

The Episcopal Diocese of Mississippi
Constitution for the Mission
Church of the Nativity, Water Valley, MS

- As Church of the Nativity is not incorporated as a stand-alone entity but rather organized under legal entity of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States of America, the following is a draft Constitution rather than By Laws for the Mission.

Next Steps:

- Review by the Canon to the Ordinary of the Diocese and request for feedback – completed and approved July 2, 2025
- Consideration, any proposed changes made, and approval of a final draft by the Mission Committee to present to church membership – completed and approved at the September 9, 2025 Mission Committee meeting
- Approval by the general membership of the Mission Church at its next Annual Meeting or a Special Meeting by a 2/3 or greater vote of eligible Mission congregation members

The Episcopal Diocese of Mississippi
118 N. Congress Street
Jackson, Mississippi 39201
601-948-5954

Constitution of the Church of The Nativity
Water Valley, Mississippi

609 N. Main Street
Water Valley, Mississippi

Constitution of the Church of the Nativity, Water Valley Mississippi

PREAMBLE

The foregoing, having previously agreed, and hereby confirming that agreement, to associate as a Mission for the purpose of maintaining the worship of Almighty God according to the faith and usages of The Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America, otherwise known as and hereafter referred to as The Episcopal Church, have adopted the Articles attached hereto as the Church of the Nativity, Water Valley, Mississippi, a mission in the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Mississippi.

Article I

AUTHORITY ACKNOWLEDGED

The Mission accedes to the doctrine, discipline and worship and the Constitution and Canons of The Episcopal Church, and to the Constitution and Canons of The Protestant Episcopal Diocese of Mississippi, otherwise known as the Episcopal Diocese of Mississippi (hereinafter referred to as “the Diocese”), and acknowledges their authority.

Article II

VICAR

The Vicar shall have control and responsibility in accord with the Constitution and Canons of the Church, both general and diocesan, and shall be under the authority of the Bishop of the Diocese.

The Vicar shall have jurisdiction over the spiritual affairs of the Mission and supervise and direct the mission staff and volunteers. He or she shall be appointed and may be removed by the Bishop of the Diocese, and may be designated as vicar, priest-in-charge, minister-in-charge, or otherwise by the Bishop of the Diocese.

Article III

THE MISSION COMMITTEE

The Mission Committee shall work with the Vicar to adopt and implement policies and programs and to promote general leadership and supervision to the mission including, but not limited to church programs, property, finances and worship.

The Mission Committee shall be composed of no more than eleven members, including officers, all of whom shall be elected by a 2/3 vote of the membership of the mission at the annual meeting of the mission and who shall serve three-year terms. No Mission Committee member shall serve more than one consecutive three-year term.

The Mission Committee shall hold regular monthly meetings on a set date and time established by the Mission Committee annually in the first meeting following the annual meeting of the mission.

The Mission Committee may hold special meetings called by the Sr. Warden or by three of the members of the Mission Committee. Meetings may be conducted in person, by telephone conference call, virtual conferencing, or through any other technological medium in which all members can see and hear all communications and activities of the meeting available to all members at reasonable cost.

All actions taken by the Mission Committee shall be by majority vote. No action shall be taken at a meeting unless a quorum is present. A quorum is one half plus one of the total mission committee membership.

Voting on issues by the Mission Committee may be conducted by group e-mail, group text or other group messaging platform if all members are given notice and included and are provided an opportunity to vote. If a vote is taken by this method, all members must confirm their presence on the platform and record their vote as either “aye”, “nay” or “abstain”. The Clerk shall notate the record of such votes in the Minutes of the next regular Mission Committee Meeting.

If a vacancy occurs on the Mission Committee, the remaining members may, at the next meeting of the Mission Committee, select a replacement to serve until the next annual meeting of the mission.

The Vicar and / or Sr Warden of the Mission Committee may establish and appoint Standing Committees and Ad Hoc Committees for various purposes in their discretion.

Article IV

OFFICERS AND DELEGATES TO THE DIOCESE

A Senior Warden, a Junior Warden, a Treasurer and a Clerk shall serve the Mission.

The Mission Committee shall elect annually a Senior Warden, a Jr. Warden, a Treasurer and a Clerk. Provided, that the Officers shall serve subject to the approval of the Bishop of the Diocese. If the members of the mission are unable to elect officers to maintain and sustain the orderly affairs of the Mission, the Bishop of the Diocese shall have the authority to remove any officers and appoint new officers as necessary.

Terms of Officers shall be for one-year, renewable for one year terms, up to three years consecutive, maximum.

