



CANON 35: PARISH GOVERNMENT

BASIS OF CANON AND PURPOSE OF A PARISH

1. (1) The parishes of the Diocese are the primary local expression of the Body of Christ in the Anglican tradition. Their ministries, which enact their life and work, are carried out by congregations under the guidance of their governance structures which are created by this Canon.
- (2) Parish Councils are the governing bodies of the parishes of the diocese and so have responsibility for directing and overseeing the mission of the Parish and its Churches, which is God's mission.

INTERPRETATION

2. (1) In this Canon,
 - (a) "Anglican Church Act of Nova Scotia" means Chapter 130 of the Statutes of Nova Scotia for 1967, the Anglican Church Act; or any Act of the Nova Scotia Legislature that replaces it;
 - (b) "Anglican Church Act of Prince Edward Island" means Chapter 53 of the Acts of the General Assembly of Prince Edward Island for 1972, the Anglican Church Act or any Act of the House of Assembly of Prince Edward Island that replaces it;
 - (c) "Bishop" means the Bishop of the Diocese;
 - (d) "church" means
 - (i) a congregation that has a place, physical or virtual, in which to worship or meet, or
 - (ii) where more than one divine service is held in the place on Sundays, all the congregations for which the divine services are held, recognized by a parish as a church included in the parish;
 - (e) "communicant" means a baptized Christian who regularly receives Holy Communion as a worshipping member of a congregation;
 - (f) "congregation" means a group of people organized to minister, worship and learn from God's Holy Word, with or without a place in which to worship or meet;
 - (g) "Diocese" means the Diocese of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island;
 - (h) "parish" means
 - (i) a congregation, or
 - (ii) two or more congregations that are, for the purpose of ministry, grouped together, served by a member of the clergy or other individual licensed by the Bishop in a territory or district allotted by the Bishop for that purpose, but does not include the congregations worshipping at the Cathedral Church of All Saints, Halifax.



- (i) For the purpose of this Canon, the term “Rector” includes the Rector, priest-in-charge or other incumbent of the parish.
- (2) A reference in this Canon to a parish corporation of a parish is a reference to the parish corporation that is formed
 - (a) by the Anglican Church Act of Nova Scotia constituting, as a body corporate, the Rector, wardens and the other members of the parish council of the parish; or
 - (b) by the Anglican Church Act of Prince Edward Island constituting, as a body corporate, the Rector, wardens and, the other members of the parish council of the parish.
- (3) For greater certainty, a reference in this Canon to a church or a congregation that forms a part of a parish includes a single congregation or church that, in itself, constitutes that parish.

PARISHES AND CONGREGATIONS AS FUNCTIONING PARTS OF REGIONS

- 3. Every parish and every congregation that forms a part of the parish shall be a functioning part of the region in which the parish exists.

PARISH CORPORATIONS

- 4. (1) There is, by reason of the Anglican Church Act of Nova Scotia and the Anglican Church Act of Prince Edward Island, a parish corporation for each parish.
- (2) Each parish corporation is a separate legal entity and may
 - (a) sue and be sued;
 - (b) have a common seal;
 - (c) receive grants of real and personal property for the use of the church and all parish purposes;
 - (d) improve such real property and receive rents thereof for the like use;
 - (e) with the approval of the Bishop in writing, sell, convey, lease and mortgage such real and personal property;
 - (f) when the appropriate amendments have been made to the Acts, sell, convey, lease and mortgage personal property;
 - (g) make by-laws and regulations for the management of the temporalities of the corporation and the due orderly conducting of its affairs.
 - (h) enter into a shared ministry arrangement, and ecumenical ministry arrangement, or a collaborative ministry agreement.



- (3) The parish corporation of a parish consists of the Rector, wardens and the other members of the parish council of the parish.
- (4) All documents, including deeds, mortgages, leases and contracts, shall be executed on behalf of a parish corporation under the seal of the corporation and shall be signed by the persons authorized under the bylaws of the parish, but any document relating to real property, including a deed, mortgage or lease, is ineffective unless and until it is approved, in writing, by the Bishop.

PARISH COUNCILS

5. (1) There shall be a parish council for every parish.
 - (2) A parish council is the governing body that orders the life of the congregation or congregations forming the parish for which the parish council is established.
6. The governance responsibilities of every parish council include:
 - (a)
 - a. articulating and implementing the mission of the parish;
 - b. entering into a covenant with the Rector and reviewing it at least every two years with the Archdeacon;
 - c. approving all policies for the parish, including SafeR Church policies;
 - d. overseeing the assets of the whole parish (including church buildings, cemeteries and all bank accounts and investments);
 - e. developing and monitoring the annual budget (including the budgets of the churches in a multi-church parish);
 - f. approving all contracts including contracts with paid staff;
 - g. ensuring that there is good communication among the congregations and organizations of the parish;
 - h. ensuring that there is effective governance for all outreach activities of the parish; and
 - i. oversight of all activities in the parish.
 - (b) regularly evaluating the overall life of the parish and recommend ideas for effective ministries;



(c) carrying out such duties as are imposed on it by law, including the Constitution and Canons of the Diocese and the by-laws of the parish.

