



# EPISCOPAL DIOCESE *of* INDIANAPOLIS

## Convention Delegate Guide

### Introduction to Diocesan Convention

For many visitors and delegates, diocesan convention is a new experience. Other delegates have been to diocesan convention several times and are familiar with the basics of diocesan governance. Whatever your experience, this document is designed to provide a foundation for and common understanding of diocesan convention.

### What is Diocesan Convention

According to the diocesan constitution, the Episcopal Diocese of Indianapolis gathers once a year to “legislate for the continuance and welfare of the Protestant Episcopal Church in this Diocese.” At convention, we worship and celebrate, listen and speak, debate and vote. At convention, laypeople, clergy and the bishop govern the diocese together, practicing the shared authority that shapes our community of faith and allows us to respond to the Holy Spirit’s guidance.

During our business session, we elect people who will oversee the work of the diocese for the next year. We present resolutions, share opinions, and vote on resolutions. We hear from the bishop about the vision for the mission of our diocese and from a keynote speaker about the work God has given us to do.

Convention also includes opportunities to learn, sing, pray, celebrate the Eucharist, and enjoy being the church in community.

### On Convention Delegates

Convention delegates represent their congregations at the annual diocesan convention and at any specially convened conventions. They are responsible for educating themselves about the issues coming before convention, consulting with the

congregation's vestry or bishop's committee about those issues, voting at convention, and reporting back about the actions of convention.

Delegates and alternate delegates should plan to attend not just diocesan convention, but also the spring and fall neighborhood gatherings. The fall neighborhood gatherings are designed to help delegates and clergy become familiar with the business of the upcoming convention, including proposed resolutions, constitutional and canonical changes, nominations for elected offices, and the budget. A representative from the budget committee will attend each fall neighborhood gathering. At the fall gatherings, neighborhoods also elect clergy and lay conveners and members of Executive Council.

Any elected delegate who becomes unable to attend convention is responsible for informing the bishop's office of the change and the name of the alternate delegate who will serve instead.

**Selection of Convention Delegates**

Lay and alternate delegates are generally elected either at congregational annual meetings or by the vestry or bishop's committee. The term of office is generally one to three years and is determined by each congregation's bylaws.

Lay delegates are chosen based on their ability to represent a congregation and vote on its behalf. Members of the vestry or retiring wardens often make good delegates because of their extensive knowledge of the congregation's operations and challenges. Congregations often subsidize the cost of attending convention; new delegates can speak with the rector or priest-in-charge of their congregations for details.

All clergy canonically resident in the diocese are eligible for voice and vote. Licensed clergy are welcome to attend, but do not have voice and vote.

All congregations are entitled to representation at convention based on the number of communicants as defined in the current parochial report:  
(see ARTICLE IV Section 1.b of the constitution)

Any number not to exceed 150	2 delegates
151-300	3 delegates
301-450	4 delegates
451-600	5 delegates
Over 600	6 delegates

Plus one delegate for each 200 communicants in excess of 600

### **What to Expect at Convention**

Hearings on the budget, proposed resolutions, and proposed changes to the constitution and canons will be held at convention before voting begins. Hearings include brief presentation by the chairs of committees and time for questions.

Workshops are offered on Friday and Saturday mornings at convention. The subjects vary each year and are open to all registered attendees.

Elections at convention will be held by electronic balloting. Nominations for elected offices are open until several weeks before convention but can also be made from the floor. Check the website for updated nomination information.

Exhibit and Vendor Hall provides diocesan committees, cooperating ministries and vendors an opportunity to distribute information and sell items to convention attendees.

### **Communications to Expect**

Newsletters – On alternating Wednesdays, the diocese sends a general email newsletter and a leadership newsletter. The leadership newsletter is especially important for convention delegates, and convention information is published beginning in July.

Pre-Convention Newsletter – In August, a special issue of the newsletter will provide information about convention, including how to register, make nominations, propose resolutions and constitutional and canonical changes, and more.

Diocesan website – All convention information, including resolutions, nominations, and other items for convention action, will be posted on the diocesan website for review and download. At convention, just one copy of convention materials is printed for each table; delegates who prefer to have documents available on paper are encouraged to print them in advance of convention.

Questions about convention can be directed to Kim Christopher and Erinna VanDever in the bishop's office at 317- 926-5454.