In the event of a vacancy of an officer, the Mission Committee shall elect a new officer at a regular meeting.

Duties of the Officers are as follows:

Senior Warden – acts as the chief executive officer and implements the policies set by the Mission Committee. The Senior Warden provides recommendations to the Mission Committee on matters concerning the Church. The Senior Warden shall have such other duties as may be assigned from time to time by the Mission Committee.

Junior Warden – has primary responsibility for the maintenance and supervision of the physical facilities used by the Church to include buildings, grounds, furniture and fixtures. The Junior Warden shall make recommendations for any modifications, additions, alternations or maintenance needs for the Church's physical facilities to the Mission Committee for approval. The Junior Warden shall have such other duties as may be assigned from time to time by the Mission Committee.

Treasurer – receives and disburses all monies acquired by the Mission, maintains financial records of the church and prepares and presents monthly and annual financial reports to the Mission Committee, prepares and oversees the annual budget of the Church and reports to the Mission Committee and Diocese on the financial information and data pertaining to the Church.

Clerk – maintains written records of actions taken by the Mission Committee in its meeting and votes, and takes and publishes Minutes of the annual meeting of the mission. The clerk provides Minutes to the Mission Committee monthly, and if requested, to the Diocese.

The Mission shall also have a Delegate and Alternate to the Annual Diocesan Convention as it may be entitled to under the relevant diocesan canons and rules. Delegates and Alternates are elected by the Mission Committee in the time period prescribed by the Diocese, traditionally one year prior to the Annual Council at which they will represent the Mission.

Article V

THE MISSION CONGREGATION AND ANNUAL MEETING

Any baptized person of the age of sixteen years or more, who acknowledges the authority of the Constitution of the Mission, and by declaring their intention to support the Mission by regular attendance at public worship and by financial support, shall be considered a member of the Mission and entitled to vote in its affairs. Any member who, for one year, shall have refrained from regular worship and from contributing toward the support of the Mission, may be removed from the list of members of the Mission or may request their removal from the list.

The Annual Meeting of the Mission congregation shall be held in February each year. Notice, time and purpose of the annual meeting shall be announced at public services of the mission congregation at least two weeks in advance of the meeting and also announced in regular church communications to all members. Not less than ten persons qualified to vote shall constitute a quorum for the annual meeting. Reports of the Vicar, Sr. Warden and Treasurer shall be presented in the annual meeting and recorded in the records of the Minutes of the Annual Meeting. Elections of mission committee members shall be made by nominations from a pre-determined slate of willing candidates and from the floor. Elections shall be by decided simple majority of a voice vote.

Article VI

ANNUAL AUDIT

The Mission Committee shall cause to be made an annual audit of the accounts of the Treasurer and other custodians of funds of the Mission. The audit shall be made by a certified or independent public accountant or by any alternative permitted by the Office of the Treasurer of the Diocese.

Article VII

PAROCHIAL REPORT

The Mission shall send its annual Parochial Report to the Diocese by March 1 of each year or the at the time prescribed by the Diocese.

Article VIII

REAL ESTATE TITLE

The title of any real property owned or acquired by the Mission for Church purposes shall be vested in the Trustees of the Diocese, to be held in trust by them, and proper evidence of this and of adequate insurance coverage thereon, must be maintained and provided upon request at all times.

Article IX

GIFTS AND MEMORIALS

No object intended as a permanent addition to the Church or Mission property, or to be used therein during public worship, shall be accepted as a gift or memorial without the approval of the Vicar and the Mission Committee. All objects so accepted may be removed when deemed necessary by the Mission Committee. The names of donors of such gifts and memorials, any terms and conditions, and the dates of acceptance shall be recorded in the permanent records of the Mission.

Article X

AMENDMENTS

This Constitution may be amended by vote of two-thirds of the qualified members of the Mission congregation present at a properly called and duly noticed meeting; subject to 1) approval by the Bishop; 2) approval by the Mission Committee; 3) written notice of the proposed changes having been publicly promulgated to all members of the mission congregation at least two weeks in advance of the vote on such amendments.

I, _____, Vicar or Priest-in-Charge of the Church of the Nativity, Water Valley, Mississippi [Or by the Sr. Warden if there is a vacancy in the vicar or priest-in-charge] Mississippi do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and complete copy of the Constitution of the Mission, as voted upon and approved by the mission congregation at the Annual Church Meeting held on _____.

IN WITNESS HEREOF, I have subscribed my name this ____ day of _____, 20__.

Printed Name: _____

Signature: _____

Title: _____