Episcopal Diocese of Western New York
Resolutions submitted to the 188th Convention

Resolution NY-A

Originator: Constitution and Canons Committee of the Episcopal Diocese of WNY
Subject: Canon 19: Election of a Bishop, Amendment A

§1. Notice of Convention to Elect. Whenever it becomes appropriate for this Diocese to elect a Bishop Diocesan, Bishop Coadjutor or Bishop Suffragan, the necessary consents having been obtained, due notice of the Convention to Elect shall be given by the Ecclesiastical Authority.

$2. Committees.
(1) ~~(1)~~ Election and Qualifications. The Standing Committee shall prepare, in consultation with the Bishop Diocesan, if there be one, both a process for the selection ~~election~~ of persons to the Search Committee and the Transition Committee and the qualifications sought for each committee. If the Diocesan Convention is scheduled to convene within thirty days, the Standing Committee shall seek the concurrence of the Diocesan Convention regarding the selection ~~election~~ process and qualifications sought. At all other times, the Standing Committee shall seek the concurrence of the Diocesan Council regarding the ~~election~~ selection process and qualifications sought. The Standing Committee shall communicate the ~~election~~ selection process and the qualifications sought throughout the diocese. The Standing Committee will invite nominations for the Search Committee and Transition Committee using a diocesan-wide process and will select the members of the committees.

(2) Search Committee. The Search Committee shall be composed of the following:
(a) One Clerical Member and one Lay Member from each Deanery. The Clerical Member ~~elected~~ shall be canonically resident in the diocese and serving in the ~~electing~~ deanery. The Lay Member ~~Member elected~~ selected shall be an ~~an~~ adult communicant in good standing of a parish or mission in the ~~electing~~ deanery.
(b) The Standing Committee may appoint up to five additional persons to the committee.

(3) Transition Committee. The Transition Committee shall be composed of the following:
(a) One Clerical Member and one Lay Member from each Deanery. The Clerical Member elected shall be canonically resident in the diocese and serving in the ~~electing~~ deanery. The Lay Member elected shall be an adult ~~confirmed~~ communicant in good standing of a parish or mission in the ~~electing~~ deanery.

(b) The Chancellor of the Diocese.

(c) The Standing Committee may appoint up to three additional persons to the committee.

(4) Organization
(a) The Standing Committee shall appoint the Chair of the Search Committee and the Chair of the Transition Committee

(b) The Standing Committee shall convene a joint session of both committees to commission and charge them in their ministries.

(c) Members of the Search Committee shall continue as members until the close of the Convention to Elect at which the Bishop Diocesan, Bishop Coadjutor or Bishop Suffragan is elected, or until the Search Committee has been discharged by vote of the Convention to Elect. Members of the Transition Committee shall continue as members at least six months following the ordination of the bishop-elect or until the Transition Committee is discharged by vote of the Standing Committee.

(d) A Member of the Search Committee or a member of the Transition Committee whose name is proposed for election under this canon must either withdraw from consideration or resign from the committee.

(e) The Standing Committee may at any time fill any vacancy in the membership of these committees caused for any reason.

(f) The Search Committee and the Transition Committee may adopt rules and procedures not inconsistent with the Constitution and Canons of The Episcopal Church and of this Diocese.

Rationale:
In reviewing Canon 19 this past summer to prepare to launch the Process for the Search of a New Bishop, the Standing Committee discovered that the expectations of this canon to elect one member of the clergy and one lay person from each deanery did not match the current reality. It hails from a time before technology sped up communication and eased some of the strain of geographic isolation. Additionally, for nearly a decade, many deaneries have not:

- Held the requisite official or regular meetings
- Maintained active rosters or leadership structures
- Developed the organizational capacity needed to hold representative elections

In light of this, the Standing Committee, in consultation with the Chancellor, the Diocesan Council, and the Constitution and Canons Committee, decided it was necessary to deviate from the canonical election process, while still honoring the intent of the canons, namely broad deanery representation, transparency, and faithful discernment. To consult with the entirety of the Diocese, a Zoom listening session was held on July 16th with no objection to this new process.

