

# **Anglican District of Virginia**

## **CONSTITUTION**

### **PREAMBLE**

In convention represented by all of the member churches, including missions and other religious congregations, clergy and laity of the Anglican District of Virginia, this Constitution is hereby adopted on the 29th day of September in the Year of Our Lord Two Thousand Seven.

### **Article I Doctrine**

We believe and confess Jesus Christ to be the Way, the Truth, and the Life: no one comes to the Father but by Him.

We confess the canonical books of the Old and New Testaments to be the inspired Word of God, containing all things necessary for salvation, and to be the final authority and unchangeable standard for Christian faith and life.

We confess Baptism and the Supper of the Lord to be Sacraments ordained by Christ Himself in the Gospel, and thus to be ministered with unflinching use of His words of institution and of the elements ordained by Him.

We confess the godly historic Episcopate as an inherent part of the apostolic faith and practice, and therefore as integral to the fullness and unity of the Body of Christ.

We confess as proved by most certain warrants of Holy Scripture the historic faith of the undivided church as declared in the three Catholic Creeds: the Apostles', the Nicene, and the Athanasian.

Concerning the seven Councils of the undivided Church, we affirm the teaching of the first four Councils, and the Christological clarifications of the fifth, sixth and seventh Councils in so far as they are agreeable to the Holy Scriptures.

We receive The Book of Common Prayer as set forth by the Church of England in 1662, together with the Ordinal attached to the same, as a standard for Anglican doctrine and discipline, and, with the Books which preceded it, as the standard for the Anglican tradition of worship.

We receive the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion of 1562, taken in their literal and grammatical sense, as expressing the Anglican response to certain doctrinal issues controverted at that time, and as expressing fundamental principles of authentic Anglican belief.

In all these things, we are determined by the help of God to hold and maintain, as the Anglican Way has received them, the doctrine, discipline and worship of Christ.

**Article II**  
**The Anglican District of Virginia and the Anglican Communion**

The Anglican District of Virginia (“District”) is an association of churches, including missions and other religious congregations, their clergy and laity, who hereby join together to realign traditional Anglicans, so that they may continue in full communion with the Anglican Communion, which is a Fellowship comprising those duly constituted Dioceses, Provinces, and regional churches of the one body of Christ upholding and propagating the Historic Faith, Doctrine, Sacrament, and Discipline of the one Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church as the Lord has commanded in His Holy Word and as the same are received as taught in the *Book of Common Prayer*, the Ordinal, 1662, and the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion. The District encompasses a discrete ecclesiastical and legal structure under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the Convocation of Anglicans in North America (“CANA”), a missionary convocation of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion) in North America, an affiliation by which the District and all of its members are formally in full communion with the foregoing constituent members of the Anglican Communion. CANA and the District were created in part in response to the division within The Episcopal Church and the Episcopal Diocese of Virginia as an offshoot for those former Episcopal churches, missions and other religious congregations adhering to Article I that desire to remain part of the Anglican Communion.

**Article III**  
**Name**

The District was incorporated in the Commonwealth of Virginia in 2006 as a religious non-stock corporation under the Virginia Non-Stock Corporation Act, using the full legal name “Anglican District of Virginia, An Association of Churches.” The District may continue to operate, within and outside the Commonwealth, using both the full legal name under which it was originally incorporated and the shorter name “Anglican District of Virginia.” The Ecclesiastical Authority and/or the Synod Council may take such actions, consistent with applicable laws, that they deem appropriate to protect and secure the District’s rights in either or both names.

**Article IV**  
**Membership**

**Section 1.** All churches, including missions and other religious congregations, that accept the confession of faith set forth in Article I of this Constitution and desire to remain in full communion with the Anglican Communion through CANA may apply for membership in the District. Admission shall be determined by the Ecclesiastical

Authority, according to admission standards and procedures prescribed and administered by the Synod Council. The term church as used in this Constitution shall include missions and other religious congregations.

