

POLICY ON YOUTH REPRESENTATION ON THE VESTRY

Purpose

The Purpose of this Policy is to codify the long-standing Parish practice of having a representative of the youth of the Parish serve as a member of the Vestry, and provide a Process for effecting this practice.

Background

For some years now there has been a practice in the Parish of having a Youth Representative on the Vestry. This typically was accomplished by appointing a high school student to a vacancy. That appointee would then stand for election at the next Annual Meeting, as does any other person appointed to fill a vacancy. This practice was never codified.

At the 2007 Annual Meeting, the person appointed in such a manner was not elected to complete the term. This left the Vestry without Youth Representation for the first time in many years. This in turn led to concerns among the youth, Parish Staff and Vestry. The Rev. Donna Foughty was asked to take the lead on the issue. She consulted a number of stakeholders and prepared a draft Procedure.

Their draft attempted to present a procedure that allows equal opportunity for all youth active in Pohick Episcopal Church to participate in the selection of their representative as well as give all the youth the opportunity to actively participate in this very important ministry as a leader in the church. It was presented to the Vestry on March 11, 2008, and referred to the Policy and Planning Commission for further review and recommendation. The Policy and Planning Commission discussed it at two meetings, and on April 12, 2008 completed a revised Draft and recommended it to the Vestry for adoption.

Rationale

The Episcopal Church and Pohick Parish support and encourage participation in the life, ministry and governance of the Parish by the youth of the Parish. Our youth are full members of the Parish when they are baptized. When they reach age 16, they may vote in Parish elections; when they reach age 16 and are confirmed members, they may serve as members of the Vestry.

Policy

At the December 2008 Annual Meeting of the Congregation of Pohick Episcopal Church, the Congregation shall be asked to approve a sixteenth member of the Vestry. This new member shall be designated as the Youth Representative, and said shall be elected according to this Policy.

The Youth Representative shall have seat, voice and vote when serving on the Vestry.

Term

The Youth Representative shall serve a term of one year, beginning in May of each year following his/her election (see Para. 0). Between his/her election at the annual meeting and the beginning of the Term, the Youth Representative shall have seat and voice on the Vestry, while the previously-elected Youth Representative completes his/her Term. The intent of this overlap is to allow the outgoing Youth Representative a chance to mentor the incoming person prior to the beginning of the new person's term.

In conformance with the canons of the Diocese of Virginia, the person selected as Youth Representative shall not be eligible to be elected to a second consecutive term. (See Canons, Para. 1.1.4)

Selection Process

In the fall of each year, a Selection Committee as defined in Paragraph 0 below should strive to nominate from among the youth of the Parish at least two, and as many as four, youth who meet the criteria set forth in Paragraph 0 below for nomination as Youth Representative. In determining the nominees, the individual Youth Ministry leaders will advise their membership of the upcoming election, discuss the responsibilities and canvass for interest.

These youth shall be fully briefed on the responsibilities laid out by the Constitution and Canons of The Episcopal Church and of the Diocese of Virginia of those serving on a Vestry and shall agree to fulfill those responsibilities.

The selection and election process should take place in time for a candidate to be elected and placed on the ballot at the Annual Meeting of the Congregation in December.

Selection Committee

The Selection Committee for this purpose shall consist of the Sr. High EYC Advisors, the Director of Christian Education, the Sr. High Sunday School Teachers, Acolyte Master, Vestry Education Representative, Minister of Music and the Youth Minister who shall serve as Chair.

The Vestry may at its discretion revise the membership of the Selection Committee to accommodate changes in roles, responsibilities and titles.

Qualifications

The youth selected for this ministry must, by the time of the Annual Meeting of the Congregation:

- a) Be a minimum of sixteen years of age;
- b) Be a confirmed member in good standing of the Church, and

- c) Be active in at least one of the Parish's youth-related ministries, such as EYC, Sunday school, acolytes, and music and choir, and
- d) Meet any and all other criteria of the Constitution and Canons of The Episcopal Church and The Diocese of Virginia for serving as a member of a Vestry.

Just as other Vestry members are expected to continue to be active in the various activities and ministries of the Parish, the Youth Representative is expected to continue to be active in the Parish's youth-related ministries throughout his/her service on the Vestry. There will be no prohibition against a parent and youth serving on the Vestry at the same time.

Election by Youth of the Parish

The Selection Committee shall then conduct elections by ballot in each of the Youth Ministries, either jointly or individually, at its discretion. Each youth member of the Parish shall vote only once, regardless of the number of ministries in which he or she is involved.

Election at the Annual Meeting

The Youth Representative so elected by the Youth of the Parish shall stand for election by the Parish at the Annual Meeting of the Congregation in December of that year. The candidate shall appear on a separate portion of the ballot. If candidate receives a majority of the votes cast on that portion of the ballot, he/she shall be elected to the Vestry. If not, the Selection Committee shall begin the selection process again.

Effect

This Policy shall take effect immediately upon its adoption by the Vestry, provided that to continue in effect it shall be presented at the next Annual Meeting of the Parish as a Referendum item. To continue in effect it must be approved by a majority of those voting on that Referendum Item.

If so approved it shall continue in effect until modified by the Vestry. Any such modification must likewise be presented and approved as a Referendum Item at the next Annual Meeting of the Congregation.

Upon its approval by the Vestry, a Youth Representative shall be selected in accordance with this process, and presented to the Vestry. The Vestry shall affirm this candidate to serve on the Vestry with seat and voice until the next Annual Meeting.

References

Constitution and Canons of The Episcopal Church

Diocese of Virginia Constitution and Canons, Cannon 11, Section 2: