

---- **PROPOSED** ----
Revised Canons
of
The Progressive Episcopal Church

1. THE COUNCIL OF BISHOPS

The officers of the Church shall be elected by a 51% majority. Officers may be removed from office by a 2/3 majority vote. Officers are elected for a three (3) year term and may be re-elected for additional terms. The officers shall consist of a duly elected Presiding Bishop and a duly elected Secretary General.

2. THE PRESIDING BISHOP

2.1 The Presiding Bishop shall be elected from a member of the Council of Bishops.

2.2 The Presiding Bishop's responsibilities include:

- Presiding over regular and special sessions of the Council of Bishops
- Encouraging communication and collaboration between members of the Council of Bishops
- Serving as a symbol of unity and first among equals of the bishops of the Church

3. THE SECRETARY GENERAL

3.1 The Secretary General may be elected from a member of the Council of Bishops, or may be a priest or deacon recommended by a member of the Council of Bishops or the Presiding Bishop, subject to a vote by the Council per terms of Canon 1.

3.2 The Secretary's responsibilities include:

- Recording minutes of meetings and publishing official documents of the Church
- Serving as administrative officer of the Church
- Filing an annual report to the regular annual session on the state of the Church
- The Secretary General shall keep an official record of all currently incardinated and active clergy of TPEC

3.3 In accordance with the ancient tradition of the Anglican church, a cleric other than a bishop holding the appointment of Secretary General shall carry the title The Reverend Canon in addition to any other distinctions and may be referred to as the Canon Secretary.

4. OF QUORUMS

A quorum for regular or special sessions of the Council of Bishops shall consist of 51% of the member bishops and the current Presiding Bishop and General Secretary in attendance, unless

otherwise specified in the Constitution or Canons, or due to death or resignation of office of an officer. Action by regular or special sessions require a 51% majority vote of the quorum, unless specified otherwise in the Constitution or Canons.

5. ANNUAL SESSIONS OF THE COUNCIL OF BISHOPS

The Annual Session of the Council of Bishops shall be held once each year at a date, time and place or by electronic means, as the Presiding Bishop may designate, with no less than 30 days notice being given to all member bishops. Additional sessions may be called when deemed necessary by the Presiding Bishop or 51% of the membership of the Council of Bishops. Notice of such sessions may be provided by electronic means or postal service, provided such notice is given at least 15 days prior to the opening of the session. Roberts Rules of Order, Revised, shall govern parliamentary procedure in all meetings, unless otherwise specified in the Constitution or Canons.

6. AMENDMENT OF CANONS

These Canons may be amended by a special meeting convened by the Presiding Bishop in consultation with the Council of Bishops, until the Church is large enough to have a General Synod. Any considerations of possible additions or removals from these Canons should be sent to the Council of Bishops and/or the Presiding Bishop. This document should be a “living document” meaning it is subject to change, enlightenment, and direction from the People of God.

A 2/3 majority vote of a regular annual, **or a called** session of the Council of Bishops is required to amend the Canons.

7. DIOCESES

7.1 Dioceses of the Progressive Episcopal Church are affinity dioceses, and not geographic, unless specifically designated otherwise by the Council of Bishops.

7.2 Dioceses, though subject to the rulings of the Council of Bishops, are autonomous in nature.

7.3 Each Diocese will be under the jurisdiction of a Diocesan Bishop. In the event of a *sede vacante* in any Diocese, the vacant see may be placed under the authority of an Archdeacon until such time as a new Bishop is seated, at the discretion of the Presiding Bishop. The Presiding Bishop may alternatively request the assistance of another Diocesan Bishop to assist with episcopal oversight of the vacant Diocese.

7.4 A Diocesan bishop may appoint a bishop to be Suffragan Bishop. The appointment must be approved by a 51% majority vote of the Council of Bishops.

7.5 Clergy within TPEC are canonically resident in the Diocese of their affinity.

8. PROVINCES

(reserved)

9. ARCHDEACONS, CANONS and DEANS

9.1.1 Of Archdeacons The Presiding Bishop may appoint a cleric to the office of Archdeacon to assist with the administration of The Progressive Episcopal Church. The Archdeacon is the principal deputy of the bishop for the exercise of administrative authority. The Archdeacon may assist the Presiding Bishop in the administration and oversight of any Dioceses that are in a state of *sede vacante*, acting administratively as bishop-pro-tem. An Archdeacon will *not* have the episcopal privilege of a bishop, i.e., the power and authority to confer Holy Orders, etc.