**Section 2.** Churches already under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of another non-United States Province of the Anglican Communion who otherwise subscribe to Articles I and II of this Constitution may apply for admission in the District. Admission shall be determined by the Ecclesiastical Authority, according to admission standards and procedures prescribed and administered by the Synod Council, although such churches will not fall under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of CANA unless they separately seek to bring themselves under CANA's ecclesiastical jurisdiction.

**Section 3.** Membership shall include each baptized individual member of each member church who accepts the confession of faith set forth in Article I of this Constitution. The name of each individual member shall be entered into the church's register of his or her respective church, mission or other religious congregation.

**Section 4.** Any member may disaffiliate from ADV at any time.

## **Article V Church Property**

All church property, both real and personal, owned by each member church now and in the future is and shall be solely and exclusively owned by each member church and, consistent with Virginia law, shall not be subject to any trust interest or any other claim of ownership arising out of the canon law of any other ecclesiastical entity the ecclesiastical jurisdiction to which member churches may now or in the future be subject.

## **Article VI Governance**

The Ecclesiastical Authority, the Synod Council, and the Synod shall govern the District.

## **Article VII Ecclesiastical Authority**

**Section 1.** The Ecclesiastical Authority of the District shall be the Bishop of CANA resident in the United States.

**Section 2.** The Ecclesiastical Authority of the District is authorized to invite other Anglican bishops into the District for the purpose of performing pastoral oversight and related duties under mutually agreeable licensing arrangements. Pastoral oversight and related duties are not deemed to constitute the exercise of ecclesiastical jurisdiction.

**Article VIII  
Of the Synod**

**A. Composition of the Synod and Authority to Enact Canons**

**Section 1.** The Synod shall consist of: (a) all of the clergy from each member church of the District; and (b) one lay representative from each member church of the District. From every member church having more than two hundred voting members, there shall be an additional lay representative for each two hundred voting members, or fraction thereof, above the first two hundred, except that the total number of lay representatives from any member church shall not exceed eight. The lay representatives from each member church of the District shall be chosen in accordance with each such church's internal governing rules.

**Section 2.** The ecclesiastical structure of CANA, including the canons thereof, shall govern the District to the extent expressly made applicable to the District by the Ecclesiastical Authority in consultation with the Synod Council. The Synod may make further provision for the governance of the District through the enactment of supplementary canons and the taking of such other actions as it considers necessary, subject to this Constitution and in conformity to the ecclesiastical structure and canons of CANA.

**Section 3:** Churches already under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of another non-United States Province of the Anglican Communion admitted to membership in the District pursuant to Article IV, Section 2 ("Non-CANA Members") shall not be subject to the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of CANA, including the canons thereof. Such Non-CANA Members shall be subject to the ADV constitution and any supplementary canons enacted by the ADV Synod pursuant to Section 2 of this Article VIII.A only if, and to the extent that, such canons do not conflict with the constitution and canons of the Anglican ecclesiastical jurisdiction to which such Non-CANA Members are subject.

**B. Synod Meetings**

**Section 1.** There shall be an annual meeting of the Synod, to be held at such time and at such place within Virginia, as the Ecclesiastical Authority shall determine.

**Section 2.** The Ecclesiastical Authority shall have the power to call special Synod meetings by giving not less than fifteen days' notice, such meetings to be held at the place designated by the Ecclesiastical Authority. No other business shall be transacted than that stated in the notice calling the meeting, unless two-thirds of the members of the Synod Council eligible to vote authorize the transaction of other business.

### C. Transaction of Synod Business

**Section 1.** Fifty percent of the clergy delegates and fifty percent of the lay delegates representing at least fifty percent of member churches shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

**Section 2.** The Clergy and Laity shall deliberate as one body and shall vote as such. All Synod members shall have one vote.

**Section 3.** On every question save alterations to this Constitution the votes of a majority of those present shall decide. In case of a tie, the Ecclesiastical Authority shall cast the deciding vote.

### D. Synod Officers

#### 1. President of the Synod

The Bishop of CANA resident in the United States shall serve *ex officio* as president of the Synod and shall vote only to break a tie vote of the Synod.

