

...Walking together as One

CONVENTION PRIMER 2024



A guide for voting members,
elected members, lay delegates
and alternates.

Charlotte Harbor Event & Conference Center, Punta Gorda
Friday and Saturday, October 11 - 12, 2024

So you are a Lay Delegate/Alternate...?

Chances are you were elected as a convention delegate or alternate at your congregation's annual meeting, or you were appointed by your vestry or Bishop's Committee. To be a delegate, you must satisfy the same qualifications that apply to an "elector" or voting member of a parish including:

- 1) You are at least 16 years of age.
- 2) Your name is duly enrolled in the register of your congregation.
- 3) You are regular in attendance at divine services.
- 4) You make stated contributions of record to the general support of your congregation.

Make sure to visit the Convention Website!

Find more information about this year's convention including registration info (deadline Friday, September 27th) workshops, agendas, hotels, and more at www.conventionswfl.org

If your congregation is a parish, you are one of 3 lay delegates. If your congregation is a mission, you have 2 delegates. Each congregation is also entitled to an alternate delegate in case a delegate is unable to serve. Notes about the role of the alternate follow in the section below. Clergy members of convention have separate rules under the Constitutions and Canons of the Diocese.

What should Lay Delegates/Alternates do?

1) Attend a fall deanery convocation meeting.

In order to serve effectively, voting delegates (and alternates) need to be prepared to vote at Convention on any resolutions and elections to leadership roles that are placed into consideration. Information regarding these elections and or resolutions, along with details about the diocesan budget that will be presented at convention for approval, are shared during these important convocation meetings. Plan on attending the convocation that meets in your deanery.

2024 Convocation Meetings

- **Ft. Myers/Naples Deaneries: Tuesday, September 3, 7 p.m.**
Lamb of God Lutheran/Episcopal Church, 19691 Cypress View Dr., Fort Myers, FL 33967
- **Clearwater/St. Petersburg/Tampa Deaneries: Wednesday, September 4, 7 p.m.**
St. Mark's Episcopal Church, 13312 Cain Rd., Tampa, FL 33625
- **Manasota/Venice Deaneries: Thursday, September 5, 7 p.m.**
St. Wilfred Episcopal Church, 3773 Wilkinson Rd., Sarasota, FL 34233

2) Attend Convention.

As a delegate, you have the right to **seat, voice, and vote**. Your congregation chose YOU to represent them and do the business of the Diocese of Southwest Florida at convention. At the Annual Convention, you will be responsible for voting on the budget, voting on resolutions and electing candidates to various positions. In addition, as a delegate, it would also be your responsibility to attend any subsequent meetings that need to be scheduled. While it is rare, it has come to pass that not all the business of the convention was acted on in one day and there was some urgent matter that required additional voting or consideration. You are a delegate until you resign or your successor is chosen.

Lay alternates, who are entitled to **seat** at convention, should be prepared to be of service. In the event a lay delegate is unable to attend convention, an alternate delegate shall step in to serve and shall then have seat, voice, and vote. The process for substituting an alternate for a delegate who has resigned is discussed on page 6 of this primer.

Preparing for Convention (a.k.a. Convention Homework!)

In order to be an effective delegate you will need to do some homework BEFORE you get to convention. All the information you will need to do your “job” will be made available to you in advance - either presented at a deanery convocation meeting or available on the convention website: www.conventionswfl.org. Be sure to visit the convention website *regularly* to check for the latest convention news.

The 2025 Diocesan Budget

At the convention, delegates, along with voting members of clergy, will be voting on the Diocesan Budget for the upcoming year. The Deanery Convocations (see previous page for dates) are the best place to have your budget questions answered and to seek clarity on anything you don't understand. At the business meeting, on the floor of the convention, with lots of items on the agenda, it is difficult to ask or answer technical questions.

- Copies of the diocesan budget will be presented and reviewed at each of the fall deanery convocations by Chief Financial Officer Mike Booher.
- The CFO will be available after the deanery convocations if you have additional budget questions.