The role of the Archdeacon is generally summarized as follows:

1. assisting the Presiding Bishop in his episcopate and care of the Church and its Provinces;
2. providing a supportive and collaborative leadership for mission and ministry in the Church;
3. The Archdeacon shall report to the bishop any matter in any parish within the Church or its Provinces which it may be necessary or useful for the bishop to know, particularly any case of serious illness or other form of distress amongst the clergy.

9.1.2 The archdeacon will carry out his duties under the bishop and will assist the bishop in his pastoral care and office, and particularly he will see that all such as hold any ecclesiastical office within the same perform their duties with diligence, and will bring to the bishop's attention what calls for correction or merits praise.

9.2 Of Canons. The Bishop of any Diocese may appoint a cleric as Canon to provide administrative assistance and other leadership as assigned by the Bishop to the diocese, its congregations, and church organizations in the diocese.

9.3 Of Deans. A diocesan bishop may appoint a Rural Dean to assist with administrative and pastoral oversight of a specific geographic area. The role of a dean is generally summarized as follows:

1. helping the Bishop in his episcopate and care of the deanery
2. providing a supportive and collaborative leadership for mission and ministry in the deanery

3. Every rural dean shall report to the bishop any matter in any parish within the deanery which it may be necessary or useful for the bishop to know, particularly any case of serious illness or other form of distress amongst the clergy

10. VOCATIONS

10.1 By divine institution, among Christ's faithful there are in the Church sacred ministers who are also called clerics, the others are called lay people.

10.2 Celibacy is not a requirement of any clergy within TPEC. The Orders of Sacred Ministry are open to all qualified people regardless of marital status, gender, race, sexual orientation, or gender identity.

10.3 If there are clerics, who sharing in the priestly work of Christ feel called in his name to exercise acts of ministry which are independent of the TPEC, then while this happens outside the authorising structures of The Progressive Episcopal Church, the Bishops, priests and deacons of The Progressive Episcopal Church nevertheless offer their support and guidance to such clerics in as much as these acts of ministry are consistent with good Christian practice and in as much as their ministry bears good fruit. However, they must make it clear, in these circumstances, that they are not ministering in the name of TPEC.

10.4 It is the duty of the whole Christian community to foster vocations so that the needs of the sacred ministry are sufficiently met in the entire Church.

11. HOLY ORDERS

11.1 Candidates for ordination may wish to have received the minor orders, and have exercised them for an appropriate time.

11.2 All candidates for Holy Orders must have a minimum of a Master's Degree, preferably in an appropriate area of ministry or theology.

11.3 By the reception of the diaconate and the higher orders a person becomes a cleric.

11.4 Clerics who are ordained outside TPEC in a church not in Apostolic Succession may be incardinated into TPEC and licensed for their ministry. Diocesan bishops will issue a ministry license, a copy of which must be provided to the TPEC General Office. Licenses will be valid for one (1) or two (2) years, and may be renewed. Licenses may be revoked at any time for due cause.

11.5 Clerics who have been ordained already in the apostolic succession according to the tradition of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church can join TPEC. If they wish to be incardinated into it and licensed for their ministry then they need to provide the following documentation:

- Their Letters of Orders.

- Five witness letters from those who support and recommend them for incardination. (Diocesan Bishops may alter the number of witness letters required, but it must be shown that the cleric has the support of others who can affirm the fruits of their ministry)

- A letter giving their assent to the Canons of TPEC.

- An enhanced police check, or other equivalent check, showing no offences against minors and vulnerable adults.

- A signed pledge that they intend to remain a cleric of TPEC for at least 5 years after incardination.

- All clergy and candidates for ministry are encouraged, but not required, to carry a certificate of public liability insurance to cover their ministry.

- A letter of excardination from the jurisdiction of the Bishop under whom they currently serve.

11.6 Clerics normally receive Episcopal oversight from their Diocesan bishop. If a cleric wishes to receive Episcopal oversight from the bishop of another Diocese either from their entry into the TPEC or later by means of transfer then they must make a written request of the same to the CB giving their reasons.

12. THE DIACONATE

12.1 The functions especially entrusted to the deacon are as follows: the administration of baptism (in the absence of a priest), preaching, the visitation of the sick, assisting at the Eucharist, anointing of the sick (in the absence of a priest), the conducting of funerals.

