

**Holy Trinity Parish**  
**Vestry Handbook**

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## Responsibilities of the Vestry

Anglican polity consists of clergy and laity, each has respective spheres, but work in concert

Clergy in charge of “spiritualities” of the parish

Bishops in charge of doctrine and discipline of parish clergy

Parish clergy in charge of the spiritual ministries of the church

Worship, liturgy, catechesis, evangelism, mercy, and execution of the same

Rector appointed by Vestry in consultation with Bishop; all other staff under Rector

Vestry (as a lay body) in charge of the “temporalities” of the parish

Maintenance of the “fabric” of the church: building and its appointments, finances

Vestry involved with

The vestry is not an elder board; it does not establish doctrine or determine ministry

It “acts” (moves) only in regards to temporalities (and the hiring of the Rector)

How these relate: the Vestry’s charge

Produce budget, monitor finances, approve expenditures, steward parish’s money

Model strong personal commitment to generosity (time as well as money)

Advise rector on ministry priorities and congregational morale

Respectful consultation needed, not usually formal motions (i.e. “acts of the vestry”)

Partner with Rector in holding ministry operations accountable to mission/principles

Conduct occasional reviews of rector-vestry relationship (all other staff reviewed by Rector)

Governance/Oversight vs. Management/Operations

The Vestry *does* provide governance, which is high level stewardship of parish mission

Knowing the mission and principles of the parish

Partnering with Rector in ensuring strategic execution of mission/principles

Ensuring financial commitments align with mission/principles and best institutional practices

The vestry *does not* manage the day-to-day ministries/operations of the parish

This falls under purview of Rector and the staff under him

Issues of regular practices and ministry minutiae ought to be taken to the Rector directly

If these matters are brought to the Vestry, *consultation only, not a motion*, is requested;

which is to say: meeting time should *not* be absorbed by day-to-day minutia of operations

Issues of pastoral care only rarely come up in Vestry meetings, and if so, very generally

What is expected of Vestry members as individuals:

A life of active discipleship; *especially in conformity to doctrine/discipline of diocese and province*

Regular attendance at meetings; *absences allowed only by advanced request, and for weighty cause*

Model generosity, *in deliberation, in time (i.e. be involved in the ministry of parish), and with money*

Uphold the mission/principles of parish, *especially via partnership with Rector and parish staff*

Uphold confidences, especially the deliberations of the Vestry; *official acts of the whole body, once*

*decided, ought to be whole-heartedly supported in one-on-one conversations with parishioners*

**Duties of the Vestry**  
As Prescribed by Canon

**Canons of the Anglican Diocese of the Living Word**  
Title II, Canon 1, Section 5 & Canon 3, Section 1

Canon 1, Section 5. Governance of Congregations

A. Governing Body of Congregation Defined and How Elected

The Rector and Vestry shall be the governing body of the Congregation.

B. Governing Documents and Structure

- i. Each Congregation shall adopt governing documents in conformity the Constitution and Canons of the Diocese and shall operate in accordance with the same. Each Congregation shall furnish to the Chancellor a copy of its governing documents, and such governing documents of each Congregation shall be kept by the Registrar.
- ii. Duties: The Vestry shall at a minimum have the following duties:
  - a. Provide for the financial support of the Rector and exercise fiduciary oversight of the Congregation's finance. No monies of the congregation shall be paid out except pursuant to a budget adopted by the vestry or upon authorization of the vestry.
  - b. Pray regularly for the Rector and the Congregation;
  - c. Support the Rector in all aspects of his ministry, including ensuring the Christian formation, biblical literacy, and spiritual maturity of the members of the Congregation;
  - d. Provide an adequate place for regular worship;
  - e. Provide for the compensation of paid staff members;
  - f. Establish an adequate insurance program for the Congregation that includes, at a minimum, property damage, liability, personal injury, and errors and omissions;
  - g. Support biblically-based financial giving by members of the Congregation;
  - h. Ensure that the Congregation shares in the financial support of the Diocese; and
  - i. Strive for unity and adopt principles for resolving conflict.
- iii. Vestry Oath. Every person elected a Vestry member shall take the following oath of office: "I do believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God and to contain all things necessary for salvation through Our Lord Jesus Christ and I do yield my hearty consent to the Constitution and Canons of the Diocese. I promise, with God's help, that I will faithfully execute the duties of the office of Vestry member of this Congregation to the best of my ability."
- iv. Vestry Elections. Every Congregation shall have an annual meeting in keeping with its governing documents at which meeting new Vestry members shall be elected.

