

Title: SPECIAL RULES OF ORDER FOR VIRTUAL CONVENTIONS

Proposer: David Powell, Chancellor of The Diocese of West Missouri

- 1 **RESOLVED:** That The Diocese of West Missouri adopt the following Special Rules of
- 2 Order for Virtual Conventions (see Attachment 1), and be it further,
- 3
- 4 **RESOLVED:** That the Special Rules of Order be in force only when a Special or Annual
- 5 Convention of the diocese, due to an exigency, cannot meet in person but must meet
- 6 virtually, using online technologies to conduct- gather, debate, resolve, and vote, and
- 7 be it further,
- 8
- 9 **RESOLVED:** That these Special Rules of Order be incorporated as an Appendix of the
- 10 Constitution and Canons of The Diocese of West Missouri.

Explanation:

The Diocese, along with the rest of the United States and the world, is caught up in a National Emergency concerning the outbreak of the novel coronavirus disease (SARS-CoV-2, aka COVID-19), which has resulted in the public being ordered or advised by national, state, and local governments to practice social distancing and other personal protective means to mitigate the spread of the coronavirus. This situation makes meeting as the Convention of The Diocese of West Missouri, whether for a Special Convention or an Annual Convention, dangerous to the health of individuals and the membership of the Diocese. This situation calls for the creation of rules that will allow the diocese to conduct a Special or Annual Convention of the Diocese without violating the best recommendations of public health officials. Therefore, the Special Rules of Order for Virtual Conventions (see attachment) are presented to permit convention delegates to have seat, voice, and vote at safe and convenient virtual conventions when such extraordinary proceedings are deemed necessary by the Ecclesiastical Authority of the Diocese.

ATTACHMENT 1

**SPECIAL RULES OF ORDER FOR
VIRTUAL CONVENTIONS
OF THE DIOCESE OF WEST MISSOURI**

1 To facilitate the ability of The Diocese of West Missouri to hold a virtual annual
2 convention in 2020 and to hold future virtual conventions when deemed necessary by the
3 Ecclesiastical Authority of the Diocese, the following Special Rules of Order are adopted.

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5 The Annual Meeting, or other meeting of the Convention of The Diocese of West
6 Missouri, may be conducted in a virtual format through use of internet-based and other
7 meeting services designated by the Ecclesiastical Authority of the Diocese that support
8 anonymous voting by orders and visible displays: (i) identifying those participating, (ii)
9 identifying those seeking recognition to speak, (iii) showing (or permitting the retrieval of) the
10 text of pending motions, and (iv) showing the results of votes. An electronic meeting of the
11 Convention shall otherwise be subject to all rules adopted by the Convention to govern its
12 annual meeting, which may include any reasonable limitations on, and requirements for,
13 ~~members~~delegates' participation. These Special Rules of Order for Virtual Annual Conventions
14 shall apply to any virtual convention called by the Ecclesiastical Authority of the Diocese and
15 shall supersede any conflicting rules previously adopted by the Convention or stated in
16 Robert's Rules of Order, but only during a convention conducted virtually. At a regular, face-to-
17 face convention, the Diocese's regular Rules of Order will be in force.

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19 In addition, the following procedures shall apply to any virtual convention, whether
20 designated as Annual or Special:

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22 **A. Interpretation of Rules**

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24 For purposes of conventions governed by these Rules, these terms shall have the following
25 interpretation:

- 26
27 • "Convention": The meeting of clergy and laity of The Diocese of West Missouri
28 conducted wholly or in part via remote electronic participation by its ~~members~~delegates.
- 29 • "Seat": The ability to participate in the Convention via electronic connection.
- 30 • "Voice": The right to make oral statements during the Convention.
- 31 • "Vote": The right to cast a vote by voice, via electronic polling, or by filing an electronic
32 ballot during the Convention.

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34 **B. Worship Service**

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36 Notwithstanding Article IX, Section 3 of the Constitution of the ~~diocese, and in recognition of~~
37 ~~the limitations of a virtual meeting format, there shall take place during a virtual~~
38 ~~Convention~~Diocese, a service of Holy ~~Eucharist—~~Eucharist, or another form of prayer or
39 divine service in lieu of ~~communion—such form of worship to be~~communion, as determined by

40 the Ecclesiastical Authority ~~of the Diocese~~ shall take place during a virtual Convention.
41

