

**CANONS**  
**MISSIONARY DIOCESE OF THE SOUTH AND OZARKS**  
United Episcopal Church of North America

**Canon 1. Of Name and Membership.**

- 1.1 The missionary diocese shall be known as the Missionary Diocese of the South and Ozarks (“Diocese”).
- 1.2 The Diocese is a voluntary association composed of the clergy canonically resident therein, and of all the Parishes, Missions, Chapels, and the members thereof, that are recognized as constituent members by the diocesan Convocation and Bishop.
- 1.3 The Diocese is a missionary diocese in union with the United Episcopal Church of North America (“UECNA”), a part of the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church, and submits to the Canons and General Convention thereof.
- 1.4 The boundaries of the Diocese shall be set by the House of Bishops of the UECNA, in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution and Canons thereof.

**Canon 2. Of the Bishop.**

- 2.1 The ecclesiastical authority of the Diocese is the Bishop, who shall exercise ordinary jurisdiction within the Diocese.
- 2.2 The Bishop shall be chosen and elected in conformity with the UECNA Canons and shall be the chief pastor to all the members of the church in the Diocese.
- 2.3 The Bishop shall make at least one visitation to every Parish and Mission every three years, and he shall be *ex officio* member of all committees and agencies established by the diocesan Convocation.

**Canon 3. Of Diocesan Officers in Holy Orders.**

- 3.1 With the advice and consent of the Standing Committee, the Bishop may appoint a clergyman in good standing to be Archdeacon or Area Dean in any county, state, or

grouping of the same in which there are located at least three congregations.

- 3.2 The Bishop may appoint other officers in holy orders within this diocese only with the advice and consent of the Standing Committee.

#### **Canon 4. Of the Diocesan Convocation.**

- 4.1 The Diocese shall be governed by a Convocation meeting annually at a place and time chosen by the Standing Committee. In any year when the UECNA General Convention is held within the boundaries of the Diocese, the Convocation shall be held at the same or adjacent place and time as the General Convention.
- 4.2 The Convocation may be convened for special reasons at other times at the request of the Bishop or Standing Committee.
- 4.3 All meetings of the Convocation shall be called by written notice to the clergy and congregations of the Diocese, communicated at least sixty days in advance of the date of the meeting.
- 4.4 The Convocation shall be composed of all clergy in good standing, three lay delegates from each Parish, two lay delegates from each Mission, and one lay delegate from each Chapel. Congregations may elect an equal number of alternates to be seated in the absence of their delegates.
- 4.5 The Bishop shall report the agenda for the Convocation to all parishes at least thirty days before the Convocation. The agenda may be changed by a vote of the Convocation.
- 4.6 Convocation shall be called to order and presided over by the Bishop. Should the office of Bishop be vacant, the Episcopal Visitor or a clergyman appointed by the Standing Committee shall preside.
- 4.7 Convocation shall certify all delegates registered, receive reports, establish budgets, and conduct the general business of the Diocese.
- 4.8 A quorum for the Convocation shall consist of a majority of the qualified clergy and at least one lay delegate from a majority of the congregations.
- 4.9 Voting in the Convocation may be by orders if a motion to that effect is made, seconded, and approved by a majority of the delegates. In such case, a majority in each order is required for passage of an act of Convocation. The division of orders shall be lay

delegates and clergymen.

4.10 Proxy votes shall not be recognized.

4.11 The Convocation shall elect a lay communicant to serve as diocesan Treasurer for a term of three years. The Treasurer need not be a member of the Standing Committee. The Standing Committee shall appoint a Treasurer to fill any vacancy for an unexpired term.

## **Canon 5. Of the Standing Committee.**

5.1 The Standing Committee shall serve as the board of trustees of the nonprofit corporation of the Diocese.

5.2 If there is no Bishop canonically authorized to act as ordinary, the Standing Committee shall be the Ecclesiastical Authority in the Diocese.

5.3 The Standing Committee shall consist of two clergymen and four adult lay communicants of this Diocese who have been duly elected by the Convocation.

5.4 When the number of congregations in the diocese exceeds five, no more than one member in each order shall be drawn from any one parish, mission, or chapel.

