

INFORMATION ON PROPOSED CANON CHANGES

Canon 1.1 – Composition of Synod

The College of Deacons has requested the option of electing an alternate member of Synod (similar to the provision of lay representatives to Synod) such that if one of their elected members is not able to attend Synod, an alternate can attend in their stead.

Proposed Amendment:

That the following section be added to Canon 1.1:

4. The College of Deacons may annually elect up to two substitute members of Synod from among its members.

Canon 1.9 – Synod Council

This proposed amendment comes after a governance review by the board of Canterbury Hills in response to new provisions of the Ontario *Not-for-Profit Corporations Act*. It removes the membership on Synod Council of a representative from the board of Canterbury Hills. Recognizing this proposed amendment, the board chose not to appoint a representative in 2025. Other diocesan affiliated boards, such as St. Matthew's House, do not have representation on Synod Council.

Proposed Amendment:

That section (n) of Canon 1.9 be deleted.

~~[One representative elected by the Canterbury Hills Board of Directors, for a one-year term, at its first meeting following the conclusion of the Diocesan Synod, provided that the Board of Directors may elect an alternate representative who may attend, and vote at, meetings of the Synod Council should the Board's elected representative be compelled to be absent.]~~

Canon 2.10 – The Cathedral of the Diocese of Niagara

This amendment to section 2 of Canon 2.10 acknowledges the responsibility of the Cathedral's established Cemetery Board for the upkeep the columbarium.

Proposed Amendment:

That section (2) of Canon 2.10 be amended to read:

2. The Cathedral congregation shall have all rights, responsibilities, and duties assigned to a duly established parish by Canon 4.1, with the exception of those fiduciary responsibilities related to the care and trusteeship of the buildings and property on which the Cathedral is situated, including its fixtures, fittings, and fabric, which shall be the responsibility of the diocese, save and except the maintenance, repair or improvement of the organ and the columbarium, which shall remain the responsibility of the Cathedral congregation.

Canon 3.5 – College of Deacons

The College of Deacons has requested clarity about the length of term for members elected to its executive council.

Proposed Amendment:

That section 5(c) of Canon 3.5 be amended to read:

- c) three delegates duly elected from the membership of the College of Deacons, **for a two-year term;**

Canon 4.1 – Vestries and Churchwardens

The revisions proposed to section 4 of Canon 4.1 are based on practical experience. Vesting extraordinary annual vestry meeting deadline extensions with the bishop, rather than with Synod Council, for instance, will lead to more timely decisions and free up valuable time at Synod Council meetings. Vestry regulations enacted during the pandemic recognized that communication about a meeting is best to happen in a number of ways, not just during Sunday worship. The amendment also better reflects the business of an annual vestry meeting. Lastly, in response to regular inquiries, a new clause was added to provide some guidance about nominations, drawing on the canons of the Diocese of Huron.

Proposed Amendment:

That section 4 of Canon 4.1 be amended to read:

- (a) An Annual Vestry Meeting shall be held by the 1st of March each year, or on such day as may be fixed by the Synod. In extraordinary circumstances, this deadline may be extended with the approval of the **Bishop. Synod Council.**
- (b) Notice of the annual meeting shall be given during Divine Service on the two Sundays immediately preceding the said meeting, **and communicated widely to the membership using other means available to the parish.**
- (c) The annual meeting shall be for the purpose of receiving the audited accounts of the Vestry, **the presentation of a budget,** and subsequently of electing and appointing Churchwardens, Lay Representatives, **Parish Council members, and other officers,** and for the transaction of other business connected with the temporalities of the Church.
- (d) **In the absence of an established nominations committee, the Churchwardens and Deputy Churchwardens (if any) shall act as the nominations committee. Further nominations with the consent of the nominee(s) may be made at the Vestry meeting.**

Canon 4.7 – As to Purchasing, Selling or Mortgaging Church Property

An Act to Simplify the Sales of Property Held in Trust for the Church of England in Canada in the Diocese of Niagara (1923) grants the diocese some discretion over the disposition of trust property where it is impossible or inadvisable to maintain the original charitable trust's purpose, however, this discretion is not currently articulated in the corresponding canon. This proposed change harmonizes the text of the canon with our governing legislation such that the full powers available to the Synod are retained.

Proposed Amendment:

That section (9) of Canon 4.7 be amended to read:

9. The proceeds realized from the sale of property shall be paid to the Synod to be held and invested by the Synod under the same trusts, uses, endowments or purposes as those for which the said property were acquired, **or in the case of a change of circumstances, it becomes impossible or inadvisable to do so, such proceeds may, if so desired by the vestry, and with the approval of the Synod, be applied for other church purposes for the benefit of the parish, mission, or congregation on whose behalf the said trust, use, endowment or purpose was created.**