12.2 Each Deacon shall be licensed in the State of his/her residence to lawfully solemnize marriage.

12.3 A Deacon is to be responsible for the keeping of proper registers, that is of baptisms, of marriages and of deaths, and any other services conducted. He or she is to ensure that entries are accurately made and that the registers are carefully preserved.

12.4 Every deacon shall provide an annual report of their ministry to their bishop. The report should include a complete accounting of all services and their attendance, including (but not limited to) the number of marriages, burials, and baptisms officiated. The report should also include an account of ecumenical/interfaith partnerships entered, and general pastoral/ministry activities in which the deacon has engaged in the preceding year. The report will be due no later than January 31 for the preceding year.

12.5 The services of the church can be held in any place, at the discretion of the bishop, priest, deacon, church or lay people involved. Our foundation is the Book of Common Prayer, but its use is not bound by these canons. Clergy may freely use any liturgy, prayer-book or service-book that is appropriate to their community and local customary.

12.6 All deacons are morally and ethically bound, and in most states required by law, to report any cases or suspected cases of the abuse and/or neglect of children or vulnerable adults to the appropriate authorities.

13. THE PRIESTHOOD

13.1 A priest has the obligation to ensure that the word of God is proclaimed in its entirety to those within his or her parish. He or she is to see that the lay members of Christ's faithful are instructed in the truths of the faith. He or she is to foster works which promote the spirit of the Gospel, including its relevance to social justice. He or she is to have a special care for the Christian education of children and young people.

13.2 A priest is to strive to ensure that Christ's faithful are nourished by the devout celebration of the sacraments.

13.3 So that the priest may fulfil his or her office of pastor diligently, he or she is to strive to know those entrusted to his or her care. She or he is therefore to visit their families, sharing especially in their cares, anxieties and sorrows, comforting them in the Lord. He or she is to help the sick and especially the dying in great charity, solicitously restoring them with the sacraments and commending their souls to God. She or he is to be especially diligent in seeking out the poor, the suffering, the lonely, those who are exiled from their homeland, and those burdened with special difficulties.

13.4 The priest is to recognise and promote the special role which the lay members of Christ's faithful have in the mission of the church, fostering their associations which have loving

purposes. He or she is to ensure that the faithful are concerned for the local community and that they take part in and sustain works which promote the community.

13.5 The functions especially entrusted to the priest are as follows, the administration of baptism, the administration of the sacrament of confirmation to those in danger of death or at the request of a bishop, the anointing of the sick and the imparting of the apostolic blessing, the assistance at marriages and the nuptial blessing, the conducting of funerals, the celebration of the Eucharist.

13.6 Each priest shall be licensed in the State of his/her residence to lawfully solemnize marriage, if that state requires licensing. Some states only require that a person is a cleric of good standing within their denomination.

13.7 A priest is to be responsible for the keeping of proper registers, that is of baptisms, of marriages and of deaths, and any other services conducted. He or she is to ensure that entries are accurately made and that the registers are carefully preserved.

13.8 Every priest shall provide an annual report of their ministry to their bishop. The report should include a complete accounting of all services and their attendance, including (but not limited to) the number of marriages, burials, baptisms, and confirmations officiated. The report should also include an account of ecumenical/interfaith partnerships entered, and general pastoral/ministry activities in which the priest has engaged in the preceding year. The report will be due no later than January 31 for the preceding year.

13.9 All the services of the church can be held in any place, at the discretion of the bishop, priest, deacon, church or lay people involved. Our foundation is the Book of Common Prayer, but its use is not bound by these canons. Clergy may freely use any prayer-book or service-book that is appropriate to their community and local customary.

13.10 All priests are morally and ethically bound, and in most states required by law, to report any cases or suspected cases of the abuse and/or neglect of children or vulnerable adults to the appropriate authorities.

14 THE EPISCOPATE

14.1 By divine institution, Bishops succeed the Apostles through the Holy Spirit who is given to them. They are constituted Pastors in the Church, to be teachers of doctrine, the priests of sacred worship and the ministers of governance.

14.2 By their Episcopal consecration, Bishops receive together with the office of sanctifying, the offices of teaching and of guiding.

14.3 At any time, any person can submit a name to the Presiding Bishop, the Council of Bishops, or any Bishop, of a person to be considered for the Episcopate. Any candidate for episcopal office must be approved by a 2/3 majority vote of the Council of Bishops.

