

Episcopal Diocese of Bethlehem
2023 Diocesan Convention
Resolutions

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Resolution 1 – 2024 Clergy Salary Schedule

I. TYPE OF RESOLUTION:

Annual submission of clergy cash stipends to Diocesan Convention

II. TITLE & AUTHOR OF RESOLUTION:

2024 Clergy Salary Schedule
Finance Committee

III. RESOLUTION:

Resolved that this convention recommends a minimum 5.0% cost of living salary increase for clergy and recommends consideration be made for additional merit increases as performance and resources allow, and,

Be it resolved that the Cash Stipend Range for 2024 be as follows,

Parish Index	Cash Stipend Range
1 – 99	\$41,201 – \$49,492
100 – 250	\$45,626 – \$67,467
251 – 399	\$54,602 – \$84,054
400 – above	\$73,687 – \$119,309

Be it further resolved that this convention recommends a minimum 5.0% cost of living increase for lay employees and recommends consideration be made for additional merit increases for lay employees as performance and resources allow.

Be it further resolved that the Clergy Supply Schedule for 2024 be as follows:

Service	Rate
1 Service (Saturday or Sunday)	\$165.00
2 Service (Saturday or Sunday)	\$200.00
3 Service (Saturday or Sunday)	\$225.00
1 Major Service (Holy Week, Christmas, Funeral)	\$165.00
Midweek Service	\$105.00

IV. SPONSORS

Diocesan Council

V. SUPPORTING INFORMATION

View the Parish Index Calculation sheet: <https://diobeth.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/2024-Parish-Index.pdf>

Resolution 2 – Budget of the Diocese of Bethlehem

I. TYPE OF RESOLUTION:

Annual submission of budget to Diocesan Convention

II. TITLE & AUTHOR OF RESOLUTION:

Budget of the Diocese of Bethlehem

Finance Committee

III. RESOLUTION:

Resolved, that the Assessment Rate applied to Line A, Normal Operating Income (NOI) of the 2022 Parochial Report shall be 12% in 2024.

Be it further resolved, that the proposed Diocesan Budget as it is presented to the Convention be adopted.

IV. SPONSORS

Diocesan Council

V. SUPPORTING INFORMATION

View the Diocesan Budget:

<https://diobeth.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/Proposed-Budget-Summary-2024.pdf>

View the 2024 Assessments and Acceptances:

<https://diobeth.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/AA-2024-Bethlehem.pdf>

Resolution 3 – Closing of Holy Cross Episcopal Church (Wilkes-Barre)

I. TYPE OF RESOLUTION:

Closing of a Parish

II. TITLE & AUTHOR OF RESOLUTION:

Closing of Holy Cross Episcopal Church (Wilkes-Barre)

Canon Steve Baker

III. RESOLUTION:

Resolved, that this convention approves, in response to the request of Holy Cross Episcopal Church (Wilkes-Barre), the Bishop, and Diocesan Council, pursuant to Title II, Canon 8 2.A of the Episcopal Diocese of Bethlehem Canons, that Holy Cross Episcopal Church (Wilkes-Barre) be closed voluntarily.

IV. SPONSORS

- Holy Cross Episcopal Church (Wilkes-Barre)
- The Rt. Rev. Kevin Nichols
- Diocesan Council

Resolution 4 – Amendment to the Constitution of the Diocese of Bethlehem

I. TYPE OF RESOLUTION:

Update of the Diocesan Constitution

II. TITLE & AUTHOR OF RESOLUTION:

Amendments to the Constitution of the Diocese of Bethlehem
Committee on Constitution and Canons

III. RESOLUTION:

Resolved, That the following Amendment to the Constitution of the Diocese of Bethlehem be approved for the second reading by this 152nd Convention of the Diocese of Bethlehem:

That Article IV of the Constitution, which currently reads: *Every Convention shall be opened with Prayers, as directed by the Bishop, and at every Convention there shall be a celebration of the Holy Communion.*

Be amended to change "shall" to "may" and to add the words "at the direction of the Bishop" at the end of the sentence.

Every Convention shall be opened with Prayers, as directed by the Bishop, and at every Convention there ~~shall~~ may be a celebration of the Holy Communion at the direction of the Bishop.

Explanation

The decision to hold Holy Communion at Convention should be made at the discretion of the spiritual leader of the Diocese. It is not an appropriate matter for regulation by the Constitution. Therefore, the Committee recommends this amendment to clarify that the decision is made at the sole direction of the Bishop.

Resolutions to amend the Constitution must be approved by two successive Diocesan Conventions pursuant to a vote by Orders. This is the second time this resolution is being submitted to Convention.

