



**Synod of the Diocese of the Central States
of the Reformed Episcopal Church
21 October 2021**

REPORT OF THE CONSTITUTION AND CANONS COMMITTEE

Organization:

The Constitution and Canons Committee is a body that serves by appointment of the Bishop Ordinary and is tasked with studying issues related to the Constitution and Canons of the Diocese and, when needed, drafting proposals for amendment of that document by the diocesan Synod.

The current Committee comprises:

- The Rev. Canon Scott Houser
- The Rev. Dr. Paul Edgerton, Chair
- The Rev. Bart Gingerich

Recommendations:

1. MODEL CANON CONCERNING THE CALL OF MINISTERS

The 56th General Council held in June passed a new model canon regarding the call of ministers to parishes. In order to come into agreement with this model, we recommend that we strike our TITLE III, CANON I, Sections 3 and 4 and replace them with the text of the new model as it is printed below:

~~Section 3. The Call of a minister shall be in the following form, and no other:~~

~~THE _____ REFORMED EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF
 _____ being fully satisfied with your ministerial
 qualifications, and confident that we have been led to you by the Holy Spirit as one
 whose ministry will be profitable to the spiritual life of our Church and fruitful to
 the Kingdom of the Lord, solemnly calls you
 _____ to undertake the work as
 _____ of this Parish, promising you in the discharge of
 your duty all proper support, encouragement and obedience
 in the Lord. That you may devote yourself to the Ministry of the Word among us, we
 obligate ourselves to pay you the sum of \$ _____ a year in regular
 (weekly) (monthly) payments, and will pay the church's portion into the Minister's
 Retirement Fund on the basis determined by the General Council, during the time of
 your being and continuing in the pastoral relationship set forth in this Call to this
 Parish.~~

~~(NOTE: Insert below other terms, including such matters as rectory, utilities, annual leave for recreation and rest, expense allowances, moving costs, car allowance, etc. It is suggested that where there is a cash allowance made for the rectory that the rectory allowance be designated in a cash amount. Other such cash amounts such as car allowance, etc., should be designated separately so as~~

to not be confused with salary.)

The following should also appear at the end of the document:

~~We agree that the Vestry of this Parish will annually review the above remuneration with a view to necessary adjustments. At least _____ days' notice shall be required for the termination of this pastoral connection by either party. In testimony whereof we have respectively subscribed our names this _____ day of _____, A.D.~~

Attest:

Senior Warden _____

Junior Warden _____

Secretary _____

~~Approved by action of the Bishop and the Standing Committee of the Reformed Episcopal Diocese of the Central States:~~

Date _____ Bishop

Secretary of the Standing Committee

Acceptance this _____ day of _____, A.D. _____ by

~~After approval and acceptance, a copy is to be given to each of the following:~~

- ~~1. The Minister receiving the Call~~
- ~~2. The Bishop Ordinary of the Diocese of the Central States~~
- ~~3. The Secretary of the Standing Committee~~
- ~~4. The Secretary of the Parish extending the Call~~

~~**Section 4.** The Bishop Ordinary and Standing Committee shall appoint the Vicar of a Mission Parish or of an extension work. A Presbyter shall have the right to accept or reject such an appointment without prejudice. A Deacon shall be required to accept such an appointment and serve diligently at the pleasure of the Bishop Ordinary.~~

Section 3. The Call of a Minister shall be consistent with the laws of the state or other jurisdiction in which the parish is located, shall be in writing in the form of a "Letter of Call" or other written Contract. The Diocese shall prepare templates for the employment of various offices of ministry including the calling of a Rector, the calling of an Interim Rector, the calling of a Presbyter, the appointment of a Vicar, and the assignment of a Deacon/Deaconess. These shall include at a minimum the following:

