

**St. ALBAN's BALLOTING PROCEDURES (2019)**  
**Background and Authority, based on the 2018 Parish Bylaws**

**A. WHO CAN VOTE?**

1. Bylaws Requirements:

- (1) To be qualified to vote at an Annual or Special Meeting, a person must, at least 30 days before the meeting, be: [II.1]
  - a. a member of the Episcopal Church as defined in the General Convention Canons – in other words: persons whose Christian baptism is recorded in the Episcopal Church;<sup>1</sup>
  - b. recorded as a member in the Parish register;<sup>2</sup>
  - c. at least 15 years old; and
  - d. a contributor to the financial support of St. Alban's parish for at least 6 months "as determined by the Treasurer" or a contributor of services to St. Alban's parish for at least 6 months "as determined by the Rector."
- (2) The Vestry will determine any issue concerning who is a qualified voter. [II.2]

2. Practice: Voter List – 2019:

The "voter list" is the list of qualified voters, generated by the Parish office no less than thirty (30) days before the Annual Meeting – December 29, 2018.<sup>3</sup> The Rector and staff have continued their concerted effort to "clean up" and keep current the parish membership rolls, but in 2018 we are resuming the historical practice of setting out the membership list for parishioners to check on Sunday mornings for several weeks prior to the 30-day deadline.

Previous bylaws required that the Voter List of qualified voters – as finalized 30 days before the Annual Meeting – was to be provided by the Parish Office to the tellers for use on Election Day. This is no longer specified by the bylaws, but still needs to be done.

**B. VOTING PROCEDURE: PRIOR TO ELECTION DAY (Absentee Ballots)**

1. Bylaws Requirements:

The bylaws do not detail balloting procedures, but provide that "The Vestry will establish additional balloting procedures and will publish them to the Parish at least sixty (60) days before the Annual Meeting, allowing a reasonable period for comment by members of the

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<sup>1</sup> "All persons who have received the Sacrament of Holy Baptism with water in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, whether in this Church [– the Episcopal Church –] or in another Christian Church, and whose Baptisms have been duly recorded in this Church, are members thereof." [Canon I.17.1(a)]

<sup>2</sup> Canon I.17.4 sets forth the procedures for maintenance of a parish register. Essentially, a person may be a member of only one parish. When a person transfers from one parish to another, he/she must obtain from the former parish a certificate "indicating that the person is recorded as a member . . . of [the Episcopal] Church and whether or not such a member : (1) is a communicant; (2) is recorded as being in good standing; (3) has been confirmed or received by a bishop of this Church or a Bishop in communion with this Church." [Canon I.4(a)]

<sup>3</sup> The parish uses a church management software called Shelby Systems, which enables us to produce numerous types of listings, such as mailing lists and a voters list.

Parish. The balloting procedures will ensure that qualified voters unable to attend the Annual Meeting in person may vote by absentee ballot; any issues concerning absentee ballots will be determined by the vote of a majority of the members of the Vestry attending the Annual Meeting.” [VI.2]

2. Practice:

- (1) The Parish staff will prepare ballots (including absentee ballots), with candidates for each office listed in the random order established by the Vestry. Ballots and absentee ballots will be on different colored paper, but otherwise identical.<sup>4</sup>
- (2) Absentee ballots will be available from the Parish Office three weeks before Election Day, and this fact will be published to the Parish.
- (3) In order to obtain an absentee ballot, a qualified voter must personally appear at the Parish Office and be marked on the Voter List (by green highlighter) as having claimed an absentee ballot. Once marked as such, the qualified voter will be ineligible to obtain a regular ballot on Election Day.
- (4) Each absentee ballot will be accompanied by an inner envelope marked only “Absentee Ballot” and an outer envelope indicating it is an absentee ballot and bearing a line for signature by the voter. The voter will be instructed to place the ballot (with votes indicated) into the inner envelope and to seal the envelope, and then to place the inner envelope into the outer envelope and seal that envelope and then sign it, and to return the package to the Parish Office. Just prior to Election Day, the Director of Operations or his designee will open the outer envelope and place the sealed inner envelope into the locked ballot box, retaining the signed outer envelopes for the record.
- (5) Absentee ballots will be counted, as regular ballots are.
- (6) “Any issues concerning absentee ballots shall be determined by the vote of a majority of the voting members of the Vestry attending the Annual Meeting.” [VI.2]

**C. VOTING PROCEDURE: ELECTION DAY VOTING**

1. Bylaws Requirements:

- (1) “Wardens and Vestry Members will be elected on the day of the Annual Meeting by plurality vote of those qualified voters casting secret ballots.”<sup>5</sup> [VI.2]
- (2) “[A]ny issues concerning absentee ballots will be determined by the vote of a majority of the Vestry attending the Annual Meeting.” [VI.2]

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<sup>4</sup> Each ballot will include instructions that a voter is to “vote for one” among candidates for Senior Warden and “vote for one” among candidates for Junior Warden, and “must vote for four” among Vestry Member candidates. The purpose of the latter is to ensure a fair election, in that no candidate is unduly advantaged or disadvantaged by having votes withheld. A voter may choose to not vote for any candidate in an office, but if the voter does cast any vote(s) short of four for Vestry Member, all of that voter’s votes for Vestry Member will be disregarded. (This practice was instituted in 2018.)

