

**CONSTITUTION AND CANONS  
OF THE  
MISSIONARY DIOCESE OF CENTRAL STATES**

**CONSTITUTION**

**ARTICLE I**

The name of this Diocese of the Reformed Episcopal Church is and shall be The Missionary Diocese of Central States.

**ARTICLE II**

The object of The Missionary Diocese of Central States is to establish, support and maintain Churches and Missions and supervise and aid the ministry of clergymen in the Diocese.

**ARTICLE III—*The Diocese***

**Section 1.** The Missionary Diocese of Central States (MDCS) as a constituent part of the Reformed Episcopal Church, accedes to and accepts ~~the principles and restrictions of the Declaration of Principles and~~ the **Constitution and Canons of the Reformed Episcopal Church.**

**Section 2.** Said MDCS shall consist of all organized Parishes and Mission Parishes, and all the assigned resident clergy of the Reformed Episcopal Church within boundaries of the MDCS, such boundaries having been established by the General Council and its **Constitution and Canons.** The Parishes and Mission Parishes shall be represented at the Diocese meetings as the Canons of this Diocese direct.

**Section 3.** The territorial limits of the MDCS are those defined by the General Council of the Reformed Episcopal Church, subject to such amendment as may be later voted by a Council of this Diocese, with the consent of the General Council as follows:

By action of the General Committee of The Reformed Episcopal Church, the MDCS is comprised of the states presently of Virginia, West Virginia, Ohio, Indiana, Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, and North Carolina. [\[North was misspelled in original document\]](#)

**ARTICLE IV—*Government of the MDCS***

**Section 1.** The legislation of the MDCS and the direction of all matters which belong to and affect the MDCS, shall be vested in a Council of the MDCS, subject to the restrictions of Article III, Section 1.

**Section 2.** The Bishop of The Missionary Diocese shall be the ecclesiastical authority of the MDCS. If there is no Bishop of the MDCS, the Presiding Bishop shall be the ecclesiastical authority.

**Section 3.** All boards and committees of the MDCS shall be under the supervision of the Bishop and Standing Committee of the MDCS, which Committee shall within the limits of the **Constitution and Canons of the Special Diocese** have veto power over their operations and actions.

**Section 4.** The Bishop shall be a member *ex-officio* of all committees whether elective or appointed.

#### **ARTICLE V—Membership of the Council of the MDCS**

**Section 1.** The Bishop, Assistant Bishops and all Presbyters of the MDCS, and any Deacon who is Minister-in-Charge of a Parish within the MDCS.

**Section 2.** The Secretary, the Standing Committee, the executive officers of the BNCE, all Chairmen of Committees of the SINA and authorized Agencies of the MDCS (*see Title I, Canon VII, of the Canons of the MDCS*) or their alternates, the Senior Warden of each Parish, with the Junior Warden of the Parish as his alternate.

**Section 3.** All lay delegates elected in accordance with the provisions of Title II, Canon V, of the **Canons of the MDCS**.

**Section 4.** Licensed Lay Readers [serving as pastor of ] **pastoring** a Church or a Parish within the MDCS may be elected by any Council to membership therein.

**Section 5.** No one shall be a member of the Council of the MDCS who is not a communicant member of the Reformed Episcopal Church in good and regular standing.

**Section 6.** By a two-thirds vote, visitors and friends of our Church may be made Corresponding Members for the duration of the meeting of the Council. Corresponding membership shall confer the right to speak upon the floor of the house, but not to vote in deliberations.

#### **ARTICLE VI—Meetings of the Council**

**Section 1.** The Council of the MDCS shall convene its regular meeting on the Friday before the third Sunday in February each year, at such a place as shall have been designated at the next preceding meeting, unless such time or place of meeting, or both, shall have been changed in the manner set forth in Section 2 or Section 3 of this Article.

**Section 2.** In case there shall be any good cause rendering it advisable to change either, or both, the time or the place fixed for any meeting of the Council of the MDCS, the Bishop, by and with the consent of two-thirds of the members of the Standing Committee, may do so.

If such change is made, the Bishop shall give thirty days' notice thereof to every Parish and Mission Parish entitled to representation in the Council of the MDCS.