[Canon 2 involves the relationship of the Vestry to the Rector and other Clergy]

Canon 3, Section 1. No Denominational or Diocesan Trust in Congregation and Mission Property

All real and personal property owned by or held for the benefit of a Congregation or Mission shall belong exclusively to that Congregation or Mission free of any trust or other claim by the Diocese, the Province, and all other ecclesiastical entities both in the United States and beyond.

## **Canons of the Anglican Church in North America**

### **Title I, Canon 6, Sections 5 & 6**

#### **Section 5 - Concerning Governing Boards**

There shall be a governing board of each congregation, often known as the vestry, which is chosen and serves according to applicable laws, diocesan canons, and the congregational bylaws. The Presbyter in charge of the congregation shall always be a member of the governing board and its presiding officer except as provided by diocesan canon. The governing board is responsible for the temporalities of the congregation and, except where otherwise provided by canon, supports the clergy in the spiritual leadership of the congregation.

#### **Section 6 - Concerning Property Ownership**

All congregational property, real and personal, owned by a member congregation is and shall be solely and exclusively owned by the congregation and shall not be subject to any trust in favor of the Province or other claim of ownership arising out of the canon law of the Church; neither may any Diocese assert any such claim over the property of any of its congregations without the express written consent of the congregation. Where property is held in a different manner by any Diocese or grouping, such ownership shall be preserved.

### **By-Laws of Holy Trinity Parish**

#### **Article II, Sections 5, 10, and 11**

*Section 5* The regular Vestry meeting shall be held at a time and place designated by the Vestry. The Vestry shall meet once a month or as often as necessary. All meetings of the Vestry shall be open to any member of the Parish to observe, unless under appropriate circumstance the Vestry chooses to go into executive session.

*Section 10* The Vestry shall have the care and management of all temporal affairs of the parish including real estate and personal property subject to Article I, Section 5. Members of the Vestry are *ex officio* Directors of the legal corporation.

*Section 11* It shall be the duty of the Vestry to elect and call a Rector and to provide for his maintenance as agreed upon, or otherwise to provide for the regular worship of the parish. Once called, the priest may be dismissed only for such substantiated cause as defined in the Canons of the Church and the laws of the State of Michigan. The Vestry shall keep order during divine worship and act as helpers to the clergy in the furtherance of the Gospel.

#### **Qualifications and Officers according to Parish By-Laws *in brief***

The vestry shall consist of not fewer than 6 members (Art. 2, Sec. 1)

Members of the vestry must be eligible voters of the parish (Art. 1, Sec. 2 & Art. 2, Sec 2)

At each annual meeting, approximately 1/3 of the vestry is elected (Art. 2, Sec. 1)

Terms are 3 years; no vestry member can serve more than 6 consecutive years (Art. 2, Sec. 2)

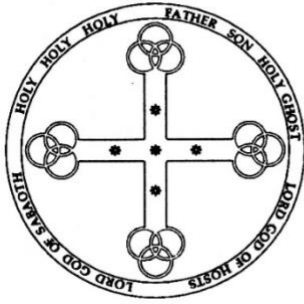
Two elected members are chosen by the vestry every year to serve as Wardens (Art. 2, Sec. 3)

The duties of the Wardens are prescribed in Art. IV, concerning the same

The vestry appoints a Treasurer and Secretary, which need not be elected members (Art. 2, Sec. 4)

The duties of the Treasurer and Secretary are prescribed in Art. V, concerning the same

The Rector presides at meetings; he has voice, but only tie-breaking vote (Art 2. Sec. 7 & Art. 3 Sec. 2)



## *Holy Trinity Parish*

P. O. Box 845  
Hillsdale, Michigan 49242

### Vestry Oath

[Date]

I commit to serve as a member of the Vestry of Holy Trinity Parish until the conclusion of my term, or until unforeseeable impediments prevent me, in accordance with the following affirmations:

I affirm that

I have been baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,  
I have been confirmed or received by an Anglican bishop in Communion,  
I am a member in good standing of the parish, *and*  
I have been duly elected to this office by a vote of the membership of the parish.

