

**THE PARISH BY-LAWS OF SAINT THOMAS EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF FLAGLER COUNTY,  
FLORIDA**

Revisions Offered By the Vestry and Adopted By the Members of the Parish at the 2017 Annual Meeting.

**ARTICLE I**

**Purposes**

The general nature of the Mission and Ministry, the Objectives and Purposes of Saint Thomas Episcopal Church of Flagler County, Florida shall be:

- A. To propagate and disseminate the Gospel of the Lord, Jesus Christ; that is "Living and Proclaiming the Gospel in Community, Eucharist and Servanthood Ministry."
- B. To be a constituent part of the Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Florida recognizing, acceding to and adopting the Constitution and Canons of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America and the Canons of the Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Florida, and acknowledging these authorities accordingly, subject only to any limitations in the laws of Florida.
- C. To do all things necessary and proper in the pursuit of such objectives.

**ARTICLE II**

**Location**

The physical boundaries of the parish shall be circumscribed by the perimeter of Flagler County, Florida; and the church building shall be located in the City of Palm Coast, State of Florida.

**ARTICLE III**

**Membership**

1. **Members:** All persons who have received the sacrament of Holy Baptism with water in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit whether in this church or in other Christian churches and whose baptism has been duly recorded in this church are members of St Thomas Episcopal Church of Flagler County, Florida.
2. **Communicants:** All members of this church who have received Holy Communion in this church at least three times during the preceding year are considered to be communicants of this church.
3. **Communicants in Good Standing:** All communicants of this church, who for the previous year have been faithful in corporate worship, unless for good cause

- prevented, and have been faithful in working, praying and giving for the spread of the Kingdom of God, are to be considered 'communicants in good standing'.
4. **Confirmation:** It is expected that all adult members of this Church, after appropriate instruction, will have made a mature public affirmation of their faith and commitment to the responsibilities of their Baptism and will have been confirmed or received by the laying on of hands by a Bishop of this Church or by a Bishop of a Church in communion with this Church.

#### **Transfer from Another Congregation:**

- A. A member of the Episcopal Church transferring from the congregation, in which that person's membership is recorded, to Saint Thomas Episcopal Church of Flagler County, Florida shall request the parish registrar to procure a certificate of transfer from the previous church indicating that the person:
  - 1) is a communicant;
  - 2) is recorded as being in good standing;
  - 3) has been confirmed or received by a Bishop of the Episcopal Church or a Bishop in communion with this Church.
- B. The Rector or the Registrar of Saint Thomas Church of Flagler County, Florida to whom such a certificate is surrendered, shall record in the Parish Register the information contained on the presented certificate of membership, and then notify the Rector of the congregation which issued the certificate, that the person has been duly recorded as a member of Saint Thomas Episcopal Church of Flagler County, Florida. Failure to receive a certificate, through no fault of the person applying, an appropriate entry shall be made in the Parish Register upon evidence of membership status, sufficient in the judgment of the Rector.
- C. Any communicant of any church in communion with the Episcopal Church shall be entitled to the benefit of this section so far as the same can be made applicable.

### **ARTICLE IV**

#### **Parish Meetings**

1. **Annual Meetings:** Annual Meeting of the Parish shall be held not later than thirty (30) days after the close of each annual meeting of the Diocesan Convention for the purpose of:
  - a. Acquainting the parish with the work of the Convention.
  - b. Electing delegates and alternate delegates to the next meeting of the Diocesan Convention.
  - c. Conducting any other relevant business necessary and proper within the general purpose of the church, especially the Parish Budget as adopted by the Vestry along with other relevant financial information.
  - d. Electing representative to the Vestry for the following three year term or lesser.
2. **Parish Meetings:** There may be parish meetings, held as necessary each calendar year, on the call of the Rector or a majority of the members of the Vestry, to conduct such

- business as may be brought before it. Written and/or electronic (email, web site) notification shall be given at least fourteen days prior to each meeting. Publication of the meeting date in the monthly newsletter and/or the Sunday bulletin and/or bulletin board shall be considered adequate notice.
3. **Presiding Officer:** At each Parish Meeting the Rector, or in his absence, or at his discretion, the Senior, or Junior Warden, in order, shall preside. The secretary of the Vestry Shall be the secretary of the parish meeting.
  4. **Qualifications:** Persons voting at parish meetings shall be members in good standing as defined in Article IV herein.
  5. **Vestry Nominations:**
    - a. The Vestry Nominating Committee, consisting of the Junior Warden, with members of the Vestry whose terms will expire at the end of the current year, along with the Rector as advisor, shall make known a slate of qualified persons to be considered for election to the Vestry. Thirty (30) day written and /or electronic (email, web site) notification of the meeting date in the monthly newsletter and/or the weekly bulletin shall be considered adequate notice.)
    - b. Members of the congregation, who are 'communicants in good standing' may nominate confirmed persons similarly qualified for election to the vestry in addition to those selected by the Vestry Nominating Committee, with the understanding, that the nominee is so qualified, and has consented to serve on the Vestry if elected.
    - c. The names of these nominees shall be submitted to the parish office in writing, so as to be published at least thirty days prior to the Annual Meeting.
    - d. All prospective candidates are to submit a recent photograph with a brief biography, which includes offices held, or activities engaged in within this church or in the church where he or she previously attended, additionally the qualifications of candidates shall be confirmed and the expectations of vestry membership be made clearly know in writing.
  6. **Election:** The election to the vestry shall be by secret ballot unless the adult members voting in a parish meeting at least 60 days in advance of the meeting at which the new vestry members are to be elected, shall pass by majority vote, that the election of the new vestry members shall be by lot from among such nominations as set forth in accordance with Article V, Section 5 Nominations. Henceforth subsequent elections shall be by lot unless a vote taken in the same manner as stated herein shall be passed to return to the use of secret ballots. Counting will be by outgoing Vestry members and the Treasurer. All ballots will be kept for one year.