**Section 3.** The Bishop of the MDCS may also call special meetings of the Council of the MDCS, by and with written consent of two-thirds of the members of the Standing Committee, and any such meetings shall be held at the time and place designated in the call to the meeting. Thirty days' notice thereof shall be given by the Bishop to every Parish and Mission Parish specifying the object or objects of such meeting in the manner prescribed in Section 2 of this Article.

**Section 4.** The Delegates appointed to the next preceding Council of the MDCS shall be delegates to any special meeting, unless in the interim, any Parish shall have elected other delegates.

#### **ARTICLE VII—*Officers of the Council***

**Section 1.** The officers of the Council of the MDCS shall be President, Vice-President, and Secretary, and such other officers as the MDCS Council may decide upon from time to time. The officers not appointed shall be elected by ballot at each regular meeting, upon the organization of the Council of the SINA, and shall hold their respective offices until their successors have been elected and have qualified.

**Section 2.** The Bishop of the MDCS, shall be *ex-officio* President of the Council.

**Section 3.** The Vice-President of the Council shall be the Arch-Deacon, if there be one. If no Arch-Deacon be appointed, the President shall appoint a Vice-President [from the Presbyters in good standing of the MDCS].

**Section 4.** The Secretary may be a Presbyter, or a lay person in the MDCS. With the consent of the Council, the Secretary may appoint an Assistant Secretary to help with the duties while the Council is in session.

**Section 5.** The several officers described in Section 1 shall perform the duties which usually pertain to their offices and such other duties as may be assigned to them by the Council of the Missionary Diocese.

**Section 6.** In the event of the resignation, removal, or death of the President, the Presiding Bishop, in consultation with the President of the Board of National Church Extension, shall appoint a suitable person to fill the office until the office can be filled.

**Section 7.** In the case of the death or disability or resignation of the Vice-President, the President, in concurrence with a majority of the Standing Committee, shall forthwith appoint a suitable person to [temporarily assume the duties of the office] ~~fill the office~~ and execute the duties thereof [until a permanent appointment can be made by the General Committee].

**Section 8.** In the case of the death or disability or resignation of the Secretary, or any Treasurer, the President, in concurrence with a majority of the Standing Committee, shall forthwith appoint a suitable person to fill the office and execute the duties thereof until the next regular meeting of the Council of the MDCS.

**Section 9.** The Treasurer of the Council of the MDCS shall be appointed by the Missionary Bishop in consultation with the Standing Committee.

#### **ARTICLE VIII—*Proceedings of the Council of the MDCS***

**Section 1.** The proceedings at the meetings of the Council of the MDCS shall be regulated by such parliamentary rules as the Council may from time to time adopt; provided, however, that whenever ten or more members of the Council call for a vote by orders, it shall be allowed. In such case the Bishop shall vote as a Presbyter, and the concurrence of both orders shall be necessary to the passage of the measure so voted on.

**Section 2.** In all business of the Council, freedom of debate shall be allowed, subject to the Council to fix and limit the length of time for debate.

**Section 3.** A majority of the Presbyters and a majority of the delegates from the Parishes of the MDCS shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business, but any number may adjourn from day to day to await the arrival of a quorum.

**Section 4.** A call for prayer is always in order in the deliberations of the Council of the MDCS.

#### **ARTICLE IX—*Boards and Committees***

**Section 1.** The following Committee and Boards shall be appointed by the Bishop at the Council of the MDCS at its regular meetings:

(1). The Standing Committee shall consist of a minimum of two Presbyters and two laymen appointed annually by the Bishop from his Diocese. In addition, the President and Vice-President of the BNCE shall be members of this Committee.

(2). The function of the Board of Trustees of the MDCS shall be performed by the Board of National Church Extension.

**Section 2.** Such Committees as are determined necessary to the orderly operation of the MDCS shall be appointed by the Bishop.