5.5 Upon adoption of this Canon 5.5, the terms of the next succeeding Standing Committee members shall be limited and staggered as follows, with no more than one clergyman elected each year: two members each for terms of one year, two years, and three years, with terms specified in advance of nomination and election.

5.6 Upon the expiration of the term of each Standing Committee member elected under Canon 5.5, terms of members of the Standing Committee shall be for three years, staggered such that two members are elected each year.

5.7 Vacancies of unexpired terms of Standing Committee members shall be filled by nomination of the Bishop, with election by a majority vote of the Standing Committee members serving.

5.8 The Standing Committee shall elect annually from its members a President and a Secretary.

- 5.9 The Standing Committee shall meet at least annually in conformity with its own rules and shall keep a record of its proceedings. A quorum shall be a majority of Standing Committee members.
- 5.10 Members of the Standing committee shall be notified of a meeting at least seven days in advance by mail, email, or telephone.
- 5.11 The Bishop may direct the President to summon a special meeting of the Standing Committee. The President may call a special meeting of the Standing Committee provided he has the consent of at least two other members.
- 5.12 Meetings of the Standing Committee may be held by conference call or electronic means that allow for all participants to hear each other.

## **Canon 6. Of Financial Matters.**

- 6.1 The diocesan Finance Committee shall be composed of the Treasurer and the lay members of the Standing Committee. The Treasurer shall serve as chairman.
- 6.2 The Finance Committee shall draft an annual budget for the Diocese, to be approved by the Convocation in advance of the succeeding year. The Treasurer shall provide the adopted budget to the UECNA Treasurer and Presiding Bishop.
- 6.3 Each Parish and Mission shall remit a tithe (one-tenth) of its general fund income to the UECNA national treasury. In case of necessity or distress, application may be made to the Bishop for a temporary waiver of this requirement. Each Chapel shall contribute to the UECNA national treasury in accordance with its means.
- 6.4 The Standing Committee shall establish and superintend a Diocesan Discretionary Fund for the receipt of special financial gifts to the Diocese, employing sound and accepted business practices.
- 6.5 The Diocesan Discretionary Fund shall be used for non-operating expenses of the Diocese that are not paid from the UECNA national treasury. Such non-operating expenses include providing for pastoral care concerns and special projects authorized by the Convocation or the Standing Committee.

## Canon 7. Of Parishes and Rectors.

- 7.1 A Parish of this Diocese shall be a congregation ...
- a. with at least twenty adult communicant members;
  - b. with a Vestry of at least three members;
  - c. that is able to remit its tithe to the UECNA national treasury;
  - d. that has remitted its tithe in full for the preceding calendar year;
  - e. and that is able to support a Rector with a mutually agreed stipend.
- 7.2 If a Parish is unable to fulfill the obligations of Canon 7.1, it may be reduced to the status of a Mission by the Bishop with the advice and consent of the Standing Committee. If the congregation subsequently meets the qualifications of Canon 7.1, Parish status may be restored by action of Convocation.
- 7.3 Each Parish shall call an annual meeting during the first quarter of the civil year, to which shall be summoned all adult communicant members of the Parish. The Rector shall preside. A quorum shall consist of a majority of the adult communicant members.
- 7.4 At the annual meeting, communicant members shall elect members of the Vestry, in accord with Parish bylaws, and shall elect delegates to the diocesan Convocation.
- 7.5 The Vestry shall manage temporal affairs of the Parish between annual meetings, in compliance with Parish bylaws, and in harmony with policies established at annual meetings.
- 7.6 The Vestry shall provide for all things needed for worship and for the administration of the sacraments and ordinances of the church, shall assist the Rector in the furtherance of the spiritual welfare of the Parish, and shall function as the agents of the Parish concerning its relationship with its clergy.
- 7.7 The Rector shall be *ex officio* chairman of the Vestry and shall preside at meetings in accordance with state law.
- 7.8 The Rector shall appoint annually a Rector's (Senior) Warden from the Vestry membership.
- 7.9 The Vestry shall elect annually a People's (Junior) Warden from its membership.
- 7.10 The Vestry shall elect a Treasurer and a Secretary, who shall be adult communicant members of the Parish, but need not be members of the Vestry.

