



# THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF VIRGINIA

## Youth Delegates Primer

### **Anglican Communion**

Our Episcopal Church is a member of The Anglican Communion, a group of 38 independently governed churches that share a common faith, history and tradition. Each of these churches has its own chief bishop (primate), and more or less, its own rules. Members of the Anglican Communion share a common history rooted in the establishment of the Church of England, and express their faith, liturgy and sacramental practice in a Book of Common Prayer. These four guiding principles unite churches in the Anglican Communion: The Old and New Testaments are the revealed Word of God, the Nicene Creed is the statement of our Christian faith, our primary sacraments are baptism and Holy Eucharist, and all bishops follow a succession of ordination from the apostles to the present day.

Every 10 years, the Archbishop of Canterbury (primate of the Church of England, symbolic head of the Anglican Communion and “first among equals”) invites all bishops to a Lambeth Conference, held in Lambeth Palace, residence of the Archbishop of Canterbury. See [anglicancommunion.org](http://anglicancommunion.org) for more information.

### **Episcopal Church**

Our church within the Anglican Communion is the Episcopal Church, made up of 109 Dioceses, not all of which are located in the United States (Haiti, some Central American countries and some dioceses in the European Convocation are Episcopalian). The legislative body of the Episcopal Church is General Convention, made up of all bishops and four clergy and four lay delegates from each Diocese, meeting every three years. Our Presiding Bishop (Michael Curry) is the Episcopal Church's chief pastor, representing us to other denominations, other faiths and to the world. Between General Conventions, the church's Executive Council oversees the ongoing mission and ministry of the church. And although there is a good deal of flexibility within our church, we are governed by Constitutions and Canons (laws), which can only be changed through the Acts of General Convention.

### **Provinces, Dioceses, Regions and Parishes**

Dioceses are clustered (more or less) geographically into nine provinces. Leadership conferences within Provinces are held twice a year to discuss common issues. And because we are an “episcopal” church (led by a bishop), we are further organized into dioceses, the basic unit of our church. There are three Episcopal Dioceses in the state of Virginia: Southern Virginia, Southwestern Virginia and our diocese, Virginia.

In the Diocese of Virginia, individual parishes are organized into 15 Regions, again more or less geographically, to share resources and maximize ministry. And then we get down to

your parish, your home church. Regardless of how small or how big your parish is, we are part of something much, much bigger, linked in ministry to help realize God's dream for our world.

There are approximately 180 parishes in the Diocese of Virginia and about 80,000 communicants making the Diocese of Virginia the second largest diocese in the Episcopal Church.

### **Delegates**

Each parish sends clergy and at least one Lay Delegate to Convention each year, all having voice and vote. Larger parishes get to add one more Lay Delegate for each additional 300 “communicants in good standing.” (attend church, receive Communion, make a donation to their parish) Delegates are elected by each parish’s Vestry. Each of Virginia’s 16 Regions is invited to elect and send one Youth Delegate and one Alternate Youth Delegate (alternates attending Council will have voice, but no vote)

### **Why we have Convention**

This is the annual business meeting of the Diocese and is presently held late in January, alternating between locations in Northern Virginia and the Richmond area. Convention conducts elections; votes on the budget, resolutions and any other actions presented; hears reports; and conducts any other business of the Diocese. It includes both the Clerical Order and the Lay Order, as well as members of Convention ex officio, and guests. Approximately 600 people attend the Annual Convention.

The agenda for Diocesan Convention is published several weeks prior and is available on the Diocesan website and through other communications. The business sessions, presided over by the Bishop, are the primary objective of Convention and include the Bishop’s address, appointments, elections requiring vote of the Council, reports of various committees and commissions, budget approval, and any other business of the Diocese. In addition, Convention activities may include workshops, an orientation session, nominations hearings, exhibits of various ministries and organizations, social events and worship. It’s recommended that all attending Convention familiarize themselves with the agenda, and make plans to participate in all business sessions of Convention.