**ARTICLE X—*Amendments***

This Constitution may be amended by a unanimous vote of any stated meeting of the Council, or of any special meeting thereof called for the purpose; otherwise, by a two-thirds vote at one stated meeting of the Council, ratified by a two-thirds vote at the next succeeding stated meeting thereof. A motion to adopt for first reading, even though passed unanimously when made, shall not constitute final passage but shall require ratification at the next stated meeting of the Council. If it is intended to have an amendment passed without a second reading, it shall be stated so when it is offered or proposed.

## CANONS

### TITLE I—THE MISSIONARY DIOCESE OF CENTRAL STATES

#### CANON I—*The Clergy*

**Section 1.** Annually before the meeting of the Council of the MDCS, the Bishop, or if there be none, the Standing Committee, shall prepare or cause to be prepared, a Roll of the Clergy of the MDCS, with names of their respective charges, together with their places of residence; and also, with particulars of time and place, the names of all ministers who have been ordained or received from other churches or have resigned, or died, or have been dropped from the Clergy Roll, or may have been subject to discipline. Such Clergy Roll shall be laid before the Council immediately after it shall have been called to order and the names of the clerical members called therefrom. This Clergy Roll shall be published in the **Journal**, and the Secretary of the MDCS shall send a copy of the same to the Secretary of the General Council.

**Section 2.** It shall be the duty of every minister in the Missionary Diocese of the Central States, except he be retired because of age or disability, who is not in charge of a Parish or otherwise engaged in the service of the MDCS, to report, in writing, within thirty days immediately preceding the convening of the annual Council of the MDCS, to the Bishop, or if he is not in office, to the Standing Committee, stating his address and occupation. The notation of the receipt of such reports shall be appended to the Clergy Roll.

Any minister failing so to report for two or more successive meetings of the Council of the MDCS shall be dropped from the Clergy Roll, in which event he may be restored by reporting for two successive years to the Bishop (or to the Standing Committee of the MDCS). Such reporting must include a satisfactory explanation for his previous failure to report. A call to an active pastorate will negate the need for the disciplinary action to be carried out.

**Section 3.**

(A). A Presbyterian in charge of a Parish shall be designated the Rector, or Pastor, thereof.

(B). A Deacon in charge of a Parish shall be designated the Minister-in-Charge thereof.

(C). A Presbyterian or Deacon in charge of a Mission Parish by appointment of the MDCS Bishop and Standing Committee shall be designated the Vicar thereof.

(D). A Lay Reader may be licensed by the Bishop to conduct Divine Worship in a Parish or Mission without pastoral care, (Reformed Episcopal Church, **Constitution and Canons**, Title III, Canon X) but such licensing may only be provided to those who are

Communicants of this church and meet the requirements for a Deacon as noted in 1 Timothy 3:8-13.

**Section 4.** The mandatory age for retirement of Presbyters from active service on the employed staff of the MDCS, or in a Parish or Mission Parish, shall be 70 years of age, which period of service can be extended annually for a maximum of five more years by consent of the Standing Committee and Vestry where a Parish ministry is concerned, or by the Standing Committee and the relevant employing Board where staff membership is concerned, or of the Bishop and Standing Committee alone where the Minister of a Mission Parish is concerned.

#### **CANON II—*The Vice-President***

In the event of the inability of the President to act during a session of the Council, or between sessions, the Vice-President shall discharge his duties while such inability continues, except the episcopal acts and ecclesiastical duties pertaining to the office of Bishop of the MDCS.

#### **CANON III—*The Secretary***

It shall be the duty of the Secretary to take the **Minutes** and record all proceedings of the Council of the MDCS, and together with the Bishop, to attest its official acts. The Secretary shall direct the printing and distribution of the **Journal of the Council of the MDCS** and shall preserve in the archives of the MDCS at least ten copies thereof.

Before printing, the copy of the **Journal** shall be examined by and have the approval of the Bishop or, in his absence, someone designated by the Standing Committee.

#### **CANON IV—*The Treasurers***

It shall be the duty of all Treasurers elected by the Council of the MDCS, or acting under its supervision, to receive the monies belonging to their respective funds and to distribute the same under the direction of the Council of the MDCS and/or the conventions, boards or committees under which they serve. Their accounts shall be rendered to the Council of the MDCS and audited by a committee appointed by the Bishop. A certificate of audit by a professional accountant may be accepted in lieu of examination by such Auditing Committee.