1. A “Ministry Position Description” that states the general requirements and duties of the pastoral, administrative, sacramental, and educational ministry expected in the performance of the call. It shall be acknowledged and signed by all parties. For reference, a general summary of the Duties of Ministers may be found in Canon 19 of the Canons of the General Council. Specific expectations, personnel and other policies, holidays, vacation, and medical or family leave.
2. Continuing education, and provision, when applicable for full time clergy, of a sabbatical leave.
3. Aspects of proper order and discipline related to the position: Ministry review, conformity with diocesan policies/customaries, and reporting to diocesan authority as required, etc.
4. The financial arrangements of the call including salary, retirement contributions, health, disability, and any other insurance including coverage mandated by the General Council. Issues concerning the rectory (if there is one) or of a housing allowance: utilities, annual leave for recreation and rest, expense allowances, moving costs, car allowance, etc. It is required that where there is a cash allowance made for the rectory that the rectory allowance be designated in a cash amount. Other such cash amounts such as car allowance, etc., should be designated separately so as to not be confused with salary.
5. Matters concerning any intellectual and other property rights.
6. Except in the case of an Interim Rector, the Letter of Call or Contract must be for a period of two years.
7. The Vestry shall annually review all salary and benefits with a view to necessary adjustments.
8. All matters concerning the call of a clergyman must be approved by the Bishop and Standing Committee and a copy of the signed documentation shall be given to each of the following:
 - A. The Minister receiving the Call
 - B. The Bishop of the Diocese of Mid-America
 - C. The Secretary of the Standing Committee
 - D. The Secretary of the Parish extending the Call.

Section 4. The Bishop and Standing Committee shall appoint the Vicar of a Mission Parish or of an extension work. A Presbyter shall have the right to accept or reject such an appointment without prejudice.

2. THE OFFICERS OF THE SYNOD

There is an apparent contradiction in Article VII concerning the Officers of the Synod. In Section 1, the Bishop Ordinary is made the Presiding Officer of the Synod. But Section 2 requires that a President of the Synod be elected as well as a Vice-President who would preside at any scheduled Synod should the Bishop Ordinary be absent or in the event of his disability or impairment. The election of a Vice-President is a good measure, and one we recommend that we follow, so that required business could go forward smoothly in the absence of the Ordinary. The election of a President, however, is unnecessary in light of Section 1.

Further, Section 5 seems to contradict Section 2, offering a different method for assigning the duties of the President and assuming that the President might not be the Bishop Ordinary.

We recommend that the requirement to elect a President be removed from Section 2 and that Section 5 be stricken entirely as illustrated below:

ARTICLE VII – Officers of the Synod

Section 1. The Bishop Ordinary of the Diocese of the Central States shall be the Presiding Officer of the Synod and, except in the case of disability or other impairment, shall preside at all meetings of the Synod.

Section 2. The Synod shall elect a ~~President and~~ Vice-President of the Diocese. ~~They~~ **He** shall be a Bishop or Presbyter of the Diocese of the Central States and shall preside at all Synods or other meetings when the Bishop Ordinary is absent or in the event of a disability or other impairment of the President until the election or installation of a new Bishop Ordinary.

Section 3. The Synod shall elect a Secretary and a Treasurer from the clergy or lay persons in the Diocese of the Central States. The Secretary and the Treasurer may appoint an assistant to help with their duties as necessary. The Synod may also elect such other officers as it may decide upon from time to time. The officers shall be elected by ballot at each regular meeting, upon the organization of the Synod of the Diocese of the Central States and shall hold their respective offices until their successors have been elected and have qualified.

Section 4. The several officers described in Sections 1, 2, and 3 shall perform the duties which pertain to their offices and such other duties as may be assigned to them by the Synod of the Diocese of the Central States.

~~**Section 5.** In the case of the death, disability, or resignation of the President, the Bishop Ordinary, in concurrence with a majority of the Standing Committee, shall appoint a Presbyter of the Diocese to fill the office and execute the duties thereof until the next regular meeting of the Synod of the Diocese of the Central States.~~

~~**Section 6 5.** In the case of the disqualification, death, disability, or resignation of the Secretary or Treasurer, the Bishop Ordinary, in concurrence with a majority of the Standing Committee, shall immediately appoint a suitable person to fill the office and execute the duties thereof until the next regular meeting of the Synod of the Diocese of the Central States.~~

~~**Section 7 6.** The Treasurer of the Synod of the Diocese of the Central States shall be the Treasurer of the Standing Committee of the Diocese of the Central States.~~

Reminder: These amendments would be effected immediately upon either a unanimous vote of this Synod or upon the second two-thirds majority vote of two consecutive Synods.

Respectfully Submitted,



The Rev. Dr. Paul C. Edgerton