

Canon 35 Reform Webinar

Date: May 1 2025

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Webinar Agenda

- Problems with the existing Canon 35
- New approach to governance structures for
 - Single church parishes
 - Multi-church parishes
- How these address the problems

Webinar Agenda (cont'd)

- Making it happen
 - New Canon 35 (to be presented to Synod)
 - Model bylaws (drafted, to be approved by Diocesan Council)
 - New Parish Officers' and Treasurers' handbooks
- Content of the new Canon
- Looking past Synod: implementation plan

The problems with Canon 35

- Long, complex, and repetitive
- Used as the primary reference on governance matters
- ... but didn't have answers to many questions
- Parish Councils are too large and it's too hard to find members
- Does not deal with multi-parish ministries

Key Definitions

- “Church”
- “Parish”
- “Rector”
- Other terms:
 - Council of the Community
 - Shared Ministry Arrangement
 - Collaborative Ministry Arrangement

Overall Approach

- Single-church and multi-church parishes are different
- Canon provides essential principles
- Details are in new bylaws, policy, and training material
- Bylaws for each parish will bring it all together
- Flexibility for changing situations

Single Church Parishes

- Parish Council:
 - Small in size
 - makes the big decisions
 - coordinates all the parts
- Work is done by teams or committees
- Smaller parishes
 - may do most of the work through Parish Council
 - may use a Council of the Community

Multi-church Parishes

- Parish Council
 - makes the financial, policy and legal decisions
 - coordinates ministry among churches
- Parish Council is made up of
 - Clergy and an LLM
 - An elected executive
 - The wardens and treasurers of the churches
 - The elected Synod Delegates

At the church level

Options:

- Elected Church Council
- Elected executive
- Parish Council assumes responsibility for a church
- Shared Church Councils

A Tale of Four Parishes ...

- Parish of William Laud
- Parish of St. Hilary
- Parish of the Four Winds
- Parish of the Three Angels

How this fixes the problems (1)

It's too long, complex, and detailed:

- Limit the canon to the essential rules that aren't like to change

It's the primary resource document but doesn't have all the answers

- Parish bylaws

- New training resources

Parish Councils are too large

- Refocus on governance

- Different for single- and multi-church parishes

Responses to the identified problems (2)

It's too hard to find people

- Smaller Parish Councils
- Clear expectations and communication
- Deal with conflict in a healthy way

What about shared/collaborative ministries and flexibility?

- Covered in bylaws

Content of the New Canon

- What the canon is about: parishes; parish councils
- Definitions
- Requirement that parishes participate in regional ministry
- Parish corporation authorities and limitations
- Parish council authorities and responsibilities (high level)

Content of the New Canon (cont'd)

- All the details will be in model bylaws, approved by the Bishop:
 - single-church parishes
 - multi-church parishes
- Diocesan Council can make policies
- Parish AGMs must be held by the last day of February each year
- Ministries of a parish

The Canon will come into effect on a day established by Diocesan Council

What Synod delegates should consider:

1. Are you in agreement with moving the details on parish governance from Canon to model bylaws which have the approval of Diocesan Executive Council and parish bylaws which have the approval of the Bishop?
2. Are there any aspects of parish governance which should be mandatory for all parishes which aren't included in the Canon?

Implementation Plan

- Diocesan Council will approve the model bylaws
- Parishes will fine-tune the bylaws:
 - Workshop
 - Approve the bylaw
 - Training sessions
- Other resources:
 - SafeR church position descriptions and audits
 - Parish Officers' Handbook