

Constitution and Canons
of the
Diocese of the Central States
As Amended by the 2026 Synod of the Diocese

CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE I

The name of this Diocese of the Reformed Episcopal Church is and shall be the Diocese of the Central States.

ARTICLE II

The purpose of the Diocese of the Central States is to establish, support, and maintain Churches and Missions of the Reformed Episcopal Church, and to supervise and govern churches within its jurisdiction; aid the ministry of clergymen within the limits of the Diocese; and promote the general charitable work of the churches within the limits of the Diocese.

ARTICLE III – *The Diocese*

Section 1. The Diocese of the Central States is a constituent part of the Reformed Episcopal Church. This Diocese affirms and adheres to the Doctrine, Discipline, and Worship of the Reformed Episcopal Church as enumerated in the Constitution and Canons of the same.

Section 2. Said Diocese shall consist of all organized Parishes, Mission Parishes, and Extension Works, and all the assigned resident clergy of the Reformed Episcopal Church under the jurisdiction of this Diocese, such jurisdiction having been established by the General Council and its Constitution and Canons. The Parishes and Mission Parishes shall be represented at Diocesan meetings as the Canons of this Diocese direct.

Section 3. The territorial limits of the Diocese of the Central States are those defined by the General Council of the Reformed Episcopal Church, subject to such amendment as may be later voted by a Synod of this Diocese, with the consent of the General Council as follows:

By action of the General Committee Meeting on Saturday, 13 October 2007, the Diocese of the Central States is comprised of the states of Alabama, Indiana, Kentucky, North Carolina, Ohio, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia.

ARTICLE IV – *Government of the Diocese of the Central States*

Section 1. The legislation of the Diocese of the Central States and the direction of all matters that belong to and affect the Diocese of the Central States shall be vested in a Synod of the Diocese of the Central States, subject to the restrictions of Article III, Section 1.

Section 2. The Standing Committee and the Bishop Ordinary shall together constitute the Ecclesiastical Authority of the Diocese. If there is no Bishop Ordinary of the Diocese of the Central States or if the Bishop Ordinary is certified by three reputable physicians as incapable of acting, then the Bishop Coadjutor shall succeed per Canon 11, Section 3 (a) of the Reformed Episcopal Church, Constitution and Canons. If there is no Bishop Coadjutor, the Suffragan Bishop shall be the ecclesiastical authority until such time as the Bishop Ordinary shall resume his office or a new bishop is elected and installed. If there is no Bishop Coadjutor or Suffragan Bishop, the Standing Committee shall be the ecclesiastical authority until such time as the Bishop Ordinary shall resume his office or a new bishop elected and installed.

Section 3. All boards and committees of the Diocese of the Central States shall be under the supervision of the Bishop and Standing Committee of the Diocese of the Central States, which shall within the limits of the Constitution and Canons of the Diocese have veto power over their operations and actions.

Section 4. The Bishop shall be a member *ex-officio* of all committees whether elective or appointed.

ARTICLE V – *Membership of the Synod of the Diocese of the Central States*

Section 1. The Bishop Ordinary, Assistant Bishop, all Presbyters of the Diocese of the Central States, and any Deacon who is Minister-in-Charge of a Parish within the Diocese of the Central States.

Section 2. All Chairmen of Committees of the Diocese of the Central States and authorized Agencies of the Diocese of the Central States including lay members of the Standing Committee and Board of Trustees of the Diocese.

Section 3. All lay delegates elected in accordance with the provisions of Title II, Canon V, of the Canons of the Diocese of the Central States.

Section 4. Licensed Lay Readers pastoring a Church or a Parish within the Diocese of the Central States may be elected by any Synod to membership therein.

Section 5. Deacons, who are not Ministers-in-Charge of a parish, and Deaconesses canonically resident in the Diocese of the Central States have the right to speak upon the floor of the house, but not to vote in deliberations.

Section 6. No one shall be a member of the Synod of the Diocese of the Central States who is not a communicant member of the Reformed Episcopal Church in good and regular standing.

Section 7. By a two-thirds vote, visitors and friends of our Church may be made Corresponding Members for the duration of the meeting of the Synod. Corresponding membership shall confer the right to speak upon the floor of the house, but not to vote in deliberations.

ARTICLE VI – *Meetings of the Synod*

Section 1. The Synod of the Diocese of the Central States shall convene its regular meeting at such time and place as shall have been designated at the preceding meeting unless such time or place of meeting, or both, shall have been changed in the manner set forth in Section 2 or Section 3 of this Article.

Section 2. The Bishop Ordinary, by and with the consent of two-thirds of the members of the Standing Committee, may change time and/or place fixed for any meeting of the Synod of the Diocese of the Central States. If such change is made, the Bishop shall give thirty (30) days' notice thereof to every Parish and Mission Parish entitled to representation in the Synod of the Diocese of the Central States.

Section 3. Special Meetings of the Synod of the Diocese of the Central States may be called by the Bishop Ordinary by and with the written consent of a majority of the members of the Standing Committee; by two-thirds of the members of the Standing Committee acting without the Bishop; or by three-quarters of the parishes having certified to the Bishop Ordinary and the Standing Committee that such a meeting was approved by a majority vote of the requesting parish at a properly called parish meeting. Any such meeting shall be held at the time and place designated in the call to the meeting. Thirty (30) days' notice thereof shall be given by the Bishop Ordinary to every Parish and Mission Parish specifying the purpose or purposes of such meeting.