Respectfully submitted by the following members of the Committee on Constitution and Canons:

Linda M. Henry, Chair

John E. Feather

C.H. Welles, IV

Full Diocese of Bethlehem Canons can be read on the diocesan website: <https://diobeth.org/governance-and-administration/>

Resolution 5 – Resolution Seeking Continued Study of a Potential Reunification of the Diocese of Central Pennsylvania and the Diocese of Bethlehem

I. TYPE OF RESOLUTION:

Reunification Study

II. TITLE & AUTHOR OF RESOLUTION:

Resolution Seeking Continued Study of a Potential Reunification of the Diocese of Central Pennsylvania and the Diocese of Bethlehem.

Reunification Discernment Committee

III. RESOLUTION:

Be it resolved that The Diocese of Bethlehem concurs to extend the period of intentional exploration with the Diocese of Central Pennsylvania/Bethlehem of the future reunification as one diocese and, be it further;

Resolved that the Reunification Discernment Committee appointed to assist the bishops in this process (with equal representation from each diocese) will continue their work as charged. And be it further

Resolved that the bishops are authorized to continue the engagement of the outside consultant who is assisting the Committee with this process and be it further

Resolved that each diocese will contribute an equal amount to this process for 2024, but no diocese shall contribute more than \$25,000 in the time frame between approval of this resolution and the proposed Joint Convention

Resolved that the Committee will continue to report its findings quarterly to each Standing Committee, to seek input from and address questions raised by members of the dioceses, and prepare recommendations regarding reunification to be made at a Joint Convention in Fall 2024.

IV. SPONSORS

Reunification Discernment Committee for the Diocese of Bethlehem

The Rev. Rodney Conn, At-large

The Rev. Sidnie Crawford, Diocesan Council

The Rev. Douglas Moyer, President of the Standing Committee

Ms. Ginnie Schoonover, At-Large

Mr. Ty Welles, Esq, Assistant Diocesan Chancellor

The Rt. Rev. Kevin Nichols, Bishop

V. EXPLANATION

Acknowledging that until 1904, the Diocese of Central Pennsylvania and the Diocese of Bethlehem were historically united as one diocese under the name "The Diocese of Central Pennsylvania" prior to the founding of the Dioceses of Harrisburg and Bethlehem. And that with the approval of each Convention and the Ecclesiastical Authorities, the Constitution (Article V) of The Episcopal Church and Canon 1.10.6-7 allows for the reunification of dioceses, The Diocese of Bethlehem and The Diocese of Central Pennsylvania agreed by acts of Convention to enter into a period of intentional exploration of their future reunification as one diocese. The conventions each adopted a resolution giving the following detail:

- “The exploration be conducted by both bishops, supported by a discernment committee of 10 additional people (comprised of two chancellors, two members of the standing committees, two

members of the council of trustees and/or Diocesan Council, and two at large members from each diocese selected by each diocese's standing committee) with equal representation from each diocese.

- The discernment committee will explore opportunities in the areas of general operations, formation, finance, pastoral care, stewardship, social justice ministries, staffing, and children and youth ministry as well as the gifts, strengths and priorities of each diocese and this discernment committee will consider a plan for full reunification as well as any interim sharing of resources and, if feasible, seek to provide a draft timetable for those efforts.
- The bishops are authorized to engage an outside consultant to assist the discernment committee with this process.
- This committee will report its findings quarterly to each Standing Committee and at the 2023 Convention of each of the two dioceses.
- Each diocese will contribute an equal amount, but no diocese shall contribute more than \$25,000, in the time frame between approval of this resolution and the Diocese's next Diocesan Convention, to accomplish this work.”

The Reunification Discernment Committee began their work in January 2023. The full Committee has met monthly either in person or by zoom with four sub-teams meeting regularly as well to explore areas of diocesan life and organization. The Committee has identified significant potential possibilities for a greater communion and mutual support between the dioceses including, but not limited to, a joint diocesan service for confirmation; planned gathering for deacons; our shared clergy formation (VELI) for newly ordained clergy; the potential joining of our Commissions on Ministry; the potential joining of our Disciplinary Boards; the potential sharing of part-time supply clergy; partnering parishes with another in an opposite diocese for prayer and a greater shared community of faith; and the sharing of social justice ministries across each diocese.

The Committee has gathered a significant amount of data from both dioceses and other dioceses in similar processes of discernment. They also hosted five Listening Sessions through which about two hundred members of the dioceses offered input. Given the magnitude of this work and the time required for faithful, reasoned discernment, the Committee and both Bishops have jointly concluded that an extended timeline would be beneficial for this discernment and to create options for the dioceses to consider for their future.

The Committee will be offering a report at both diocesan conventions this year and be seeking further input from delegates present. This Resolution is simply proposing an extension of the timeframe initially allotted for this work of mutual, faithful discernment regarding future collaboration and potential reunification.