## ARTICLE V

### Delegates to Diocesan Convention

1. **Lay Delegate Qualifications:** Lay Delegates and Alternate Delegates to the Diocesan Convention shall be 'confirmed communicants in good standing' and not less than sixteen years of age. For continuity and familiarity of Diocesan issues, Delegates to Convention will also serve as Regional Council Representatives during their term. Expectations of the office are to be made known clearly in writing.

2. **Term of Office:** At the Annual Meeting the appropriate number of Lay Delegates and Alternate Delegates shall be elected. Each Lay Delegate shall serve a term of two years. Alternates shall serve a term of one year.
3. **Vacancy of Office:** In the event an Elected Delegate is not able to perform the duties of a delegate, the Alternate Delegate receiving the largest number of votes, shall be selected to fill the vacancy. If the alternate pool is exhausted the Vestry shall appoint an Alternate Delegate to fill the vacancy, with appropriate prior notification given to the Diocese.
4. **Regional Meeting:** The Delegates to Convention shall attend the Regional Meeting that precedes the Annual Diocesan Convention, as Regional Council Representatives, to ensure familiarity with pertinent issues.
5. **Pre-Convention Meeting:** The Delegates to Convention shall coordinate with the Rector and will hold a pre-convention discussion forum with member of the congregation. The purpose of this session is to discuss the motions on which delegates will be required to vote. At convention the voting of delegates should be in accordance with the feelings of the congregation.

## ARTICLE VI

### Regional Council Representatives

1. **Representation:** The Rector, the Senior Warden, or other Vestry person selected by the Vestry shall be the official representative to the Regional Council for the River Region. Other clergy associated with Saint Thomas are invited to attend as interested.

## ARTICLE VII

### The Vestry

1. **Composition:** The Vestry shall be comprised of the Rector and twelve lay members of the parish. The Rector shall, or at his/her designation, appoint other persons to preside as Chairman of the Vestry.
2. **Qualifications:** Lay members of the Vestry shall be 'confirmed communicants in good standing', not less than sixteen years of age, who believe in and profess faith in Jesus Christ, and are pledging their time, talent and treasure to God's work in the parish.
3. **Term of Office:** The congregation shall, at the Annual Meeting, elect four qualified persons to serve for a term of three years, and qualified persons to serve lesser terms where vacancies occur. The term of office shall commence the first Vestry meeting after being elected at the Parish meeting. Outgoing Vestry member terms expire with the seating of the newly elected Vestry member. No Lay member of the Vestry shall serve a term of more than three successive years, except that election to an unexpired term shall not disqualify a person from being a candidate at the Annual Meeting. The Wardens and Vestry members are eligible for re-election after one year of being off the Vestry.

4. **Senior Warden:** The Rector shall appoint the Senior Warden from the membership of the Vestry for a period of one year or more if required and accepted.
5. **Junior Warden:** The Junior Warden shall be elected from the membership of the Vestry by the Vestry for a term of one year or more if required and accepted.
6. **Secretary of the Vestry:** Upon the nomination of the Rector, the Vestry shall elect the Secretary of the Vestry for a term of one year or longer if required and accepted.
7. **Youth Representative:** A youth representative, at least sixteen years of age, shall be recommended by the Christian Formation and Education Committee, nominated by the vestry and submitted to the Congregation for confirmation at the Annual Parish meeting at which new vestry members are elected, to serve a one (1) year renewable term on the vestry. The Youth Representative shall have full discussion and voting privileges at all regularly scheduled Vestry meetings.
8. **Vacancy of Office:** If a vacancy occurs on the Vestry, the Vestry shall elect a nominee, if any, from the Annual Meeting in order of votes received to fill the unexpired term until the next election. In absence of other nominees, the vestry will select a qualified member in good standing from the Parish.
9. **Meetings:** The vestry shall meet monthly at such time and place as agreed by a majority. Meetings shall be open to all members of the Parish. Parish members shall have a voice but no vote. There may be occasions when the Vestry members will meet in 'executive session'. The Vestry may meet on special occasions at the call of the Rector, or in his absence at the call of the Senior Warden, or upon the request of one-third of the members of the Vestry.
10. **Responsibilities:** The Vestry shall take charge of and assume a leadership role in the temporal concerns of the Parish, and shall interest itself in the spiritual development and growth of the Parish. The Vestry shall focus upon and shall work with the Clergy and laity of the congregation to promote and implement the Mission, Ministry, Objectives and Purposes of the Parish. The Vestry shall periodically, with the concurrence of the heads of commissions, committees and other organizations, state in writing "what they believe" God wants to accomplish in the life of the congregation. The Vestry shall communicate this vision to the congregation and shall coordinate and report the results thereof at any Annual Meeting. The Vestry shall be responsible for:
  - a. The approval of all expenses for capital improvements and maintenance, and for making certain that the land and buildings are fully and appropriately insured.
  - b. Making certain that the church and its physical assets are fully covered and appropriately insured.
  - c. Maintain an official record of all meetings.
  - d. Developing an annual budget.
  - e. Submitting timely and accurate reports required by the Diocese.
  - f. Maintaining adequate accounting records as required by the diocesan treasurer and providing for an annual audit of such records.
  - g. Maintaining register of services.
  - h. Providing for and ensuring the keeping of an accurate Parish Register.
  - i. Maintaining a record of all memorial gifts to the church.
  - j. Notification to the Bishop when there is a vacancy in the office of the Rector in the parish, as required under the provisions of Diocesan Canon 23, section 5.
  - k. Executing all duties imposed by any General Convention, the Constitution and Canons of The Episcopal Church, and Conventions of the Diocese and the Canons.

