

ST JOHN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH  
CENTREVILLE, VIRGINIA  
PARISH BY-LAWS

January 16, 2019

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## ARTICLE I – GENERAL PROVISIONS

### Section 1 – Dedication and Mission

- a. Dedication: Jesus Christ is our Lord, and this Parish is dedicated to His service, with praise and thanksgiving.
- b. Mission: We the people of St. John’s Episcopal Church, work to achieve our vision of healing, hope, and hospitality through personal prayer, corporate liturgy, Christian formation, stewardship, and respect for the dignity of every human being.

### Section 2 – Name and Location

The name of this Parish is St. John’s Episcopal Church<sup>1</sup>. It is located in Centreville, Fairfax County, Virginia, of the Diocese of Virginia.

### Section 3 – Organization and Governance

- a. This Parish shall be organized and governed in accordance with these by-laws, and as they may be subsequently amended.
- b. If in conflict, these by-laws shall be subordinate to the Constitution and Canons for the Government of the Episcopal Church in the United States of America (CCECUSA), the Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Virginia (CCDOV), the laws of the United States of America, and the laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia.
- c. These by-laws shall be effective upon approval by a two-thirds majority vote of the Adult Members of the Parish who are Communicants in Good Standing, as defined in Article II of these by-laws, and in attendance at the Parish Meeting in which they are proposed.

## ARTICLE II – MEMBERSHIP DEFINITIONS

### Section 1 – Members of the Parish

Members of the Parish are all the persons who have received the sacrament of Holy Baptism with water in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit whether in the Episcopal Church in the United States of America or in another Christian church and whose Baptisms have been duly recorded in the Parish records.<sup>2</sup>

### Section 2 - Adult Members

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<sup>1</sup> CCDOV, Canon 10

<sup>2</sup> CCECUSA, Title I, Canon 17, Section 1(a).

Members 16 years of age and over are to be considered adult members.<sup>3</sup>

### Section 3 – Communicants

All Members of this Parish who have received Holy Communion in this Parish at least three times during the preceding year are to be considered Communicants of this Parish.<sup>4</sup>

### Section 4 – Adult Communicants

Communicants 16 years of age and over are to be considered Adult Communicants.<sup>5</sup>

### Section 5 – Communicants in Good Standing

All Communicants of this Parish who for the previous year have been faithful in corporate worship, unless for good cause prevented, and have been faithful in working, praying, and giving for the spread of the Kingdom of God, are to be considered Communicants in Good Standing.<sup>6</sup>

### Section 6 - Confirmation<sup>7</sup>

- a. Any person who is baptized in this Parish as an adult and receives the laying on of hands by the Bishop at Baptism shall be considered as both baptized and confirmed.
- b. Any person who is baptized in this Parish as an adult and at some time after the Baptism receives the laying on of hands by the Bishop in Reaffirmation of Baptismal Vows shall be considered as both baptized and confirmed.
- c. Any baptized person who received the laying on of hands at Confirmation (by any Bishop in Apostolic Succession) and is received into the Episcopal Church by a Bishop of the Episcopal Church in the United States of America shall be considered as both baptized and confirmed.
- d. Any baptized person who received the laying on of hands by a Bishop of The Episcopal Church in the United States of America at Confirmation or Reception shall be considered as both baptized and confirmed.

## **ARTICLE III – PARISH MEETINGS**

### Section 1 – Annual Parish Meeting

- a. The Annual Parish Meeting shall be held each year as soon as practical following January 1<sup>st</sup>, but no later than the last Sunday in February. The Annual Parish Meeting may be

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<sup>3</sup> CCECUSA, Title I, Canon 17, Section 1(b).

<sup>4</sup> CCECUSA, Title I, Canon 17, Section 2(a).

<sup>5</sup> CCECUSA, Title I, Canon 17, Section 1(b).

<sup>6</sup> CCECUSA, Title I, Canon 17, Section 3.

<sup>7</sup> CCECUSA, Title I, Canon 17, Section 1(d).

held either in the Parish House or at another place in or near Centreville, as selected by the Vestry.

