

Title: SPECIAL RULES OF ORDER FOR VIRTUAL CONVENTIONS

Proposer: David Powell, Chancellor of The Diocese of West Missouri

- 1 **RESOLVED:** That The Diocese of West Missouri adopt the following Special Rules of
2 Order for Virtual Conventions (see Attachment 1), and be it further,
3
4 **RESOLVED:** That the Special Rules of Order be in force only when a Special or Annual
5 Convention of the diocese, due to an exigency, cannot meet in person but must meet
6 virtually, using online technologies to conduct gather, debate, resolve, and vote, and be
7 it further,
8
9 **RESOLVED:** That these Special Rules of Order be incorporated as an Appendix of the
10 Constitution and Canons of The Diocese of West Missouri.

Explanation:

The Diocese, along with the rest of the United States and the world, is caught up in a National Emergency concerning the outbreak of the novel coronavirus disease (SARS-CoV-2, aka COVID-19), which has resulted in the public being ordered or advised by national, state, and local governments to practice social distancing and other personal protective means to mitigate the spread of the coronavirus. This situation makes meeting as the Convention of The Diocese of West Missouri, whether for a Special Convention or an Annual Convention, dangerous to the health of individuals and the membership of the Diocese. This situation calls for the creation of rules that will allow the diocese to conduct a Special or Annual Convention of the Diocese without violating the best recommendations of public health officials. Therefore, the Special Rules of Order for Virtual Conventions (see attachment) are presented to permit convention delegates to have seat, voice, and vote at safe and convenient virtual conventions when such extraordinary proceedings are deemed necessary by the Ecclesiastical Authority of the Diocese.

ATTACHMENT 1

SPECIAL RULES OF ORDER FOR VIRTUAL CONVENTIONS OF THE DIOCESE OF WEST MISSOURI

1 To facilitate the ability of The Diocese of West Missouri to hold a virtual annual
2 convention in 2020 and to hold future virtual conventions when deemed necessary by the
3 Ecclesiastical Authority of the Diocese, the following Special Rules of Order are adopted.

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5 The Annual Meeting, or other meeting of the Convention of The Diocese of West
6 Missouri, may be conducted in a virtual format through use of internet-based and other
7 meeting services designated by the Ecclesiastical Authority of the Diocese that support
8 anonymous voting by orders and visible displays: (i) identifying those participating, (ii)
9 identifying those seeking recognition to speak, (iii) showing (or permitting the retrieval of) the
10 text of pending motions, and (iv) showing the results of votes. An electronic meeting of the
11 Convention shall otherwise be subject to all rules adopted by the Convention to govern its
12 annual meeting, which may include any reasonable limitations on, and requirements for,
13 members' participation. These Special Rules of Order for Virtual Annual Conventions shall
14 apply to any virtual convention called by the Ecclesiastical Authority of the Diocese and shall
15 supersede any conflicting rules previously adopted by the Convention or stated in Robert's
16 Rules of Order, but only during a convention conducted virtually. At a regular, face-to-face
17 convention, the Diocese's regular Rules of Order will be in force.

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19 In addition, the following procedures shall apply to any virtual convention, whether
20 designated as Annual or Special:

21 22 **A. Interpretation of Rules**

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24 For purposes of conventions governed by these Rules, these terms shall have the following
25 interpretation:

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27 • "Convention": The meeting of clergy and laity of The Diocese of West Missouri
28 conducted wholly or in part via remote electronic participation by its members.
- 29 • "Seat": The ability to participate in the Convention via electronic connection.
- 30 • "Voice": The right to make oral statements during the Convention.
- 31 • "Vote": The right to cast a vote by voice, via electronic polling, or by filing an electronic
32 ballot during the Convention.

33 34 **B. Worship Service**

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36 Notwithstanding Article IX, Section 3 of the Constitution of the diocese, and in recognition of

37 the limitations of a virtual meeting format, there shall take place during a virtual Convention, a
38 service of Holy Eucharist—or another form of prayer or divine service in lieu of communion—
39 such form of worship to be determined by the Ecclesiastical Authority of the Diocese.