14.4 To be a suitable candidate for the Episcopate, a person must be outstanding in his or her ability to show Christian love to all. A person who in the prudent judgment of the Council of Bishops is considered to be of exceptional faith, wholly motivated by the right intention, deeply endowed with wisdom, held in the highest esteem by a group of people who know him or her well and have achieved a developed sense of moral probity and virtue and clearly possess the emotional, psychological and spiritual qualities appropriate to the order to be received. They must be at least 35 years of age. (The Council may make exceptions to the age requirement where necessity requires and where a candidature permits but leave must be obtained from the Council.)

14.5 In exercising his or her pastoral office, a Bishop is to be solicitous for all people without exception.

14.6 He or she is to have a special concern for priests and for all vocations.

14.7 A Bishop is bound to give an example of holiness in charity, humility and simplicity of life. Since he or she is the principal dispenser of the mysteries of God he or she is to strive constantly that Christ's faithful may grow in grace through the celebration of the sacraments, and may know and live the paschal mystery.

14.8 All bishops are morally and ethically bound, and in most states required by law, to report any cases or suspected cases of the abuse and/or neglect of children or vulnerable adults to the appropriate authorities.

15. ORDINATION

15.1 By divine institution some among Christ's faithful are, through the sacrament of order, marked with an indelible character and are thus constituted sacred ministers; thereby they are consecrated and deputed so that, each according to his or her own grade, they fulfil, in the person of Christ the Head, the offices of teaching, sanctifying and serving, and so they nourish the people of God.

15.2 The orders are the episcopate, the priesthood and the diaconate. They are conferred by the laying on of hands and the prayer of consecration.

15.3 An ordination is to be celebrated during Mass.

15.4 The minister of sacred ordination is a consecrated Bishop.

15.5 It is usual though not essential for the principal consecrating Bishop at an Episcopal consecration to have at least two other consecrating Bishops with him. It is, however, entirely appropriate that all Bishops present should join with these in consecrating the Bishop-elect.

15.6 Only a baptised man or woman can validly receive sacred ordination.

15.7 In order correctly to confer the orders of priesthood or diaconate, it is required that, in the judgment of the Bishop, the candidate possesses the requisite qualities and is considered beneficial to the ministry of the Church. Only those are to be promoted to orders who, in the prudent judgment of the Bishop, all things considered, are of good faith, motivated by the right intention, endowed with wisdom, held in good esteem by a group of people who know them well and have achieved a moral probity and virtue and possess the emotional, psychological and spiritual qualities appropriate to the order to be received.

15.8 The Bishops of The Progressive Episcopal Church agree not to discriminate with regard to the promotion to orders on the basis of gender, race, ethnic group, sexual orientation, disability, social group, means or academic achievement.

15.9 The priesthood may be conferred only upon those who have completed their twenty-fifth year of age, and possess a sufficient maturity. There would normally be an interval of at least six months between the diaconate and the priesthood. This interval may be waived at the discretion of the Bishop or Presiding Bishop if circumstances deem it appropriate. The diaconate may be conferred only upon those who have completed their twenty-third year of age.

15.10 All bishops have equal power to ordain deacons and priests of The Progressive Episcopal Church. They must both satisfy themselves of the correctness of the rite used and the required intention to ordain. Each ordaining Bishop must issue their own respective ordination documents, and is encouraged to provide the Ordinand with a copy of his/her Apostolic Succession.

15.14 No Bishop within the TPEC can consecrate another Episcopal candidate within the TPEC without the consent of the Council of Bishops.

16. ORDINATION TO THE DIACONATE

16.1 For a person to be promoted to the sacred order of the diaconate the following documents are required:

-Certificate of Baptism

- Five witness letters from those who support and recommend them for ordination. (Diocesan Bishops may alter the number of witness letters required, but it must be shown that the cleric has the support of others who can affirm the fruits of their ministry)

-A letter giving their assent to the Constitution & Canons of TPEC.

-A programme of pre and post ordination training approved by a bishop.

-An enhanced police check showing no offences against minors and vulnerable adults (Diocesan Bishops can adapt this requirement to their own situation ensuring however that, inasmuch as it is possible to do so, it can be shown that there have been no offences against minors.)

