



## What is a Diocese?

In The Episcopal Church, local congregations gather together into a larger geographical and administrative unit called a Diocese. Each diocese is led by a Bishop.

In The Episcopal Church, a diocese must meet certain canonical requirements to be accepted.

Key requirements for a diocese include:

- **Size:** A diocese must contain at least six active self-supporting congregations, each led by a full-time priest. The parishioners are the stewards of God's church and provide the Talent (through volunteer work) and Treasure (funds) needed to carry out the Church's mission.
- **Episcopal Leadership:** A Bishop is the chief pastor, spiritual guide and mentor for the congregants and clergy of the diocese. The bishop is the organizational leader of the diocese. As a member of the House of Bishops, each bishop also participates in the governing of the national Episcopal Church.
- **Constitutional Structure:** The diocese must have a governing constitution and set of canons consistent with those of the national Episcopal Church.
- **Standing Committee:** A council of advice for the Bishop, often acting as the ecclesiastical authority when the bishop's position is vacant.
- **Diocesan Convention:** An annual gathering of lay representatives from all congregations within the diocese and all resident clergy presided by the diocesan bishop, typically representing a democratically governed structure.

- **Representation:** The diocese must be able to elect and send up to four priests/deacons and four lay deputies to the House of Deputies at the national General Convention, held every three years. The diocese must be able to elect and send representation to the appropriate Provincial Synod,
- **Ordination Standards:** The diocese must adhere to established canons for examining and ordaining clergy, including theological education, clinical pastoral education, and background checks.

The following can be modified to suit the specific needs of the diocese:

- **Executive Board/Diocesan Council:** Most dioceses maintain an executive body to carry out the programs and policies adopted by the Convention.
- **Key Officers:** Administrative officers typically include a Secretary, Treasurer, Chancellor (legal advisor), and Registrar.
- **Cathedral:** One church is set aside specifically for the bishop and holds the bishop's chair (in Latin *cathedra*). Diocesan administrative offices are usually either in or near the cathedral.

If you have any questions or comments, please submit an inquiry to the Discernment Committee on the Diocese's Transition web page: <https://dioceseofeaston.org/transition/>