The Resolutions

Throughout the year, resolutions on a variety of topics are submitted for consideration and approval of the members of convention. These resolutions in the past have included support for farm workers in Immokalee, revising or amending diocesan Canons, making changes to diocesan financial procedures, granting voting rights to deacons, members of the Standing Committee, Diocesan Council, and more. The texts of any proposed resolutions will be made available to you on the diocesan convention website. Make sure to read the resolutions, the explanations for why they are being brought forth—think and ask questions about them. That way, when you get to convention, you will be ready to cast your vote.

Elections

Bios, photos, and statements of the candidates who have been nominated for Diocesan committees such as the Ecclesiastical Disciplinary Board, Diocesan Council, the Standing Committee, among others, are available on the convention website and in the Bridges Newsletter, as are the descriptions of what each job involves. Take time to study the candidates and their bios before the Saturday (October 12th) Convention business meeting, and give prayerful consideration to determining whom you will choose for these leadership roles. These are some of the people who will be doing the work of the diocese for years to come. Note that additional candidates may be nominated from the floor of convention. Unfortunately, we are unable to provide biographical information for floor nominees because voting takes place immediately after nominations close.

Convention Registration

Registration for this year's convention is online only. The registration link may be found in the BRIDGES newsletter and also on the convention website: www.conventionswfl.org.

For help with online registration, call (941) 556-0315 and ask for Beth Gould, or email her at bgould@episcopalswfl.org. The final convention registration deadline is Friday, September 27th. No registrations will be accepted after the deadline and there is no provision for walk-in registration.

What to Expect at Convention

Diocesan convention weekend is much more than just the business meeting. In fact, delegates account for only half of the convention attendees. We gather to worship, to reunite with colleagues and friends, and to learn and share with others. Those who attend the Friday sessions (Morning Prayer, Workshops, the Ministry Fair, the Opening Eucharist and the Evening Reception) may not want to attend the Saturday business meeting. Some delegates may not be able to attend anything but the Saturday business meeting. Others like to come and go!

Obtaining Your Credentials for Convention

Because of the varied nature of Friday and Saturday activities, you will receive a different set of credential for each day. Check in for both days will begin at 8:00 a.m. Any materials you need for the days events will be provided at the time of check in.

Friday, October 11th, 2024

Check in begins at 8 a.m.

- Locate the Friday check-in tables, organized from A-Z, at the concourse of the conference center, and pick up your name tag.
- Your name tag will list your name, congregation and city, and will indicate if you have pre-ordered the Friday meal packet. The meal packet will include the continental breakfast, lunch, and the evening hors d'oeuvres reception and 2 free drinks. There will be also be a cash bar available at the evening reception. **Please make sure to choose and pay for your meal packet at the time of registration. You will not be able to purchase it at convention.**

Friday Workshops

On Friday, a full day of workshops dedicated to continuing education on a wide variety of interesting topics is open to anyone—convention delegates/alternates, clergy, guests and visitors. The workshops provide an opportunity to learn new skills and find resources that can be taken back to your congregation. We encourage people from the same congregation to spread themselves out among the workshops and take what they learn back to their congregations. You may review the workshop descriptions ahead of time on the convention website.

The Ministry Fair

The Ministry Fair, on the main concourse, shows off the breadth and depth of ministry in our diocese with displays from congregations, ministry groups, and national organizations that specialize in church products and services. There are shopping opportunities here, as well as opportunities to contribute to Episcopal charitable causes. Don't forget to visit our very popular altar guild booth, where congregations offer, at no charge, vestments and equipment they no longer need. The Ministry Fair opens at 8:00 a.m. on Friday and closes after lunch on Saturday.

Worship in Hibiscus Hall

Our time at convention gives us a rare opportunity to walk as One Diocese through worship. Join your fellow Episcopalians for the following worship opportunities:

- Morning Prayer: Friday and Saturday at 9 a.m.
- Convention Opening Eucharist: Friday at 5:00 p.m.

Evening Reception

Immediately following the Friday Opening Eucharist (at approximately 6:30 p.m.) an evening reception with heavy hors d'oeuvres will be offered. If you have purchased the meal packet with your registration, we will provide you with two free drink tickets. A cash bar will also be available. Should you want to venture out for dinner Friday evening, we have posted a list of Punta Gorda restaurants on our convention website for your convenience.

