

The Diocese of Olympia

2024 Convention Guide

About this guide

This Convention Guide is intended to provide Convention members with practical information concerning the Convention and how it functions. Additional questions concerning the Convention may be addressed to Canon for Human Resources, Governance & Convention, [Dede Moore](#).

The Diocese of Olympia

The Diocese of Olympia, encompassing the Episcopal congregations—parishes, missions, parochial missions and designated mission stations—in western Washington State, is bounded by the Cascade Mountains, Oregon, the Pacific Ocean, and Canada. Every baptized Episcopalian resident in western Washington is a member of the Diocese.

The authority of the Diocese is vested in and exercised by the Bishop, the Convention, and the Standing Committee. The Diocese is governed by its Constitution and Canons (laws). A copy of the [Constitution and Canons](#) is available on the diocesan website.

The Diocese of Olympia is incorporated under the laws of Washington State, under the name of “The Diocese of Olympia, Inc.” This corporation has responsibility for the custody, control, and investment of all trust funds of the Diocese, and holds legal title to all diocesan property, including the property of all missions, and certain specialized ministries not separately incorporated. A Board of Directors, appointed by the bishop and approved by the Convention, governs the corporation.

The Diocesan Convention

The Diocesan Convention consists of the bishop, (and the bishop coadjutor, bishop provisional, or bishop suffragan if there be one); canonically resident clergy who reside or work in the Diocese; lay delegates elected from each parish, mission and mission station in union with the Convention; lay members of the Diocesan Council, Standing

Committee, and Board of Directors; lay conveners and assistant conveners of the regional ministries; one young adult (16-21) from each Regional Ministry; and the Officers of the Diocese (if lay persons) [*Article VII*].

Parish and mission representation is based on communicant strength of the congregation [*Canon Two*]:

Under 200	2 delegates
201–400	4 delegates
401–600	6 delegates
601–900	8 delegates
901–1200	10 delegates
Over 1200	12 delegates

Current Officers of the Convention

President	The Rt. Rev. Philip N. LaBelle
Secretary	Marda Steedman Sanborn
Treasurer	James Beckwith
Chancellor	Judith Andrews, Esq.
Archivist	Erik Bauer

What the Convention Does

The Convention elects certain officers, ratifies a budget, sets assessment levels for financing the operation of the Diocese, admits congregations as missions or parishes (and may suspend them), votes upon resolutions, elects General Convention deputies and alternates, hears the bishop’s annual address, and conducts such other business as the Convention may determine. In addition, the meeting of Convention provides an opportunity for worship, information sharing by exhibitors and others, networking, and fellowship.

Order of Business

The Convention adopts an order of business upon recommendation of the Committee on Dispatch of Business.

Rules of Order

Rules of Order are adopted at the beginning of each convention. Except when in conflict with the Constitution or Canons of the Episcopal Church or of the Diocese of Olympia, the latest revised edition of Robert's Rules of Order governs the conduct of Convention business. By unanimous consent, action may be taken that is not in contravention of any provision in the Constitution or Canons of the Episcopal Church or those of the Diocese of Olympia.

Speaking at Convention

Any Convention member, including those given Voice through the Committee on Privilege, may speak upon recognition by the president of Convention. Alternates do not have privilege to speak on the convention "floor."

Voting

Electronic ballots will be used according to the Rules of Order. Laity and clergy deliberate in one body and vote as individuals, with each delegate present entitled to one vote. On most matters, a majority vote is decisive. In some instances, the votes of clergy and laity must be counted separately. This is called a "vote by orders." Upon the request of any five members of the Convention, the two orders vote separately.

Resolutions

Canon Four requires that resolutions be submitted to the Resolutions Committee at least 45 days prior to the Convention. Resolutions submitted by September 10, 2024, were considered by the Resolutions Committee and included in its report to Convention. Resolutions not submitted by the deadline may be considered as set forth in the Rules of Order, which states that a *resolution shall be considered by Convention only if it does not propose to modify the Constitution and Canons of the Diocese and does not call for an appropriation from the Diocesan budget, and further provided that it has been submitted, in writing, to the Resolutions Committee no later than forty-eight (48) hours before the convening of Convention, and consideration of such resolution is approved by a majority vote of the Convention.*

Annual Diocesan Operating Budget

The bishop and the Diocesan Council prepare the annual diocesan operating budget. In accordance with Canon Six, the operating budget is presented to the Convention for ratification; the budget may be amended by following the guidelines for resolutions.

Any proposed amendment that calls for new or increased spending must include an estimate of the additional costs and must specify budget line item reductions or other revenue sources that would maintain a balanced budget. Any proposed amendment that calls for reduction in spending must specify the budget line items to be affected. Any proposed budget amendment must be submitted by written resolution at least 45 days prior to the Convention (September 10, 2024).

Assessment

Canon Seven provides that an annual assessment be levied upon each parish and mission congregation of the Diocese, based on the "net disposable income" (NDI) available for general parish/mission purposes. Assessment calculation is based on real-time NDI for the previous month. Thus, January NDI is used as the basis for the February payment, February for March, etc.

The assessment rate is set by the Convention for the second succeeding year following the Convention. Thus, the 2024 Convention will set the assessment rate for 2026.

If it is necessary to increase the rate of assessment for a particular year, the Convention may, by two-thirds affirmative vote, levy a special assessment upon the parishes and missions. Such a special assessment is limited to one year.