Section 4. The Delegates appointed to the preceding Synod of the Diocese of the Central States shall be delegates to any special meeting, unless in the interim, any Parish shall have elected other delegates.

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 Vice-President of the Diocese. 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 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 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.

ARTICLE VIII – *Proceedings of the Synod of the Diocese of the Central States*

Section 1. The proceedings at the meetings of the Synod of the Diocese of the Central States shall be regulated by such parliamentary rules as the Synod may from time to time adopt; provided, however, that whenever ten or more members of the Synod call for a vote by orders, it shall be allowed. In such case the Bishop shall vote as a Presbyter and the concurrence of both orders shall be necessary to the passage of the measure so voted on.

Section 2. In all business of the Synod, freedom of debate shall be allowed, subject to the Synod to fix the length of time for debate.

Section 3. A majority of the Presbyters and a majority of the delegates from the Parishes of the Diocese of the Central States shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business, but any number may adjourn from day to day to await the arrival of a quorum.

Section 4. A call for prayer is always in order in the deliberations of the Synod of the Diocese of the Central States.

ARTICLE IX – *Boards and Committees*

Section 1. The following Committees and Boards shall be appointed by the Bishop Ordinary at the Synod of the Diocese of the Central States at its regular meetings:

(A) The Standing Committee shall consist of three Presbyters and three laymen nominated by a committee appointed by the Bishop Ordinary for that purpose, and elected by the Synod to serve overlapping three-year terms, with one new member of each order being elected at each annual meeting of the Synod. The Synod may also fill the unexpired portion of any term vacated during the previous year. The Bishop Coadjutor and other Bishops together with the President, Archdeacon, Canons, Secretary, and Treasurer shall be ex-officio members of the Standing Committee in accordance with the Canons of the Reformed Episcopal Church. The Standing Committee shall be organized and shall operate in conformity with Canon 46 of the Constitution and Canons of the Reformed Episcopal Church.

(B) The Board of Trustees of the Diocese of the Central States shall consist of three Presbyters and three laymen to be nominated by a committee appointed by the Bishop for that purpose, and with one of each order being elected by the Synod to serve overlapping three-year terms, with one new member of each order being elected at each annual meeting of the Synod. In addition, the Vice-President and Secretary of the Synod shall be members of the Trustees.

(C) A Nominations Committee shall be appointed by the Bishop Ordinary to nominate one qualified person of each order for each open position for a full or partial term on the Standing Committee and present such nominations to the annual or special Synod.

(D) A Board of Examining Chaplains shall be appointed in accordance with Canon 4 of the Reformed Episcopal Church consisting of at least three Presbyters of the Diocese.

Section 2. Such other Committees as are determined necessary to the orderly operation of the Diocese of the Central States shall be appointed by the Bishop Ordinary.

ARTICLE X – *Amendments*

This Constitution may be amended by a unanimous vote of any stated meeting of the Synod, or of any special meeting thereof called for the purpose; otherwise, by a two-thirds vote at one stated meeting of the Synod, ratified by a two-thirds vote at the next succeeding stated meeting thereof. A motion to adopt for first reading, even though passed unanimously when made, shall not constitute final passage, but shall require ratification at the next stated meeting of the Synod. If it is intended to have an amendment passed without a second reading, it shall be stated so when it is offered or proposed.

CANONS

TITLE I – THE DIOCESE OF THE CENTRAL STATES

CANON I – *The Clergy*

Section 1. Annually before the meeting of the Synod of the Diocese of the Central States, the Bishop, or if there be none, the Standing Committee, shall prepare or cause to be prepared, a Roll of the Clergy of the Diocese of the Central States, with names of their respective charges, together with their places of residence; and also, with particulars of time and place, the names of all ministers who have been ordained or received from other churches or have resigned, died, have been removed from the Clergy Roll, or may have been subject to discipline. Such Clergy Roll shall be laid before the Synod immediately after it shall have been called to order and the names of the clerical members called therefrom. This Clergy Roll shall be published in the Journal and the Secretary of the Diocese of the Central States shall send a copy of the same to the Secretary of the General Council.

Section 2. It shall be the duty of every minister in the Diocese of the Central States, except he be retired because of age or disability, who is not in charge of a Parish or otherwise engaged in the service of the Diocese of the Central States, to report, in writing, within thirty days immediately preceding the convening of the annual Synod of the Diocese of the Central States, to the Bishop, or if he is not in office, to the Standing Committee, stating his address and occupation. The notation of the receipt of such reports shall be appended to the Clergy Roll.

Any minister failing so to report for two or more successive meetings of the Synod of the Diocese of the Central States shall be dropped from the Clergy Roll, in which event he may be restored by reporting for two successive years to the Bishop (or to the Standing Committee of the Diocese of the Central States). Such reporting must include a satisfactory explanation for his previous failure to report. A call to an active pastorate will negate the need for the disciplinary action to be carried out.

Section 3.

(A) A Presbyter in charge of a Parish shall be designated the Rector, or Pastor, thereof.

(B) A Deacon in charge of a Parish shall be designated the Minister-in-Charge thereof.

(C) A Presbyter or Deacon in charge of a Mission Parish by appointment of the Bishop and Standing Committee of the Diocese of the Central States shall be designated the Vicar thereof.