17. ORDINATION TO THE PRIESTHOOD

17.1 For a person to be promoted to the sacred order of the priesthood the following documents are required:

-Orders issued according to the tradition of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church for the diaconate.

-A letter giving their assent to the Constitution & Canons of TPEC.

-A programme of pre and post ordination training approved by a bishop.

-An enhanced police check, or other equivalent check, showing no offences against minors and vulnerable adults (Diocesan Bishops can adapt this requirement to their own situation ensuring however that, inasmuch as it is possible to do so, it can be shown that there have been no offences against minors.)

-If the Letters of Orders for the diaconate come from another church, then five witness letters are also required from those who support and recommend the candidate for ordination. (Diocesan Bishops may alter the number of witness letters required, but it must be shown that the cleric has the support of others who can affirm the fruits of their ministry).

18. ORDINATION TO THE EPISCOPATE

18.1 For a person to be promoted to the sacred order of the Episcopate the following documents are required:

-Orders issued according to the tradition of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church for the diaconate and the priesthood.

-A letter giving their assent to the Constitution & Canons of TPEC.

-An enhanced police check, or other equivalent check, showing no offences against minors and vulnerable adults.

-A signed pledge that they intend to remain a Bishop of the TPEC for life and will certainly remain a Bishop of TPEC for at least 5 years after Consecration.

-A Mandate from the Council of Bishops signed by the Presiding Bishop.

18.2 After an ordination, the names of the individuals ordained, the name of the ordaining minister, and the place and date of ordination are to be entered into an Episcopal register.

18.3 The ordaining bishop is to give to each person ordained an authentic certificate of the ordination received.

18.4 Once ordained, a bishop, priest or deacon is held for ever in a spirit of absolute love and support unconditionally. Each Bishop, priest and deacon, in Christ, is joined one with another by the Laying on of each consecrated hand. The sign of inseparability within the Church of Christ must be the hallmark of unity.

18.5 In conformity with ancient tradition it is only necessary that one bishop with valid Apostolic Succession are required to consecrate a bishop.

19. THE OTHER SACRAMENTS

19.1 The sacraments of the New Testament were instituted by Christ the Lord and entrusted to the Church. As actions of Christ and of the Church, they are signs and means by which faith is expressed and strengthened, worship is offered to God and our sanctification brought about. Thus they contribute in the most effective manner to establishing, strengthening and manifesting ecclesiastical communion.

19.2 Sacred ministers may not properly deny the sacraments to those who opportunely ask for them.

19.3 Because they imprint a character, the sacraments of baptism, confirmation and order cannot be repeated.

19.4 If after diligent enquiry a prudent doubt remains as to whether the sacraments of baptism, confirmation and order have been conferred at all, they are to be conferred conditionally.

19.5 In administering sacraments in which holy oils are to be used, the minister should use oil made from olives or other plants, which has recently been consecrated by a Bishop.

19.6 The priest is to obtain the holy oils from his or her own Bishop and keep them carefully in fitting custody.

20. THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

20.1 By Baptism people are freed from sins, are born again as children of God and, made like to Christ by an indelible character, are incorporated into the Church. Baptism is to be conferred either by immersion or by the pouring or sprinkling of water, with the appropriate words.

20.2 The ordinary minister of baptism is a Bishop, a priest or a deacon.

20.3 In a case of necessity, any person who has the requisite intention may do so.

20.4 In so far as possible, in the case of infant baptism, the person being baptised is to be assigned a Sponsor/Godparent. The parents are to choose the Sponsor/Godparent and they can be anyone, without exception, who the parent believes lives a good life.

20.5 The priest must carefully and without delay record in the register of baptism the names of the baptised, the minister, the parents, the sponsors and the place and date of baptism. He or she must also enter the date of birth.

20.6 Once baptised a lay member is held for ever in a spirit of absolute love and support unconditionally.

20.7 The officiating cleric will provide a Certificate of Baptism which will include the candidate's full name, parents' names, godparents'/sponsors' names, and date and place of baptism.

20.8 The officiating cleric will ensure that the appropriate record is made of the baptism as required by Canon 12.3 or 13.7.

21. THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION

21.1 The sacrament of confirmation confers a character. By it the baptised continue their path of Christian initiation. They are enriched with the gift of the Holy Spirit and are more closely linked

to the Church. They are made strong and more firmly obliged by word and deed to witness to Christ and to spread and defend the faith.