- 7.11 Vacancies of unexpired terms on the Vestry shall be filled by a majority vote of the remaining Vestry members.
- 7.12 The Rector shall be a presbyter in good standing in the UECNA, who has been elected to the office in accordance with the bylaws of the Parish, and whose election has received the consent of the Bishop.
- 7.13 The Rector of each Parish shall be responsible for the worship of the Parish in accordance with the Canons of the Diocese and UECNA; for the music, musicians, and choir; for Christian education; for pastoral ministry; and for all lay ministries of the congregation.
- 7.14 The Rector shall keep a Register of Church Services and a Parish Register of all baptisms, confirmations, marriages, and funerals.
- 7.15 The Rector may, with consent of the Vestry and Bishop, appoint such assistant clergymen as he shall deem necessary.
- 7.16 A Rector's cure may be vacated by resignation, removal in accordance with the rubrics and letter of institution at page 569 of the 1928 edition of the *Book of Common Prayer*, or in accordance with the UECNA Canons.
- 7.17 Each Parish shall retain and hold all properties and monies pertaining to it and shall in no wise be defeated of its title to the same or of the free exercise of all rights, powers and privileges pertaining thereto, by any diocesan, provincial, or national agency, Convocation, or officer, or by these Canons.

## **Canon 8. Of Missions and Vicars.**

- 8.1 A Mission of this Diocese shall be a congregation ...
  - a. with at least ten adult communicant members;
  - b. with a Mission Council of at least three members.
- 8.2 When a Mission is formed, the Bishop shall appoint the Mission Council, which shall serve until the first annual meeting. Thereafter, at each annual meeting, a Mission Council shall be elected, consisting of not less than three members.
- 8.3 In any Mission lacking sufficient adult communicant members able and willing to serve on the Mission Council, the Bishop shall appoint members to the Mission Council from among other adult communicants of the Diocese.

- 8.4 Each Mission shall call an annual meeting in the first quarter of each year, to which shall be summoned all adult communicant members of the Mission. The Vicar or other minister in charge shall preside. A quorum shall consist of a majority of the adult communicant members.
- 8.5 The Mission Council shall elect annually from its membership a Warden. It shall also elect a Treasurer and Secretary, who shall be adult communicant members of the Diocese, but need not be members of the Mission Council.
- 8.6 The Bishop shall appoint the Vicar of a Mission, with the advice and consent of the Mission Council. A Vicar shall enjoy the rights and perform the duties ascribed by these Canons to a Rector, except that he may be removed by the Bishop in consultation with the Mission Council, with the cause stated.
- 8.7 Each Mission shall retain and hold all properties and monies pertaining to it and shall in no wise be defeated of its title to the same or of the free exercise of all rights, powers and privileges pertaining thereto, by any diocesan, provincial, or national agency, Convocation, or officer, or by these Canons.

## **Canon 9. Of Chapels.**

- 9.1 The Bishop may license Chapels for groups of people worshipping together according to the *Book of Common Prayer* that do not qualify as Parishes or Missions under the provisions of these Canons.
- 9.2 Each Chapel shall elect a Warden, from its adult communicant members, who shall represent the interests of the congregation to the minister and the Bishop. The Chapel shall also elect a Treasurer, who shall be an adult communicant member of the Diocese.
- 9.3 Each Chapel shall retain and hold all properties and monies pertaining to it and shall in no wise be defeated of its title to the same or of the free exercise of all rights, powers and privileges pertaining thereto, by any diocesan, provincial, or national agency, Convocation, or officer, or by these Canons.

## **Canon 10. Of Clergy Not Having the Cure of Souls.**

- 10.1 Each clergyman of the UECNA resident in the Diocese without cure or other ecclesiastical appointment shall be licensed under seal by the Bishop, and annually shall

give an account in writing to the Bishop concerning his spiritual functions.

- 10.2 A clergyman not canonically resident in the Diocese may be licensed by the Bishop to officiate therein for a period not exceeding one year. The license may be renewed at the Bishop's discretion.

