishop shall have power to suggest such changes in the boundaries of the Parish or in the site of the Church or Chapel as may seem for the best interests of the Parish and of the Diocese.

- a. In such cases the Bishop shall transmit suggestions to the Diocesan Council for advice. Upon receipt of such suggestions a copy thereof shall be sent by the Council to the Parish. In all cases where the title to the property is held by the Board of Trustees for the Diocese, a copy of such suggestion shall be sent to the said Board of Trustees.
- b. After investigation, consideration and consultation with the Rector or Priest/Deacon/Minister-in-Charge and Vestry of the Parish, the Diocesan Council shall advise the Bishop in writing, a copy of which shall be sent to the same parties who received the original suggestions.
- c. After receiving the advice of the Council, and after consultation with the Rector or Priest/Deacon/ Minister-in-Charge and Vestry of the Parish, the Bishop shall give the final decision and shall send the same to the Parish.
- d. If any Parish which is at that time receiving aid from any of the Diocesan funds shall refuse to agree or shall within six months after the receipt of the final decision fail to carry out the same, it shall cease to receive aid from the Diocese.

Section 10. The secular affairs of each Parish shall be conducted by a Vestry of not less than five persons to be elected according to the By-laws of such Parish.

Section 11. The Vestry shall consist of baptized members of the Church, and, wherever practicable, of confirmed members of the Church, and, when possible, of actual

communicants in the Parish. Vestry membership shall not be restricted with regard to sex.

Section 12. The appointment of Ministers to and their removal from the Charge of

Transitional Parishes shall be vested in the Bishop. Their stipends shall be determined by the Diocesan Council.

Section 13. Election to and service on Vestries of Transitional Parishes shall be with the consent and by the authority of the Bishop.

Section 14. The title of all property held by or for the use of any Transitional Parish shall be vested in the Board of Trustees for the Diocese of Pittsburgh.

Section 15. Transitional Parishes shall nevertheless be subject to all assessments laid by or

with the authority of the Convention.

Section 16. New congregations not yet recognized as a Parish under Canon XV, Section 1, or admitted into union with the Convention according to Canon XV, Section 2 shall be known as Mission Fellowships. For purposes of leadership and organization, the provisions of Canon XV relating to Transitional Parishes shall, as far as possible, guide oversight and structure of such Mission Fellowships.