In the exercise of my office as a vestry member, I commit to uphold  
the Bylaws of this Parish,  
the Constitution and Canons of the Anglican Diocese of the Living Word, *and*  
the Jerusalem Declaration of the Global Anglican Future Conference.

Finally and in accordance with the Canons of the Anglican Diocese of the Living Word, I make the following oath of office:

“I do believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God and to contain all things necessary for salvation through Our Lord Jesus Christ and I do yield my hearty consent to the Constitution and Canons of the Diocese. I promise, with God’s help, that I will faithfully execute the duties of the office of Vestry member of this Congregation to the best of my ability.”

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Sign

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Date

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Print Full Name (please write clearly)

## The Jerusalem Declaration

In the name of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit:

We, the participants in the Global Anglican Future Conference, have met in the land of Jesus' birth. We express our loyalty as disciples to the King of kings, the Lord Jesus. We joyfully embrace his command to proclaim the reality of his kingdom which he first announced in this land. The gospel of the kingdom is the good news of salvation, liberation and transformation for all. In light of the above, we agree to chart a way forward together that promotes and protects the biblical gospel and mission to the world, solemnly declaring the following tenets of orthodoxy which underpin our Anglican identity.

1. We rejoice in the gospel of God through which we have been saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit. Because God first loved us, we love him and as believers bring forth fruits of love, ongoing repentance, lively hope and thanksgiving to God in all things.
2. We believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God written and to contain all things necessary for salvation. The Bible is to be translated, read, preached, taught and obeyed in its plain and canonical sense, respectful of the church's historic and consensual reading.
3. We uphold the four Ecumenical Councils and the three historic Creeds as expressing the rule of faith of the one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
4. We uphold the Thirty-nine Articles as containing the true doctrine of the Church agreeing with God's Word and as authoritative for Anglicans today.
5. We gladly proclaim and submit to the unique and universal Lordship of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, humanity's only Saviour from sin, judgement and hell, who lived the life we could not live and died the death that we deserve. By his atoning death and glorious resurrection, he secured the redemption of all who come to him in repentance and faith.
6. We rejoice in our Anglican sacramental and liturgical heritage as an expression of the gospel, and we uphold the 1662 Book of Common Prayer as a true and authoritative standard of worship and prayer, to be translated and locally adapted for each culture.
7. We recognise that God has called and gifted bishops, priests and deacons in historic succession to equip all the people of God for their ministry in the world. We uphold the classic Anglican Ordinal as an authoritative standard of clerical orders.
8. We acknowledge God's creation of humankind as male and female and the unchangeable standard of Christian marriage between one man and one woman as the proper place for sexual intimacy and the basis of the family. We repent of our failures to maintain this standard and call for a renewed commitment to lifelong fidelity in marriage and abstinence for those who are not married.
9. We gladly accept the Great Commission of the risen Lord to make disciples of all nations, to seek those who do not know Christ and to baptise, teach and bring new believers to maturity.
10. We are mindful of our responsibility to be good stewards of God's creation, to uphold and advocate justice in society, and to seek relief and empowerment of the poor and needy.
11. We are committed to the unity of all those who know and love Christ and to building authentic ecumenical relationships. We recognise the orders and jurisdiction of those Anglicans who uphold orthodox faith and practice, and we encourage them to join us in this declaration.
12. We celebrate the God-given diversity among us which enriches our global fellowship, and we acknowledge freedom in secondary matters. We pledge to work together to seek the mind of Christ on issues that divide us.
13. We reject the authority of those churches and leaders who have denied the orthodox faith in word or deed. We pray for them and call on them to repent and return to the Lord.