(D) A Lay Reader may be licensed by the Bishop Ordinary to conduct Divine Worship in a Parish or Mission without pastoral care (Reformed Episcopal Church, Constitution and Canons, Canon 24, Section 1 (a)), but such licensing may only be provided to those who are Communicants of this church and meet the requirements for a Deacon as noted in I Timothy 3:8-13.

Section 4. When a Minister ordained in a Church in communion with the Reformed Episcopal Church desires to be a Deacon or Presbyter in this Church and minister in the Diocese of the Central States, he must apply in writing and present to the Ecclesiastical Authority of this diocese a testimonial letter from the Ecclesiastical Authority of the Church in which he is presently canonically resident, which testimonial fully sets forth his true standing and character. The Ecclesiastical Authority of this diocese may, in its complete discretion, require such additional documentation and examination as necessary to determine whether the applicant should be received. The process of reception should be generally administered in a manner consistent with the canons of the Reformed Episcopal Church applicable to the reception of Ministers ordained in foreign jurisdictions by bishops in communion with this Church. Before a Minister may be received under this canon, his application must be approved by the Bishop Ordinary and Standing Committee.

CANON II – *Bishops*

Section 1. The Bishop Ordinary shall hold office subject to the Constitution, Canons, and Discipline of the Reformed Episcopal Church.

Section 2. At least thirty (30) days before the Synod at which a Bishop is to be elected, notice in writing of such election shall be sent by the Secretary of the Standing Committee to every clergyman and vestry in the Diocese. A majority of the parishes must be represented at a Synod in which a Bishop is to be elected. The vote shall be by orders and a majority of those present of both orders shall be necessary for election.

Section 3. The Bishop Ordinary shall preside at all meetings of the Synod and may deliver his sentiments on any subject after it has been discussed and before a vote thereon. In case of a tie, he may cast the deciding vote. The Bishop Ordinary shall also preside at all meetings of the Board of Trustees and Standing Committee.

CANON III – *The Vice-President*

In the event of the inability of the President to act during a session of the Synod, or between sessions, the Vice-President shall discharge his duties while such inability continues, except the episcopal acts and ecclesiastical duties pertaining to the office of Bishop Ordinary of the Diocese of the Central States.

CANON IV – *The Secretary*

It shall be the duty of the Secretary to take the Minutes and record all proceedings of the Synod of the Diocese of the Central States and, together with the Bishop Ordinary, to attest its official acts, preserve its records, and notify the parishes thirty days in advance of the time and places of all meetings of the Synod. The Secretary shall direct the printing and distribution to the parishes of the Journal of the Synod of the Diocese of the Central States and shall preserve in the archives of the Diocese of the Central States at least ten (10) copies thereof.

Before printing, the copy of the Journal shall be examined by and have the approval of the President of the Synod, or in his absence by someone designated by the Standing Committee. In the case of the death, disability, or resignation of the Secretary, the President, 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.

CANON V – *The Treasurers*

It shall be the duty of all Treasurers elected by the Synod of the Diocese of the Central States, or acting under its supervision, to receive the monies belonging to their respective funds and to distribute the same under the direction of the Synod of the Diocese of the Central States and/or the conventions, boards or committees under which they serve. Their accounts shall be rendered to the Synod of the Diocese of the Central States and audited by a committee appointed by the Bishop Ordinary. A certificate of audit by a professional accountant may be accepted in lieu of examination by such Auditing Committee. In the case of the death, disability, or resignation of any Treasurer, the President, 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.

CANON VI – *The Standing Committee*

Section 1. The Standing Committee, consisting of a minimum of three Presbyters and three laymen to be nominated by a committee appointed by the Bishop Ordinary for that purpose, and with one of each order being elected by the Synod to serve overlapping three-year terms, with one new member of each order being elected at each annual meeting of the Synod, shall be the Advisory Board to the Bishop Ordinary of the Diocese of the Central States and have such powers and perform such duties as are provided by the Constitution and Canons of the Reformed Episcopal Church, the Constitution and Canons of the Diocese of the Central States, and such duties as may be assigned by the Synod of the Diocese of the Central States.

Section 2. The Bishop Ordinary of the Diocese of the Central States shall be Chairman of this Committee, *ex-officio*. The Secretary of the Diocese as elected by the Synod shall also serve as the Secretary of the Standing Committee, shall keep the Minutes of its meetings, and perform such other clerical duties as the Committee may direct.

Section 3. A simple majority shall constitute a quorum.

Section 4. The Committee shall make a report of its proceedings to each annual Synod of the Diocese of the Central States and to the General Council of the Reformed Episcopal Church.

CANON VII – *The Board of Trustees of the Diocese of the Central States*

Section 1. The Board of Trustees shall consist of the President, Vice-President, Treasurer, and the other members. The Board shall meet upon call of the President, Vice-President, or any two members, upon three days' notice in writing. A simple majority of the Trustees shall constitute a quorum. The Board of Trustees of the Diocese of the Central States shall consist of a minimum of three Presbyters and three laymen to be nominated by a committee appointed by the Bishop Ordinary for that purpose, and with one of each order being elected by the Synod to serve overlapping three-year terms, with one new member of each order being elected at each annual meeting of the Synod. The Bishop of the Diocese of the Central States shall be Chairman of this Committee, *ex-officio*.

