

# AD ECCLESIAM

November 2008 - No 3

“Built into one body”

## THESE

**GUIDELINES FOR VESTRY MEETINGS HAVE BEEN PREPARED BY THE BISHOP AND ENDORSED BY DIOCESAN COUNCIL ON SATURDAY 18<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2008. ALL INCUMBENTS, CHURCHWARDENS AND PARISH COUNCILS ARE EXPECTED TO IMPLEMENT THEM WITH IMMEDIATE EFFECT.**

Dear brothers and sisters in the Lord,

“Peace to you brothers and sisters, and love with faith from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ”  
(Eph 6:23)

Thank you very much for your support of the activities leading up to the Diocesan Launch of “Growing the Church”. We pray the Lord of the harvest to keep on blessing our Diocese as we strive to implement our Pastoral Plan, of which “*Growing the Church*” is a confirmation that, as a diocese, we are very much in synch with the vision of the Anglican Church of Southern Africa as a whole.

## VESTRY MEETINGS

I wish to share with you some guidelines about Vestry meetings to be held in all parishes not later than Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> March. I need to remind everyone about important time lines, the agenda for Vestry, what is expected in terms of the Rector’s and the Churchwardens’ Reports and the Vestry returns to the Diocesan Office. Not everything that I am sharing with you is codified in the Canons of ACSA or in the Acts of the Diocese, but, I am trying to interpret the mind of the Acts to assist us in holding meaningful Vestries.

### 1. GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS:

- 1.1. **Final date of Vestry:** 15<sup>th</sup> March
- 1.2. **Financial statements:** The Annual Vestry cannot be validly held until the Annual Financial Statements for the preceding year have been completed and either professionally audited or verified by an independent verifier approved by the diocese.
- 1.3. **Three Year limit:** Anyone who has been a Churchwarden for three years of unbroken service is not eligible for re-election. A member of Parish Council may be elected as Churchwarden and then serve as Churchwarden for a maximum of three one-year terms. However, a churchwarden who has completed three consecutive one-year terms may not be elected as a Parish Councillor.
- 1.4. **Nominations:** only the laity may nominate people to serve as Churchwardens and Parish Councillors.
- 1.5. **Elections and scrutineers:** Voting shall/should be by secret ballot. Scrutineers for the voting must be agreed to by Vestry and may not include the Rector or Priest-in-Charge.

### 2. ACTION FLOW BEFORE ANNUAL VESTRY

- 2.1 **NOVEMBER/ DECEMBER**
  - i. Parish Council to formulate a **Mission Action Plan** on the basis of the six priorities of the Diocesan Pastoral Plan and the parish

- ii. vision previously developed. Parish Council to develop and endorse a comprehensive financial **Budget** for the ensuing year.
- iii. If not already done, identify an **independent verifier** -approved by the Archdeacon- who will check your income and expenditure statement before Vestry.
- iv. Incumbents due to move early in the new year should prepare a written statements of needs/report to be presented by a churchwarden or the new incumbent during next Vestry.

**2.2. FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT: CALL FOR NOMINATIONS**

Lists calling for nominations for Churchwardens and Councillors must be put up on the notice board.

**2.3. NOMINATION SUNDAY: THIRD OR FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

Nominations are handed back, duly signed by the proposer, a seconder and the person being nominated. Nominations are now officially closed.

**2.4. TIME FOR PRAYERFUL DISCERNMENT:**

From Nomination Sunday until the date of Vestry. Regular reminders during weekday services and Sunday worship. Emphasis on the ministry of parish intercessors.

**2.5. END OF YEAR:** Complete financial statements except for final, minor adjustments.

**2.6. JANUARY** Complete financial statements and -where applicable- send to auditors or approved, independent verifier. Check when financial will be ready and set date for Vestry. **Vestries must be before or on March 15<sup>th</sup> every year.** Allow space for unforeseen delay.

**2.7. AT LEAST 7 DAYS BEFORE VESTRY:**

Publish and display written notice of Vestry. The notice must be signed by Rector and Churchwardens and must give the place, date, time and agenda of Vestry. The Agenda for Vestry is set out in section V of Canon 27 and amplified in the following guidelines.

v. **VESTRY:**

**3.1. Chairperson of Vestry:** The Rector is normally the chairperson of Vestry. Consult Canon 27,7 if the Incumbent is not available.

**3.2. Members of Vestry:** Parishioners of a Pastoral Charge being of the age of 18 years and upwards.

**3.3. AGENDA OF VESTRY:**

The Annual Vestry meeting will consider the following business in the following order:

- iv. Confirmation of **Minutes** (written and, whenever possible, typed) of previous Annual Vestry Meeting;
- v. **Presentation by Churchwardens of audited or verified annual financial accounts.** Note: accounts must be accepted before moving on to the next item of business.
- vi. **Report by Churchwardens** on condition of church property, which report must be received by Vestry and a copy forwarded to the Diocesan Office together with the required vestry returns.
- vii. **Report by Incumbent** on care of the parish including a statement of needs, which report must be received by Vestry and either accepted or amended. A copy of this report must be sent to the Diocese together with the required Vestry returns.