7. (1) Each parish shall be governed in accordance with the bylaws of the parish.
- (2) Upon this Canon coming into effect, the bylaws of each parish shall be the model bylaws approved by Diocesan Executive Council, either for a single church parish or multi-church parish, as applicable.
- (3) Subject to subsections (4) and (5), a parish council may, at a duly called meeting, make, amend or repeal by-laws respecting the affairs of the parish or a church that forms part of the parish if notice of intention to propose the by-law or to amend or repeal a by-law is given
- (a) at a previous meeting of the parish council; or
- (b) in the notice of the meeting at which the making of the by-law, or its amendment or repeal will be proposed.
- (4) A by-law made pursuant to subsection (3) does not come into force unless and until it is
- (a) ratified at the next duly called annual or special meeting of the members of the parish; and
- (b) approved by the Bishop.
- (5) An amendment or repeal pursuant to subsection (3) does not come into force unless and until it is approved by the Bishop.
- (6) The Bishop shall not approve any bylaw, amendment or repeal if it conflicts with the Constitution or Canons of the Diocese, or with any policy approved by Diocesan Executive Council.
8. (1) The bylaws of a parish shall, without limitation, address the following matters:
- (a) the composition of the parish council;
- (b) the offices, duties and term limits, if any, of the wardens, secretary and treasurer of the parish;
- (c) conduct of meetings of the parish, including quorum and eligibility to attend and vote at any meetings of the parish;
- (d) election of officers of the parish and other members of parish council;
- (e) conduct of the annual general meeting of the parish;



- (f) disclosure of the financial affairs of the parish, including the preparation and presentation of an annual budget of income and expenses, and presentation of the prior year's financial statement to the annual general meeting of the parish;
- (2) The bylaws of a multi-church parish may address:
- (a) the composition of church councils;
 - (b) the offices, duties, and term limits, if any, of the wardens, secretary and treasurer of a church;
 - (c) conduct of meetings of a church, including quorum and eligibility to attend and vote at any meetings of the church;
 - (d) election of officers of a church and other members of a church council;
 - (e) conduct of the annual general meeting of a church;
 - (f) disclosure of the financial affairs of a church, which may be incorporated into the financial affairs of the parish.
9. Diocesan Executive Council may from time to time establish policies respecting parish governance, which policies shall have effect upon parishes when approved by Diocesan Executive Council.
10. Annual general meetings of parishes shall be held no later than the last day of February in each year.



MINISTRIES

11. (1) For the purposes of this Canon, the ministries of a parish are the means by which the life and work of the parish are carried out and shall include:
- (a) proclaiming the Good News of the Kingdom in word and example
 - (b) teaching, baptizing, and nurturing new believers
 - (c) responding to human need, both spiritual and tangible, by loving service
 - (d) transforming the unjust structures of society, challenging violence of every kind and pursuing peace and reconciliation
 - (e) safeguarding the integrity of creation, and sustaining and renewing the life of the earth
 - (f) nurturing the household of God, including:
 - (i) Deepening the discipleship of all members of the parish through worship and spiritual practices of prayer, study, and service
 - (ii) Life together which enacts the love we share as siblings in Christ
 - (iii) Regular self-examination of the life and ministry of the parish

And other ministries discerned by the parish or church

- (2) Each parish and church shall nurture and carry out the ministries of the parish for which it is established.
- (3) In order to fulfill the ministries of a parish or a church the parish council established for the parish or the church council established for the church, as the case may be, may establish such structures that are, in the opinion of the parish council or the church council, appropriate for the parish or the church, as the case may be, under the circumstances, including the size and resources of the parish, or the church.
- a) The parish council shall ensure that parish property, finances, and administration which are used in the parish's ministries are adequately managed by:
- (i) providing for a regular inspection of all buildings and grounds owned by the parish corporation, including, cemeteries and, at a time agreed upon by the Rector and the committee, regular inspections of the rectory,
 - (ii) investigating and recommending to the parish council established for the parish a continuing maintenance program and providing estimates of costs and supervision of approved work,
 - (iii) providing operational and janitorial services,



- (iv) inspecting the rectory owned or rented by the parish, before the appointment of an incumbent, by a committee together with the wardens of the parish and the regional dean for the region in which the territory or district allotted to the parish is located,
- (v) carefully and periodically examining all the buildings to establish the best means for the conservation of energy;
- (vi) the supervision of the finances of the parish and each congregation that forms a part of the parish, including a regular review of the work of the Treasurer of the parish,
- (vii) adequate insurance coverage on all properties of the parish corporation of the parish,
- (viii) the preparation of a budget of estimated receipts and expenditures for the ensuing year for the parish and each church forming a part of the parish for approval by the parish council established for the parish and each church council established for a congregation that forms a part of the parish and presentation to the annual meeting of the parish and the annual meeting of each,
- (ix) the implementation of bequests;
- (x) cultivation of a greater awareness of the Anglican Church's mission and ministry and the resources required to fulfill its gospel mandate, including:
 - maintaining an ongoing awareness of stewardship;
 - empowering the parish to exercise the stewardship of their gifts within the parish and beyond
 - providing secretarial and office help and equipment,
 - providing current parish lists and maintaining up-to-date information on parish registers,
 - providing leadership in maintaining open communication with the parish,
 - providing statistics respecting the parish according to the Diocesan schedule and reporting the statistics to annual meetings of the parish, and
 - when necessary, establishing or providing for the establishment of a committee or task group to make recommendations to the parish council or the church council respecting the hiring or review or both the hiring and review of staff other than clergy.