Convention Primer 2017

A Guide for Clergy, Voting Delegates & Alternates to the 2017 Diocesan Convention

Charlotte Harbor Event & Conference Center, Punta Gorda
Friday and Saturday, October 13 & 14, 2017
So, you’re a lay delegate/alternate

Chances are you were elected as a convention delegate at your congregation’s annual meeting or you were appointed by your vestry or bishop’s committee. To be a delegate, you must satisfy the same qualifications that apply to an “elector” or voting member of a parish:

1) at least 16 years of age
2) name is duly enrolled in the register of your congregation
3) regular in attendance at divine services
4) make stated contributions of record to the general support of the congregation

If your congregation is a parish, you are one of three lay delegates. If your congregation is a mission, you have two delegates. Each congregation also has an alternate delegate in case a delegate is unable to serve. Notes about the role of the alternate will follow in the “Job Description” section, below. Clergy members of the convention have separate rules under the Constitution and Canons of the Diocese.

What should lay delegates/alternates do?

- **Attend the fall deanery convocation meeting:** In order to serve effectively, you need to be adequately prepared to vote on the resolutions and elections to leadership positions that are placed into consideration. This requires that you attend your deanery convocation (locally-convened meetings organized by deaneries). Discussions at the fall meetings that precede convention are centered on the diocesan budget and any final preparations. The official convention book containing election nominee information, reports to convention, proposed budget and additional convention related information is distributed at these meetings.

  The dates and locations for the fall convocations are:
  
  - **Ft. Myers/Naples Deaneries:** Tuesday, September 5, at 7 p.m.
    St. Mary’s Episcopal Church, 9801 Bonita Beach Road, Bonita Springs, FL 34135
  - **Clearwater/St. Petersburg/Tampa Deaneries:** Wednesday, September 6, at 7 p.m.
    Cathedral Church of St. Peter, 140 4th St. North, St. Petersburg, FL 33731
  - **Manasota/Venice Deaneries:** Thursday, September 7, at 7 p.m.
    DaySpring Episcopal Center, 8411 25th Street East, Parrish, FL 34219

- **Attend convention:** Lay delegates to convention are members of convention with the right to seat, voice and vote. It is your duty to attend every meeting of the convention. “Every meeting?” Yes. While very rare, it has come to pass that not all of the business of the convention was acted on in one day, and/or there was some urgent matter that required the undivided attention of the convention. You are a lay delegate at any subsequent meeting of the convention. You serve until you resign or until your successor is chosen.

- **A note for alternates:** Lay alternate to convention should be prepared to be of service. In the event a lay delegate is unable to attend convention, an alternate delegate from that congregation shall serve and shall have seat, voice and vote. If you are an alternate and there is a need for you to serve as a delegate, there is a separate registration process for this. See the “Registration” section that follows.
What to expect

Diocesan convention weekend is much more than a business meeting. In fact delegates account for only half of the convention attendees. We gather to worship, to reunite with colleagues and friends, to learn and to share with others. Those who attend the Friday sessions (Morning Prayer, Workshops, Ministry Fair, Opening Eucharist, Friday Night Dinner Party) may not want to attend the business meeting. Some delegates may not be able to attend anything but the business meeting. Others like to come and go and visit the Ministry Fair, which displays the extensive work that goes on around the diocese and is a wonderful source of ideas and resources.

Delegates are encouraged to attend as many of the other meetings and events as possible. However, the varied nature of our gatherings requires distinction between the Friday and Saturday events.

How to officially register for convention

The official registration process for the 2017 Diocesan Convention will be limited to “mail-in” registration forms accompanied with check payments. Online registration and payment will not be available.

During August, a complete packet of convention information is sent to all churches in the diocese and also to each individual Clergy and Lay member of Convention. The content of the packet includes both Friday and Saturday registration forms, a second listing of workshop descriptions, lunch selections, hotel information, etc. The same material and more is available for download from the Convention page of the diocesan website: www.episcopalswfl.org.

Check payment must accompany the registration form/s. You must register by mail and your check payment must cover the total and correct amount reflected on the completed, accompanying registration form/s.

All complete church registrations, with payment, received at the diocese by Friday, September 15, 2017 will be entered in to the “Be Our Guest” drawing for 6 free tickets to the Friday Night Party. (A $180.00 value)

Registrations without full accompanying payment and faxed registrations will not be accepted and will be returned. Registration form/s and check payment must be mailed and received together.

• Final convention registration deadline – Friday, October 6, 2017
  Registrations must be postmarked no later than Friday, October 6, 2017.
  No registration/s will be accepted after that date, and there is no provision for walk-in registration at convention. Pre-registration is mandatory.

• You must pick up credentials separately for Friday and Saturday on each respective day.
  No credentials are available in advance.
• You are required to pick up your nametag and other materials on Friday at the conference center for Friday’s activities. Registration begins at 8:00 a.m.
• You are required to pick up your new Saturday credentials, nametag, voter packet and other materials on Saturday morning. Registration begins at 8:00 a.m.
How to Prepare for Convention

Your congregation chose you to do the business of the Diocese of Southwest Florida at convention.