14. We rejoice at the prospect of Jesus' coming again in glory, and while we await this final event of history, we praise him for the way he builds up his church through his Spirit by miraculously changing lives.

### **Fundamental Declarations of the Diocese**

#### Constitution of the Anglican Diocese of the Living Word, Article I

The Diocese hereby adopts, receives, and affirms the Global Anglican Future Conference (GAFCON) Statement and the Jerusalem Declaration issued June 29, 2008; and we acknowledge the Fundamental Declarations of the Anglican Church in North America, the Province, as set forth in Article I of the Provincial Constitution. The Thirty-nine Articles of Religion (published in 1571) in all and every Article therein contained, the Book of Common Prayer (the version of 1662), and The Form and Manner of Making, Ordaining, and Consecrating of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, annexed to The Book of Common Prayer of 1662 commonly known as the Ordinal, the texts being read according to their plain and historical sense and being accepted as faithful expressions of the teaching of Scripture, provides the standard for Anglican theology and practice and may be assented unto with a good conscience by all members of the Diocese.

### **Holy Trinity By-Laws**

#### Article IX: Authority

*Section 1* Final authority in all matters pertaining to Holy Trinity Parish shall be Holy Scripture, interpreted in its plain and canonical sense, and in such doctrine of the ancient Fathers and Councils of the Church as are agreeable to the said Scriptures. In particular, such doctrine is to be found in the classical formularies of the Anglican church: the Book of Common Prayer, the Ordinal, and the Thirty-nine Articles of Religion.

*Section 2* The ecclesiastical authority of the Parish shall be the bishop of Anglican Diocese of the Living Word or his successor. In case of a conflict between them, the Constitution and Canons of the diocese shall take priority over any provision in these By-Laws.

*Section 3* Roberts' Rules of Order Revised shall govern the meetings of this organization, subject to Sections 1 and 2 of this Article.

## **Our mission: *what we do***

**Holy Trinity Parish** is a traditional Anglican congregation of disciples seeking to *hear meekly* God's word, *celebrate joyfully* Christ's sacraments, and *equip generously* the body to bring forth the fruits of the Spirit, that we may *show forth* in Hillsdale the transforming love of Jesus Christ.

## **Our principles: *who we are***

**We are witnesses of the Gospel of Jesus Christ**, by the grace of God through the power of the Holy Spirit. This is the good news of God who loved us before we loved him, reconciling us to himself by grace through the victory of the Cross. Having received this grace by faith in Christ and his sufficiency to save, we order our life together to abide in that grace. In all our worship, relationships, disciplines, and ministry, we seek to reflect the grace of the Gospel to ourselves and to our neighbors.

**We are grounded in the Word of God**, the only divine revelation and ultimate authority on all doctrine and morals. That word is found finally and completely in Jesus Christ the Son of God, about whom the Spirit of God testifies perfectly in all Scripture. We are committed to teaching clearly and learning humbly the Scriptures in their canonical sense. We are also conscious stewards of a tradition of interpretation as we have received it in the historic witness of the Anglican church, especially the *Book of Common Prayer* of 1662, the *Ordinal* annexed to the same, and the *39 Articles of Religion* of 1571.

**We are committed to spiritual formation**, walking with the Spirit to grow in holiness after Christ's likeness in all areas of life. Because Jesus calls the whole body to follow him as his disciples, we believe that this growth is best accomplished as one household of God. Therefore, we endeavor to build ministries of formation where the diverse gifts distributed across the entire body are brought together in an intergenerational effort. We also seek ways to invest intentionally in our students from Hillsdale College, encouraging their full participation not as guests but as members of the family.

**We worship in the beauty of holiness**, because we believe God is the source of all beauty and that the grandeur of creation speaks of his eternal glory. Following his own example in nature and in the rich aesthetics and symbolism of Old Testament worship, we seek to draw the imaginations of men heavenward with artistically enriched worship, crafted in the highest traditions of beauty and excellence. By these means, we aim to make men mindful of the glory of God who calls them and so inspire them to ever greater devotion to his service.