#### **CANON V—*The Standing Committee***

**Section 1.** The Standing Committee shall be the Advisory Board to the Bishop of the MDCS and have such powers and perform such duties as are provided by the **Constitution and Canons of the Reformed Episcopal Church**, the **Constitution and Canons of the MDCS** and such duties as may be assigned by the Council of the MDCS.

**Section 2.** The Bishop of the MDCS shall be Chairman of this Committee, *ex-officio*. The Bishop shall appoint from among its members a Secretary who shall keep the **Minutes** of its meetings, and perform such other clerical duties as the Committee may direct.

**Section 3.** A simple majority shall constitute a quorum.

**Section 4.** The Committee shall make a report of its proceedings to each annual Council of the MDCS and to each General Council of the Reformed Episcopal Church.

#### **CANON VI—*The Board of Trustees of the MDCS***

The Board of Trustees of the MDCS shall have such duties as are defined by the **Constitution and Canons** of said MDCS and the **Constitution and Canons** of the General Council of the Reformed Episcopal Church.

#### **CANON VII—*Authorized Agencies of the MDCS and Their Representation in the Council of the MDCS***

**Section 1.** The following organizations are recognized as authorized agencies of the MDCS and are entitled to representation in the Council of the MDCS under Article V, Section 2, of the **Constitution**:

- (1). The Reapers.
- (2). The Women of the Church.
- (3). The Men of the Church.

**Section 2.** Each organization authorized under this Canon must operate under a constitution approved by the Bishop and the Standing Committee and must report their actions and finances to the annual Council of the MDCS. Failure to meet these conditions shall be grounds for action of the Bishop and the Standing Committee to rescind any previous recognition, to seize their funds for purposes of the MDCS and to forbid their activity among Parishes and mission Parishes of the MDCS.

### **TITLE II—OF PARISHES**

#### **CANON I—*Of Membership***

**Section 1.** In accordance with TITLE IV, CANON VI, Section 3, of the Canons of The Reformed Episcopal Church, the consent of the MDCS Bishop and Standing Committee is a prerequisite to the formation of a new Parish of the MDCS.

**Section 2.** In the organization of a new Parish, the following Article of Association and Conformity shall be signed by at least twelve (12) persons of legal voting age, who have been duly examined by the Bishop of the MDCS, or some Presbyter of his appointment,



as to their personal faith, and as indicated by prior membership in an evangelical church, or by Confirmation by the Bishop, who intend to be supporters of the Parish, to wit:

“We, the undersigned, hereby associate ourselves for the purpose of maintaining the worship of God and the preaching of the Gospel according to the doctrine, discipline, and worship of the Reformed Episcopal Church, under the name of \_\_\_\_\_ Church, in the city (or town) of \_\_\_\_\_ State of \_\_\_\_\_, and we promise conformity to the **Constitution and Canons** of The Reformed Episcopal Church, and to the Missionary Diocese of Central States.

“We do hereby authorize the Chairman and Secretary of this meeting to certify this action, in writing, to both the Bishop of the MDCS and to the Standing Committee of the MDCS.

**Section 3.** A Parish already in communion with the Reformed Episcopal Church may be admitted to the MDCS by the Standing Committee on its presenting, with its petition for admission, a copy of its charter, its articles of incorporation or certificate thereof, its acceptance of the **Constitution and Canons** of this MDCS, duly certified by the Secretary thereof as the act of its Parish Meeting; provided that in every case the consent of the Bishop and Standing Committee or if there be no Bishop, of the Standing Committee of the Synod or Diocese, from which the Parish has chosen to transfer, be obtained.

**Section 4.** A congregation, or Parish, of another church that may desire to be received into union with this Church and MDCS may be received by the Standing Committee upon presentation to them of its acceptance of the **Constitution and Canons** of the Reformed Episcopal Church and this MDCS, and of the doctrine, discipline, and worship of this Church, duly certified as the act of the congregational or Parish Meeting by the Secretary thereof.