21.2 The sacrament of confirmation is conferred by anointing with chrism on the forehead which is done by the laying on of the hand, and by the appropriate words.

21.3 The chrism to be used in the sacrament of confirmation should have been consecrated by a Bishop.

21.4 The ordinary minister of confirmation is a Bishop. A priest can also validly confer this sacrament at the request of a bishop.

21.5 The sacrament of confirmation may be conferred on the faithful at or after the age of discretion.

21.6 To establish that confirmation has been conferred the names of those confirmed, the minister, the parents and the place and date of the confirmation are to be recorded in the register.

22 .THE SACRAMENT OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST

22.1 The most august sacrament is the blessed Eucharist, in which Christ the Lord is present and received and by which the Church continually lives and grows. The Eucharistic sacrifice, the memorial of our Lord's Passion, is the summit and the source of all worship and Christian life. By it the unity of God's people is signified and brought about, and the building up of the body of Christ is perfected.

22.2 The ordinary minister of the sacrament of the Eucharist is a Bishop or a priest, and where there are a number of such present they may concelebrate.

22.3 It need not be the Presiding Bishop or a Bishop who presides at a Eucharist even if they are present, rather a priest may be invited to do so.

22.4 All people without exception are invited to receive Holy Communion. This includes all those from other churches, children, the unbaptised, those of other faiths, indeed all without exception.

22.5 The most holy sacrifice of the Eucharist is offered in bread, and in wine to which, normally, a small quantity of water is added.

22.6 The Eucharist may be celebrated using any rite that is appropriate to the culture and manner of observance that respects the locality and community in which it takes place, as well as the tradition, ceremonial, and approach of those officiating.

23. THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE/RECONCILIATION

23.1 In the sacrament of penance/reconciliation those who confess their sins to a minister, are sorry for their sins and have a purpose of amendment, receive from God, through the absolution given by that minister, forgiveness of sins they have committed after baptism, and at the same time they are reconciled with the church, which by sinning they wounded.

23.2 Only a Bishop or priest is the minister of the sacrament of penance/reconciliation.

23.3 In many States, clergy privilege is suspended with regard to cases of abuse and/or neglect of children, vulnerable adults, mentally retarded or disabled persons, or other classes of people. It is required that all clergy be familiar with the requirements of their State in this regard.

24. THE SACRAMENT OF EXTREME UNCTION

24.1 The anointing of the sick, by which the church commends to the suffering and glorified Lord those who are dangerously ill so that he may support and save them, is conferred by anointing them with oil and pronouncing the relevant words.

24.2 The oil to be used in the anointing of the sick is normally blessed by a Bishop but in the case of necessity any priest can bless the oil, but it should be blessed in the actual celebration of the sacrament.

24.3 The minister is to anoint with his or her own hand, unless a grave reason indicates the use of an instrument, and using the relevant words.

24.4 A bishop or a priest or a deacon can validly administer the anointing of the sick.

25. THE SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE

25.1 The marriage covenant, by which any two adults, establish between themselves a partnership of their whole life, has been raised by Christ the Lord to the dignity of a sacrament.

25.2 Matrimonial consent is an act of will by which two people by an irrevocable covenant mutually give and accept one another for the purposes of establishing a marriage.

25.3 From a marriage there arises between the two people a bond which of its own nature is permanent and exclusive.

25.4 Those who have the care of children have the most serious obligation and the primary right to do all in their power to ensure their children's physical, social, cultural, moral and spiritual upbringing.

25.5 The Progressive Episcopal Church upholds the right of every person to choose their approach towards contraception.

25.6 Pastoral care and unconditional love must be provided for all who experience divorce. Divorced people can marry again.

25.7 All clergy must follow their state laws governing marriage officiants, and be licensed by their state if required. Every deacon and priest must be able to provide valid documentation of licensure to their Bishop & the General Secretary (if their state requires it).

25.8 For those clerics living in States where same-sex marriage is not yet legal, a Covenant Service similar to the marriage service may be offered to same-sex couples. Clergy in such States are encouraged to be resourceful in providing appropriate liturgy that keeps all parties within the limitations of the laws of that State.

26. GENERAL MATTERS

26.1 A priest can impart blessings, except for those reserved to the Bishop.

26.2 No one should exercise the possessed without the special and express permission of a Bishop.

26.3 In fulfilment of the priestly office of Christ, the Church listens to God speaking to his people and recalls the mystery of salvation. The Church is called to praise God without ceasing, in song and prayer, and to intercede with him for the salvation of the whole world.