42 C. Communication Information and Login Instructions 43

- 44 1. ~~Members-Delegates~~ to Furnish Communication Information. No later than three (3) weeks
45 before any such virtual meeting, every member of the clergy entitled to seat, voice, or vote
46 in Convention must notify the Ecclesiastical Authority of his or her email address in order to
47 receive the ability to participate in a Convention held electronically. The Ecclesiastical
48 Authority shall choose the method by which email addresses will be submitted to it. Not
49 later than such date, every rector, vicar, or a warden of any parish or congregation entitled
50 to representation in Convention and the person(s) responsible for the selection of Youth
51 Delegates to the Convention must notify the Ecclesiastical Authority of the email address of
52 (a) every Lay Delegate of such parish or congregation or Youth Delegate or (b) any
53 Alternate who will replace an elected Lay Delegate or Youth Delegate who will be unable to
54 attend the Convention.
55
- 56 2. Secretary to Send Login Information. No later than three (3) days before such meeting, the
57 Secretary of Convention or his or her designee shall send an email to every ~~member-~~
58 ~~delegate~~ of Convention setting forth (a) the time of the meeting, (b) the URL and codes
59 necessary to connect to the internet meeting service, and, as an alternative and backup to
60 the audio connection included within the Internet service, the phone number and access
61 codes that ~~members-delegates~~ need to participate aurally by telephone, and (c) if
62 applicable, a Voter ID code.
63

64 D. Opening of Meeting and Quorum 65

- 66 1. Login Time. The Secretary shall schedule Internet meeting service availability to begin at
67 least 30 minutes before the start of each meeting.
- 68 2. Signing in and out. ~~Members-Delegates~~ shall identify themselves as required in order to
69 sign into the internet meeting service and shall maintain internet and audio access
70 throughout the meeting whenever present, but shall sign out upon any departure before
71 adjournment.
- 72 3. Quorum. The Secretary shall determine and report the presence of a quorum as required
73 by the Constitution based on a count of the participating delegates' login information online
74 at the start of the meeting. The ~~members-delegates~~ present may continue to do business
75 until adjournment, notwithstanding the withdrawal of enough ~~members-delegates~~ to leave a
76 remainder that is less than the attendance needed to establish a quorum. Less than a
77 quorum can approve adjournment.
78

79 E. Attending to Business of Convention 80

- 81 1. When in business session, delegates who wish to speak will address the chair.
- 82 2. The President shall appoint such committees as are, in his or her opinion, necessary, and
83 the committee members shall be notified as early as possible before Convention opens.
- 84 3. All committees shall be appointed by the Ecclesiastical Authority, unless otherwise ordered.

- 85 4. No later than three (3) days before a virtual convention, any committee assigned
86 resolutions or matters by the Ecclesiastical Authority shall conduct an open virtual meeting.
87 Committees shall report orally at the convention when their resolutions are considered or at
88 such time as the President may direct.
- 89 5. The reports of all committees shall be received for acceptance without motion, unless
90 recommended by vote of the House.
- 91 6. All reports recommending or requiring any action by the House shall be accompanied by a
92 resolution for action or for an expression of opinion by the House.
- 93 7. The names of movers of resolutions shall appear upon the minutes of the convention.
- 94 8. A contemporaneous broadcast of the proceedings of the Convention may be made
95 available to delegates of the Diocese and the proceedings may be recorded as well.
96

97 **F. Business before the Convention**

- 98
- 99 1. No resolution shall be considered as before the House unless it has been submitted in
100 writing (including electronic submission in a manner approved by the Bishop-Ecclesiastical
101 Authority and the Secretary) and been received by the Bishop-Ecclesiastical Authority and
102 Secretary four weeks before the opening of Convention to allow distribution to all delegates
103 and introduction by title at Convention.
- 104 2. Any resolution which has not been presented to the Bishop-Ecclesiastical Authority and to
105 the Secretary four weeks prior to the convention date will not be considered as before the
106 House unless copies of such resolution are made available to every delegate and, at
107 Convention, two-thirds of said delegates agree to consider such resolution.

108

109 **G. Debate**

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- 111 1. When any member-delegate is about to speak, or deliver any matter to the House, the
112 member-delegate shall state his or her name and the congregation he or she attends, and
113 then, with due respect, address the President, confining his or her remarks strictly to the
114 point in the debate.
- 115 2. A memberdelegate, other than the chair of a committee whose report is under
116 consideration, shall not speak more than twice in the same debate, nor longer than ten
117 minutes at a time, without leave of the House.
- 118 3. When a question is under consideration, a motion shall not be received, except to lay it on
119 the table, to postpone it until a certain time, to postpone it indefinitely, to commit it, to divide
120 it, or to amend it; motions for any of these purposes shall have precedence in the order
121 herein named.
- 122 4. If a motion to lay an amendment on the table be carried, the matter before the House shall
123 be proceeded with as if no such amendment had been offered.
- 124 5. Motions to lay on the table and to adjourn shall be decided without debate.
- 125 6. The motion to adjourn shall always be in order.
- 126 7. Debate shall not be allowed upon a resolution to refer any motion to a committee, or a
127 motion to recommit any subject which has been before a committee, but the member-
128 delegate who offers such resolution or motion may speak for five minutes for the purpose of
129 explaining its object.

- 130 8. All amendments shall be considered in the reverse order in which they are moved. When a
131 proposed amendment is under consideration a motion to amend the same ~~day~~ may be
132 made. An after amendment to such second amendment shall not be in order, but when an
133 amendment to an amendment is under consideration, a substitute for the whole may be
134 received. A proposition, different from the one under consideration, shall not be received
135 under color of an amendment or substitute.
- 136 9. All questions of order shall be decided in the first instance by the President, without debate;
137 an appeal, however, may be made from his or her decision to the Convention by any
138 member-delegate of the same.