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41 C. Communication Information and Login Instructions

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43 1. Members to Furnish Communication Information. No later than three (3) weeks before
44 any such virtual meeting, every member of the clergy entitled to seat, voice, or vote in
45 Convention must notify the Ecclesiastical Authority of his or her email address in order to
46 receive the ability to participate in a Convention held electronically. The Ecclesiastical
47 Authority shall choose the method by which email addresses will be submitted to it. Not
48 later than such date, every rector, vicar, or a warden of any parish or congregation entitled
49 to representation in Convention and the person(s) responsible for the selection of Youth
50 Delegates to the Convention must notify the Ecclesiastical Authority of the email address
51 of (a) every Lay Delegate of such parish or congregation or Youth Delegate or (b) any
52 Alternate who will replace an elected Lay Delegate or Youth Delegate who will be unable to
53 attend the Convention.

54

55 2. Secretary to Send Login Information. No later than three (3) days before such meeting, the
56 Secretary of Convention or his or her designee shall send an email to every member of
57 Convention setting forth (a) the time of the meeting, (b) the URL and codes necessary to
58 connect to the internet meeting service, and, as an alternative and backup to the audio
59 connection included within the Internet service, the phone number and access codes that
60 members need to participate aurally by telephone, and (c) if applicable, a Voter ID code.

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62 D. Opening of Meeting and Quorum

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- 64 1. Login Time. The Secretary shall schedule Internet meeting service availability to begin at
65 least 30 minutes before the start of each meeting.
- 66 2. Signing in and out. Members shall identify themselves as required in order to sign into the
67 internet meeting service and shall maintain internet and audio access throughout the
68 meeting whenever present, but shall sign out upon any departure before adjournment.
- 69 3. Quorum. The Secretary shall determine and report the presence of a quorum as required
70 by the Constitution based on a count of the participating delegates' login information
71 online at the start of the meeting. The members present may continue to do business
72 until adjournment, notwithstanding the withdrawal of enough members to leave a
73 remainder that is less than the attendance needed to establish a quorum. Less than a
74 quorum can approve adjournment.

75

76 E. Attending to Business of Convention

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- 78 1. When in business session, delegates who wish to speak will address the chair.

- 79 2. The President shall appoint such committees as are, in his or her opinion, necessary, and
80 the committee members shall be notified as early as possible before Convention opens.
81 3. All committees shall be appointed by the Ecclesiastical Authority, unless otherwise
82 ordered.
83 4. No later than three (3) days before a virtual convention, any committee assigned
84 resolutions or matters by the Ecclesiastical Authority shall conduct an open virtual
85 meeting. Committees shall report orally at the convention when their resolutions are
86 considered or at such time as the President may direct.
87 5. The reports of all committees shall be received for acceptance without motion, unless
88 recommended by vote of the House.
89 6. All reports recommending or requiring any action by the House shall be accompanied by a
90 resolution for action or for an expression of opinion by the House.
91 7. The names of movers of resolutions shall appear upon the minutes of the convention.
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93 **F. Business before the Convention**

- 94
95 1. No resolution shall be considered as before the House unless it has been submitted in
96 writing (including electronic submission in a manner approved by the Bishop and the
97 Secretary) and been received by the Bishop and Secretary four weeks before the opening
98 of Convention to allow distribution to all delegates and introduction by title at Convention.
99 2. Any resolution which has not been presented to the Bishop and to the Secretary four
100 weeks prior to the convention date will not be considered as before the House unless
101 copies of such resolution are made available to every delegate and, at Convention, two-
102 thirds of said delegates agree to consider such resolution.
103

104 **G. Debate**

- 105
106 1. When any member is about to speak, or deliver any matter to the House, the member
107 shall state his or her name and the congregation he or she attends, and then, with due
108 respect, address the President, confining his or her remarks strictly to the point in the
109 debate.
110 2. A member, other than the chair of a committee whose report is under consideration, shall
111 not speak more than twice in the same debate, nor longer than ten minutes at a time,
112 without leave of the House.
113 3. When a question is under consideration, a motion shall not be received, except to lay it on
114 the table, to postpone it until a certain time, to postpone it indefinitely, to commit it, to
115 divide it, or to amend it; motions for any of these purposes shall have precedence in the
116 order herein named.
117 4. If a motion to lay an amendment on the table be carried, the matter before the House
118 shall be proceeded with as if no such amendment had been offered.
119 5. Motions to lay on the table and to adjourn shall be decided without debate.
120 6. The motion to adjourn shall always be in order.
121 7. Debate shall not be allowed upon a resolution to refer any motion to a committee, or a

122 motion to recommit any subject which has been before a committee, but the member
123 who offers such resolution or motion may speak for five minutes for the purpose of
124 explaining its object.