26.4 A Bishop, priest or deacon of TPEC is available to conduct a baptism, a marriage, a funeral, or any other service for any person without exception. Particularly for funerals, all clerics are encouraged to personalize the service as much as possible, and to avoid a generic funeral or burial office. In life and in death, all are God's creation and worthy of due respect and dignity.

26.5 The usual title of the Presiding Bishop is The Most Reverend or Bishop; of a Bishop is The Right Reverend or Bishop; of a priest is The Reverend or Father/Mother; of a deacon is The Reverend. The usual title of an Archdeacon is The Venerable, and of a Canon is The Reverend Canon.

26.6 All clerics may wear a clerical collar and the attire appropriate to their Order or Title.

26.7 No person can be excommunicated without exception.

27. SACRED PLACES

27.1 Sacred places are those which are assigned to divine worship or to the burial of the faithful by the dedication or blessing provided for this purpose.

27.2 The dedication and blessing of a place belongs to a Bishop.

27.3 A document is to be drawn up to record the dedication or blessing of a place.

27.4 Sacred places are violated by acts done in them which are gravely injurious and give scandal when, in the judgment of a Bishop, these acts are so serious and so contrary to the holiness of the place that the harm needs to be repaired by means of a penitential rite.

27.5 The church is to be open to all without exception and welcoming to all without exception.

27.6 It is appropriate that places set aside for the use of a church, oratories and private chapels be blessed.

28. OFFERINGS AND RECORDS

28.1 Offerings given for a specified purpose may be used only for that purpose.

28.2 Offerings given for an unspecified purpose may be used, by the one/s to whom it has been given, for whatever good purpose the bishop, priest, deacon or church decides.

28.3 A bishop, priest, deacon, church must administer goods and finances with due diligence to the civil law and with integrity.

28.4 Records, available for public inspection, should be kept of all offerings received and how they were allocated.

[28.5 [RESERVED] Each Diocese should make appropriate financial arrangements.]

28.6 A Bishop, priest, or deacon can ask for a contribution towards their ministry for the services they take, although such services should not be withheld due to financial considerations. A parish may wish to provide a stipend or expenses for their clergy or make some other financial arrangements.

28.7 A Bishop, priest or deacon may be involved in full time ministry or they may also have secular employment.

28.8 A diocese or parish may apply for charitable status.

29. SANCTIONS

29.1 In the case of the behaviour of a bishop, priest, deacon or church giving rise to scandal, the Council of Bishops must arrange pastoral care and advice for all those involved.

29.2 The Progressive Episcopal Church does not apply its own penal sanctions to those who commit offences but relies upon the civil law in all such matters.

29.3 If the behaviour of a bishop, priest, deacon or church continues to give rise to scandal, despite the pastoral care and guidance provided by the Council, then the Council can issue a public statement disassociating TPEC from the behaviour in question, and removing its commendation for those involved, and in the case of a cleric removing his or her license.

29.4 If the bishop, priest, deacon or church subsequently desists from the behaviour in question and repents of it and carries out appropriate reparations, then TPEC can issue a public statement to that effect and can commend the bishop, priest, deacon or church again to the public and in the case of a cleric can restore their license.

30. SAFE CHURCH

30.1 All clergy without exception must complete comprehensive Safe Church training for the protection of children and vulnerable adults. The Episcopal Church (ECUSA) has an excellent program and provides certification upon completion of training, which is valid for five years. Clergy are encouraged to work with their local ECUSA or other denominational churches to attend the appropriate training sessions and obtain the necessary certification.

30.2 Each bishop will be responsible for overseeing the Safe Church training and certification of the clergy in his/her diocese.

30.3 The TPEC Administration Office and each bishop will have a copy of their clergy's Safe Church certificate. It will be the responsibility of each cleric to provide such copy to his/her bishop and to the Administration Office.

30.4 All clergy from Licentiate Ministers to Bishops shall be safe church certified.

30.5 All laity regularly working with children and/or vulnerable adults must be safe church certified.

31. THE DIVINE MANDATE

31.1 There are three things that last for ever, Faith, Hope and Love, but the greatest of these is Love. Love will never come to an end. The Bishops, Priests, Deacons and Lay people of The Progressive Episcopal Church are called to have faith, hope and love, but the most important one of all is LOVE.