**We seek to build a culture of hospitality**, both in the church and in our homes, that we may extend a warm welcome to our neighbors in a culture increasingly burdened by isolation and loneliness. As a divine Table is the centerpiece of our worship, so an ample spread of food on a dining table is often the context of our fellowship. We desire to share with others the bounty of God's gracious provision to us, seeking to grow in compassion, loving service, and works of mercy and healing after the example of our Lord Jesus.

**We strive to be faithful in mission**, confident that the advancement of God's kingdom is fundamentally his work which he graciously empowers us to do if we look first to him. Our duty and our privilege is to know God in common prayer and devotion, fully trusting in his promise that when we so seek him, he hears us and equips us. By his Holy Spirit going before us and living within us, we are emboldened to spread the good news of the Gospel by word and by deed in our community that all might share with us in the transforming love of Jesus Christ to the glory of God the Father.

## Monthly Calendar of Vestry Meetings

### Necessary Acts at Prescribed Times

#### January

- Approve nominations for vestry elections
- Review previous fiscal year-end financials (as presented by Treasurer)

[Annual Meeting takes place in in the first quarter (Art. 1, Sec. 3), ideally after January vestry meeting]

#### February

- Organizational meeting after Annual Meeting
  - Vestry Education: review respective duties of clergy/staff and vestry
  - Seat newly elected members (including having them sign the Vestry Oath)
  - Appoint wardens and other officers
  - Assign members to chair committees, if desired
  - Approve minutes from Annual Meeting for next year's meeting

#### March

- Organize spring clean-up date (if necessary)
- Authorize first quarter deposit into General Investment Fund
- Approve delegates for diocesan synod

#### April

#### May

#### June

- Authorize second quarter deposit into General Investment Fund

July [the Vestry has historically not met in July owing to the slow pace of the summer and travel]

#### August

#### September

- Organize fall clean-up date (if necessary)
- Authorize third quarter deposit into General Investment Fund

#### October

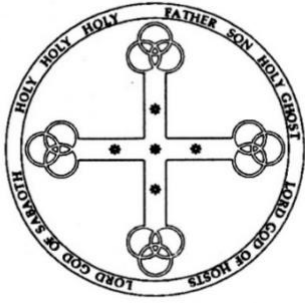
- Go over preliminary draft of next fiscal year's budget

#### November

- Designate date of Annual Meeting
- Consider nominations for vestry election
- Approve next fiscal year's budget

#### December

- Approve clergy housing allowance(s) (form letter below)
- Approve year-end clergy and staff bonuses (if desired)
- Authorize fourth quarter deposit into General Investment Fund



## *Holy Trinity Parish*

P. O. Box 845  
Hillsdale, Michigan 49242

[Date]

Rev. [Clergy Full Name]  
[Clergy Address 1]  
[Clergy Address 2]

Dear [Name],

We greet you in the Lord. We write to inform you that at a regularly scheduled meeting held on the \_\_\_\_ day of December, \_\_\_\_ the Vestry duly adopted the following resolution regarding your compensation for [next fiscal year]:

Whereas, the Rev. [Full Name] is compensated by Holy Trinity Parish in Hillsdale, Michigan exclusively for service as a minister of the Gospel; and

Whereas, Holy Trinity Parish does not provide Rev. [Surname] with a parsonage; thereby, it is

Resolved, that the total compensation paid to Rev. [Surname] for calendar year \_\_\_\_ shall be \$[full salary amount], of which \$[housing allowance amount] is hereby designated to be a parsonage allowance within the meaning of that term in Section 107 of the IRS Code of 1986.

According to Section 107 of the IRS Code, you may exclude from federal income tax the amount used to pay housing expenses up to the amount of the fair rental value, including the cost of furnishings and utilities. You should keep an accurate record of your expenditures to provide a home in order to substantiate any amounts excluded from your gross income in filing your federal income tax return.

We pray all God's blessings and wisdom for you as you serve us as Rector.

To the Triune God be all glory,

[Senior Warden Name]  
Senior Warden, For the Vestry

CC: Treasurer of the Vestry