**Section 5.** Where the adult membership, of legal voting age, of a Parish is between twelve (12) and twenty-nine (29) members, such Parish shall be designated a Mission Parish. A Mission Parish shall be under the sole government of the Bishop or a Presbyter appointed by him, whom shall appoint and remove Wardens, Vestrymen and other officers and admit and dismiss members.

**Section 6.** Every group meeting for worship by authority of the Standing Committee, but not admitted as a Parish or Mission Parish shall be known as an Extension Work.

**Section 7. (a).** In the event that the communicant membership of a Parish falls below the number of thirty (30) for two consecutive years, that Parish shall be given the status of a Mission Parish with all the limitations to which Mission Parishes are subject under the **Canons of the MDCS**. Should the Mission Parish again attain the membership of 30 or

more, it shall be necessary for the Vestry of such a congregation to re-apply for the designation of Parish.

**(b).** In the event that the communicant membership of a Parish or Mission Parish falls below the number of twelve for two consecutive years, that group may be disbanded by the Bishop with the approval of the Standing Committee and the members assigned to the pastoral care of a neighboring Reformed Episcopal Parish or Mission Parish. If a Reformed Episcopal group is not meeting in a neighboring area, an effort will be made to find a group compatible to the doctrinal standards of the Reformed Episcopal Church.

**Section 8.** The consent of the Bishop and Standing Committee shall be a prerequisite to the merger of Parishes consisting of two or more congregations. In matters of representation, rights, and limitations enumerated in these Canons, the status of such Parishes with several congregations shall be determined by their total combined communicant membership.

**Section 9.** All Parishes affiliating with the Special Diocese must have the name of their Parish approved by the Standing Committee. These names shall be submitted for consideration by the Standing Committee.

#### **CANON II—*Of Parish By-Laws***

By-Laws of any Parish must not conflict with the **Constitution and Canons** of the Reformed Episcopal Church, or the MDCS and must be submitted to the Committee on Constitution and Canons for correction, if need be, and for certification. Likewise all proposed revisions of By-Laws of Parishes shall be so submitted. (The model Constitution and By-Laws for a Local Parish in the MDCS shall serve as a guide to any Parish formulating its By-Laws.)

**Section 1.** All officers and members of committees must be communicant members of this Church, in good and regular standing, of legal voting age or over.

#### **CANON III—*Of Vacant Parishes***

**Section 1.** Whenever a Parish becomes vacant (without a regularly employed minister), it shall be the duty of the Wardens or the Secretary of the Vestry forthwith to notify the Bishop.

**Section 2.** The Bishop of the MDCS is *ex-officio* Rector of every vacant Parish until a Rector is elected and installed. The Bishop or his representative shall be *ex-officio* chairman of the Vestry at any Parish Meeting. The Senior Warden shall preside if neither the Bishop or his representative are able to attend and is so directed by the Bishop.

**Section 3.** During the vacancy it shall be the duty of the Vestry under the direction of the Bishop, to make provision for maintaining Divine Worship in the Church, and for the pastoral care of the Parish.

#### **CANON IV—*Of Parish Registers***

**Section 1.** In every Parish or Mission Parish, the Vestry shall provide a suitable book to become a Parish Register. It shall be in the custody of the Minister, whose duty it shall be to keep accurate and full records therein of all baptisms, confirmations, receptions by letter from other Churches, marriages, and burials, together with a complete list of the communicants and a list, so far as practicable, of families within his charge, which Register shall be the property of the Parish, and be preserved for the use of his successor. No names, once entered shall ever be erased; changes of status being entered as notes or remarks.

**Section 2.** Communicants of a Parish are all persons who have been confirmed therein, or who have been received by letters of dismissory from evangelical churches, or have presented satisfactory evidence of previous communicant membership and present purpose to serve the Lord, provided that in every case they have received the Holy Communion.

**Section 3.** The Communicant list shall be corrected annually by the Parish Council by removing from active membership, through notation, the names of all persons who have died or have been ordained to the Presbyterate, or dismissed to another church, or excommunicated, together with those who for a period of one year have not partaken of the Lord's Supper, or disappeared, or ceased to attend Divine Services, or to contribute to the support of the Parish; provided, that all reasonable efforts to reclaim such members have been made.

