

From the President of the House of Deputies:

Dear Friends in Christ:

Thank you for your willingness to serve at the 78th General Convention of The Episcopal Church. Our preparations have kicked into high gear, and I am looking forward to a productive convention.

Now is a great time to begin preparing for your work at General Convention. This year, *The Blue Book* reports from committees, commissions, agencies, and boards of the Church are being released online at <http://www.generalconvention.org> beginning in late January. If you have been assigned to a legislative committee, you'll want to study in particular the reports and legislation that will come before your committee. If you are not serving on a legislative committee at this convention, I hope that you will choose legislation and issues to study, attend committee meetings and hearings, and explore the way that legislation moves through the convention.

The legislative process at General Convention allows us to hear about, learn from, and consider what God is doing in many contexts and communities. Once we leave General Convention, we have to put legislation into action — passing a resolution is the beginning, not the end. But we need the legislative process to hear all of the voices of the people of God.

Because the legislative process is so essential to our common life, we have been working to update and streamline it so it can better suit the needs of today's Church. The Presiding Bishop and I worked together to revise the legislative committee structure, and study committees from both Houses have reviewed their Rules of Order. On the first day of Convention, the House of Deputies will consider some significant revisions to our Rules of Order. You can learn more at <http://www.houseofdeputies.org/gc-2015>.

This will be my first General Convention as president of the House of Deputies, but it will be the ninth convention at which I have served as a deputy. Over the years, I've developed a list of Top Ten rules for surviving and thriving at General Convention:

10. We're at General Convention to serve the Church, not the other way around.

9. Be leaders and consider your theology of power. We all make choices about how we use power and exercise leadership — choices that shape not only the Church and the dioceses, congregations, and institutions we serve, but also our very hearts and souls.

8. Be kind. If you wouldn't say it face-to-face, don't post it on social media.

7. No triangles. If you're unhappy with someone — especially me — deal with it directly. I promise I'll do the same.

6. Pray for the deputies, alternate deputies, and bishops who serve at General Convention. Pray for the executive officer of General Convention, church staff, and convention center employees who make the event possible, and for the people of The Episcopal Church.

5. Do your homework. The reason we post reports and appoint committees in January is that it takes some time to do our jobs right. Be responsible for the work you've been given to do.

4. If you don't understand something, ask a question. If something isn't clear to you, it's a sure bet that someone else doesn't get it either.

3. Renew the spiritual practices that keep you centered, attentive, and humble so that you show up in body, mind, and spirit. While in Salt Lake City, take care of yourself. Get enough sleep, eat nutritious food, and wear comfortable shoes. If you drink alcohol, do so cautiously and sparingly.

2. Seek Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself. Remember that this doesn't mean agreeing with your neighbor, or staying silent if your neighbor needs to be held accountable, or avoiding healthy conflict.

1. Remember that your fellow bishops and deputies and the people we serve in the Church are the beloved children of God — made in His image, redeemed by His Son, and strengthened by the Holy Spirit.

Between now and June, I hope you will join me in praying for the House of Deputies, the House of Bishops, and our beloved Church. I am eager to see you in Salt Lake City.

Faithfully yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gay Clark Jennings". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of each name being capitalized and prominent.

The Rev. Gay Clark Jennings
President, House of Deputies