- b. The agenda of the Annual Parish Meeting shall be set by the Vestry and shall include: a report on the state of the Parish presented by the Rector, or in his/her absence, by the Senior Warden; the election of new Vestry Member(s); and consideration of any proposed changes to the Parish By-laws. The Vestry may add to the agenda reports from committees and other items of business as it deems appropriate.

### Section 2 – Special Parish Meetings

A Special Parish Meeting may be called by the Vestry, or upon the written request to the Vestry by any ten Adult Communicants in Good Standing of the Parish. All Special Parish Meetings shall be held either in the Parish House or at another place in or near Centreville, as selected by the Vestry.

### Section 3 – Presiding Officer at Parish Meetings

The Rector shall preside at all Parish Meetings. In the absence of the Rector, the Senior Warden shall preside, and in his/her absence, the Junior Warden shall preside.

### Section 4 – Notice of Parish Meetings

At least 14 days prior notice of any Annual or Special Parish Meeting shall be given to all Adult Members of the Parish. Such notice shall be given in church at each worship service on two consecutive Sundays prior to the meeting, and/or by other adequate means as determined by the Vestry.

### Section 5 – Qualified Voters at Parish Meetings

All Adult Members who are Communicants in Good Standing are entitled to vote in person at Parish Meetings. There shall be no absentee or proxy votes.

### Section 6 – Quorum at Parish Meetings

No election or business conducted at a Parish meeting shall be valid in absence of a quorum. A quorum shall constitute ten percent of all qualified voters.

## **ARTICLE IV – THE VESTRY OF THE PARISH<sup>8</sup>**

### Section 1 – Responsibilities

The Vestry of the Parish and the Rector shall be mutually responsible for the leadership of the Parish. The Vestry in cooperation with the Rector shall transact all its temporal business in accordance with those duties and responsibilities so described by canon law.<sup>9</sup> The Vestry shall

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<sup>8</sup> CCDOV, Canon 11

<sup>9</sup> CCDOV, Canon 12 and 13

also be responsible for: approving budgets, establishing policies, electing Parish Officer and Parish Representatives, establishing committees and subcommittees as required or necessary, monitoring the organized activities of the Parish, and, establishing goals and objectives for Parish programs. In the case of a deadlock on any matter coming before the Vestry, the Rector shall cast the deciding vote.

### Section 2 – Duties<sup>10</sup>

The duties of the Vestry are called out in the Canons, and the Vestry shall:

- a. Cooperate with the Rector in promoting the spiritual welfare of his/her cure and assist him/her in his/her duties.
- b. Support the programs of the Parish and continuously encourage the members of the congregation to support the programs of the Parish and give generously towards the support of those programs.
- c. See that the Rector is properly supported, that his/her salary is paid in full and with regularity, together with the pension premiums and other obligations due from the Parish.
- d. Advise the Diocese by November 30<sup>th</sup> of the percentage of its annual disposable income that will be shared with the Diocese in support of Diocesan Programs.
- e. Perform other duties as prescribed in CCDOV, Canon 12.

### Section 3 – Number and Terms

The Vestry shall consist of up to twelve lay persons. Each shall serve a term of three years. However, Vestry members and officers of the Vestry shall continue to hold office and discharge their duties until their successors are elected and qualified. No member who has already served consecutively for three years shall be eligible for re-election or for appointment to an unexpired term, until the expiration of one year. A member, otherwise qualified, who was elected to fill an unexpired term of another Vestry member is eligible for re-election.

### Section 4 – Qualifications

Vestry members must be Adult Members of the Parish who are Confirmed Communicants in Good Standing, as defined in Article II of these by-laws.

### Section 5 – Vestry Nominations

- a. At least two months prior to the Annual Parish Meeting, the Executive Committee, with the consent of the Vestry, shall appoint a Nominating Committee, which shall seek qualified candidates for Vestry vacancies. The candidates must agree to serve if elected. The Nominating Committee shall nominate at least one person for each vacancy and shall

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<sup>10</sup> CCDOV, Canon 12, Sections 2 – 6.

publish and distribute the names of the candidates along with a brief biography of each at least 14 days before the Annual Parish Meeting. The names of these candidates shall be printed on the election ballots.

- b. Qualified candidate(s) may also be nominated from the floor of the Annual Parish Meeting. However, any nominated individual must agree to serve if elected. The name(s) of such nominee(s) shall be added in writing to each ballot.