## **Resolutions**

So – if the mission of the church is restoration of all to unity with God and each other through Christ – how do we do that?? So, yeah, Sunday morning stuff: prayer, worship, sacraments, proclaiming the Gospel – and also through the promotion of justice, peace and love. The resolve of the church to do justice, to promote peace and to live in love is voiced through and voted on through these resolutions – and in a million other ways seen and unseen as our mission is carried out through people like you and me. Listen closely as our church speaks to the needs of the world.

## **Budget**

The Mission of the Diocese of Virginia, according to Bishop Goff, is worshipping the Lord and serving the world in unity and diversity. Our budget, in effect, is our Mission Statement, and each year must be approved so that Mission Trips and Camps and Formation Programs and Youth Programs and Parochial Support and Clergy Support and Family Support and so much more can flourish and grow, all fantastically facilitated by our Diocesan Staff.

The priorities of the Diocese are Youth and Young Adult Formation, the strengthening of our congregations, evangelism and proclamation, multiculturalism and ethnic ministries and mission beyond ourselves, all ministries requiring God’s blessing, funding, passion and hard work.

## **Sharing what you learn**

It’s likely that you’ll be asked to report back to your Region on your experiences at Convention, making it a very good idea to jot down thoughts and notes during Convention. We hope that you’ll visit with your home parish’s Vestry, too. Your insight will help them fashion new ways of being church. We very much hope that you’ll share your learnings and experiences with your church friends – and especially – with your non-church friends. Hey – look at you – you’re an Evangelist! (information on church governance and polity guided by “My Faith, My Life” by Jennifer Gamber and by “A Lay Delegate’s Guide” by Diane Miller, President of Region 5, Diocese of Virginia)

**If you have any further questions, please reach out to:**

**Sierra Gore, Christian Formation Assistant at [sgore@thediocese.net](mailto:sgore@thediocese.net) or 804.643.8451 x1023**



# Youth Delegate to Annual Convention

## SAMPLE APPLICATION FORM

### PARTICIPANT INFORMATION *(Please print clearly.)*

Name:	Grade:
Email:	Gender:
Phone:	Phone Type: Home / Cell / Other
Any allergy, medical, or dietary conditions: No / Yes – explain:	
Church Name & Location:	
Home Address:	

### PARENT/GUARDIAN INFORMATION

Parent/Guardian Name(s):	
Phone #1:	Type: <i>(i.e. mom's cell)</i>
Phone #2:	Type:
Phone #3:	Type:
Insurance Company & Policy #:	
Parent/Guardian Email:	
Non-Parent Emergency Contact Name & Phone:	

### PARENT/GUARDIAN PERMISSION *(Section must be completed and signed by parent/guardian of youth participants.)*

**Photos/Images:** I understand that the Diocese will sometimes record images, sound or video of diocesan events for use in marketing and promotional material, and on Web sites owned by the Diocese. Last names are not printed with photos of youth. Please indicate by checking the box, if you do **NOT want images of your child published:**

**Medical & Liability Release for Minors:** I hereby give my permission for my child to attend the Diocesan Annual Convention and serve as a Youth Delegate, and in the event of an accident or illness, to receive emergency medical treatment as deemed necessary by a licensed physician. I also agree by execution of this document to release the Region, the local congregation, the Diocese of Virginia, and all others acting for or on behalf of the Diocese of Virginia from all liability whatsoever, for personal injury, or damages to property, real or personal, caused by, or arising out of activities sponsored by The Diocese of Virginia.

Parent/ Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please answer these questions on a separate sheet of paper.**

1. Why do you want to be a Delegate/Alternate?
2. Please share how you are involved on the community of your church.
3. Have you been confirmed in the Episcopal Church?
4. Have you ever been on a mission trip? What did you learn?
5. What strengths and weaknesses would you bring as a Delegate/Alternate?
6. What activities, groups, and clubs are you involved with outside of the church?

**Please read over the following with your parent/guardian.**

I understand that being a Youth Delegate/Alternate for the Diocese of Virginia is a ministry and a commitment to being a leader in the Diocese. Because of this it is important for everyone to attend the necessary orientation and planning meetings and to be present for Annual Convention.

Youth signature:

Parents are expected to support their child in this effort by helping to provide or plan for transportation to/from Annual Convention and by recognizing the commitment of time and energy being asked of each delegate/alternate.

Parents/guardian's signature: