

**DIOCESE OF THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS  
OF THE  
ANGLICAN CHURCH IN NORTH AMERICA**

*Approved June 21, 2016*  
**CONSTITUTION**

***Preamble***

*There is one body and one Spirit - just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call - one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. Ephesians 4.4-5*

The Diocese of The Rocky Mountains (the “Diocese”) is an assembly of Congregations and Missions in the western United States initially formed by our relational partnership with the Anglican Church of Rwanda and gathered under common episcopal authority within the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church (the “Church”). As members in the Anglican Church in North America (the “Province”), we exist to proclaim and strengthen the Kingdom of God throughout the Western United States and to implement the mission of the Anglican Church in North America, for the furtherance of which we ordain and establish this Constitution as consistent with the Constitution and Canons of the Anglican Church in North America.

***Article I***

***Fundamental Declarations of the Diocese***

The Diocese being part of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church of Jesus Christ, believes and confesses Jesus Christ as Lord. He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life: no one comes to the Father but by Him. This Diocese holds the essentials of evangelical Anglicanism handed down through the English reformation. We believe that the doctrine of the Church is grounded in the Holy Scriptures and in such teachings of the ancient Fathers and Councils of the Church as are agreeable to those Scriptures. As such, this Diocese affirms the Jerusalem Declaration that was adopted at the Global Anglican Future Conference in Jerusalem, June 2008 (Appendix 1). In particular, this Diocese confesses and upholds:

- (a) The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be God’s Word written, containing all that is necessary for salvation;
- (b) The orthodox Christian creeds, namely the Apostles’ Creed, the Nicene Creed and the Athanasian Creed together with the Chalcedonian Definition;
- (c) The Thirty-nine Articles as containing foundational doctrine of the Church agreeing with God’s Word and as authoritative for Anglicans today;
- (d) Anglican sacramental and liturgical heritage as an expression of the gospel, and the 1662 Book of Common Prayer as a true and authoritative standard of worship and prayer, to be translated and locally adapted for each culture.

The Diocese likewise conforms to the Fundamental Declarations of the Province as set forth in Article I of the Provincial Constitution. The Diocese acknowledges the authority and powers of the Province as set forth in the Provincial Constitution and Canons and adopts this Constitution to be in conformance therewith. In an event of a conflict between the Constitution and/or Canons of the Diocese and the Constitution and/or of the ACNA, the Constitution and Canons of the ACNA shall govern this diocese. Consistent with the principle of subsidiarity, all powers not granted to the Province are reserved to the Diocese. In turn, the Diocese exists to serve and coordinate the work of its Churches and Missions, so whatever the Diocese may wisely leave to the local congregation will be left to the local congregation.

## *Article II* *Mission Values*

The mission of the Diocese is that of the Church, to fulfill the Great Commandment and the Great Commission. We affirm that local Churches and Missions, acting within and with the support of the diocese, are the fundamental agencies of the mission of the Church. A principal work of the Diocese is to encourage and strengthen existing congregations and to assist them in planting new congregations, which may become self-sustaining member churches of the Diocese.

With roots in Rwanda and our context in North America, we affirm the following values that blend these two realities together:

1. **Consecrated Lives:** We will submit to our Lord Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit, striving to grow in his love and holiness as a people rooted in God's Word, enflamed by prayer, united in common worship, and passionate for effective mission.
2. **Low Overhead:** We will share and steward our resources with a passionate concern for the planting of churches, without sacrificing the vital need of pastoral care and support for our existing churches.
3. **Leadership Development:** We will work together to discern and develop practical means for finding, forming, and funding leaders capable of planting healthy Anglican churches in the West.
4. **Collaborative Mission:** We will develop meaningful ways to connect and unite churches, even across large distances, so as to promote mutual learning, cooperative ministry, and effective leadership throughout the Diocese.
5. **Delegated Authority:** We will strive to recognize leaders and delegate authority throughout the Diocese so as to facilitate local pastoral care, leadership initiative, and church planting.
6. **Movement above Structure:** We will prioritize bold and creative kingdom initiatives, refusing to allow structure to burden or hinder mission, while upholding the importance of godly order for the health of Christ's body.
7. **Strategic Thinking:** We will carefully consider the difference between where we are and where we believe God wants us to be, discern the necessary steps to close the gap, put those steps in their proper order, and then methodically begin to take them.
8. **Global Relationships:** We will exercise fellowship and cooperation in Gospel ministry with the Global Church. We will explore how our respective assets and gifting can support the work

of gospel mission in the Anglican Church in the Global South, and we commit to hold in common the proclamation of the faith of Jesus Christ, the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, and the glory due to God the Father.

***Article III***  
***Ecclesiastical Organization and Governance***

The fundamental agency of mission is the local congregation gathered in union with the Diocese. The chief agents of this mission to extend the Kingdom of God are the people of God. The order, governance, and discipline of the Diocese shall be vested in the Bishop as the Ecclesiastical Authority and personal instrument of unity. The Bishop governs and disciplines by means of the Diocesan Council (the “Council”), the Synod, Committees, and the Ecclesiastical Court of the Diocese in conformity with this Constitution.

