

OPENING REMARKS
BY
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CHANCELLOR, EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF LIBERIA
Special Convention
Church of the Good Shepherd
Paynesville City, Montserrado County
Saturday, 19 February 2022

My Sisters and Brothers-in-Christ:

Normally, at this time of this year, our Diocese will hold its general Diocesan Convention. However, under the Constitution of this Diocese the Ecclesiastical Authority, here the Bishop, may for sufficient cause as determined by the Ecclesiastical Authority change the time or place to another time and place. (Art. II.1)

Given conditions affecting the health of our Bishop, who is presently away from the Diocese and unable to be present for the general Diocesan Convention, again in keeping with the Constitution, after his consultation with the Standing Committee, this Special Convention has been called for the sole purpose of electing a Bishop Coadjutor. (Art. II.2)

We are pleased to have with us the Rt. Rev. Thomas Wilson, Bishop of Freetown, who is presiding over this Special Convention. The election is being done in accordance with the Constitution & Canons of the Province of West Africa.

The election shall be by secret ballot as required by the Constitution & Canons of the Province and those of the Diocese.

The Constitution & Canons require that the Chancellor presides over the election. To facilitate the execution of this election, as your Chancellor, I have appointed an Elections Committee. That Committee is headed by the Diocesan Registrar Bro. Cyril Jones, Esq., who shall be assisted by, immediate past Chancellor Bro. James E. Pierre, Esq., Deputy Chancellor Jamesetta Wolokollie, Esq., former Deputy Chancellor Johnny Momoh, Esq. I am confident this Committee shall under the

overall supervision of the Chancellor conduct the elections in a transparent and fair manner.

We will proceed as follows:

(i) The Bishop Nominating Committee shall make its Report; (ii) A motion will be called to confirm the Report; (iii) A simple majority is required to confirm the Report; (iv) If confirmed, the Elections Committee will then explain the voting procedure for the election of the Bishop Coadjutor; (iv) if not confirmed, the Bishop Nominating Committee will be required to modify its submission and re-submit a Report. This can happen up to three times after which the BNC is dissolved and a new BNC would have to be established; (v) Upon passage of the motion to confirm, the Convention will proceed with the casting of votes; (v) the elections for the Bishop Coadjutor shall be conducted by secret ballot. (vi) To prevail, a nominee must get two-thirds votes of all present and voting. If no nominee gets the required two-thirds during the first round, the nominee with the lowest number of votes will be dropped. And a second round will be held. If still a nominee does not get the required two-thirds, there shall be a third round. If after the third round, still no nominee gets the required two-thirds, the list of the nominees will be sent to the Provincial House of Bishops, and the House of Bishops will select the Bishop Coadjutor.

LAWSUITS AGAINST CHURCHES BY PARISHIONERS – lawsuits by aggrieved members of this Church in State courts are prohibited by the Constitution and Canons of the Province and by Resolution Adopted at the 76th Convention of this Diocese in 2005. Any member of this Church who takes the Church to a State court is liable for excommunication.

ONE PERSON ONE VOTE – no multiple votes because a person holds multiple positions. Individual persons are voting; positions are not voting. Example Jonathan B.B. Hart at the Provincial level cannot have a vote as Bishop of Liberia, then as Archbishop for the Internal Province of West Africa, then as Primate and Metropolitan of the Province. He cannot have three votes as one individual. Similarly, it will not be done at the Diocesan level.

RETIRED CLERGY – retired clergy do not have a vote except in instances where the retired clergy has been given an assignment by the Bishop. By that assignment,

the status of the retired clergy is deemed temporarily activated and the clergy person will therefore have a vote.

SUSPENDED CLERGY – Clergy under suspension have their right to vote suspended during the period of suspension unless granted a specific waiver by the suspending authority, that is the Ecclesiastical Authority.

Let us proceed with the abiding spirit that we are Episcopalians and that we are above all followers of Jesus Christ. May the love of God guide and direct us. Amen

Welcome.