This resolution is needed to incorporate this adapted process into the canons. This change does not alter the intent of the canon but only shifts the manner in which it is effectuated.

While we were amending the canon, we took the opportunity to normalize and standardize the language across the two committees by removing the "~~confirmed~~ communicant in good standing" from the Transition Committee.

Resolution NY-B

Originator: Constitution and Canons Committee of the Episcopal Diocese of WNY
Subject: Canon 19: Election of a Bishop, Amendment B

§3. Nominees.

(1) The Search Committee shall communicate to the Standing Committee not fewer than ~~four~~ two nominees whom it considers qualified for the Episcopal Office to be filled at least twelve weeks before the Convention to Elect. The Standing Committee shall communicate the names of the nominees throughout the diocese.

(2) Following the announcement of the names submitted by the Search Committee, other persons may be placed in nomination by Petition. To be nominated by Petition, persons must have the signatures of not fewer than five members of the Clergy of the Diocese entitled to vote, and not fewer than ten adult communicants in good standing of the Diocese. The petitioners must represent no fewer than five congregations of the Diocese located in at least two Deaneries. Petitions must be submitted to the Standing Committee within two weeks of the announcement of the names submitted by the Search Committee.

(3) All nominees shall satisfactorily complete a background investigation, the procedure for which shall be determined by the Search Committee, subject to the Canons and policies of The Episcopal Church and of this Diocese.

(4) Biographical sketches of persons placed in nomination, whether by the Search Committee or by petition, shall be distributed by the Secretary of the Diocesan Convention to each member of the Clergy of the Diocese, to every person who is in charge of a congregation but may otherwise not be entitled to vote, and to each lay member of the Convention to Elect prior to the presentation of the nominees to the diocese.

(5) All nominees will be presented to the Diocese within two weeks of the Convention to Elect.

§4. Nominating Process at Convention to Elect. When the Convention to Elect has been called to order and all business incident to its organization has been completed, the Standing Committee shall formally move the nomination of each person nominated who is then qualified for the Episcopal Office to be filled.

§5. The Election.

(1) Recognizing the solemnity of such an occasion, the Ecclesiastical Authority shall insure that the election is placed within an appropriate context of worship and prayer. Each member shall vote religiously and in fear of God, the whole solemnity being an act of religion and part of public worship.

(2) An election shall be declared when one candidate receives a concurrent majority of votes in both lay and clerical orders, each order voting separately.

(3) If the Convention to Elect determines that it is unable to elect a person for the Episcopal Office to be filled, it may direct the Standing Committee to publish rules of order to prepare for another Convention to Elect using the process set forth in this Canon.

§6. The Context of the election of a Bishop. This Canon is an act of solemn prayer, trusting in the guidance of the Holy Spirit. We know the heritage of the Episcopate is the faith of the patriarchs, apostles, and martyrs, and those of every generation who have looked to God in hope; and that a bishop is called to be one with the apostles in proclaiming Christ's resurrection and interpreting the Gospel, and to testify to Christ's sovereignty as Lord of lords and King of kings. We call upon God to be with us in this election that we may choose a bishop and chief pastor.

Rationale:
Witnessing that the pool of candidates for Bishop is not as fulsome as it was in past generations in the Church, this revision seeks to allow the Search Committee and Standing Committee more flexibility as they seek to provide the best slate to Diocesan Convention. The revision down from at least 4 candidates for Bishop to at least 2 candidates is an accommodation to the current state of the Episcopal Church. In recent years, Dioceses much larger than ours (Dallas, California, Ohio, etc.) have all had slates of three candidates. The Revision does not preclude a slate for 4 or more, it simply allows for less.