This includes:
• Voting on the budget
• Voting on resolutions
• Electing candidates to various positions

In order to be an effective delegate, you will need to do some homework BEFORE you get to convention. All the materials you need to do that work are available to you well in advance, both on the convention page of the diocesan website and in the convention book, which you will receive at the fall deanery convocation. No need to wait till the last minute! Let’s look at a few items:

The Budget

• Copies of the budget will be presented at the fall deanery convocations.
• Chief Financial Officer, Canon Anne Vickers, will be present to explain the budget.

This is the best place to have your questions answered and seek clarity on anything you don't understand. On the floor of convention at the business meeting, with lots of items on the agenda, it is difficult to ask or answer technical questions.

• The CFO is available to you after the deanery convocation if you have additional questions.

The Resolutions

• Throughout the year, resolutions are submitted seeking approval of the members of convention on a variety of topics. In the past, resolutions have included support for farm workers in Immokalee, revising or amending diocesan Canons, making changes in our financial procedures and granting voting rights to deacons.
• The text of the resolutions and explanations of what they would do is available on the diocesan website and in the convention book that you receive at your fall deanery convocation.
• Read the resolutions and the explanations, think about them, ask questions and determine how you plan to vote.
• Don’t wait until the morning of convention to start considering whether you will support one resolution or another.

Elections

• The names, photos and statements of the candidates are available on the diocesan website and the convention book, as are the descriptions of what each job involves.
• Additional candidates may be nominated from the floor of convention. We are unable to provide biographical information for floor nominees because voting takes place immediately after nominations close.
• Take time to study the candidates and their qualifications before the business meeting and give prayerful consideration in determining whom you will choose for these leadership roles to do the work of the diocese in the years to come.
On Friday, October 13, 2017:
Registration Begins at 8:00 a.m.

On-Site Registration Pick-Up Process

- Locate the registration tables on the concourse of the conference center.
- Registration for Friday is alphabetically organized from A – Z. There is no designation for clergy, lay delegate/alternate and guests/visitors.
- Everyone is listed by individual last name, not by congregation or city.
- You will be handed your name tag and your tickets for lunch and dinner if you have pre-ordered these. Unfortunately, no additional lunch or dinner tickets will be sold or will be available at convention.
- Once you have picked up your materials, you may help yourself to the continental breakfast, visit the Ministry Fair tables, locate your first workshop room and attend Morning Prayer.

Friday Workshops

On Friday, a full day of workshops dedicated to continuing education on a wide variety of interesting topics, is open to anyone, convention delegate/alternate, clergy and guests/visitors. You must register in advance so that adequate provisions are made for seating and handout material. This is your opportunity to learn new skills and find resources you can take back to your congregation. The canonically required safeguarding training is offered annually. Registration forms can be downloaded from the convention page of the diocesan website. These are also included in the convention packets that are mailed to all official voters.

The Ministry Fair (opens on Friday at 8:30 a.m. and closes after lunch on Saturday)

Our Ministry Fair, on the main concourse, shows off the breadth and depth of ministry in our diocese with displays from congregations, ministry groups, national organizations and businesses that specialize in church products and services. There are shopping opportunities here, as well as, opportunities to contribute to Episcopal charitable causes, and there are always surprises. Don't forget to visit our very popular Altar Guild booth, where congregations offer, at no charge, vestments and equipment they no longer need.

Worship in the Hibiscus Hall

Many people tell us how much they appreciate the opportunity to worship together as a diocese.
We offer:
- Morning Prayer at 9 a.m. Friday and Saturday.
- The convention’s Opening Eucharist will begin at 5:00 p.m. on Friday

Friday Night Dinner Party......BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND

As a diocese, we love to party. Annual convention weekend is our family reunion, the one time a year we get to be together, to relax, enjoy a meal together and sit back and talk with old/new friends. For our Friday night dinner party --- always a highlight of the convention weekend --- we will, once again, gather at Hurricane Charley’s Restaurant, directly west of the Convention Center, just across U.S. 41. The buffet line will open at 7:00 p.m.

Safety Advisory: Traffic is busy on U.S. 41. May we suggest that you use the walkway under U.S. 41? After the opening Eucharist, exit the conference center via the doors on the north end (The river side, onto the patio where lunch is served). Guides will direct you to the walkway, which is handicapped-accessible. If you wish, you may leave your cars parked where they are and use the safe walkway to the restaurant and enjoy an evening of fun and fellowship. We'll have maps available on Friday at the registration tables.

Pre-registration and payment for the Friday Night Dinner Party must be made on a Friday registration form. We apologize but we are unable to accommodate any “walk in guests.”
On Saturday, October 14, 2017:
Registration Begins at 8:00 a.m.

On-Site Registration Pick-Up Process

The annual business meeting of the diocese requires a separate registration process from Friday. We do this to differentiate “members of convention” (lay and clergy voting delegates) from all other attendees.