Exceptions may be made of non-residents who continue to contribute and wish to retain their active standing, and of aged persons, invalids and persons who are financially unable to contribute, and in the military service or educational institutions which requires a change of residence. All who are placed upon the inactive list shall be notified if their addresses are known. In preparing statistical reports of Communicant Members, only those on the active list shall be enumerated.

**Section 4.** A communicant moving from one Parish to any other shall request and be granted a letter dismissory, which shall give his status as shown by the Parish Register. A communicant who has resumed regular attendance at Divine Services, renewed his support, and partaken of the Lord's Supper, shall be restored at any time to the active roll from the inactive roll.

**Section 5.** Upon the death or removal of the Minister, the Parish Register shall pass to the Senior Warden, who shall keep the records, entering every change without delay, while the Parish is vacant.

**Section 6.** All Parish records shall be open to the Bishop, and it shall be his duty to examine them regularly, or to appoint a person or persons to act in his stead.

**Section 7.** Upon the dissolution of a Parish, the Parish Register shall become the property of the Diocese, to be preserved in the archives.

### **CANON V—*Of the Annual Parish Meeting***

**Section 1.** In each Parish annually during Easter Week or on some other convenient occasion, an election shall be held for Wardens, Vestrymen, Parish Council, and Delegates to the MDCS Council. Wardens, Vestrymen, Parish Council, and Delegates shall be chosen from among the communicants of legal voting age. One-third of the entire number of Vestrymen shall be elected for a three-year period, each year.

**Section 2.** A Parish or congregation consists of all persons enrolled as communicant members or stated worshippers in the congregation, and who, in greater or lesser degree, contribute to its support, and have been thus connected with the Parish for twelve months preceding. Only communicants of legal voting age shall be entitled to vote at the Parish Meeting. In any case of dispute as to the qualification of the electors, the decision shall rest with the Wardens.

**Section 3.** At the annual Parish Meeting, reports in writing shall be made by the Rector of the spiritual condition of the Parish with a synopsis of the official labors, and showings of the Parish Register, and from all other auxiliaries, boards, clubs, and departments of work in connection with the Parish. The Treasurer of the Parish and the treasurers of all Parish organizations, shall together with his (their) itemized report, present his receipts and vouchers. Such Treasurer's reports shall be audited by a committee of two or more, of whom one shall not have been a member of the Vestry for the year preceding.

**Section 4.** Every Parish Meeting, whether stated or special, must be announced at each church service on two Sundays preceding its date. The purpose for each special meeting shall be announced in its call, and this business and none other, shall be considered in such a special meeting.

### **TITLE III—OF PASTORAL CONNECTIONS**

#### **CANON I—*The Call of a Minister to a Parish***

**Section 1.** Unless otherwise provided by the Charter or By-Laws of the Parish, or ordered by the Parish at a stated meeting, the Vestry shall take initial and final action in the calling of a Rector or Minister-in-Charge (Deacon).

**Section 2.** The advice and consent of the President of the Council and Standing Committee, or the Standing Committee alone if there be no Council President, shall be required before a Call is issued by any Parish. No Deacon may be considered as a Candidate for a Call without the prior consent of the President of the Council.

**Section 3.** The Call of a minister shall be in the following form, and no other: THE \_\_\_\_\_ REFORMED EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF \_\_\_\_\_ being fully satisfied with your ministerial qualifications, and confident that we have been led to you by the Holy Spirit as one whose ministry will be profitable to the spiritual life of our Church and fruitful to the Kingdom of the Lord, solemnly calls you \_\_\_\_\_ to undertake the work as \_\_\_\_\_ of this Parish, promising you in the discharge of your duty all proper support, encouragement and obedience in the Lord. That you may devote yourself to the Ministry of the Word among us, we obligate ourselves to pay you the sum of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ a year in regular (weekly) (monthly) payments, and will pay the church's portion into the Minister's Retirement Fund on the basis determined by the General Council, during the time of your being and continuing in the pastoral relationship set forth in this Call to this Parish.

