

2019 Constitutional Resolution CON-1

First Reading

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RESOLVED, That the 127th Council of the Episcopal Diocese of Southern Virginia amend Articles IV and VIII of the Constitution to read in the form and language as herein proposed:

ARTICLE IV: COMPOSITION OF COUNCIL

The Council shall be composed as follows:

4. A representative from each Christian body with which the Episcopal Church has official dialogue or Covenant Relationship, as determined by the Council of the Diocese of Southern Virginia and based on the work of the Standing Commission on Ecumenical Relations of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America. ~~Each representative is to be appointed by, and his or her status as laity or clergy determined by, the appropriate judicatory leader or body.~~ The appropriate judicatory leader of the Christian body, or the Christian body shall appoint each representative, and shall determine the status of each, as laity or clergy.

ARTICLE VIII: PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL

The Bishop shall be the President of the Council. It shall be ~~his~~ the duty of the President to give the Council annually a report of ~~his~~ the President's official acts and a general view of the state of the Church. ~~He~~ The President may declare ~~his~~ views on any subject after it has been discussed, and before a vote thereon. The Bishop Coadjutor, if there be one, and if there be none, the Suffragan Bishop if there be one, and if there be none the Assistant Bishop if there be one, shall preside in the absence of the Bishop.

RATIONALE: The Episcopal Church affirms in I.17.5 of the Canons of the Episcopal Church that "no one shall be denied rights, status or access to an equal place in the life, worship, and governance of this Church because of race, color, ethnic origin, national origin, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, disabilities or age, except as otherwise specified by Canons." Similar rights are reflected for clergy in the Canons for discernment (III.1.2) and licensing to officiate in a diocese (III.9.7(a)).

As we prepare to elect the XI Bishop of the Diocese of Southern Virginia, the Search/Nominating Committee has been charged to consider all candidates in accordance with the above cited canonical rights. Our Constitution should reflect the same openness and diversity in language about both our bishop and ecumenical representatives to Council, as is proposed in these amendments.