



**REFORMED EPISCOPAL CHURCH
DIOCESE OF THE NORTHEAST AND MID-ATLANTIC
COMMITTEE ON CANONS**

**REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON CANONS TO THE 138TH COUNCIL
OF THE DIOCESE OF THE NORTHEAST AND MID-ATLANTIC**

NOVEMBER 1, 2022

The Committee on Canons reports as follows:

1. REVISION OF PARISH BYLAWS

The Committee was asked to advise with respect to revisions to parish bylaws. Three parishes submitted proposed changes to the bylaws and the Committee has considered the proposed changes. These mainly involve alterations to the composition or quorum of vestries. The Committee has provided suggestions to each of the parishes concerned.

**2. REVISIONS TO THE CONSTITUTION OF THE DIOCESE OF THE NORTHEAST
AND MID-ATLANTIC**

A. Board of Directors of the Theological Seminary of the Reformed Episcopal Church

The Committee considered a change to the Diocesan Canons which would alter the manner of electing members of the Board of Directors for the Theological Seminary of the Reformed Episcopal Church. This change would make the Seminary Board directly responsible to the Diocesan Council.

The current Seminary Charter provides for a Board of Directors as follows:

The number of trustees of the corporation shall not be less than seven nor more than 15. They shall be elected by the [Diocesan Council] at its regular meetings, and shall hold their offices for such terms as the [Diocesan Council] may from time to time direct and until their successors are elected.

The Committee's proposed change provides for a simpler election process and largely duplicates the language of the Seminary Charter:

1. ARTICLE IX, SECTION 3

Article IX, Section 3 shall be amended as follows:

Current Version:

Section 1. The following Committees and Boards shall be elected annually:

(3). A Board of Directors for the Theological Seminary of the Reformed Episcopal Church, consisting of nine members, in accordance with the Charter of the Institution. Members serve three year terms, with three members being elected annually. Members who have served for two consecutive terms may not be elected for a third consecutive term

Proposed Amendment: The current version of Subsection (3) shall be deleted and replaced by the following:

(3). A Board of Directors for the Theological Seminary of the Reformed Episcopal Church, consisting of between seven and fifteen members, to serve a one-year term.

In accordance with Article XI, the Committee proposes this Amendment for Final Reading at this Council. The Amendment shall take effect immediately upon adoption by this Council. The Motion is as follows:

Upon Motion and Second, it is hereby resolved that the Constitution of the Diocese of the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic of the Reformed Episcopal Church be amended as follows:

- 1. The Current version of Article IX, Section 3 of the Constitution shall be deleted.**
- 2. In place of the current provision, the following shall be inserted:**

“A Board of Directors for the Theological Seminary of the Reformed Episcopal Church, consisting of between seven and fifteen members, to serve a one-year term.”
- 3. The Amendment is proposed for Final Reading at this Council and shall take effect immediately upon adoption.**

3. REVISIONS TO THE CANONS OF THE DIOCESE OF THE NORTHEAST AND MID-ATLANTIC

A. Associate Rector

The Committee considered one change to the Diocesan Canons which would provide for the election of an Associate Rector. The purpose of this change is to create an opportunity for a parish to call a successor to its current Rector in advance of the incumbent's retirement or resignation from the parish.

The impetus behind this proposal is to eliminate the delays inherent in calling a new Rector. The Committee is of the opinion that a long interrim between the retirement or resignation of a Rector and the call of a successor may have deleterious effects on the mission and growth of the parish. In some cases, therefore, it may be desirable for a successor to be called in order that a new Rector may be in place upon the departure of the incumbent.

The proposal does not envision that every parish will opt to call an Associate Rector. On the contrary, in certain cases, it will be desirable for an interrim Rector be appointed in order to lead the parish through an assessment of the its ministry and assist the parish in extending a call to a new Rector.

Consequently, the Committee includes a requirement that the call of an Associate Rector may only be made with the consent of the Bishop Ordinary. Our assumption is that each parish is unique, and that while some parishes will benefit from calling an Associate Rector, a traditional interrim Rectorship may be appropriate in other cases. We believe, therefore, that the decision to call an Associate Rector should only be done after full consultation with, and approval from, the Bishop.

The Committee's proposed changes are as follows:

1. TITLE I, CANON I, SECTION 3

Title I, Canon I, Section 3 shall be amended as follows:

Current Version:

Title I, Canon I, Section 3. Titles of Clergy and those serving

(A). A Presbyter in charge of a Parish shall be designated the Rector or Pastor thereof.

Proposed Amendment: A new subsection providing an additional definition of an Associate Rector shall be added to read:

Title I, Canon I, Section 3. Titles of Clergy and those serving

(A). A Presbyter in charge of a Parish shall be designated the Rector or Pastor thereof.

(B). A Presbyter specifically called to become Rector upon the retirement or resignation of the incumbent Rector shall be designated the Associate Rector.

Subsections (C) through (E) shall be renumbered as subsections (D) through (F).

2. TITLE III, CANON I

Title III, Canon I shall be amended as follows:

Proposed Amendment: A new Section shall be added providing for the calling of an Associate Rector to read:

Section 2. Unless otherwise provided by the Charter or Bylaws of the Parish, or ordered by the Parish at a stated meeting, the Vestry, with the concurrence of the Rector and the Ordinary, shall take initial and final action in the calling of an Associate Rector.

Sections 2 through 10 of Title III, Canon I shall be renumbered as Sections 3 through 11.

3. GLOSSARY OF TERMS

The Glossary shall be amended to add a definition of Associate Rector as follows:

Associate Rector: A Presbyter specifically called to become Rector of a parish upon the retirement or resignation of the incumbent Rector.

In accordance with Article XI, the Committee proposes this Amendment for Final Reading at this Council. The Amendment shall take effect immediately upon adoption by this Council. The Motion is as follows:

Upon Motion and Second, it is hereby resolved that the Canons of the Diocese of the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic of the Reformed Episcopal Church be amended as follows:

1. Title I, Canon I, Section 3 shall be amended to insert a new subsection B into the Section as follows:

(B). A Presbyter specifically called to become Rector upon the retirement, resignation, incapacity, or death of the incumbent Rector shall be designated the Associate Rector.

2. Subsections (B) through (E) of Title I, Canon I, Section 3 shall be renumbered as subsections (C) through (F).

3. A new Section shall be added to Title III, Canon I as follows:

Section 2. Unless otherwise provided by the Charter or Bylaws of the Parish, or ordered by the Parish at a stated meeting, the Vestry, with the

concurrence of the Rector and the Ordinary, shall take initial and final action in the calling of an Associate Rector.

4. Sections 2 through 10 of Title III, Canon I shall be renumbered as Sections 3 through 11.

5. The Glossary of Terms shall be amended to add a definition of Associate Rector as follows:

Associate Rector: A Presbyter specifically called to become Rector of a parish upon the retirement, resignation, incapacity, or death of the incumbent Rector.

6. The Amendment is proposed for Final Reading at this Council and shall take effect immediately upon adoption.

3. Other Business

No other business came before the Committee this year.

Respectfully submitted,

(The Very Reverend) Jon Abboud

(The Reverend) M.P. Harrington