<sup>5</sup> Except that a “vacancy in the office of a lay Vestry Member will be filled by . . . the Vestry . . . [to] serve the remainder of the vacated term.” [IV.7]

2. Practice:

- (1) “Poll Attendants” (to check voters in) and “Ballot Clerks” (usually 7, to count ballots) will be appointed (from among the Nominating and Elections Committee and others) by the chair of the Nominating Committee in consultation with the Rector. The Senior Warden will serve as Supervisor.
- (2) Polls will be open continuously from 7:30 am to 12:30 pm.<sup>6</sup>
- (3) A locked ballot box will be set out in Nourse Hall. Copies of the candidate statement packages will be available for voters’ reference.
- (4) Poll Attendants will be stationed at tables in the Wade Room, with Voter Lists (divided into alphabetical groups, with one Poll Attendant assigned to each group) and ballots.
- (5) As each person approaches to obtain a ballot, the Poll Attendant highlights his/her name in yellow and gives the person a ballot.
  - a. If a person seeks to vote but his/her name is not on the Voter List, he/she is referred to the Supervisor.
  - b. If a person has already received an absentee ballot (i.e., his/her name is highlighted in green), he/she is referred to the Supervisor.

**D. VOTING PROCEDURE: TALLYING AND ANNOUNCING RESULTS**

1. Bylaws Requirements:

“Wardens and Vestry Members will be elected on the day of the Annual Meeting by plurality vote of those qualified voters casting secret ballots. Election by plurality vote means that the candidate for Senior Warden or for Junior Warden receiving the highest vote on the first ballot will be declared elected, and the candidates of Vestry members equal to the number of vacancies and receiving the highest number of votes on the first ballot will be declared elected.” [VI.2]

2. Practice:

- (1) Ballot counting: Once the polls close (12:30 pm), the Supervisor and Ballot Clerks will take the ballot box into the room designated for ballot counting – Satterlee Hall room 301. The Supervisor will unlock the ballot box in the presence of the Ballot Clerks, and distribute the ballots among three teams of two Ballot Clerks, along with tally sheets. Each pair of Ballot Clerks counts its ballots votes twice, with one Clerk calling each vote while the other Clerk records it on the tally sheet, and then switching places to repeat the process. (If there is not agreement, the pair will continue the twice-counting process until agreement is reached.) Each team’s tally sheet is delivered to the seventh Ballot Clerk, who will enter the results on a master tally sheet.
- (2) Ballot storage. As each packet of ballots has been counted, it is secured, together with its tally sheet, in an envelope sealed by the Supervisor.

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<sup>6</sup> The 2019 Annual Meeting will be held between the 9:00 and 11:15 services, the traditional Forum Hour – convening at 10:15 am.

- (3) After all ballots have been counted, the result will be communicated to the Rector, who will contact each candidate to advise him/her whether he/she has been elected.
- (4) The Rector and Senior Warden will arrange for the list of elected persons to be Published to the Parish on the day after the election, after personally informing each candidate of the result as to him/her.

#### **E. CANDIDATE SLATE – 2019**

##### 1. Bylaws Requirements:

The Senior Warden will be elected to a three-year term beginning in 2019 and each third year thereafter. The Junior Warden's next three-year term will begin in 2020. Each year four Vestry Members will be elected to three-year terms. Vacated Warden terms may be filled by Vestry vote to serve only until the next Annual Meeting election day; vacated Vestry Member terms may be filled by Vestry vote to serve the remainder of the vacated term. [VI.2]

##### 2. Practice:

In 2019, the Parish will elect four Vestry Members and a Senior Warden, as well as a Junior Warden to serve the remaining year of the vacated Junior Warden's term. This year, we have instituted the practice of offering Warden candidates the opportunity to also separately stand for election to the Vestry; the purpose of this is to avoid having to lose altogether the possibility that a Warden candidate who is not elected to that office may have no other chance to serve in elected lay leadership. Three of the four Warden candidates have elected to simultaneously stand for election as a Vestry Member. It will work this way: a winning Warden candidate will be dropped off the Vestry Member list, and any votes he/she receives for Vestry Member will be disregarded. The remaining Vestry Member candidates will be ranked by votes received, and elected accordingly.

#### **F. VOTING PROCEDURE: IN THE EVENT OF INCONCLUSIVE ELECTION**

##### 1. Bylaws Requirements:

“In the event of a tie vote on the first ballot for the position of Senior Warden or Junior warden, or as between candidates for the last of the Vestry Member vacancies, further ballots shall be cast until sufficient candidates are elected; provided that on the second and any subsequent ballot, votes will be cast only for those persons who were tied on the first ballot.” [VI.2]

##### 2. Practice:

In case of a tie, a run-off election will be scheduled for as soon as possible after Election Day.

[end]