- Locate the registration table in the concourse of the conference center that corresponds to your standing as an attendee. The choices will be clergy/clergy spouse/lay delegate/lay alternate/guests/visitors. Each category will be sub-sectioned alphabetically (A-J, K-N, and so on) by last name. Make certain you are at the correct table category and in the correct line alphabetically.
- You will be handed your nametag and where applicable a voter packet.
- You will be handed your lunch tickets for Saturday (No additional lunch tickets will be sold or available at convention).
- Once you are registered, proceed to the floor of convention in Hibiscus Hall. Locate your designated seating area/deanery. Convention Pages will be assigned to each deanery and can help you find your table.

Credentials and seating at the business meeting

At the business meeting, seating is designated as follows:

- Voting members of convention sit at designated tables at the front of the hall labeled by deanery and congregation.
- Retired clergy, who retain seat and voice, sit at tables specifically designated for them. They do not sit with their former or current congregations.
- Tables marked “Special Guests” are set aside for members of Standing Committee, Diocesan Council, Finance Committee, Endowment Board, Chancellor and Vice Chancellors, Chaplains to retired clergy and families, Honorary Members of Convention, Visiting Bishops and other designated Special Guests.
- All others are seated in the designated guest gallery. These include, but are not limited to, lay alternates; non-canonically resident clergy; clergy spouses; and anyone else wishing to attend this annual business meeting of the Diocese of Southwest Florida.
- Convention Pages will be assigned to the floor of convention to assist with the collection of ballots and other voting floor tasks as assigned.

The Saturday registration and seating maintain the integrity of the voting system, ensuring that everyone who is on the floor of convention is authorized to be there. From this registration we are able to obtain an accurate count of the delegates and the congregations represented in order to determine a quorum. That establishes the number of votes required to conduct the business of convention, such as approving resolutions and the budget, electing candidates and dealing with other business that may be brought to the floor.

You may not pick up your Saturday voter packets, nametags or sign in for the business meeting before 8:00 a.m. on Saturday morning. In your voter packet you will find convention information, ballots and a specific type of pencil that must be used to mark the ballots. Nametags for Saturday are specifically color-coded as a means for us to easily distinguish the credentialed members of convention from our guests.

Clergy Members of Convention - Special Note

Diocesan Canons list six (6) separate distinctions for clergy members of convention. The canon that applies to you will be noted on your nametag. The preliminary roster was posted online in July so that you have adequate time for review and change requests. It is too late to make status changes on convention weekend.
Lay Member Change from Alternate to Delegate

Delegates who know in advance of convention weekend that they will be unable to attend may arrange to have their congregation’s alternate changed to full delegate status. The change of delegation form is on the convention page of the diocesan website (found under the “Governance” tab on the “Home” page) along with all the other convention registration materials. This form must be completed and signed by the rector/vicar/priest in charge and senior warden or secretary of the vestry, and mailed to the Rev. Canon Michael Durning at the diocese and received no later than close of business on Friday, Oct. 6, 2017.

For delegate changes on the day of convention (Saturday only), alternates and their rector, vicar, priest-in-charge or interim must visit the credentials room located at the back of the registration tables. The clergy member must sign the change form. If no clergy member from the congregation is present, a clergy member of the bishop’s staff will verify and sign the change form. At that point the alternate’s nametag will be updated and the alternate will receive a voter packet and will be seated at the congregation’s table on the floor of convention.

Delegate changes are only permitted prior to the presentation of the final Credentials report (usually this comes about at approximately 10 a.m. on Saturday). After that time no changes in delegate/delegation status may be made.

Once you have picked up your nametag and voter packet, you are officially registered and you alone are responsible for your personal convention materials and ballots. No duplicate materials will be handed out. Your voter packet includes the day’s agenda. We begin with registration at 8 a.m. followed by Morning Prayer at 9 a.m. and the business session at 9:30 a.m. You are invited to enjoy a continental breakfast and visit the Ministry Fair in the concourse before you enter the floor of convention in Hibiscus Hall.

Business Session/Voting

• As you enter Hibiscus Hall, a Floor Manager/Convention Pages will be on hand to direct you to your assigned seating area. We do this to ensure that only those who are entitled to vote are seated on the voting floor of convention. This is how we maintain the integrity of the vote, which you, the delegates/clergy have told us repeatedly, is critically important to you.

• Once the business meeting has begun, if you wish to speak at an appropriate time, please approach one of the two microphones on the convention floor and wait to be recognized by the chair. First state your name and congregation, and then make your comments, which are limited to three minutes. Then return to your seat. Convention works through the agenda, with scheduled breaks and a lunch period.

• Votes will be taken throughout the day on a variety of issues. For some votes, you will fill in a printed ballot and hand it to an assigned Page, who will then carry the ballots to the tellers to be counted electronically.

• Other votes maybe taken by a show of red or green cards, which you will receive in your voter packet, along with other official materials. At the appropriate time, hold up red for “No” and green for “Yes.” The floor pages will count the cards. We believe this is a more accurate system than a voice vote.