Section 2. The Board shall hold in trust, invest, control, and care for all funds and other property of the Diocese, and may, by vote of at least two-thirds of its members, authorize the leasing, mortgaging, encumbering, selling, and conveying of any and all property of the Diocese, in its discretion. It shall also take all necessary legal steps to establish title to the property of the Diocese and of all extinct parishes. It shall exercise special care that parish property which shall have been acquired in whole or in part by grants from the Board be secured to the Reformed Episcopal Church, and it shall make the amount of its grants to any parish for the acquisition of property payable to the Diocese whenever such property shall be alienated from the uses of the Reformed Episcopal Church. With a two-thirds vote of the Board of Trustees, the Bishop or another agent may be authorized to sign legal documents for leasing, mortgaging, encumbering, selling, or conveying any Diocesan property.

Section 3. The Trustees shall give such bonds as the Synod from time to time may require, and shall make full report to each Synod of the condition of their trusts.

Section 4. The Secretary of the Diocese as elected by the Synod shall also serve as Secretary of the Board of Trustees and shall keep the minutes of its meetings and perform such other clerical duties as the Board may direct.

Section 5. It shall be a specific duty of the Board to prepare an annual estimate of the financial requirements of the Diocese for the ensuing fiscal year and a plan for meeting them, and to submit this to the Synod for adoption. Furthermore, it shall be the duty of the Board to take all such necessary steps to provide the monies required, except such portions as may be otherwise specifically provided for.

Section 6. The Board shall make a report of its proceedings to each annual Synod of the Diocese of the Central States.

CANON VIII – *Authorized Agencies of the Diocese of the Central States and Their Representation in the Synod of the Diocese of the Central States*

Section 1. Upon the recommendation of the Bishop Ordinary and the Standing Committee, the Synod of the Diocese of the Central States may designate organizations that further the mission of the Diocese as authorized agencies of the Synod, entitled to representation in the Synod under Article V, Section 2, of the Constitution.

Section 2. Each organization authorized under this Canon must operate under a constitution approved by the Bishop Ordinary and the Standing Committee and must report their actions and finances to the annual Synod of the Diocese of the Central States. Failure to meet these conditions shall be grounds for action of the Bishop Ordinary and the Standing Committee to rescind any previous recognition, to seize their funds for purposes of the Diocese of the Central States, and to forbid their activity among Parishes and Mission Parishes of the Diocese of the Central States.

CANON IX - *Chancellors and Canon Lawyers*

Section 1. The Bishop Ordinary may, with the advice and consent of the Standing Committee, appoint a person learned in canon and civil law to serve as diocesan Chancellor. If the person to be appointed is a Presbyter or Deacon, the Bishop may, in his complete discretion, designate him as Canon Lawyer to the Ordinary of the Diocese of the Central States. At the request of the Chancellor or upon his own initiative, the Bishop Ordinary may appoint such Vice or Assistant Chancellors as may be necessary to assist the Bishop or the Chancellor in a specific practice area, jurisdiction, or geographical region.

Section 2. The Chancellor will provide such legal advice as permitted by civil law on such matters as shall be referred to him by the Bishop Ordinary, diocesan Synod, Standing Committee, Board of Trustees, Constitution and Canons Committee (if one be appointed), or, with the permission of the Ecclesiastical Authority, any other duly established subdivision, agency, activity, mission, work, or other affiliated entity of the Diocese of the Central States.

Section 3. The Chancellor will serve with voice but no vote as a member *ex-officio* of the Standing Committee and the Committee on Constitution and Canons (if one be appointed).

Section 4. Any Chancellor appointed under this canon serves at the pleasure of the Bishop Ordinary. Upon the resignation, death, or retirement of the Ordinary, any and all Chancellors shall be deemed to have tendered their resignations to the Standing Committee, subject to the acceptance or rejection of said resignations by the incoming Bishop Ordinary, who shall have the right and discretion to designate such officers.

TITLE II – OF PARISHES

CANON I – *Of Membership*

Section 1. No new Extension Work, Mission Parish, or Parish shall be formed without the consent of the Bishop Ordinary and Standing Committee of the Diocese of the Central States and without conforming to the requirements of Canon 48 of the Reformed Episcopal Church.

Section 2. In the organization of a new Mission Work, Mission Parish, or Parish, the following Article of Association and Conformity shall be signed by at least twelve (12) persons of legal voting age, who have been duly examined by a Bishop of the Diocese of the Central States, or some Presbyter of his appointment, as to their personal faith, and as indicated by prior membership in an evangelical church, or by Confirmation by the Bishop, who intend to be supporters of the Parish, to wit:

"We, the undersigned, hereby associate ourselves for the purpose of maintaining the worship of God and the preaching of the Gospel according to the doctrine, discipline, and worship of the Reformed Episcopal Church, under the name of _____Church, in the city (or town) of _____ State of_____, and we promise conformity to the Constitution and Canons of The Reformed Episcopal Church, and to the Diocese of the Central States.

We do hereby authorize the Chairman and Secretary of this meeting to certify this action, in writing, to both the Bishop of the Diocese of the Central States and to the Standing Committee of the Diocese of the Central States."

Section 3. A Parish already in communion with the Reformed Episcopal Church may be admitted to the Diocese of the Central States by the Standing Committee on its presenting, with its petition for admission, a copy of its charter, its articles of incorporation or certificate thereof, its acceptance of the Constitution and Canons of this Diocese of the Central States, duly certified by the Secretary thereof as the act of its Parish Meeting; provided that in every case the consent of the Bishop Ordinary and Standing Committee or if there be no Bishop, of the Standing Committee of the Diocese or Jurisdiction, from which the Parish has chosen to transfer, be obtained.