Resolution NY-C

Originator: Constitution and Canons Committee of the Episcopal Diocese of WNY
Subject: Canon 15

Canon 15 Section 2 concerning the Commission on Ministry from 2020 shall be deleted and replaced with the Section 2 concerning the Commission on Ministry from 2017.

Rationale:
These changes would restore us to our Canon on the Commission on Ministry before the Partnership and reduce the membership from 12 members to 8 members. (see below).

This will be a place holder until the Commission on Ministry and the Bishop Diocesan set a new vision for the Commission.

15§2. Commission on Ministry.
(1) Membership. There shall be a Diocesan Commission on Ministry consisting of ~~six~~ four members of the Clergy canonically resident within the Diocese and ~~six~~ four lay persons, each of whom is an adult confirmed person who is a regular attendant, communicant in good

standing and contributor for at least twelve months to the support of a parish or mission in this Diocese.

(2) How Named. Members of the Clergy and lay persons shall be nominated by the Bishop at the Annual Convention of the Diocese, nominations being confirmed by vote of the Convention.

(3) Term. The term of office of each member of the Commission on Ministry, except for any member who is filling a vacancy, shall be six years, which term shall commence on the first day of November of the year of confirmation and end on the 31st day of October of the sixth year thereafter.

(4) Vacancies. Should a vacancy occur in the Commission on Ministry when the Convention is not in session, the Bishop shall nominate a person to fill such vacancy. Upon confirmation by the Standing Committee, that person shall serve as a member until the 31st day of October next following. At the Annual Convention of that year, the Bishop shall nominate a person to fill the remainder, if any, of the term. Upon confirmation by the vote of the Convention, the person so nominated shall serve as a member for the remainder of that term.

(5) Successive Terms. No person who has served two consecutive terms as a member of the Commission on Ministry, including one nominated and confirmed to complete the term of another, may be re-nominated by the Bishop to the Commission on Ministry until the expiration of one Convention year.

(6) Privileges and Duties. The privileges and duties of the Commission on Ministry shall be those prescribed by the Canons of the General Convention.

(7) Report. The Commission shall make an annual report concerning its work to the Convention of the Diocese.

(8) Service on Standing Committee. No one elected to the Standing Committee of this Diocese shall, during the term of his or her election thereto, serve as a member of the Commission on Ministry of this Diocese.

Resolution NY-D

Originator: The Joint Commission to Dismantle Racism and Discrimination, WNY and NWPA
Subject: Need for Diverse Staffing on All Levels

Resolved: That the newly reconstituted Dioceses of WNY* live into the Gospel call of Becoming Beloved Community by intentionally identifying and transitioning from practices in governance, operations, worship and community ministry that result in complicity with racism, discrimination or exclusion toward healing through loving, liberating, life-giving relationship with all God’s children.

Resolved: That decision-makers, including the laity, parish clergy and Diocesan staff, be mindful of and take steps to mitigate inequitable outcomes for people of color and those from indigenous, immigrant, LGBTQ+, women, differently abled, economically vulnerable and other marginalized communities who have been historically discouraged from full participation in the Church.

Resolved: That every effort be made to increase representation of people of color and those who have been historically discouraged from full participation in the Dioceses of WNY through hiring, staffing and appointment at all levels of Diocesan church organizations, including clergy leadership and parish staffing as well as appointment to committees, commissions and specialized taskforces, both paid and volunteer. Where selection is by election, steps should be taken to encourage a slate of diverse candidates.

Resolved: That those involved in recruitment, screening and/or selection processes for hiring, appointing and staffing at both Diocesan and parish levels be informed of The Episcopal Church's Model Practices for Racial Reconciliation and Healing, receive specialized training as called for in Resolution 2024-A035[1] and establish Model Policies for Anti/Racism/Racial Reconciliation Work. This training shall be conducted for members of the Bishop Search Committee, Diocesan leadership, and parish clergy, *as currently required by The Episcopal Church*.

