

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) about the Council of Trustees (CoT)

**Q: Who is eligible to be a CoT member?**

A: All persons who are members in good standing in a parish in this diocese are eligible.

**Q: How does one become a member of the CoT?**

A: There are three ways people can become members:

1. They are elected at their convocation meeting to serve as a convener.
2. They are elected at the annual convention.
3. The Bishop can appoint them.

**Q: What are the expectations for members of the CoT?**

A: The primary duties of all members are to prepare for and attend all meetings of the CoT, and to participate fully in these meetings. Members are expected to notify the diocesan office if they are not able to attend. While not mandatory, it also is hoped that members will volunteer to serve as liaisons to one or more diocesan committees. These liaisons are not required to attend every meeting of their committee(s) but are expected to submit reports about recent committee activities two weeks before each CoT meeting. To expedite the meeting process, members are expected to review the minutes from the last meeting and all other documents posted on the Council of Trustees member page before each meeting.

**Q: Are there other duties and responsibilities for those CoT members elected at convention?**

A: No, the duties of the members elected at convention are those listed above. The Bishop may ask that these members also perform other duties as needed and appropriate.

**Q: Are there other duties and responsibilities for conveners and assistant conveners?**

A: The primary duty of the conveners is to facilitate communication between the individual parishes of the convocation and the CoT. This communication needs to go both directions: from the parishes to the CoT and from the CoT to the parishes. Both conveners and assistant conveners are expected to prepare for and attend all meetings of the CoT, participate fully in the meetings, and to notify the diocesan office if they are not able to attend.

Conveners also are responsible for organizing, marketing, and running convocation meetings. These duties include, but are not limited to, contacting the clergy, wardens, and convention delegates about upcoming meetings, working with the diocesan staff to create agendas for the meetings, locating sites

for each in-person meeting, making sure someone is taking minutes, recruiting candidates for conveners as needed, and, for the meeting before the annual convention, encouraging discussion of the budget and resolutions. The assistant convener is responsible for fulfilling these duties if the convener is not able to do so.

**Q: How often does the CoT meet?**

A: The CoT meets at least four times a year.

Q: What are the norms for the group/group rules/behavioral expectations?

A: All members are valued and expected to treat all other members with the respect and dignity due to all human beings. This includes, but is not limited to, listening to opinions that may differ from your own, considering them prayerfully, and responding with kindness.

**Q: What are the financial responsibilities of a CoT member?**

A: While there are no specific financial responsibilities, members are generally expected to cover the cost of their travel to and from in-person CoT meetings. Members often carpool, and lunch is provided for meetings that include midday. In the case of financial hardship, the diocese will work with members or their parish to address the travel costs. During the current COVID-19 situation, the meetings are being held virtually through Zoom, and the diocesan staff sends out a link to the meeting in advance.

**Q: Is there an assumption about a co-convener becoming the convener at the end of the current convener's term?**

A: This often happens, but it is not required.

**Q: What do the Canons say about the Council of Trustees?**

A: Canon III: Council of Trustees for the Mission of the Diocese, which has three sections, is quoted below.

*SECTION 1. There shall be a Council of Trustees for the Mission of the Diocese ("Council"), which shall have the following powers and duties:*

*A. The Council shall hold title to all real estate and other assets owned by the Diocese and shall have full power to deal with said real estate and assets after consultation with the Bishop. In addition, the Council shall possess all other powers and duties granted by law to a Pennsylvania nonprofit corporation.*

*B. The Council shall report to the Annual Convention and shall be the governing body of the corporate and fiscal affairs of the Diocese. The Council shall carry out the program and work of the Annual Convention when said Convention is not in session and shall perform such other responsibilities as normally assumed by a board of directors of a nonprofit corporation in accordance with the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and consistent with the Constitution and Canons of the Episcopal Church and of this Diocese.*

*C. The Council shall have power to make such by-laws, rules, policies, and procedures as it may, from time to time, deem necessary or expedient for its governance, provided that they are not repugnant to the constitution and laws of the United States or the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania or to the constitution and canons of the Episcopal Church or this Diocese.*

#### *SECTION 2. Membership of the Council of Trustees*

*The Council of Trustees shall be composed of the following members, all of whom shall be entitled to vote: the Bishop, the Bishop Coadjutor and Suffragan Bishop, if there be such, the Chancellor, the Secretary, the Treasurer, the President of the Standing Committee, the Canon for Finance and Operations, the presiding officer of the Episcopal Churchwomen, a representative of the Youth Advisory Program, the seven Convocation Conveners and their Assistant Conveners, in office at the time, and three clergy members and six lay members elected by the Annual Convention for staggered three-year terms.*

#### *SECTION 3. Governance and Operations of the Council*

*A. The Bishop, or the Bishop's appointee, who need not be a member of Council, shall preside at all meetings of the Council of Trustees.*

*B. The Council shall meet not less than four times annually upon dates fixed by itself.*

*C. A quorum for the conducting of business shall be a majority of the elected Trustees including the Convocation Conveners and Assistant Conveners.*

#### **Q: How can I find out more information about the CoT?**

A: You can learn more by contacting any one of the members or the diocesan staff. All current members are listed on the CoT page of the diocesan website. You can also talk with one of the conveners of your parish's convocation; if you don't know who those conveners are, talk with your parish's senior warden.