(A) Every Parish or Mission which is incorporated under the laws of the state in which it is resident shall provide the Diocese with a current copy of its Articles of Incorporation or Articles of Association and shall notify the Diocese, in writing, of any proposed amendments or alterations to the same at least thirty (30) days prior to any scheduled vote on said changes.

(B) In every case in which there is or appears to be a conflict between the clear meaning or requirements of Parish Articles of Incorporation or Association, Parish By-Laws, the Diocesan Constitution and Canons, or the Constitution and Canons of the Reformed Episcopal Church, the order of precedence shall be as follows: The Constitution and Canons of the Reformed Episcopal Church shall take first priority followed in precedence by the Constitution and Canons of the Diocese of the Central States, followed by the By-Laws of the Parish or Mission as approved by the Diocese, followed by the Articles of Incorporation or Articles of Association. Any conflict between

the requirements or apparent meaning of the Constitution and Canons and the By-Laws or Corporate Articles of any parish or Mission shall be decided in favor of the Diocese. Any proposed change in the By-Laws or Articles of Incorporation or Association of a Parish or Mission, which are not submitted to the Committee on Constitution and Canons as required in Title II, Canon II shall be null and void and unenforceable.

(C) Every Parish or Mission shall provide the Diocese with a copy of its most current By-Laws together with an income statement and balance sheet annually thirty (30) days prior to Synod.

Section 4. A congregation or parish of another church that may desire to be received into union with this Church and Diocese of the Central States may be received by the Standing Committee upon presentation to them of its acceptance of the Constitution and Canons of the Reformed Episcopal Church and this Diocese of the Central States, and of the doctrine, discipline, and worship of this Church, duly certified as the act of the congregational or parish meeting by the Secretary thereof.

Section 5. Where the adult membership, of legal voting age, of a Parish is between twelve (12) and twenty-nine (29) members, such Parish shall be designated a Mission Parish. A Mission Parish shall be under the sole government of the Bishop Ordinary, or a Presbyter appointed by him, who shall appoint and remove Wardens, Vestry members, and other officers and admit and dismiss members.

Section 6. Every group meeting for worship by authority of the Standing Committee, but not admitted as a Parish or Mission Parish shall be known as an Extension Work.

Section 7.

(A) In the event that the communicant membership of a Parish falls below the number of thirty (30) for two consecutive years, that Parish shall be given the status of a Mission Parish with all the limitations to which Mission Parishes are subject under the Canons of the Diocese of the Central States. Should the Mission Parish again attain the membership of thirty (30) or more, it shall be necessary for the Vestry of such a congregation to reapply for the designation of Parish.

(B) In the event that the communicant membership of a Parish or Mission Parish falls below the number of twelve (12) for two consecutive years, that group may be disbanded by the Bishop Ordinary with the approval of the Standing Committee and the members assigned to the pastoral care of a neighboring Reformed Episcopal Parish or Mission Parish. If a Reformed Episcopal group is not meeting in a neighboring area, an effort will be made to find a group compatible to the doctrinal standards of the Reformed Episcopal Church.

(C) The property of a disbanded parish, mission, or extension work shall be vested in and become the property of the Diocese unless it conflicts with civil law of the state in which the property is located.

Section 8. The consent of the Bishop Ordinary and Standing Committee shall be a prerequisite to the merger of Parishes consisting of two or more congregations. In matters of representation, rights, and limitations enumerated in these Canons, the status of such Parishes with several congregations shall be determined by their total combined communicant membership.

Section 9. All Parishes affiliating with the Diocese must have the name of their Parish approved by the Standing Committee. These names shall be submitted for consideration by the Standing Committee.

CANON II – *Of Parish By-Laws*

Section 1. By-Laws of any Parish must not conflict with the Constitution and Canons of the Reformed Episcopal Church or the Diocese of the Central States, and must be submitted to the Committee on Constitution and Canons for correction, if need be, and for certification. Likewise, all proposed revisions of By-Laws of Parishes shall be so submitted. (The model Constitution and By-Laws for a Local Parish in the Diocese of the Central States shall serve as a guide to any Parish formulating its By-Laws.)

Section 2. All officers and members of committees must be communicant members of this Church, in good and regular standing, of legal voting age.

CANON III – *Of Vacant Parishes*

Section 1. Whenever a Parish becomes vacant (without a regularly employed minister), it shall be the duty of the Wardens or the Secretary of the Vestry to immediately notify the Bishop Ordinary.

Section 2. The Bishop Ordinary of the Diocese of the Central States is *ex-officio* Rector of every vacant Parish until a Rector is elected and installed. The Bishop Ordinary or his representative shall be *ex-officio* chairman of the Vestry and at any Parish Meeting. The Senior Warden shall preside if neither the Bishop Ordinary nor his representative is able to attend and is so directed by the Bishop Ordinary.

Section 3. During the vacancy it shall be the duty of the Vestry under the direction of the Bishop Ordinary, to make provision for maintaining Divine Worship in the Church, and for the pastoral care of the Parish.