(NOTE: Insert below other terms, including such matters as rectory, utilities, annual leave for recreation and rest, expense allowances, moving costs, car allowance, etc. It is suggested that where there is a cash allowance made for the rectory that the rectory allowance be designated in a cash amount. Other such cash amounts such as car allowance, etc., should be designated separately so as to not be confused with salary.)

The following should also appear at the end of the document:

We agree that the Vestry of this Parish will annually review the above remuneration with a view to necessary adjustments.

At least \_\_\_\_\_ days' notice shall be required for the termination of this pastoral connection by either party.

In testimony whereof we have respectively subscribed our names this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, A.D. \_\_\_\_\_.

Attest:  
Senior Warden \_\_\_\_\_

Junior Warden \_\_\_\_\_

Secretary \_\_\_\_\_

Approved by action of the Bishop and the Standing Committee of the Reformed Episcopal Missionary Diocese of Central States:

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Bishop  
\_\_\_\_\_ Secretary of the  
\_\_\_\_\_ Standing Committee

Acceptance this \_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, A.D. \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_

After approval and acceptance, a copy is to be given to each of the following:

1. The Minister receiving the Call.
2. The Bishop of the MDCS.
3. The Secretary of the Standing Committee.
4. The Secretary of the Parish extending the Call.

**Section 4.** The Bishop and Standing Committee shall appoint the Vicar of a Mission Parish or of an extension work. A Presbyter shall have the right to accept or reject such an appointment without prejudice. A Deacon shall be required to accept such an appointment and serve diligently at the pleasure of the Bishop.

**Section 5.** Unless otherwise provided in the By-Laws of a Parish, a Call shall be for an indefinite period of time but in no case for less than a period of two years.

**Section 6.** No Presbyter shall be settled as Rector or Pastor of a Parish of the MDCS unless he be duly installed according to the Order provided in the **Book of Common Prayer** by the Bishop, or a Presbyter appointed by the Bishop to act in his stead. This section shall not apply in the case of a Deacon called as a Minister-in-Charge or Vicar appointed to a Mission Parish or Extension Work.

#### **CANON II—***Termination of a Pastoral Connection*

A pastoral connection in this church may at any time be terminated by the consent of both parties; or, after not less than thirty, nor more than ninety days, by the decision of the Bishop and Standing Committee, on the appeal by one party, after giving due notice to the other party. The Bishop and Standing Committee shall have the authority to dissolve any pastoral connection on its own initiative after not less than thirty and nor more than ninety days, after giving due notice to both parties, if viewed necessary and in the interest of the Church, but only after an open examination into the reasons for such dissolution. And in the event that either party refuses to abide by the decision rendered in either of these cases, such party shall forfeit the right, if a Presbyter, of a seat and a vote in the General Council and in the Council of the MDCS; or if Wardens or Vestrymen, of having their Parishes represented in the same. No minister shall be approved for a pastoral relationship in a Reformed Episcopal Church, nor shall any Parish have its pastoral Call approved, while refusing to abide by a decision of the Standing Committee made under this Section. In any case, the party or parties shall in other respects, be amendable to the ecclesiastical authority, as if these forfeitures of seats, representation and approvals, had not been incurred; provided that either party shall have the right of appeal to the final decision of the next ensuing General Council.

## TITLE IV—OF WORK AND WORSHIP

### CANON I—*Of Ministers and Their Duties*

**Section 1.** It shall be the duty of every Minister in charge of a Parish or Mission Parish of this MDCS to preach the Gospel and declare the whole counsel of God according to the Holy Scriptures, to appoint and conduct services for Divine Worship; to visit the members of his congregation, particularly such as are sick, infirm or aged; to prepare candidates for Baptism, Confirmation; and conduct the funeral services of deceased communicant members; and in every way to seek to strengthen the spiritual life of the members of the Parish or Mission Parish, the cause of this MDCS and the advancement of Christ's Kingdom through the Reformed Episcopal Church.

**Section 2.** It shall be the duty of every Minister in charge of a Parish or Mission Parish to give due notice to his congregation of an Episcopal visitation, and to present such persons as are ready and desirous to be confirmed, with a list of their names, after having ascertained the fact of their baptism, to the Bishop making such visitation.

