

## *8.0 NEW CONGREGATIONS ADMISSION*

Our canons define local churches as a congregation or a church plant (See Title 1 Canon 1). As a basic guide to those congregations seeking admission, we generally consider a church plant either (a) with less than 25 Average Sunday Attendance (ASA) or (b) within 2 years of launch. This minimizes the amount of administration required to manage the congregation's development. Our Deaneries are available to assist with questions related to:

1. bookkeeping and financial management
2. administrative support
3. legal concerns, bylaws and incorporation

Our Deaneries, through their incorporation as a 501c3 nonprofit corporation, are being encouraged to assist new church plants with these basic services, so that the church planter's energies may be applied best to the work of developing a new congregation.

Congregations that are either (a) seeing more than 25 ASA or (b) past the two year window of new church development, are likely to be better served to be admitted as a congregation. Our guidelines stipulate that they are **self-funding, self-governing** and **self-propagating**. This means that planning and structures are in place for all three of these criteria.

The legal process of incorporation can be expensive in both time and money, but if your congregation needs legal assistance as they engage in this process, you may contact the diocesan office and we will provide referrals to qualified attorneys who have offered their services on a fee basis. In some cases, a reduced fee may be negotiated, but the congregation should expect to pay for these legal services.

There are individual circumstances with every congregation and church plant, so we will do everything we can to provide the greatest level of support and encouragement in their development so that they may mature and reproduce.