CANON IV – *Of Parish Registers*

Section 1. In every Parish or Mission Parish, the Vestry shall provide a suitable book to become a Parish Register. It shall be in the custody of the Minister, whose duty it shall be to keep accurate and full records therein of all baptisms, confirmations, receptions by letter from other Churches, marriages, and burials, together with a complete list of the communicants and a list, so far as practicable, of families within his charge, which Register shall be the property of the Parish, and be preserved for the use of his successor. No names, once entered shall ever be erased; changes of status being entered as notes or remarks.

Section 2. Communicants of a Parish are all persons who have been confirmed therein, or who have been received by letters Dimissory from evangelical churches, or have presented satisfactory evidence of previous communicant membership and present purpose to serve the Lord, provided that in every case they have received the Holy Communion.

Section 3. The Communicant list shall be corrected annually by the Parish Council by removing from active membership, through notation, the names of all persons who have died, have been ordained to the Presbyterate, made Deacon, dismissed to another church, excommunicated, together with those who for a period of one year have not partaken of the Lord's Supper, disappeared, ceased to attend Divine Services, or to contribute to the support of the Parish; provided that all reasonable efforts to reclaim such members have been made.

Exceptions may be made of non-residents who continue to contribute and wish to retain their active standing, and of aged persons, invalids, and persons who are financially unable to contribute, and in the military service, or educational institutions which require a change of residence. All who are placed upon the inactive list shall be notified if their addresses are known. In preparing statistical reports of Communicant Members, only those on the active list shall be enumerated.

Section 4. A communicant moving from one Parish to any other shall request and be granted a letter Dimissory, which shall give his status as shown by the Parish Register. A communicant who has resumed regular attendance at Divine Services, renewed his support, and partaken of the Lord's Supper, shall be restored at any time to the active roll from the inactive roll.

Section 5. Upon the death or removal of the Minister, the Parish Register shall pass to the Senior Warden, who shall keep the records, entering every change without delay, while the Parish is vacant.

Section 6. All Parish records shall be open to the Bishop Ordinary. It shall be his duty to examine them regularly or to appoint a person or persons to act in his stead.

Section 7. Upon the dissolution of a Parish, the Parish Register shall become the property of the Diocese to be preserved in the archives.

CANON V – *Of the Annual Parish Meeting*

Section 1. In each Parish, annually during Easter Week or on some other convenient occasion, an election shall be held for Wardens, Vestry members, Parish Council, and Delegates to the Synod of the Diocese of the Central States. Wardens, Vestry members, Parish Council, and Delegates shall be chosen from among the communicants of legal voting age. Each year one-third of the entire number of Vestry members shall be elected for a three-year period. One lay delegate to Synod and one alternate shall be elected annually.

Section 2. A Parish or congregation consists of all persons enrolled as Communicant members or stated worshippers in the congregation, and who, in greater or lesser degree, contribute to its support, and have been thus connected with the Parish for twelve (12) months preceding. Only communicants of legal voting age shall be entitled to vote at the Parish Meeting. In any case of dispute as to the qualification of the electors, the decision shall rest with the Wardens.

Section 3. The election of Lay Delegates shall be certified by the Secretary of the Vestry, or some other officer of the parish, in the form following, to-wit,

> At a parish meeting of_____Church having _____communicants, held on_____, 20__the following named communicants of said Church were appointed Lay Delegates to the Synod of the Diocese of the Central States.

This certificate shall be returned to the Secretary of the Synod prior to the meeting of the Synod to which the delegates are appointed and given to the Committee on Credentials of the Synod. In case, however, it is found that any of the Delegates chosen at the Parish Meeting are not able to attend the Synod, it shall be lawful for the Rector and Wardens to select substitutes for such Delegates and to certify to such appointment.

Section 4. When no election is made of the Parish Council (Canon 50 of the Reformed Episcopal Church), the Wardens shall act as such Council when required. It is recommended, in general, that the communicants of each parish constitute the Wardens thereof as its Parish Council.

Section 5. At the annual Parish Meeting, reports in writing shall be made by the Rector of the spiritual condition of the Parish with a synopsis of the official labors, and showings of the Parish Register, and from all other auxiliaries, boards, clubs, and departments of work in connection with the Parish. The Treasurer of the Parish and the treasurers of all Parish organizations, shall present itemized reports, receipts and vouchers. Such Treasurer's reports shall be verified in accordance with Canon 44 of the Constitution and Canons of the Reformed Episcopal Church and reviewed by a committee of two or more, of whom one shall not have been a member of the Vestry for the year preceding.

Section 6. Every Parish Meeting, whether stated or special, must be announced at each church service on two Sundays preceding its date. The purpose for each special meeting shall be announced in its call, and this business and none other, shall be considered in such a special meeting.

TITLE III – OF PASTORAL CONNECTIONS

CANON I – *The Call of a Minister to a Parish*

Section 1. Unless otherwise provided by the Charter or By-Laws of the Parish, or ordered by the Parish at a stated meeting, the Vestry shall take initial and final action in the calling of a Rector or Minister-in-Charge (Deacon). In the case of assisting clergy, the Rector shall seek the advice and consent of the Vestry in the calling of a Presbyter or the assignment of a Deacon. In every case the Vestry shall approve all compensation paid to the clergy and other financial terms of the call.

Section 2. The advice and consent of the President of the Synod and Standing Committee, or the Standing Committee alone if there be no Synod President, shall be required before a Call is issued by any Parish. No Deacon may be considered as a Candidate for a Call without the prior consent of the President of the Synod.