### **Canon 11. Of Lay Ministers.**

- 11.1 Lay Readers and Deaconesses shall comply with training requirements established by the Bishop and licensed by the Bishop in accordance with the UECNA Canons.
- 11.2 Lay Readers and Deaconesses shall serve under the direction of the Rector or Vicar of their respective congregations. If no clergyman is assigned to a congregation, the Lay Reader or Deaconess shall serve under the direction of the Bishop.

### **Canon 12. Of Background Checks.**

- 12.1 A criminal background check shall be required, without exception, for each and every Lay Reader, Trainee for licensing as a Deaconess, Deaconess, Postulant or Candidate for ordained ministry, and licensed clergyman of this Diocese.
- 12.2 The criminal background check shall include a search of the national sexual offender registry. It shall also include a state and county criminal records check for each state and county where the subject resided in the seven years previous.
- 12.3 The criminal background check shall be renewed every three years, covering the period that has transpired since the last check was performed.
- 12.4 The Standing Committee shall create and administer policies for implementing the requirements of this Canon 12.
- 12.5 Any Trainee, Postulant, or Candidate who fails to submit to the criminal background check requirement, shall be prohibited from participation in any training, postulancy, or candidacy until such requirement is fulfilled.
- 12.6 Every licensed Lay Reader, Deaconess, and Clergyman of this Diocese shall submit to the initial criminal background check within 90 days after notification that the Standing Committee has published policies for implementing the requirements of this Canon 12. Failure to submit to the criminal background check shall result in suspension from



ministry by the Bishop, unless the Standing Committee shall determine that exigent circumstances prevented timely participation. Any Lay Reader, Deaconess, or Clergyman suspended from ministry under this Canon shall be charged under the disciplinary Canons of the UECNA and this Diocese.

- 12.7 Every congregation of this Diocese shall conduct such other criminal, personal, and professional background checks of its employees and volunteers as may be appropriate for the assigned duties and constituency. Such background checks shall be conducted for every staff member and volunteer who regularly works with minor children and vulnerable adults, such as the mentally disabled.

### **Canon 13. Of Membership.**

- 13.1 A member of this Diocese is any person who has been validly baptized and whose name appears on the rolls of a Parish, Mission, or Chapel of the Diocese.
- 13.2 An adult communicant member of this Diocese is a person at least eighteen years old who has been validly baptized and confirmed, and whose name is on the register of a Parish, Mission, or Chapel of the Diocese.

### **Canon 14. Of the Reception of a Parish or Mission.**

- 14.1 An established Parish, Mission, or Chapel which, by majority vote of its adult communicant members, accedes to the UECNA Constitution and Canons, the Canons of this Diocese, and to the worship, doctrine, and discipline of the UECNA, may be received into membership of the Diocese by the Bishop.

### **Canon 15. Of Insurance.**

- 15.1 The Standing Committee shall contract for and maintain an insurance policy in the name of the Diocese, with coverage for general liability; for directors, officers, and other agents of the Diocese in their official duties; and for other appropriate areas of coverage as determined by the Standing Committee.
- 15.2 The Standing Committee shall contract with an insurer for a suitable policy within 90 days of adoption of this Canon 15.

## **Canon 16. Of Amendments and Procedure.**

- 16.1 The Standing Committee shall serve as the Canons committee and shall have the power to adopt such revisions to these Canons as are, in its judgment, non-substantive modifications, to include reorganization, renumbering, and corrections of spelling, grammar, and punctuation. The action to revise may be undertaken in the same manner as any other motion before the committee. Adopted revisions shall be effective immediately. Revised canons shall be published within ten days to the diocesan clergy and on the diocesan website.
- 16.2 These Canons may be amended by a two-thirds majority vote of Convocation.
- 16.3 Proposed amendments to the Canons shall be submitted to each congregation at least sixty days before a meeting of Convocation at which such amendments shall be considered. Adopted amendments shall be in effect upon adjournment of the Convocation in which they were approved.
- 16.4 *Robert's Rules of Order* shall determine questions of procedure not provided for in these Canons.