Resolved: That members of The Joint Commission to Dismantle Racism and Discrimination of WNY and NWPA be trained in The Episcopal Church's Model Practices for Racial Reconciliation and Healing and create a summary document for distribution across WNY parishes.

Resolved: That The Joint Commission to Dismantle Racism and Discrimination of WNY and NWPA, as well as The Union of Black Episcopalians (national) and The UBE Bishop James Theodore Holly Chapter (local) be utilized as resources for outreach and recruitment by the Bishop Search Committee and other recruitment processes as appropriate.

Rationale:
What is understood today as the ministry of Becoming Beloved Community and Racial Reconciliation has not always been endorsed by The Episcopal Church. The history of our Church reveals periods of participation in and of complicity with racism and discrimination in the Church's understanding of the Gospel and of the role of the Church in society. The struggle for inclusion and full participation for all of God's children within the Church has been long and slow and remains incomplete today, as documented in the most recent Racial Justice Audit[2].

All of us, regardless of our race, gender, cultural ethnicity, immigration status, economic standing, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, ability, urban or rural background, etc., understand the world through the lens of our own unique experience and background. We have much diversity amongst us. But as a predominately white Diocese, the legacy of our past

continues to limit our capacity to understand how to move away from racism and discrimination. Becoming Beloved Community calls for healing through authentic relationship-building across differences, mutual learning, inclusive welcome and love.

Greater racial and cultural diversity within Diocesan and parish leadership is a resource. Inclusion strengthens our capacity for Becoming Beloved Community beyond the limitations of decision-making from a white-only perspective. Fairness and openness to learning from difference grows capacity to live in loving relationship with all God's children.

1. https://www.vbinder.net/resolutions/481?house=HD&lang=en
2. https://www.episcopalchurch.org/ministries/racial-reconciliation/racial-justice-audit/

Resolution NY-E

Originator: Elisabeth Brauza-Hughes
Subject: Require Anti-Racism Training for Church Leaders

Be it resolved, that the Episcopal Diocese of Western New York require that all active clergy (to be defined as those in active ministry within the geographic bounds of this diocese), lay diocesan and church employees, diocesan elected leaders, including Standing Committee members, Diocesan Council members, Trustees, and Deputies and Alternate Deputies to General Convention, congregational lay leaders, including Wardens, Treasurers, Convention Delegates, and Vestry members, and all individuals licensed for lay ministries, complete an approved Anti-Racism/Dismantling Racism course through this or another Episcopal diocese, every three years.

Rationale:
In 2022, General Convention resolution C009 mandated that all General Convention deputies and alternate deputies have received this training within the last 3 years before each General Convention they serve. Our diocesan deputation was not in compliance with this requirement at General Convention in 2024.

Additionally, in 2024, General Convention passed resolution A035, which calls for Model Policies for Racial Reconciliation and Healing be developed no later than September 30, 2025, and that such policies include education every 3 years for all clergy, lay employees, and lay leaders. While these policies were not yet released at the time this resolution was prepared, it is possible that they will have been released at the time of our Convention, and if not, they are expected within a short time after.

This resolution seeks to bring us into compliance with 2022-C009, and anticipates what the policies called for by 2024-A035 will likely ask of us.

Moreover, it calls us to live into our baptismal covenant, to seek and serve Christ in all persons, and respect the dignity of every human being.

While we do not currently offer this training in our diocese, training is available online from the following dioceses, that do accept registrants from outside their dioceses:
● Episcopal Diocese of Southern Ohio
● *Episcopal Diocese of New Jersey
● *Episcopal Diocese of Central Pennsylvania (Stevenson School for Ministry)
● *Episcopal Diocese of Atlanta (Absalom Jones Episcopal Center for Racial Healing)

* denotes a fee for registrants from other dioceses

This is not meant as an exhaustive list, but a starting place until such time as this diocese is again able to offer training here.