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 another 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 at least 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 the Central States
(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.

Section 5. Unless otherwise provided in the By-Laws of a Parish, a Call shall be for an indefinite period of time but in no case for less than a period of two years.

Section 6. No Presbyter shall be settled as Rector or Pastor of a Parish of the Diocese of the Central States unless he be duly installed according to the Order provided in The Book of Common Prayer by the Bishop Ordinary, or a Presbyter appointed by the Bishop Ordinary to act in his stead. This section shall not apply in the case of a Deacon called as a Minister-in- Charge or Vicar appointed to a Mission Parish or Extension Work.

Section 7. All parish clergy assisting the Rector in a parish, whether stipendiary or non-stipendiary, and regardless of the title by which they are known, shall serve with the approval of the Bishop Ordinary, under the authority and direction of the Rector and shall serve at the Rector's pleasure.

Section 8. In the event of the death, retirement, removal, or resignation of the Rector, all remaining clergy shall serve at the pleasure of the Bishop Ordinary or such other authority as he shall appoint until a Rector is called to the parish.

Section 9. Upon the calling of a new Rector to a vacant parish, all assistant clergy shall be deemed to have submitted their resignation to the Vestry prior to the installation of the new Rector who shall have the prerogative of retaining or not retaining said clergy upon taking office.

Section 10. In a Mission Parish, assisting clergy will be appointed by the Bishop Ordinary to serve under the authority of the Vicar and shall serve at the Bishop's pleasure.

CANON II – *Termination of a Pastoral Connection*

If for any urgent reason a Rector or Minister, as aforesaid, or the Parish committed to his charge, its Vestry or Trustees, shall desire a separation and dissolution of the pastoral relation, and the parties be not agreed respecting such separation and dissolution, notice in writing may be given by either party to the Ecclesiastical Authority of the Diocese or Missionary Diocese. The Bishop may ask the advice and consent of the Standing Committee of the Diocese or Council of Advice of the Missionary Diocese, and he shall be the ultimate arbiter and judge. If the Diocese or Missionary Diocese be vacant, the Ecclesiastical Authority shall select a Bishop of an adjacent Diocese or Missionary Diocese to act as the Bishop, and with like force and effect. The judgment shall be either that the pastoral relation between the parties shall cease and determine at a time and upon terms therein specified, or that the pastoral relation shall not be terminated; and it shall be the duty of both parties to submit to and abide by such judgment. In the event that either party refuses to abide by the decision rendered in either of these cases, such party shall forfeit the right, if a Presbyter, of a seat and a vote in the General Council and in the Synod of the Diocese of the Central States; or if Wardens or Vestry members, of having their Parishes represented in the same.

TITLE IV – OF WORK AND WORSHIP

CANON I – *Of Ministers and Their Duties*

Section 1. In conformity with Canon 19 of the Reformed Episcopal Church, it shall be the duty of every Minister in charge of a Parish or Mission Parish of this Diocese of the Central States to preach the Gospel and declare the whole counsel of God according to the Holy Scriptures; to appoint and conduct services for Divine Worship; to visit the members of his congregation, particularly such as are sick, infirm, or aged; to prepare candidates for Baptism and Confirmation; to conduct the funeral services of deceased communicant members; and in every way to seek to strengthen the spiritual life of the members of the Parish or Mission Parish, in the cause of this Diocese of the Central States and the advancement of Christ's Kingdom through the Reformed Episcopal Church.

Section 2. It shall be the duty of every Minister in charge of a Parish or Mission Parish to give due notice to his congregation of an Episcopal visitation. After ascertaining the fact of baptism for the persons ready and desirous to be confirmed, the Minister will present the Bishop making the visitation with a list of the confirmands.

Section 3. It shall be the duty of every Minister in charge of a Parish or Mission Parish, with such assistance as he may see fit, to obtain from persons skilled in music, to give order concerning the tunes to be sung at any time in his church; and especially it shall be his duty to suppress all light and unseemly music, and all indecency and irreverence in the performance, by which vain and ungodly persons profane the service of the Sanctuary.

Section 4. The Minister in charge of a Parish or Mission Parish of this Diocese of the Central States shall, within the limitations of *The Book of Common Prayer*, including the Rubrics thereof, The Received Doctrine of the Reformed Episcopal Church, and the Constitution and Canons of the Diocese and of the Reformed Episcopal Church, be entrusted with general authority over public worship in accordance with the principle of *jus liturgicum*.

Section 5. Duty of Confidentiality

(A) *Duty*. Except as otherwise provided by this canon, it shall be the duty of every bishop, presbyter, deacon, and deaconess canonically resident in the diocese to maintain the confidentiality of any communication made to that person while acting in a professional capacity as confessor, counselor, or spiritual adviser.

(B) *Limits*. This duty extends only to statements made privately and not intended for further disclosure except to other persons present in furtherance of the purpose of the communication. A threat of violence to a person subject to this duty or a third party is not a "communication" for the purposes of this canon. An otherwise confidential communication may be disclosed at the express request of the person making the communication. In the event a statement made privately would otherwise give rise to a duty to disclose or report under applicable civil law, the recipient of such statement should confer with the Chancellor (if one be appointed) and local counsel to determine his or her obligations under applicable law.