139

140 H. Special Aspects of Conducting a Virtual Meeting

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- 142 1. Each member-delegate is responsible for his or her audio and Internet connections; no
143 action shall be invalidated on the grounds that the loss of, or poor quality of, a member's-
144 delegate's individual connection prevented participation in the meeting.
- 145
- 146 2. The President may cause or direct the disconnection or muting of a member's-delegate's
147 connection if it is causing undue interference with the meeting. The President's decision to
148 do so, which is subject to an undebatable appeal that can be made by any
149 member-delegate, shall be announced during the meeting and recorded in the minutes.
- 150
- 151 3. In addition to display of pending motions or results of votes, video of the President and any
152 member-delegate currently recognized to speak or report shall be displayed whenever
153 possible throughout the meeting, as well as such other video displays as the President
154 designates at his or her discretion.
- 155
- 156 4. Assignment of the floor. To seek recognition by the President, a delegate shall use the
157 "raise hand" request feature or similar process approved by the Secretary of the
158 Convention to request and await recognition. Once the pending action is completed, the
159 online queue shall be cleared. To preserve the orderly conduct of debate,
160 MembersDelegates' connections will be muted until they are recognized to speak.

161

162 I. Voting Methods

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- 164 1. The Secretary of the Convention shall arrange for anonymous and public voting systems
165 that permit voting and reporting of votes by orders. The Committee on Dispatch of Business
166 shall evaluate whether the technology available to the Convention can accommodate
167 multiple rounds of virtual balloting, and the Committee may, if necessary, evaluate and
168 recommend the adoption of rules for first-past-the-post virtual voting.
- 169
- 170 2. An anonymous vote conducted through the designated virtual voting system shall be
171 deemed a written ballot vote, fulfilling any requirement in the Constitution and Canons or
172 rules that a vote be conducted by written ballot. Votes shall be deemed anonymous so long
173 as votes cast by an individual are available only to the administrator of the voting system.

174

- 175 3. Where voting is allowed to be conducted in person using visual show of voting cards, voting
 176 may be conducted using a virtual voting system approved by the Secretary of the
 177 Convention. Votes cast using the virtual voting system shall be deemed the equivalent of
 178 votes cast in person.
 179
 180 4. After the first ballot of any election has been announced, the nominee (clergy and/or lay)
 181 with the least number of votes shall be dropped from the list of nominees. This process
 182 shall continue after each ballot until there remains one more nominee than the number to
 183 be elected. This shall not apply to a vote by orders.
 184

185 **J. Procedures following Decisions of Convention**

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 187 When a question has once been determined, it shall stand as the judgment of the Convention,
 188 and shall not again be drawn into debate, except on motion for reconsideration, which can only
 189 be entertained if made by a member-delegate who had previously voted in the majority.
 190

191 **K. Rules of Order in Force**

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 193 1. In all matters of parliamentary procedure, Robert's Rules of Order shall be the standard
 194 book of reference, excepting that these Rules of Order for the Convention shall supersede
 195 in cases of disagreement.
 196 2. The Rules of Order shall not be suspended except by a two-thirds vote of the members-
 197 delegates present.
 198

199 **L. Order of Business**

- 200
 201 1. Welcome and Opening Prayer
 202 2. Organizational Matters
 203 a. ~~1.~~ Report of the Credentials Committee as to seating of delegations.
 204 b. ~~2.~~ Announcement by Secretary as to whether a quorum is present.
 205 c. ~~3.~~ Appointment of Parliamentarian.
 206 ~~43.~~ Elections of Secretary of the Diocese, Treasurer of the Diocese,
 207 Assistant Treasurer of the Diocese (if any), and Chancellor of the Diocese, and other
 208 officers of the diocese~~Diocese~~.
 209 ~~54.~~ Announcements.
 210 ~~65.~~ Report of Committee on Dispatch of Business.
 211 ~~76.~~ Introduction of all resolutions ~~for reference~~.
 212 ~~87.~~ Nominations and first ballot for Diocesan Council, Standing Committee, and General
 213 Convention deputies (when applicable). Additional ballots (if any) will be taken
 214 ~~subsequently~~ and related motions will be considered at times determined by the chair.
 215 ~~98.~~ Consideration of the Plan for Ministry and any resolutions related to financial matters ~~and~~
 216 ~~the Plan for Ministry (aka the budget).~~
 217 ~~109.~~ Reports of all officers and committees.
 218 ~~1110.~~ Committee's report out on all Consideration of all remaining resolutions ~~previously~~
 219 ~~referred~~.

- 220 4211. Other elections ~~and~~ appointments, and nominations.
- 221 4312. Fixing the time and place of the next Convention.
- 222 13. Closing Prayer and Adjournment.