Resolution NY-F

Originator: Vestry of the Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd Buffalo, The Very Reverend Rebecca Barnes, The Reverend Shannon Collis, The Reverend Elizabeth Hadaway, The Reverend Michael Hadaway, The Reverend Joseph Kozlowski, The Reverend Robin Kozlowski, The Reverend Steve Lane, The Reverend Rosaleen Nogle, The Reverend Claudia Scheda, The Reverend Frieda Webb
Subject: Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)

Resolved: The Diocese of Western New York shares the concerns of other Episcopalians, our siblings in other Christian communities, and many other people in regard to the current actions of the federal government around immigration. We deplore the current model of operations of “ICE” that seem more at home in a totalitarian state than a democracy. The dehumanization, especially by those who self-identify as Christian, of people from different lands is repugnant to the clear sense of Scripture.

Resolved: our congregations are encouraged to have the full text of Leviticus 19:33-34 (or some other Biblical quote supporting alien) placed at their entrances, on their website, and in their bulletins. *“When an alien resides with you in your land, you shall not oppress the alien. The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the native-born among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God.” [Leviticus 19:33-34].*

Resolved: we will continue to minister to whoever comes, make no record of citizenship and work to love our neighbors as ourselves. Both inside our congregations and in our communities.

Rationale:
It is important for Diocese, which contains multiple border crossings, to join with the many voices in the Episcopal church resisting the current treatment of immigrants within the United States.

While the Biblical witness clearly supports welcome to the stranger we often use other language to make out points. As claiming Christian faith supporting or even participating in ICE raids and other suppressions of liberty it important to respond with what the scripture says. This quote from Leviticus is clear and powerful. It also ends the same way the Ten Commandments begin, with the name and authority of the Lord our God. Remember Jesus Christ was a political refugee in Egypt fleeing for his life and his distant ancestor Ruth was an economic refugee in Israel.

The Most Reverend Sean Rowe, our Presiding Bishop, wrote to the church on June 11, 2025:

> *What we are witnessing is the kind of distortion that arises when institutions like the military and the State Department are turned on the people they were meant to protect. These mainstays of the federal government, designed to safeguard civil society and promote peace and stability, are now being weaponized for political advantage."*

In a joint letter the Episcopal bishops in California wrote :

> *… people are concerned and fearful about the denial of due process for those detained and the potential for ICE raids targeting beloved community institutions and people working to support their families. People feel angry and threatened that the haven they sought in our communities is no longer safe. U.S. citizens and legal residents feel deep grief at losing beloved friends and family members. Children whose parents are deported face uncertain futures. In our churches, we strive to protect our members who are at risk.*
>
> *Our Baptismal Covenant asks us, "Will you strive for justice and peace among all people and respect the dignity of every human being (BCP p. 417)?" This question is a direct and ongoing call to us as persons who follow Christ to live out our calling opposed to injustice, to violence of any kind, and to stand up where human beings are not treated as we would treat a child of God.*

Resolution NY-G

Originator: Standing Committee of the Episcopal Diocese of WNY
Subject: Acknowledgement of the secularized church buildings

Resolved, that this 188th Convention of the Diocese of New York, meeting in annual session at Niagara Falls on October 11, 2025, acknowledge the secularization of the church buildings of Grace Episcopal Church, Lockport, St Mary's Episcopal Church,

Salamanca, and St Barnabas' Episcopal Mission, Franklinville, and the conclusion of community life for their members, and be it further

Resolved, that this Convention declare that the union between Grace Church, Lockport, St Mary's Church, Salamanca, and St Barnabas' Mission, Franklinville, and the Episcopal Diocese of Western New York is dissolved and the corporations are extinguished, and be it further

Resolved, that this Convention give thanks to Almighty God for the innumerable acts of love and praise that have proceeded from these communities and commend that the members be accepted and cared for by the worshiping communities of the Diocese.