(C) *Extent*. This duty also extends to all persons subject to these canons who have, whether by lawful or unlawful means, acquired knowledge or come to a knowledge of any matter, directly or indirectly, advertently or inadvertently, or in any other way, of that which falls under this canon. Nothing herein shall be construed to limit the privilege law of any applicable jurisdiction. This duty does not terminate upon or with the death of the person making the confidential communication.

CANON II – *Of the Wardens and Vestry*

Section 1. The governing body of a local Parish or Mission Parish is called a Vestry, which shall legally exercise temporal authority in the conduct of parish business, hold title to and maintain all parish property, and have authority over the finances of the same within the limitations of the Constitution and Canons of the Diocese of the Central States and of the Reformed Episcopal Church.

Section 2. A Vestry shall consist of two Wardens: a Rector's Warden (or Senior Warden), and an Accounting Warden (or Junior Warden), and some number of Vestry members. The term of office shall be determined by the Charter or By-Laws of the Parish or by the Parish at a stated meeting, subject to the Constitution and Canons of this Diocese of the Central States and of Canon 49 of the Reformed Episcopal Church.

Section 3. The Chairman shall have a vote only in case of a tie. The Rector or Pastor is *ex-officio* Chairman of the Vestry and shall preside at all meetings when present. The Senior Warden shall preside if the Rector or Pastor is absent. The Junior Warden shall preside if both are absent. A Deacon who is Minister-in-Charge of a Parish may act as Chairman upon the vote of the Vestry, but he shall have no vote. The Vicar of a Mission Parish may preside by the appointment of the Bishop Ordinary, but he shall have no vote.

Section 4. The Wardens and Vestry shall meet as soon as practicable after the annual election, and organize by electing a Secretary and Treasurer and such other officers as may be necessary. Other meetings may be called by the Rector or either of the Wardens, and shall be called whenever requested by any two vestry members.

Section 5. Vacancies occurring in the Vestry during the year may be filled by the remaining members. Any person so elected may serve until the next Annual Parish Meeting, at which time a replacement shall be elected by the Parish to serve any unexpired terms.

Section 6. The chief lay leader in a Reformed Episcopal Church is the Rector's Warden or Senior Warden. The Senior Warden should be an adult communicant in good standing and be of outstanding Christian character. In consultation with the Bishop Ordinary, the Senior Warden shall provide a supply for the pulpit in the case of illness, absence, or resignation of the minister, and is the custodian of the Parish Register if there is no Rector or Minister-in-Charge.

Section 7. The Accounting, People's, or Junior Warden shall be responsible for the funds of the Parish unless a Treasurer be provided for this purpose. The Junior Warden should be a person of exceptional Christian character and be qualified in business ability. The duties of the Junior Warden shall be the general care and oversight of the physical and real property of the Parish,

including maintenance and repairs, and in the absence of the Rector or Senior Warden, shall preside at meetings of the Vestry.

Section 8. It shall be the duty of the Vestry to take charge of all properties of the Parish, to regulate all its temporal concerns, to act in calling a Rector or Minister-in-Charge unless otherwise provided by the Charter and By-Laws of the Parish, to employ all other persons serving the Parish under salary and fix the amount of each salary. The Vestry cannot buy or sell real estate of the Parish without the approval of a Parish meeting called for that purpose.

Section 9. It shall be the duty of the Wardens, especially, to provide the elements for the Lord's Supper, to oversee the care of the communion ware, and to provide suitable vestments for the minister or ministers. In the absence of the minister, the Wardens shall see that orderly and worshipful Divine services are conducted.

CANON III – *Of Lay Readers*

Section 1. No one shall habitually officiate as Lay Reader in any Parish or Mission Parish of the Diocese of the Central States without a license from the Bishop Ordinary. Any licensure must be in accordance with the provisions of Canon 24 of the Constitution and Canons of the Reformed Episcopal Church.

Section 2. It shall be the duty of the Lay Reader to assist the Minister in the church services and prayer meetings as the Minister desires and directs.

CANON IV – *Of Order in Worship*

Section 1. In the conduct of the worship of the Church, where there is no Rubric or Canon, or where the Rubric or Canon is susceptible to various interpretations, recourse shall be had to the Bishop Ordinary in case of doubt or dispute, and his decision shall be authoritative, subject however, to revision by the Standing Committee or the General Council.

TITLE V – AMENDMENTS

CANON I – *Of Standing Resolutions*

Standing Resolutions, being of doubtful authority and enforcement, shall not be adopted in lieu of Amendments of the Constitution and Canons. When adopted, they shall stand only for the duration of the Synod of the Diocese of the Central States in which they were adopted and until the convening of the next regular or special meeting of the Synod of the Diocese of the Central States.

These Canons may be amended by a unanimous vote of any stated meeting of the Synod of the Diocese of the Central States, or of any special meeting thereof called for the purpose; otherwise, by a majority vote at one stated meeting of the Synod of the Diocese of the Central States, ratified by a majority vote at the next succeeding stated meeting thereof.

CERTIFICATION

I certify that the text of the provisions set out above is the text of the Constitution and Canons of the Diocese of the Central States as modified most recently by the Diocesan Synod at its meeting at Saint Jude's Reformed Episcopal Church, Richmond, Virginia, on the 9th day of June in the Year of Our Lord 2026, and effective immediately thereafter.

/s/ William T. Barto +

Rev. William T. Barto, Esq.
Chancellor and Chair, Constitution and Canons Committee
Diocese of the Central States, Reformed Episcopal Church