***Article IV***  
***Authority and Composition of the Synod***

The Synod, as the legislative body of the Diocese, shall have authority to adopt canons, approve resolutions and budgets and take any other specific action for the conduct of the affairs of the Diocese not in conflict with this Constitution or that of the Province. The synod shall be composed of lay and clerical orders as set out in the Canons of the Diocese.

***Article V***  
***Office of the Bishop***

A Bishop is called by God and the Church to oversee the people of God gathered under his care, and as such he is called to propagate, teach, uphold, and defend the Faith and Order of the Church, willingly and as God directs. He must not be greedy but be eager to serve, not lording the authority of his office or position over those entrusted to his care. He must be a humble, wholesome example to the entire flock of Christ. By the tradition of Christ's One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church, Bishops are consecrated for the whole Church and are successors of the Apostles through the grace of the Holy Spirit given to them. They are chief missionaries and chief pastors, guardians and teachers of doctrine, and administrators of godly discipline and governance.

***Article VI***  
***Diocesan Council***

There shall be a Diocesan Council that shall perform those duties required by the Constitution and Canons of the Province and of the Diocese. The Council shall be constituted and shall operate as provided by canon. The Council shall submit a report of its meetings and actions to the Synod and shall serve as the standing committee of the Synod between annual Synod meetings.

*Article VII*  
***Diocesan Committee on Constitution and Canons  
and Other Committees of the Diocese***

There shall be a Diocesan Committee on Constitution and Canons that shall be responsible for ensuring the conformity of the Diocesan Constitution and Canons with those of the Province. This Committee shall review and report its recommendation to the Synod regarding any proposed amendment to the Constitution or Canons. The Synod may establish other committees of the Diocese.

*Article VIII*  
***The Officers of the Diocese***

In addition to the Bishop, and, if there be such, the Bishop Coadjutor and the Bishop Suffragan, the officers of the Diocese shall be the Secretary, the Treasurer, the Chancellor, and the Registrar, along with such Canons as the Bishop may appoint. The selection and duties of the Officers of the Diocese shall be prescribed by canon.

*Article IX*  
***Holy Orders***

**Section 1. Orders of Ordained Ministry**

Ordained ministry in the Diocese shall be exercised only by clergy, that is bishops, priests, and deacons, ordained or licensed by the bishop of the diocese, whether canonically resident in the diocese or licensed thereto from another diocese or Province. No congregation may assign to lay ministers those ministerial functions reserved to ordained or duly licensed ministers, in accordance with the Canons of the Diocese and the Province.

**Section 2. Concerning Men and Women in Orders**

This Diocese upholds the biblical teaching that both men and women are created in God's image and called to full service in his Kingdom. For this reason, this Diocese is committed to promoting the ministry of women alongside men, both within and outside the church. Within the Anglican Communion there is a diversity of opinion regarding the ordination of women. While this Diocese does not ordain women as presbyters nor license nor receive them within the Diocese, we do ordain gifted and called women as vocational deacons. We ordain gifted and called men as vocational deacons, transitional deacons, and presbyters. In each of the respective offices, we gratefully receive the service of these clergy in a broad variety of ministries according to God's gifts and callings in each person's life. At the same time, we express our commitment to order within the Church by reserving sacramental ministry to presbyters. As the presbyterate and diaconate are extensions of the ministry of the Bishop, he has both authority and responsibility to ensure that all ordained ministers be extended only those functions of ministry for which they are both gifted and equipped.

***Article X***  
***Concerning the Sanctity of Marriage***

In view of the teaching of Holy Scripture (Genesis 1:26-29; 2:18-25; Mark 10:1-9; Ephesians 5:28-33), the Lambeth Conference of 1998 (Lambeth resolution 1.1.0), the Jerusalem Declaration, and in accordance with Title II, Canon 7, Section 1, of the Anglican Church in North America, and the June, 2015 Provincial College of Bishops Statement “From the Beginning” and “Bearing Witness to Holy Matrimony,” the Diocese recognizes that marriage is a lifelong covenant between one man and one woman and is God’s given context for the expression of sexual relationships. Therefore, this Diocese will teach, disciple, and strengthen the Church to follow the vocation of sexual purity both within and outside marriage as so defined. In addition, this Diocese cannot ordain persons who engage in sexual activity outside the definition of marriage we have received. We also understand that God allows divorce, and remarriage, in certain circumstances due to the sinfulness and brokenness of humanity. Therefore, provision is made for consideration and counsel in matters of divorce and remarriage by local clergy in collaboration with the Bishop.

***Article XI***  
***Worship***

Worship shall be according to Anglican faith and order and shall be conducted in accordance with the Constitution and Canons of the Province and of the Diocese.

***Article XII***  
***Ecclesiastical Discipline***

**Section 1. Ecclesiastical Trial Court Established**

There shall be an Ecclesiastical Trial Court of the Diocese for the application of Church discipline in accordance with the Provincial Constitution and Canons.

