

The Episcopal Diocese of Georgia
Policy and Procedure for the Election of a Bishop

The following Policy and Procedures, consistent with Article III.7 of the Constitution of the Episcopal Diocese of Georgia, are set by the Standing Committee. This manual shall be reviewed annually by the Standing Committee and may be revised as needed from time to time, provided that notice of such policy and procedure is given to all Lay and Clerical Delegates at least ninety (90) days in advance of the election.

When any changes are made at any time, these shall be published to the Diocese in a manner deemed appropriate by the Standing Committee and approved by the Diocesan Chancellor.

Convention Procedures

The following procedures when followed for every diocesan convention provide routine norms to provide clarity for who has seat, voice, and vote in an electing convention, which follows the same procedures. A quorum for the transaction of business for every convention shall be a majority of Clerical and Lay Delegates from a majority of the Congregations of the Diocese.

Delegate Count

One hundred twenty (120) days prior to each diocesan convention, the Secretary of Convention shall publish a list of the number of delegates permitted for each congregation. Any disputes as to the count are to be sent to the Secretary of Convention so any issues may be reviewed and resolved according to the diocesan canons.

List of Canonically Resident Clergy

One hundred twenty (120) days prior to each diocesan convention, the Secretary of Convention shall publish a list of canonically resident clergy. Any member of the clergy not listed on those rolls who feels they should have residence shall write to the Bishop Diocesan, copying the President of the Standing Committee, so any issues may be reviewed and resolved according to the diocesan canons.

Search Procedures

The following procedures concern the time from the notice of intent to resign up to the electing convention.

Notice of Intent to Resign

Other than for health concerns that are not foreseeable, the Bishop diocesan shall notify the Standing Committee and the Presiding Bishop no less than 18 months prior to an intended date of resignation so all may begin coordinating the transition together. When this occurs, or the office of the Bishop Diocesan otherwise becomes vacant, the Standing Committee will announce, within the ensuing sixty (60) days, a time for Diocesan Convention to convene for an election, whether at the annual convention or a special electing convention. If such a special meeting of Convention is called, at least ninety (90) days' notice shall be sent to all Lay and Clerical Delegates to the most recent Annual Convention as well as to each congregation of the Diocese.

Standing Committee Oversight

The Standing Committee shall act as an oversight committee and establish a process and timeline for the election and shall initiate the canonical process to obtain the required consents to hold the election. Because of this oversight role if any member of the Standing Committee, or a member's spouse, parent or child, permits his or her name to be submitted to the Search Committee for consideration as a candidate for bishop as either a nominee or a candidate by petition, the member shall recuse and absent himself or herself from any discussion, deliberation or vote on any matter coming before the Standing Committee that relates to the Search Committee or the Convention to Elect a Bishop until the member, or the member's spouse, parent or child, is no longer a possible candidate, or until the election of a bishop, whichever occurs first.

Missional Review

Once aware of an intended transition, the Standing Committee shall conduct a missional review, which shall include, but not be limited to, asking questions such as:

1. Is the diocesan infrastructure capable of permitting people to exercise their ministries in healthy and life-giving ways? Is the staffing sufficient? Does it have the capacity to use its resources, and potentially, the resources of other dioceses?
2. Are the staff (including the bishop) compensated appropriately, according to local diocesan guidelines and the recommendations of General Convention including pension contributions and healthcare and in a timely manner?
3. Is the diocese capable of fulfilling its financial obligations, including those in its own budget and its assessment to be paid to The Episcopal Church?
4. Is the diocese capable of deploying and implementing programs for the congregations (i.e., safe church training, anti-racism training, stewardship programs, vestry training, festivals and meetings)?
5. Are the diocesan properties safe, sound, and insured? Are there resources (financial or otherwise) available to assist congregations in crisis?
6. Are there enough people to fill leadership roles to implement mission and vision?
7. Is there enough spiritual health in the congregations?

This Missional Review shall be conducted in collaboration and the sharing of ideas and visions with surrounding dioceses.

Search Consultant

The Standing Committee shall work with the Episcopal Church's Office of Pastoral Development in securing a consultant for the search and transition process.

Committee Appointments

The Standing Committee shall appoint a Search Committee and a Transition Committee. Diversity shall be an important consideration in the selection of the members of the search and transition committees, considering factors such as gender, race/ethnicity, age, region, and experience in the diocese (both duration and kind).

The Standing Committee will appoint a Search Committee consisting of one clerical and one lay representative elected from each Convocation and one person elected by the Standing

Committee from among its members. The Transition Committee will likewise consist of one clerical and one lay representative elected from each Convocation and one person elected by the Standing Committee from among its members. The Standing Committee will appoint a Chair or Co-Chairs from among the members of the Search Committee and the Transition Committee.

The Search Committee

The Search Committee shall read and discuss the 2018 Report of the Task Force on the Episcopacy as a helpful guide for their work:

<https://extranet.generalconvention.org/staff/files/download/21212>

In keeping with this report, the Search Committee shall guard against biases by screening candidates' written materials with information about location, race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, and family status redacted.

The Search Committee, in consultation with the Standing Committee and the Diocesan Council, will produce a profile of the Diocese. The Search Committee will seek out and receive names of persons for consideration of election. The Committee for Nominations will report to the Standing Committee the names of not fewer than three (3) persons who (i) have consented to stand as proposed nominees for election, (ii) have passed the background screening described below and (iii) meet the criteria developed in the profile.

A member of the Committee must resign immediately in the following situations:

1. upon permitting his or her name to be submitted for consideration as a candidate for Bishop in this Diocese, whether by nomination or petition; and
2. upon the member's spouse, parent or child permitting his or her name to be submitted for consideration as a candidate for Bishop in this Diocese, whether by nomination or petition.

Background, Medical, and Psychological Screening

Prior to any person's name being placed on the ballot in nomination for election as a Bishop, whether by the nominating body or by petition, the diocese shall have:

1. conducted a thorough background check of each nominee according to criteria established by the Standing Committee. Such background check to include but not be limited to criminal records, credit checks, reference checks, sex offender registry checks, verification of education, employment and ordination and review of all complaints, charges and allegations while an ordained person;
2. each nominee evaluated by a licensed medical doctor approved by the Standing Committee; each nominee evaluated by a licensed psychologist approved by the Standing Committee, with psychiatric referral if desired or necessary; and
3. each nominee evaluated for substance, chemical, and alcohol use and abuse whether as part of the medical examination, psychological examination, or otherwise by professionals approved by the Standing Committee.

Approval of the Slate of Nominees

The Standing Committee shall receive the slate of nominees from the Search Committee. The Standing Committee will send data about each proposed nominee to all Clergy Members and

Lay Delegates to Convention entitled to vote in the election and their Alternates at least forty-five (45) days prior to the convening of the session for an election.

Not later than thirty (30) days prior to the convening of the session for an election other persons may become proposed nominees upon nomination of five (5) Canonically Resident Clergy and ten (10) Lay Delegates to the electing convention representing in total at least three (3) Parishes of the Diocese. The names of those so nominated shall be sent to the Search Committee, which will report to the Standing Committee the names of those persons who:

1. have consented to stand for nomination, and
2. have passed the background, medical, and psychological screening.

The Transition Committee

This committee shall take over the process at the time when the petition process is closed and the slate of nominees is set.

The Transition Committee will invite all nominees for events held various locations in the Diocese (or to similar electronic meetings if health conditions do not permit in-person gatherings) so that the Clergy Members, Lay Delegates to Convention, and other interested parishioners of the Diocese may hear from the nominees and ask questions.

The Transition Committee will also work on planning for the ordination and consecration of the Bishop-Elect.

Electing Convention Procedures

The election of a Bishop shall be made in an Annual Convention, or in a Special Convention called for that purpose. Determining who has a vote in the convention, shall follow the process in place above for all diocesan conventions as outlined above. The vote itself shall be taken according to a method (such as a contract with a given company whose electronic devices shall be used to conduct the election) that must be approved by the Standing Committee and announced to the Diocese at least 60 days in advance.

At the time for balloting, the Secretary of the Convention will call for a vote by orders. The vote, by secret ballot, of a majority of the Clergy and of the Lay Members of the Convention, voting separately and concurrently shall be necessary for the election of a Bishop. Provided that two-thirds of Clerical and two-thirds of Lay Delegates are present, a concurrence of the majority of each order present and voting shall be necessary to elect; otherwise, subject to the presence of a quorum as established in these canons, a concurrence of two-thirds of each order present and voting shall be necessary to elect.

Immediately following the election of a bishop, the voting delegates of the Convention shall proceed to sign the Canonical Testimonial.

After the Electing Convention

The following procedures concern the Bishop-Elect and the Standing Committee in the days following the election.

Records Retention

All records of the screening (background, medical, and psychological) of the person elected and ordained bishop shall be maintained permanently by the Diocese with a duplicate record in the Archives of The Episcopal Church. At the request of the nominee, the psychological evaluation of any nominees for bishop may be retained for three years so this can be forwarded to another Diocese should the nominee enter another election during that time period. Any screening materials (background, medical, and psychological) on other nominees shall be shredded (in the case of paper copies) and deleted (in the case of electronic files) within 30 days after the election.

Consent Process

The Bishop-Elect shall work with the President of the Standing Committee to promptly complete all information needed for the consent process. The Bishop-Elect shall not move to the Diocese and begin work prior to the completion of the consent process.

Letter of Agreement

When the required consents are in place from bishops and standing committees, the Bishop-Elect shall complete a Letter of Agreement to be approved by the Standing Committee and the Presiding Bishop.