**Section 3.** It shall be the duty of every Clergyman in charge of a Parish or Mission Parish, with such assistance as he may see fit, to obtain from persons skilled in music, to give order concerning the tunes to be sung at any time in his church; and especially it shall be his duty to surpress all light and unseemly music, and all indecency and irreverence in the performance, by which vain and ungodly persons profane the service of the Sanctuary.

### CANON II—*Of the Wardens and Vestry*

**Section 1.** The governing body of a local Parish or Mission Parish is called a Vestry.

**Section 2.** A Vestry shall consist of two Wardens: a Rector's Warden (or Senior Warden) and an Accounting Warden (or Junior Warden) and same number of Vestrymen. The term of office shall be determined by the Charter or By-Laws of the Parish or by the Parish at a stated meeting, subject to the **Constitution and Canons** of this MDCS and of the Reformed Episcopal Church.

**Section 3.** The Chairman shall have a vote only in case of a tie.

The Rector or Pastor is *ex-officio* Chairman of the Vestry and shall preside at all meetings when present.

The Senior Warden shall preside if the Rector or Pastor is absent.

The Junior Warden shall preside if both are absent.

A Deacon who is Minister-in-Charge of a Parish may act as Chairman upon the vote of the Vestry, but he shall have no vote.

The Vicar of a Mission Parish may preside by the appointment of the Bishop, but he shall have no vote.



**Section 4.** The chief lay leader in a Reformed Episcopal Church is the Rector's Warden or Senior Warden. He shall be elected at an Annual Parish Meeting. If the By-Laws do not forbid, he may be nominated only by the Rector. He should be a person of outstanding Christian character. In consultation with the Bishop, he shall provide a supply for the pulpit in the case of illness, absence or resignation of the minister. He is the custodian of the Parish Register if there be no Rector or Minister-in-Charge.

**Section 5.** The Accounting (or People's) Warden, or Junior Warden shall be elected at the Annual Parish Meeting. He shall be responsible for the funds of the Parish unless a Treasurer be provided for this purpose. He should be a person of especial Christian character and be qualified in business ability.

**Section 6.** It shall be the duty of the Vestry to take charge of all properties of the Parish, to regulate all its temporal concerns, to act in calling a Rector or Minister-in-Charge unless otherwise provided by the Charter and By-Laws of the Parish, to employ all other persons serving the Parish under salary and fix the amount of each salary. The Vestry cannot buy or sell real estate of the Parish without the approval of a Parish meeting called for that purpose.

The Wardens are members of the Vestry.

**Section 7.** It shall be the duty of the Wardens, especially, to provide the elements for the Lord's Supper, and oversee the care of the communion ware. In the absence of the minister, the Wardens shall see that orderly and worshipful Divine services are conducted.

### **CANON III—*Of Lay Readers***

**Section 1.** No one shall habitually officiate as Lay Reader in any Parish or Mission Parish of the MDCS without a license from the *Bishop*. Any licensure must be accordance with the provisions of Title III, Canon X, of the **Constitution and Canons** of the Reformed Episcopal Church.

**Section 2.** It shall be the duty of the Lay Reader to assist the Minister in the church services and prayer meetings as the Minister desires and directs.

### **CANON IV—*Of Order in Worship***

**Section 1.** In the conduct of the warship of the Church, where there is no Rubric or Canon, or where the Rubric or Canon is susceptible to various interpretations, recourse shall be had to the Bishop in case of doubt or dispute, and his decision shall be authoritative, subject however, to revision by the Standing Committee or the General Council.

## TITLE V—AMENDMENTS

### CANON I—*Of Standing Resolutions*

Standing Resolutions, being of doubtful authority and enforcement, shall not be adopted in lieu of Amendments of the **Constitution and Canons**. When adopted, they shall stand only for the duration of the Council of the MDCS in which they were adopted and until the convening of the next regular or special meeting of the Council of the MDCS.

These Canons may be amended by a unanimous vote of any stated meeting of the Council of the MDCS, or of any special meeting thereof called for the purpose; otherwise, by a majority vote at one stated meeting of the Council of the MDCS, ratified by a majority vote at the next succeeding stated meeting thereof.