1. Electing a treasurer as nominated by the Rector or members of the Vestry, which treasurer shall serve on the Vestry as an ex-officio member.

## ARTICLE VIII

### The Committees

1. **Organizations:** The conduct of the Parish religious activities and the execution of administrative and business responsibilities require the commitment and participation of Parishioners. All Parishioners in good standing are eligible for membership on the various committees. Vestry Members shall serve as liaisons to the Standing Committees and other committees, as defined in Section 4 below, which are overseen by the Standing Committees. Standing Committee liaisons will be designated by the Rector, or, in the absence of a Rector, the priest-in-charge, at the first Vestry meeting following the Annual Meeting and elections. The members and each chair of the Standing Committee shall be appointed by the rector and approved by the Vestry, provided that each appointment involves a member in good standing of St Thomas.
2. **Standing Committees:** The Standing Committees of the Parish exist to meet the needs of the Parish. The Standing Committees are: Property, Stewardship and Finance, Christian Formation and Education, Welcoming and Membership, Communications, Outreach, Parishioner Care, Worship and Music, Fellowship & Parish Life, and Mission, Vision and Planning.
3. **Standing Committee Meetings:** The Standing Committees shall meet regularly to do the work of the Vestry and Parish. Minutes shall be kept of each Standing Committee's meetings. The Standing Committee liaisons shall submit their minutes and any reports of the Standing Committees and any other subcommittees, temporary committees, ministries or task forces which are overseen by the Standing Committee to the Church Office no later than four (4) days prior to the regularly scheduled Vestry meeting. Unless a motion requiring Vestry action is involved, or special circumstances require the discussion of the minutes or reports, the minutes or reports are informational and pro forma.
4. **Other Committees:** Such other committees including but not limited to, additional standing committees, subcommittees, temporary committees, ministries and task forces, may be designated by the Rector, or, in the absence of a Rector, the priest-in-charge, at any time as necessary to the well-being of the Parish and its ability to function in an orderly and businesslike fashion. The work of all such committees shall be overseen by a Standing Committee, and all minutes and reports shall be provided to the Standing Committee so they may be presented to the Vestry as provided above in Section 3. Task forces should have a limited time to accomplish and report their findings and they are automatically dissolved upon acceptance of their work. Upon completion of their responsibilities any temporary committee may be dissolved by the Rector or priest-in-charge.

## **ARTICLE IX**

### **Parish Register**

The vestry shall provide a Parish Register, in which the Rector or Registrar shall record the name of each person Baptized with the date of birth, date of Baptism, the names of the parents, godparents, and sponsors: and the names of all persons Confirmed, Married or Buried with their respective dates and witnesses thereto; and all persons transferred to the parish by Letter of Transfer. It shall be the duty of the officiating clergy to sign the record of each entry. The said register shall also contain a list of all the Baptized members and confirmed communicants in the parish. It shall be the responsibility of the Wardens to see that the Parish Register is maintained in accordance with these By-Laws.

## **ARTICLE X**

### **Amendment of Parish By-Laws**

These By-Laws may be amended at any parish meeting by a two-thirds vote of the congregation present. Any amendment shall be approved by the Vestry and shall be submitted in writing to the parish at least fourteen (14) days prior to the parish meeting.

### **Adoption**

These By-Laws have been duly adopted by the Parish of Saint Thomas Episcopal Church of Flagler County, Florida at the Parish Meeting held on January 22, 2017, and are effective from that date, superseding any previous parish By-Laws.

### **Publication**

Copies of the current By-Laws shall be printed, made accessible and maintained for review by Church members in the "Church Library."