

Proposed Revision of the Parish Bylaws

Church of the Epiphany Anglican • A summary of changes for the Congregation

What you are being asked to do. At the Annual Meeting this fall you will be asked to approve a revised set of parish bylaws, replacing the version last amended in November 2016. The Vestry approved this draft on August 11, 2026, and refined one provision further on September 8, 2026. Under Article XIV, adoption requires a two-thirds majority vote of a quorum of Eligible Voters. The full draft accompanies this summary; this page is a guide to what actually changed.

Why now. The bylaws are ten years old. In that time our practices have moved on, some of the documents and publications they reference no longer exist under those names, and the Diocese of the Mid-Atlantic revised its own Canons in November 2025. Most of the revision is housekeeping. A smaller number of changes are real, and those are set out separately below so you can weigh them.

PART ONE — TECHNICAL AND HOUSEKEEPING CHANGES

These update language and references. None of them changes how the parish governs itself.

- **Pronouns.** Masculine pronouns referring to officeholders (he, his, him) are replaced with gender-neutral wording throughout. This is the single most frequent change in the document and carries no substantive effect.
- **Outdated references.** The "Epiphany STAR" becomes "the Epiphany newsletter." Vestry meeting times, formerly advertised in the STAR, are now listed on the church website calendar. The phrase "(Parts One and Two)" is dropped from the Annual Meeting notice — a leftover from before 2015, when we still held two annual meetings.
- **Canonical citations.** Specific section citations to the DOMA and ACNA Canons are replaced with references to those bodies and their web pages, so the bylaws do not go stale each time the Canons are renumbered.
- **Tax status.** Article I now states that the Church is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization — a fact already true, now recorded.
- **Vote counting.** Article V now names the Vestry Registrar as the person who determines the count at congregational meetings.
- **Section lettering.** The 2016 bylaws lettered two consecutive sections of Article VIII "C" and skipped D entirely, and Article X jumped from B to D. Those sections are now lettered in sequence, and the officers of the parish — Registrar, Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer — each appear under their own heading.
- **Table of contents.** Rebuilt so that every Article and every lettered section is listed. The Indemnification section, omitted in 2016, is restored, and the Record of Changes is now listed.
- **Typography.** Assorted spelling, punctuation, and capitalisation corrections throughout, none affecting meaning.

PART TWO — SUBSTANTIVE CHANGES

These change a rule, a right, or a duty. Read these before voting.

Article	What changes	What it means in practice
IV.B.c	The list of Eligible Voters will again be published before each annual election, as the 2016 bylaws required. The Vestry sets the timing, method, and form of publication.	Preserves the existing transparency requirement while giving the Vestry procedural flexibility in how the list is compiled and shared.
IV.C	NEW: adds a default voting rule — unless a provision states otherwise, a matter is decided by simple majority of the votes cast, provided a quorum is met.	Fills a gap in the 2016 text, which never said what "a vote" meant by default. Where a specific threshold is stated elsewhere (Article V.F, Article XIV), that threshold still governs.
V.G / VII.D	The Senior Warden may name a designee to preside when the Rector is absent.	Adds flexibility when both the Rector and Senior Warden are unavailable.
VI.D.a	Vestry members may be elected to terms of up to three years, rather than a fixed one-third rotating to three-year terms. The Nominating Committee states the term length for each seat.	Allows the three-year stagger to be repaired after resignations or vacancies without waiting years for it to self-correct.

Article	What changes	What it means in practice
VI.D.b	Voice vote is permitted when nominees equal vacancies. Contested elections go to written ballot. Any voter may call for a paper ballot after a non-unanimous voice vote.	Codifies what we already do, and guarantees any single member can require a secret ballot.
VI.D.e	NEW: every person elected to the Vestry signs the Vestry declaration and promise in a book kept for that purpose.	Brings our bylaws into conformity with DOMA Canon (Title IB, Canon 1, Sec. 3.C.iv), which already requires this of us.
VI.G	The Finance Committee is made responsible for purchasing indemnification insurance.	Assigns an existing duty to a named body.
VI.H.a	A successor elected to replace a removed Vestry member serves the remainder of that seat's term.	Preserves the stagger when a seat changes hands mid-term.
VII.E	Approved Vestry minutes are made available to the Congregation in the church.	A new transparency provision. The 2016 bylaws required minutes be kept, but didn't have a mechanism for sharing.
VIII.D–E	The Treasurer and Assistant Treasurers may not be members of the Vestry (2016: "need not be").	Converts a permission into a prohibition. A sitting Vestry member could no longer serve as Treasurer.
IX.B	Finance Committee: the Vestry member serves as a non-voting liaison; congregational members are "up to five" rather than exactly five; the Senior Associate Rector is removed as an ex officio member.	Separates Vestry oversight from Finance Committee voting, and lets the committee operate when fewer than five members are available.
IX.C.a	NEW: if a Nominating Committee seat falls vacant, the Vestry may appoint a member to serve until the next congregational meeting.	The 2016 bylaws had no vacancy provision at all, leaving the seat empty for the year.
X.A / X.C	The Rector and Associate Rector must be lawful ministers in the ACNA (2016: "the Worldwide Anglican Communion").	Clarifies that eligible clergy are those within our own province.
XIV	The Vestry "should" consider amendment proposals submitted by members (2016: "shall").	Softens a mandatory duty into a discretionary one.

WHAT IS NOT CHANGING

The Preamble and mission statement, the definition of Membership, the sixteen-year voting age, the ten percent quorum, the November 30 deadline for the Annual Meeting, the size of the Vestry (eight to ten lay members), the Rector's term to age 72, the July–June fiscal year, the tithe as our stewardship standard, and the two-thirds threshold for amending these bylaws all remain as they are.

BETWEEN NOW AND THE VOTE

- The full draft and this summary are available through the Church Office and on the parish website at least seven days before the Annual Meeting.
- Questions may be directed to the Rector or either Warden at any time before the meeting.
- We are still working out how to best vote on this at the annual meeting. We want to allow time for any substantive conversation about specific changes if needed. Please communicate with the rector and wardens sooner rather than later if there is a specific change in the new bylaws you would like to have us discuss individually at the annual meeting.