125 8. All amendments shall be considered in the reverse order in which they are moved. When
126 a proposed amendment is under consideration a motion to amend the same day may be
127 made. An after amendment to such second amendment shall not be in order, but when
128 an amendment to an amendment is under consideration, a substitute for the whole may
129 be received. A proposition, different from the one under consideration, shall not be
130 received under color of an amendment or substitute.

131 9. All questions of order shall be decided in the first instance by the President, without
132 debate; an appeal, however, may be made from his or her decision to the Convention by
133 any member of the same.

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135 H. Special Aspects of Conducting a Virtual Meeting

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137 1. Each member is responsible for his or her audio and Internet connections; no action shall
138 be invalidated on the grounds that the loss of, or poor quality of, a member's individual
139 connection prevented participation in the meeting.

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141 2. The President may cause or direct the disconnection or muting of a member's connection
142 if it is causing undue interference with the meeting. The President's decision to do so,
143 which is subject to an undebatable appeal that can be made by any member, shall be
144 announced during the meeting and recorded in the minutes.

145

146 3. In addition to display of pending motions or results of votes, video of the President and
147 any member currently recognized to speak or report shall be displayed whenever possible
148 throughout the meeting, as well as such other video displays as the President designates
149 at his or her discretion.

150

151 4. Assignment of the floor. To seek recognition by the President, a delegate shall use the
152 "raise hand" request feature or similar process approved by the Secretary of the
153 Convention to request and await recognition. Once the pending action is completed, the
154 online queue shall be cleared. To preserve the orderly conduct of debate, Members'
155 connections will be muted until they are recognized to speak.

156

157 I. Voting Methods

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159 1. The Secretary of the Convention shall arrange for anonymous and public voting systems
160 that permit voting and reporting of votes by orders. The Committee on Dispatch of
161 Business shall evaluate whether the technology available to the Convention can
162 accommodate multiple rounds of virtual balloting, and the Committee may, if necessary,
163 evaluate and recommend the adoption of rules for first-past-the-post virtual voting.

164

165 2. An anonymous vote conducted through the designated virtual voting system shall be

166 deemed a written ballot vote, fulfilling any requirement in the Constitution and Canons or
167 rules that a vote be conducted by written ballot. Votes shall be deemed anonymous so
168 long as votes cast by an individual are available only to the administrator of the voting
169 system.

170

171 3. Where voting is allowed to be conducted in person using visual show of voting cards,
172 voting may be conducted using a virtual voting system approved by the Secretary of the
173 Convention. Votes cast using the virtual voting system shall be deemed the equivalent of
174 votes cast in person.

175

176 4. After the first ballot of any election has been announced, the nominee (clergy and/or lay)
177 with the least number of votes shall be dropped from the list of nominees. This process
178 shall continue after each ballot until there remains one more nominee than the number
179 to be elected. This shall not apply to a vote by orders.

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181 **J. Procedures following Decisions of Convention**

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183 When a question has once been determined, it shall stand as the judgment of the
184 Convention, and shall not again be drawn into debate, except on motion for reconsideration,
185 which can only be entertained if made by a member who had previously voted in the majority.

186

187 **K. Rules of Order in Force**

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189 1. In all matters of parliamentary procedure, Robert's Rules of Order shall be the standard
190 book of reference, excepting that these Rules of Order for the Convention shall supersede
191 in cases of disagreement.

192 2. The Rules of Order shall not be suspended except by a two-thirds vote of the members
193 present.

194

195 **L. Order of Business**

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197 1. Report of the Credentials Committee as to seating of delegations.

198 2. Announcement by Secretary as to whether a quorum is present.

199 3. Appointment of Parliamentarian.

200 4. Elections of Secretary of the Diocese, Treasurer of the Diocese, Chancellor of the
201 Diocese, and other officers of the diocese.

202 5. Announcements.

203 6. Report of Committee on Dispatch of Business.

204 7. Introduction of all resolutions for reference.

205 8. Nominations and first ballot for Diocesan Council, Standing Committee, and General
206 Convention deputies (when applicable). Additional ballots will be taken subsequently and
207 related motions will be considered at times determined by the chair.

208 9. Consideration of any resolutions related to financial matters and the Plan for Ministry

- 209 (aka the budget).
- 210 10. Reports of all officers and committees.
- 211 11. Committee's report out on all resolutions previously referred.
- 212 12. Other elections and appointments.
- 213 13. Fixing the time and place of the next Convention.