Saturday, October 12th, 2024 (the day of the business meeting!)

Check in begins at 8 a.m.

- Locate the Saturday check-in tables, organized from A-Z, on the main concourse of the conference center, and pick up your name tag. Your designation (delegate, alternate, clergy, clergy spouse, guest, visitor) will be reflected on your name tag. Please note, this is a change from previous years, as check in tables will not be organized based on your convention role/status.
- If there is a change in your voting status for convention that occurs on the Saturday of Convention, changing from alternate to delegate for example, you will be directed to the credentials room to have your nametag updated. Please make sure your Rector or Senior Warden accompanies you to the credentials room.
- Once you have checked in, you are invited to enjoy a continental breakfast, visit the Ministry Fair and participate in Morning Prayer before joining the business session which begins at 9:30 a.m.

Credentials and Seating at the Business Meeting

Convention Floor

- Voting members of convention sit at designated tables at the front of the hall labeled by deanery and congregation.
- Retired canonically resident clergy, who retain seat and voice, sit at tables specifically designated for them. They do not sit with their former or current congregations.
- Tables marked “special guests” are set aside for members of Standing Committee, Diocesan Council, Finance Committee, Endowment Board, Chancellors, Vice-Chancellors, Chaplains to retired clergy and families, honorary members of convention, visiting bishops, and other designated special guests. (Some of these “special guests” are entitled to vote.)
- All others will be seated in the designated guest gallery. These may include, but are not limited to, lay alternates, non canonically resident clergy, and anyone else who desires to attend this annual meeting of the Diocese of SW Florida.

Notes for Clergy Members of Convention

Diocesan Canons list six (6) separate distinctions for clergy members of convention. The canon that applies to you will be noted on your nametag. The preliminary roster will be posted online and emailed in approximately mid July. This allows adequate time for clergy to examine their documented voting status. Contact Beth Gould, Executive Assistant to the Canon to the Ordinary, bgould@episcopalswfl.org for any needed clarification. We are unable to make any changes in Clergy voting status Convention Weekend.

Lay Member Change from Alternate to Delegate

- **In advance:** Delegates who know in advance that they will be unable to attend, should arrange to have their congregation's alternate substitute for them. To make the change, a change of delegate form **MUST** be submitted online: <https://www.tinyurl.com/2024DelegateChange>
- **Day of:** For delegate substitutions on the day of convention (Saturday only), alternates and their rector/vicar/priest-in -charge or senior warden must visit the credentials room located behind the registration tables. Once the change has been signed for and approved, the alternate's nametag will be updated with voting credentials, and the alternate will be seated at the congregation's table on the floor of convention. Delegate changes are only permitted prior to the presentation of the final credentials report from the floor of convention.

Business Session and Voting

As you enter Hibiscus Hall, convention pages will be on hand to direct you to your assigned seating area. We do this to ensure that only those who are entitled to vote are seated on the voting floor of convention. This is how we maintain the integrity of the vote. Once the business session has begun, if you wish to speak at an appropriate time, please approach one of the two microphones on the convention floor and wait to be recognized by the chair. First, state your name and congregation, and then make your comments, which are limited to three minutes. Then return to your seat. Convention works through an agenda, with scheduled breaks and a lunch period.

VPOLL Electronic Voting

We will once again be using an electronic voting system. If you are attending Convention with voting rights, **you will need to bring an electronic device such as a smartphone, tablet, or laptop computer with you to the Saturday business meeting.** Charging stations will be available; please make sure to bring any cords you need. Charging cords will not be provided. A login ID number will be provided at check in on Saturday morning. ID numbers will not be provided early. Everything you need to vote electronically will be printed on your name tag. You may sign in to the voting system as soon as you have checked in on Saturday morning: log on to www.vpoll.mobi and select the access code **SWFL56**. Enter the ID Number found on your nametag and your last name. Select Polling Session **56 Convention** and click SUBMIT. Convention Pages will be on hand if you need help getting onto the voting platform.