#### Section 6 – Election of Vestry Members

- a. Vestry members shall be elected to full three-year terms at the Annual Parish Meeting, with the exception of those Vestry members who are being elected to fill unexpired terms. When there are enough three-year terms for all the candidates, a call for the parish members to accept all the candidates by a voicing “Ayes” or “Nays” will be made.
- b. When the number of candidates is greater than the number of vacancies, the voting shall be by secret ballot, with a majority of the ballots cast being necessary for election. If there are any unexpired one- or two-year terms, the candidates with the most votes will fill the three-year vacancies, and the remaining candidates will fill the two- and one-year vacancy in order of votes received.
- c. If a secret ballot is necessary, the Vestry shall appoint three Adult Communicants in Good Standing to act as judges for the elections. These individuals shall verify the qualifications of voters, and the eligibility of persons nominated for the Vestry. They shall also distribute, collect, and tally the ballots, and shall promptly report the results to the Chair of the Parish Meeting assembled for the purpose.

#### Section 7 – Oath of Office<sup>11</sup>

Each person elected to be a Vestry member shall subscribe to the following declaration: “I do believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be the Word of God, and to contain all things necessary to salvation; and I do yield my hearty assent and approbation to the doctrine, worship, and discipline of The Episcopal Church; and I promise that I will faithfully execute the office of Vestry Member of St. John’s Episcopal Church in Centreville, County of Fairfax, Virginia, according to my best knowledge and skill.” No person shall act as a Vestry member until this declaration and promise has been subscribed to.

#### Section 8 – Vestry Meetings

- a. The Vestry shall meet at a time and place of its choosing. The Rector, or such other member of the Vestry designated by the Rector, shall preside at all meetings.<sup>12</sup>
- b. Vestry meetings shall be open to all Adult members of the parish, unless the Vestry determines that individual right to privacy may be jeopardized.

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<sup>11</sup> CCDOV, Canon 11, Section 8.

<sup>12</sup> CCECUSA, Title I, Canon 14, Section 3.

- c. A quorum of one-half of the Vestry shall be required for the transaction of Vestry business.

### Section 9 – Vestry Vacancies

- a. In the case of a vacancy on the Vestry, the remaining Vestry members may elect a qualified member of the Parish to fill that vacancy. That individual shall serve until the next Annual Parish Meeting, at which time the unexpired term of the original vacancy shall be filled by election.
- b. In case of the continued absence of any Vestry member from meetings of the Vestry and/or neglect of assigned responsibilities without adequate cause, after consultation with the member, the Rector and Senior Warden may choose to request the member step down from the Vestry. However, the Vestry member will be provided an opportunity to discuss the situation with the remainder of the Vestry if he/she desires and may ask for the concurrence of the whole Vestry.

## **ARTICLE V – PARISH OFFICERS**

### Section 1 – Qualification and Election

The Parish Officers elected by the Vestry shall be the Senior Warden, the Junior Warden, the Register of the Vestry, and the Parish Treasurer. The Officers of the Parish must be Adult Members of the Parish who are Confirmed Communicants in Good Standing, as defined in Article II of these by-laws.

### Section 2 – Senior Warden and Junior Warden

- a. As soon as practical after the Annual Parish Meeting, the Vestry shall elect<sup>13</sup> from among its members an individual to serve a one-year term as the Senior Warden. The individual may be re-elected annually to successive terms until the expiration of his/her own Vestry term.
- b. As soon as practical after the Annual Parish Meeting, the Vestry shall elect<sup>14</sup> from among its members an individual to serve a one-year term as the Junior Warden. This individual may be re-elected annually to successive terms until the expiration of his/her own Vestry term.
- c. The Wardens, with the assistance of the other members of the Vestry and Parish, shall have the following duties:<sup>15</sup>
  - (1) To oversee the operation and maintenance of the Parish property;

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<sup>13</sup> CCDOV, Canon 11, Section 9.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> CCDOV, Canon 12, Section 7.

- (2) To see that the Parish is duly prepared for every occasion of public worship, attend to the accommodations of the congregation with seats, and maintain order and decorum at the time of public worship;
- (3) To collect the offerings of the people;
- (4) To provide out of Church funds, under the direction of the Vestry, a sufficient supply of vestments and books to be used in public worship and also the elements for each celebration of the Holy Eucharist;
- (5) To see that the sexton and other employees properly discharge their duties; and,
- (6) To possess a copy of the current General Convention and Diocesan Constitutions and Canons for the information and guidance of the Rector, Vestry, and Congregation.

d. When authorized by the Vestry, the Wardens will be empowered to enter into contracts on behalf of the Parish and to act as the Parish legal representative, unless otherwise provided for in law or canon.

**Acceptance and Signing of Financial Documents and Contracts:**

Routine office or building supplies, mail, package deliveries, or Invoices for scheduled or routine contractor visits: The parish administrator, the budget clerk, or volunteer staff designated by the Rector can sign documents for routine office or building supplies, mail, package deliveries, or Invoices for scheduled or routine contractor visits. If there is any question concerning any of the documents listed above, the parish administrator, budget clerk, or volunteer staff should ask for guidance from either the Rector, the Senior Warden, or the Junior Warden.

Contracts and other financial instruments: The Rector, Senior Warden, or Junior Warden can sign for the documents listed in the previous paragraph and any other contracts or other financial instrument that has been previously approve by the Vestry. If practical, two signatures by the Rector, Senior Warden, or Junior Warden should be attested to contracts or other financial instruments.

Emergency Signing: In an emergency that affects the health, safety, or security of the St John's physical campus, staff, parishioners, ministry partners, or visitors, the Rector, Senior Warden, or Junior Warden can on their own authority sign documents that commit St John's funds used to mitigate or eliminate the emergency. The Vestry will be notified as soon as practicable of the emergency and any documents that were signed for information, ratification, or nullification.

**Section 3 – Register of the Vestry**

As soon as practical after the Annual Parish Meeting, the Vestry shall elect<sup>16</sup> a qualified individual to serve a one-year term as the Register of the Vestry. This individual need not be a member of the Vestry and may be re-elected annually to successive terms. The Register of the

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<sup>16</sup> CCDOV, Canon 11, Section 9

Vestry shall take charge of all records except the Parish Register, which is maintained by the Rector, and keep correct entries of all proceedings of the Vestry in a well-bound book to be provided for that purpose, as well as electronically, and to deliver the records and minute books to the Rector or Wardens, when his/her term of office expires<sup>17</sup>, and perform other duties as assigned by the Vestry. As in Article IV, Section 9, Part b above, the Rector and Vestry may take steps if the Register is not fulfilling his/her responsibilities.

#### Section 4 – Parish Treasurer

- a. As soon as practical after the Annual Parish Meeting, the Vestry shall elect<sup>18</sup> a qualified individual to serve a one-year term as the Parish Treasurer. This individual need not be a member of the Vestry and may be re-elected annually to successive terms. The Parish Treasurer shall take charge of all funds except Communion Alms<sup>19</sup>, and disburse the same under the direction of the Vestry, maintaining his/her accounts in accordance with the canonical requirements for the conduct of business in Parish affairs, and render reports to the Vestry and to the Diocesan Convention as may be required. At the end of his/her term of office, he/she shall deliver all books and records pertinent to his/her office to the Wardens<sup>20</sup>. The business methods in Parish affairs shall conform to those detailed in the CCDOV.<sup>21</sup> As in Article IV, Section 9, Part b above, the Rector and Vestry may take steps if the Treasurer is not fulfilling his/her responsibilities.
- b. The Parish Treasurer, with the consent of the Vestry, shall appoint Assistant Treasurer(s) as deemed necessary to maintain the various financial accounts of the Parish. The Assistant Treasurer(s) shall make reports to the Parish Treasurer as he/she may request. The Assistant Treasurer(s) shall serve one-year renewable terms.

#### Section 5 – Parish Office Vacancies

In the case of a Parish Officer vacancy, the Vestry may elect a qualified member of the Parish to fill the unexpired term.

## **ARTICLE VI – PARISH REPRESENTATIVES**

#### Section 1 – Types and Qualifications

There are two types of Parish Representatives:

- a. Delegate(s) and Alternate(s) to the Regional and Diocesan Convention, and

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<sup>17</sup> CCDOV, Canon 12, Section 8.