**Section 2. Jurisdiction, Composition, Terms of Office and Procedures**

The jurisdiction, composition, terms of office and procedures of the Ecclesiastical Trial Court shall be established by canon.

***Article XIII***  
***Concerning Property of Congregations and Missions***

All property, real and personal, owned or held by or on behalf of a Congregation or Mission of the Diocese is and shall be owned by the Congregation or Mission, free of any trust or other claim in favor of the Diocese or the Province. A Congregation or Mission may not alienate or encumber its real property except with the consent of a majority of the Congregation or Mission by vote taken at a meeting called for that purpose with adequate advance notice.

***Article XIV***  
***Concerning Diocesan Property***

Any property, both real and personal, owned by the Diocese now and in the future is not and shall not be subject to any trust interest in favor of the Province or any other claim of ownership arising out of the canon law of the Province.

***Article XV***  
***Incorporation***

The Diocese may incorporate in accordance with the laws of the State where located or the State where any of its Congregations or Missions is located. The Bishop shall be the President of the corporation and, if required, the Diocesan Council its Board of Directors. Operation of the corporation shall be as provided by canon and applicable state law.

***Article XVI***  
***Amendment***

Amendments to the Constitution must first be noticed to and reviewed by the Constitution and Canons Committee and the Bishop, who may submit their recommendations to the Bishop and Synod or the Diocesan Council. The Bishop shall send notice of the proposed Amendment, the reasons for the amendment, and any recommendations to all delegates of Synod on or before 120th day prior to the meeting of Synod. This Constitution may be amended by a two-thirds majority vote at any regular meeting of the Synod. If approved by a two-thirds majority vote of the Synod, the amendment shall lie over to the next annual meeting of the Synod, and, if again approved in the same form by a two-thirds majority vote, the Constitution shall then stand amended as proposed, after the completion of a 90-day waiting period after the amendment has been finally passed.

## **APPENDIX I**

### **The Jerusalem Declaration**

In the name of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit:

We, the participants in the Global Anglican Future Conference, have met in the land of Jesus' birth. We express our loyalty as disciples to the King of kings, the Lord Jesus. We joyfully embrace his command to proclaim the reality of his kingdom which he first announced in this land. The gospel of the kingdom is the good news of salvation, liberation and transformation for all. In light of the above, we agree to chart a way forward together that promotes and protects the biblical gospel and mission to the world, solemnly declaring the following tenets of orthodoxy which underpin our Anglican identity.

1. We rejoice in the gospel of God through which we have been saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit. Because God first loved us, we love him and as believers bring forth fruits of love, ongoing repentance, lively hope and thanksgiving to God in all things.
2. We believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God written and to contain all things necessary for salvation. The Bible is to be translated, read, preached, taught and obeyed in its plain and canonical sense, respectful of the church's historic and consensual reading.
3. We uphold the four Ecumenical Councils and the three historic Creeds as expressing the rule of faith of the one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
4. We uphold the Thirty-nine Articles as containing the true doctrine of the Church agreeing with God's Word and as authoritative for Anglicans today.
5. We gladly proclaim and submit to the unique and universal Lordship of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, humanity's only Saviour from sin, judgement and hell, who lived the life we could not live and died the death that we deserve. By his atoning death and glorious resurrection, he secured the redemption of all who come to him in repentance and faith.
6. We rejoice in our Anglican sacramental and liturgical heritage as an expression of the gospel, and we uphold the 1662 Book of Common Prayer as a true and authoritative standard of worship and prayer, to be translated and locally adapted for each culture.
7. We recognise that God has called and gifted bishops, priests and deacons in historic succession to equip all the people of God for their ministry in the world. We uphold the classic Anglican Ordinal as an authoritative standard of clerical orders.
8. We acknowledge God's creation of humankind as male and female and the unchangeable standard of Christian marriage between one man and one woman as the proper place for sexual intimacy and the basis of the family. We repent of our failures to maintain this standard and call for a renewed commitment to lifelong fidelity in marriage and abstinence for those who are not married.
9. We gladly accept the Great Commission of the risen Lord to make disciples of all nations, to seek those who do not know Christ and to baptise, teach and bring new believers to maturity.

10. We are mindful of our responsibility to be good stewards of God's creation, to uphold and advocate justice in society, and to seek relief and empowerment of the poor and needy.

11. We are committed to the unity of all those who know and love Christ and to building authentic ecumenical relationships. We recognise the orders and jurisdiction of those Anglicans who uphold orthodox faith and practice, and we encourage them to join us in this declaration.

12. We celebrate the God-given diversity among us which enriches our global fellowship, and we acknowledge freedom in secondary matters. We pledge to work together to seek the mind of Christ on issues that divide us.

13. We reject the authority of those churches and leaders who have denied the orthodox faith in word or deed. We pray for them and call on them to repent and return to the Lord.

14. We rejoice at the prospect of Jesus' coming again in glory, and while we await this final event of history, we praise him for the way he builds up his church through his Spirit by miraculously changing lives.

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