

4.0 PARISH STRUCTURE

4.1 Parish

At the local level of each diocese, the unit of administration and pastoral responsibility is called the parish. Throughout Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island there are approximately 130 Parishes and 300 congregations. Some parishes have just one congregation and may be referred to as a single point parish. Other parishes can have as many as seven different congregations worshipping in different locations and are referred to as mutli-point parishes. Parishes in the Diocese of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island are incorporated under the Anglican Church Act of Nova Scotia or Prince Edward Island.

An ordained minister called a Rector spiritually guides a parish. Rectors are “Instituted” into parishes by the Bishop at a special service of “Institution”. Clergy in charge of a parish who have not been Instituted by the Bishop are referred to as Priests-In-Charge. When one Rector serves two or more parishes, these parishes constitute a Pastoral Unit. While the individual parishes may still retain their own identity, they share the costs of the joint ministries and of expenses such as the rectory, diocesan allotment, etc.

4.2 Committees

The appointment and work of committees within the parish or church is an important element of the ministry of the Anglican Church. A committee system should be designed to promote an effective division of labor so that the varied interests and abilities of people are put to the best use. The term "shared ministry" is often mentioned in our Diocese. The committees are not meant to work in isolation but to work closely with the appropriate Council and are in all cases responsible to that Council. Effective reporting to Council must be maintained at all times. Committees must receive Council approval of their activities before implementation.

Suggested committees to establish for a parish or congregation are:

1. Spiritual Development
2. Pastoral Ministry
3. Property and Cemeteries
4. Administrations and Finance
5. Personnel

6. Stewardship

Parishes may find it necessary to establish other committees in addition to those listed. The full responsibility and Terms of Reference of the various ministries of parish and congregation are outlined in Canon 35.

4.3 Executive Committee

While not specifically outlined in Canon 35, many parishes form an executive Committee usually composed of the Rector and Wardens. This group meets for mutual support and to ensure that the decisions of Parish Council are carried out expeditiously. This group might also identify concerns and problems that need to be addressed by Council.

4.4 Parish Meetings

Canon 35 contains helpful information concerning the order of business for parish and church annual meetings, special meetings, and regular council meetings. It is advisable to consult with this section of Canon 35 before preparing agendas.

An annual meeting of a parish or church shall be held in each calendar year no later than the third week of February of that year. The date, time, and place of an annual meeting shall be announced at all divine services during a period of time beginning at least fourteen days before the date. The quorum at a parish meeting shall be at least six parishioners for each lay delegate elected to the previous Synod. The quorum at a church meeting shall be: 1) three or more persons who are entitled to vote at the meeting, where, on an average Sunday, the congregation consists of up to fifteen persons; 2) eight or more persons who are entitled to vote, where, on an average Sunday, the congregation consists of more than fifteen persons and up to fifty persons; 3) twelve or more persons who are entitled to vote, where, on an average Sunday, a congregation consists of more than fifty persons and up to one hundred and fifty persons; 4) twenty-four or more persons who are entitled to vote, where, on an average Sunday, a congregation consists of more than one hundred and fifty persons and up to three hundred persons; and 5) thirty or more persons who are entitled to vote, where, on an average Sunday, a congregation consists of more than three hundred persons.

The frequency of meetings of a parish council shall be as determined by the council but there shall be no fewer than six meetings during each calendar year. The frequency of a church council shall be as determined by the council. At a meeting of a parish or church council, a majority of the elected members of the council constitute a quorum.

4.4.1 Special Meetings

Special meetings of the parish or church councils may be held at the instance of the Rector or Priest-in-Charge, the Wardens, or upon the written request given to the secretary of the council of at least ten parishioners entitled to vote at such a meeting. Parishioners of any parish or church may be called together for any business as often as it is considered necessary. The quorum for a special general meeting of a parish or council is the same as it is for an annual general meeting.

4.4.2 Position Of Chair

The chair of a parish or church council is elected at the first meeting of the council following the annual meeting. Annual or special meetings shall elect the chair. Clergy, Wardens, or council members, may serve as chair or in the case of an annual or special meeting of the parishioners any parishioner may be elected as chair. It is also advisable for the parish or church council to elect a vice chair.

4.5 Societies And Organizations

Throughout the Diocese, there are a wide range of societies and groups operating within parishes or churches. Any guild, society, auxiliary, club or other organization within the parish or church must submit their financial statements to be duly audited along with the financial statements of the parish or church prior to the respective annual general meeting. These groups and organizations must also submit a written report of the previous year's work along with the audited financial statements to the respective annual general meeting. No organization or group shall be formed within the parish except with the approval of the appropriate Council. This highlights the role of the Council as the ultimate authority within the parish or church. The Rector has additional responsibilities and authority conveyed by the Bishop.

4.6 Parochial Corporation

Parishes in the Diocese of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island are incorporated under the Anglican Church Act of either Nova Scotia or Prince Edward Island. The incorporated body is described as the Rector, Wardens, and Parish Council of a particular parish. In Nova Scotia the legal name of a parish is outlined in the Church Act and the name form is as follows: "the name of a parochial corporation shall be the Rector, Wardens and Parish Council of the Parish . . . of . . . in the County of . . ." However, the Bishop has the authority to grant other name formats. Examples of this would be the "Parish of Avon Valley" or the "Parish of All Saints by the Sea, Canso". In Prince Edward Island the Prince Edward Island Church Act lists all parishes on the Island, i.e. The Parish of Alberton, The Parish of Port Hill, The Parish of Georgetown etc. The Church Acts bestow upon the Parochial Corporation typical powers granted to corporations (i.e. "with power to sue and to be sued, to have a common seal, to receive grants of real and personal property for the use of the church and all parochial purposes, to improve any such real property and receive rents thereof for the like use, and with the approval of the bishop in writing to sell, convey and

mortgage such real and personal property, and to make bylaws and regulations consistent with the laws of the province for the management of the temporalities of the corporation and the due orderly conducting of its affairs") It is important to note that it is the parish that is incorporated and not individual churches within the parish. Title to property and material assets must be placed in the name of the parish. It is the parish that is authorized to borrow money and not individual churches.