<sup>18</sup> CCDOV, Canon 11, Section 9.

<sup>19</sup> CCDOV, Canon 12, Section 9.

<sup>20</sup> CCDOV, Canon 12, Section 9.

<sup>21</sup> CCDOV, Canon 13.

b. Parish Trustees

Parish Representatives must be Adult Members of the Parish who are Confirmed Communicants in Good Standing, as defined in Article II of these by-laws.

Section 2 – Delegate(s) to the Regional and Diocesan Convention

- a. As soon as practical after the Annual Parish Meeting, and not later than March 1<sup>st</sup>, the Vestry shall elect one or more qualified individuals, each to serve one-year terms, as Delegate(s) and Alternate(s) to both the Regional and Diocesan Councils.<sup>22</sup> There shall be one Alternate for each Delegate.
- b. The Delegate(s) and Alternate(s) need not be members of the Vestry. They shall attend Vestry meetings when possible and shall when possible attend the Vestry meeting immediately preceding each Regional and Diocesan meeting in order to hear from the Parish leadership and to bring to the Vestry the concerns of the Region and the Diocese. While attending Vestry meetings, they shall have seat and voice only. They may be re-elected annually to successive terms. There shall be one Delegate and Alternate to be elected for each three hundred Confirmed Communicants in Good Standing, or major fraction thereof, above the first three hundred.<sup>23</sup>
- c. Delegate(s), and in their absence, Alternate(s), shall attend Regional meetings and also the annual Diocesan Convention meeting as the lay representatives of the Parish. The Delegate(s) and Alternate(s) will keep the Rector and the Vestry informed of significant matters coming before the Convention. They shall obtain Vestry approval prior to committing the Parish to any action, policy, expense, or financial pledge to either the Region or the Diocese.

Section 3 – Parish Trustees<sup>24</sup>

Beginning in 1993 and every third year thereafter, the Vestry shall elect three Trustees, pursuant to the laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia, to hold title to the property of the Parish. The Trustees need not be members of the Vestry and may be individually elected to successive three-year terms.

Section 4 – Parish Representative Vacancies

In the case of a Parish Representative vacancy, the Vestry may elect a qualified member of the Parish to fill the unexpired term.

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<sup>22</sup> CCDOV, Canon 15, Section 1.

<sup>23</sup> CCDOV, Article III, Section 1(d).

<sup>24</sup> CCDOV, Canon 15, Section 1.

## ARTICLE VII – PARISH COMMITTEES

### Section 1 - Ministry Committees

A Ministry Committee consists of lay volunteers who are interested in helping to achieve the church's program. It reports to the Rector and the Wardens. The Vestry shall establish committees as it deems necessary to properly carry out the mission and conduct the business of the Parish.

### Section 2 – Committee General Rules

The general rules pertaining to Ministry Committees are as follows:

- a. Each Committee shall have a Chair appointed by the Rector. The Chair shall serve for one-year renewable terms. The advice and counsel of the Rector and Wardens shall be sought in the event of chair vacancies.
- b. Chairs of the Ministry Committees are responsible for oversight of the committee's programs, objectives, and budget. The Chair shall develop committee goals, assign committee tasks, prepare a recommended budget for Vestry review, and monitor the Committee's adherence to the approved budget. The Chair is also responsible for providing an annual written report on the Ministry Committee's activities to the Parish Office by the 1<sup>st</sup> of January each year.
- c. The Rector and Senior and Junior Wardens shall be ex-officio members of all Committees of the Parish and shall have seat and voice.
- d. No Ministry Committee, or chair thereof may commit the Parish to a policy, position, or commit the expenditure of Parish funds, without prior approval of the Vestry.