#### 2. Secretary of the Synod

At each Annual Synod, a Secretary shall be chosen, who shall continue in office until a successor is appointed. The duties of the Secretary shall be to take the minutes of the proceedings, and when approved to enter them in a proper book; to preserve the Journal of Synod proceedings; and to attest the public acts of the body; and faithfully to deliver into the hands of successors all books and papers belonging to the Synod in his or her possession.

### E. Committees of the Synod

**Section 1.** The Synod may from time to time establish special and standing committees of the Synod, which shall have such powers and responsibilities as are assigned by this Constitution or by the Synod consistent with this Constitution.

**Section 2.** Among the standing committees of the Synod shall be a Committee on Constitutions and Canons and a Finance and Audit Committee.

**Section 3.** The standing committees shall be composed of one representative from each member church, and shall meet no less than annually, at least one-hundred-twenty (120) days prior to the annual meeting of the Synod.

## **Article IX Of the Synod Council**

There shall be a Synod Council that shall act on behalf, and under the authority, of the Synod when the Synod is not in session. The Council shall consist of an odd number of no fewer than five or greater than nine members comprising a majority of lay members and a minority of clerical members who serve for terms of five and three years, respectively. The Synod Council shall perform such other functions and tasks as the Synod may from time to time assign it. The Ecclesiastical Authority with the advice and consent of the Synod shall appoint the Synod Council.

## **Article X Holy Orders**

**Section 1.** Ordained ministry in the Anglican District of Virginia shall be exercised only by bishops, priests and deacons duly ordained or licensed by the Ecclesiastical Authority.

**Section 2.** Bishops shall be shepherds to the flock of Christ and seekers of the lost, diligently preaching God's Word and duly administering godly discipline for the edification of the faithful, the banishment of all erroneous and strange doctrine contrary to God's Word, and the fulfillment of the Great Commission. Priests shall assist the bishops in the care of souls, and deacons shall assist both the bishops and the priests. Priests and deacons exercise ministry under the general authority, oversight, and pastoral direction of their bishops.

**Section 3.** All clergy shall conduct their ministry to give glory to God; advance the Gospel; maintain peace and unity within the church; nurture, challenge and strengthen their fellow ministers, the faithful and the lost; and share faith, hope and the love of Christ with all people.

**Section 4.** The identification, education and ordination of candidates for Holy Orders shall be governed by canons adopted by the Synod and administered by the Ecclesiastical Authority.

**Section 5.** Ecclesiastical discipline and order shall be maintained and administered by the Ecclesiastical Authority pursuant to canons as may from time to time be adopted by the Synod. All clergy and laity shall be afforded due process in any ecclesiastical proceedings, including the right to a speedy determination or trial, reasonable notice of proceedings, representation by counsel, the presumption of innocence, and the right of appeal to higher ecclesiastical authority or civil tribunal.

**Article XI**  
**Alteration of the Constitution**

**Section 1.** This Constitution, or any part thereof, may be altered in the following manner only:

a. The proposed alteration or amendment shall be submitted in writing to the Synod, and if approved by a majority, shall lie over to the next annual or special meeting of the Synod, and if again approved by a majority, the Constitution shall then stand altered or amended as proposed.

b. This Constitution, or any part thereof, may also be amended by the Synod sitting in a Constitutional Convention, which may be called at any time upon the affirmative vote of two-thirds of the Synod Council or upon the application of the governing boards of a majority of the member churches. Such Constitutional Convention shall commence no fewer than ninety (90) days after providing written notice thereof to all member churches. Any proposed alteration or amendment of this Constitution in Constitutional Convention shall be submitted in writing to the Synod, and, if said alteration or amendment is approved by a majority of the Synod in Constitutional Convention, the Constitution shall then stand altered or amended as proposed.

**Section 2.** The Committee on Constitutions and Canons shall periodically review this Constitution and any Canons of the District and any proposed amendments thereto. Before any proposed alteration or amendment to this Constitution may be considered by the Synod in accordance with either Section 1.a or 1.b of this Article, the Committee on Constitutions and Canons shall have made recommendations in writing to the full Synod regarding any such proposed alteration or amendment. This Committee may also recommend that the Synod Council or member churches convene a Constitutional Convention.

*As Adopted September 29, 2007*