

## Action Item: Proposed addition to Diocesan Canon XXVI (Addition in italics and underlined.)

### Canon XXVI

#### Of Deputies to the Provincial Synod and General Convention

*Section 4. The election of Deputies for General Convention and their service shall occur as provided in Article XII of the Constitution and the General Rules of Order. Should fewer than 5 Deputies and Alternates to General Convention in either order be able to attend General Convention, and in the judgement of Diocesan Council, it is not possible to hold an annual or special diocesan convention before the start of General Convention to elect additional Deputies or Alternates, Diocesan Council shall appoint enough additional alternates and deputies so that there are 5 persons in each order able to attend and represent the diocese at General Convention. Appointments shall be administered such that adequate and appropriate consideration is given to the richness and depth of diversity within the Diocese, including—but not limited too—size and location of parishes.*

**Rationale:** In 2022 as the Pittsburgh deputation to the delayed General Convention was preparing to gather in Baltimore, the deputation chair realized that the deputation had been reduced to a bare minimum. In fact, after deploying alternates to replace deputies unable to go or stay the entire convention, there would be no alternates for the clergy deputation. The lay deputation had exactly one alternate available.

Once General Convention was over, the deputation chair raised the concern with the Constitution and Canons Committee. While the immediate precipitating factor had been a pandemic, Constitution and Canons Committee was aware that other community disasters and personal emergencies could result in similar reduced deputations. The committee created a first draft, but did not have a finished proposal for the Annual Convention in 2022. In 2023, the committee refined the proposal for submission to the 2023 convention for a vote. In crafting this proposal, the committee paid close attention to the fact that Deputies were elected by the convention, where both laity and clergy have a voice, and where the diversity of the diocese was best represented. The proposed canon change provides for the bare minimum number of appointments necessary to ensure that the diocese has 4 lay and clergy deputies on the floor in any given session of General Convention. It allows for appointment to occur only to the extent that the clergy and lay deputation each have one alternate present, thus providing for some relief during multiple day sessions, and to cover an unexpected vacancy occurring during the convention. The body making the selection is Diocesan Council, which theoretically acts for the convention during recess and is representative of the convention make-up in terms of geography, size of parishes, and proportion of lay and clergy members. Council makes the determination when it is impractical to convene convention to make additional selections.

The canons of the Episcopal Church in Title I do specifically presume that diocesan governing documents will create a means of filling vacancies in the diocesan deputation, but should a diocese not do so, that duty falls to the bishop. We sent our proposal to Bishop Ketlin and received no objection to our proposal. Since the bishop sits with Diocesan Council, the bishop would have a voice in any appointments should the proposed revision be passed.

**Sponsor:** The Committee on Constitution and Canons