### Section 3 – Ministry Committees

- a. Finance Committee<sup>25</sup>
  - (1) There shall be a Finance Committee, consisting of no less than three members, whose responsibility it is to advise the Rector, Wardens, Treasurer, and Vestry members on matters of finance. The Finance Committee shall include representation from the Vestry.
  - (2) The Finance Committee shall be responsible to the Vestry for the review of the financial and business matters of the Parish and provide advice and counsel to the Vestry as necessary or appropriate from time-to-time or as requested by the Vestry. In addition, the Finance Committee shall prepare an annual budget, initiate the annual audit of the Parish, evaluate the insurance requirements of the Parish and its

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<sup>25</sup> CCDOV, Canon 25, Section 1.

employees, assist the Treasurer in maintaining proper accounting records and controls, and recommend to the Vestry a strategy for the investment of Parish funds.

b. Additional Committees

By resolution, the Vestry may establish additional standing committees and/or subcommittees as it deems necessary to carry out the mission of the Parish. Any additional committees or subcommittees shall operate in accordance with the committee general rules.

c. Special Committees

The Vestry may establish Special Committees from time-to-time to accomplish special tasks as deemed necessary by the Vestry. Such Special Committees shall have narrow, specific duties, and a time certain for completion. The Vestry, in establishing a Special Committee, shall outline the specific tasks to be performed by resolution and may appoint the Chair and any members it deems necessary. The Chair may appoint additional members of a Special Committee as necessary to complete the tasking from the Vestry. Such Special Committees shall not exist longer than six months unless authorized by the Vestry.

## **ARTICLE VIII – THE RECTOR**

### Section 1 – Election of the Rector

The Vestry shall elect a Rector<sup>26</sup> by a two-thirds majority of the Vestry members voting.

### Section 2 - Responsibilities

The Rector has the authority of and the responsibility for the conduct of worship and the spiritual well-being of the parish. These responsibilities include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Preparation of sermons that instruct and are useful for daily living
- Teaching and offering classes on a variety of topics
- Developing Christian Education for all ages
- Providing pastoral care to parishioners as needed; visiting the homebound and those in the hospital; providing support for those who are grieving
- Officiating at weddings, baptisms, and funerals, and preparing all participants for these services
- Administering the Parish, including oversight of staff
- Attendance at monthly Vestry meetings, and meetings with the Senior Warden as necessary
- Preparation of persons for Confirmation, Reception, and Reaffirmation of Baptismal Vows
- Oversight of the use and control of all parish buildings and all furnishings.

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<sup>26</sup> CCDOV, Canon 12, Section 1.

- Ensuring that all music is used as an offering to God and as a help to people in worship. The Rector has final authority in matters pertaining to music and will seek assistance from people skilled in music.
- Attending diocesan clergy conferences, diocesan committees (as assigned or elected to), the Annual Diocesan Convention, and regional meetings.

The Rector shall also perform other duties and responsibilities as agreed upon with the Vestry and contained in the canons.

## **ARTICLE IX – ASSISTANT CLERGY AND MINISTERS**

### Section 1 – Selection of the Assistant Clergy and Ministers

All Assistant Clergy and Ministers by whatever title they may be designated, shall be selected by the Rector, subject to the approval of the Vestry, and shall serve under the authority and direction of the Rector. The Assistant Clergy and Ministers shall not serve beyond the period of service of the Rector except that, pending the call of a new Rector, the Assistant Clergy and Ministers may continue in the service of the Parish if requested to do so by the Vestry of the Parish and under such conditions as the Bishop and Vestry shall determine.<sup>27</sup>

## **ARTICLE X – MINISTRY PARTNERS**

St. John's welcomes the Ministry Partners who use space in our facility. Partners must be non-profit groups and fit with the mission statement of the church. The Vestry makes the final decision as to whether they will be accepted as a Ministry Partner, and if space is available at the day/time they want. All Ministry Partners must sign a contract with St. John's, pay their monthly fee, and provide their own insurance.

## **ARTICLE XI – AMENDMENTS TO THE BY-LAWS**

### Section 1 – Passage of Amendments

Amendments to these by-laws require at least a two-thirds majority of the voting members of the Parish who are Adult Communicants in Good Standing at a properly announced and convened Parish Meeting.

### Section 2- Date of Effect

Amendments shall take effect upon passage unless otherwise expressly stated in the proposal.

### Section 3 – Submission of Proposal

Proposed amendments to these by-laws must be submitted in writing to the Vestry no later than the regularly scheduled Vestry meeting in the month preceding the scheduled Annual Parish

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<sup>27</sup> CCDOV, Canon 12, Section 1.

Meeting. Amendments may be proposed by a majority of the Vestry, or by ten Adult Communicants in Good Standing who have signed their support for the proposal.