

COMMITTEE ON CONSTITUTION AND CANONS

The Committee on Constitution and Canons (the Rev. Dr. Bruce Robison, chair; the Rev. Dr. Michelle Boomgaard, secretary; Betsy Hetzler; the Rev. Shawn Malarkey; Ken Stiles; Ansley Westbrook; and, *ex officio*, Chancellor Andy Roman) met through the year to discuss proposals from its members and from others within the diocese regarding changes to the Constitution and Canons that might better serve our diocese.

The Committee has studied for several years the manner in which the current Constitution and Canons refer to attendance at Diocesan Convention for the purpose of deciding whether to propose any changes that would clarify the canons or improve the organization of the canons. This study was begun following the suggestion of a Lay Deputy in 2015 that the reference in Canon II, Section 3 to Clergy canonically resident in other dioceses but serving as a priest-in-charge or interim of a parish in union with Convention did not seem to fit under Canon II. The Committee hopes to conclude its study of these issues in September, and to bring any proposals for clarification or reorganization of the canons to the 152nd Convention.

The Committee has also studied the manner in which the current Constitution and Canons deal with the rights of Clergy and Lay Deputies to attend, speak out at, and vote at Convention, when the parish has failed to comply with its canonical responsibilities regarding assessments, audits, and parochial reports. The goal of this study is to determine if changes are warranted to make the canonical consequences more consistent as well as more clear. The Committee hopes to conclude its study of these issues in September, and to bring any proposals for amending the canons to the 152nd Convention.

Finally, the Committee has discussed how our diocesan canons might be amended to support greater creativity in efforts by parishes and by the diocese to address challenges and emerging ministry opportunities. We also have continued to examine provisions in our Constitution and Canons which exclude ordained persons from election to and from service on the Board of Trustees, comparing our practices with those of other dioceses and discussing whether our current structures could be amended to enhance the stewardship of the “human resources” of the diocese. While the Committee will not be bringing any proposals to the 152nd Convention on these topics, we do hope to continue these conversations in the coming year.

The Rev. Dr. Bruce M. Robison, Chair