

## **SESSION FOURTEEN THE CHURCH**

1. In Session Seven (on the Third Article of the Apostles' Creed), we saw that the Church is "one, holy, catholic, and apostolic." We also saw that the Church exists in three dimensions or states: Militant, Expectant, and Triumphant. (You may wish to review your notes from that session at this time.)
2. In this session, we will explore some different meanings of the word "Church" and how the Church exists at the local, diocesan, national, and global levels.
3. When you hear the word "church," what do you think of first? Some people think of the building where they worship. And that is a good definition: church buildings are important. But the church is also a community—the congregation that worships in the building.
4. The local church is also part of a wider church community. For example, to the question "What church do you belong to?" you could also answer, "The Episcopal Church." Or even "The Anglican Communion."
5. As members of Saints Matthew and Mark, you belong to the following church communities:
  - a. A Parish—Saints Matthew and Mark Episcopal Church, Barrington, Rhode Island.
  - b. A Diocese—The Episcopal Diocese of Rhode Island.
  - c. A National Church—The Episcopal Church.
  - d. A Worldwide Fellowship of Churches—The Anglican Communion.
  - e. A Universal Church—the "one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church" described in the Third Article of the Apostles' Creed.
6. For each of these levels of the Church, the chart on the next page lists some details regarding members, leadership, and governing bodies.

## CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

### “I AM A MEMBER OF ...”

	<b>NAME</b>	<b>MEMBERSHIP</b>	<b>LEADER</b>	<b>REPRESENTATIVE BODY</b>
<b>A PARISH</b>	Sts. Matthew & Mark	All baptized parish members (parishioners)	Priest-in-Charge, Rector, or Vicar	Vestry (meets monthly)
<b>A DIOCESE</b>	Episcopal Diocese of Rhode Island	All diocesan parishes & clergy	Bishop	Diocesan Convention (meets annually)
<b>A NATIONAL CHURCH</b>	The Episcopal Church	All Episcopal dioceses & bishops	Presiding Bishop	General Convention (meets every three years)
<b>A GLOBAL FELLOWSHIP</b>	The Anglican Communion	All Anglican or Episcopal Churches in communion w/ Canterbury	Archbishop of Canterbury	The Lambeth Conference (meets every ten years)
<b>A UNIVERSAL CHURCH</b>	“One, holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church”	All baptized Christians everywhere	Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church	(N.A.)

## **CHURCH MEMBERSHIP ADDITIONAL NOTES**

### 1. The Parish

Members of a parish (parishioners) are those who have either:

- (a) been baptized, confirmed, or received in the parish, or
- (b) formally transferred in from another Episcopal parish, or
- (c) had their baptism elsewhere recorded in the parish register

Members in good standing are those who:

- (a) attend (or are visited) regularly, and
- (b) support the parish financially, and
- (c) receive Communion at least three times a year

Members in good standing are entitled to vote at the Annual Meeting and may be elected as Vestry members and delegates to Diocesan Convention.

### 2. The Diocese

Each parish sends clergy and lay delegates to the Diocesan Convention, which:

- (a) sets the diocesan budget, determines policies, and passes canons (church laws) regulating the diocese's life
- (b) elects four clergy and four lay deputies to the General Convention
- (c) A special Diocesan Convention meets to elect a new bishop as needed

### 3. The Episcopal Church – General Convention

The General Convention meets every three years and:

- (a) Sets the Church's budget, determines policies, and passes canons (church laws) regulating the Episcopal Church's life
- (b) Consists of a House of Bishops and a House of Deputies
- (c) Elects a new Presiding Bishop every nine years

### 4. The Anglican Communion

- (a) Traditionally consists of all Episcopal or Anglican Churches "in communion with the Archbishop of Canterbury"
- (b) The Archbishop of Canterbury has a place of honor but no formal jurisdiction outside the Church of England; the Episcopal Church is fully autonomous and self-governing
- (c) The Lambeth Conference of Anglican Bishops is a consultative body only and has no formal authority over the Churches represented
- (d) If you travel or live overseas, you are entitled as an Episcopalian to attend & receive the Sacraments in the local Church of the Anglican Communion (e.g., the Church of England, the Anglican Church of Canada, etc).

## QUIZ – SESSION FOURTEEN

### Multiple choice

1. The word “church” means:  
(a) The building where we worship  
(b) The worshiping community  
(c) Both of the above
2. Saints Matthew and Mark Church, Barrington is a:  
(a) Diocese  
(b) National Church  
(c) Parish
3. The General Convention of the Episcopal Church meets:  
(a) Annually  
(b) Every three years  
(c) Every ten years

### Fill in the blanks

1. The Church is described in the \_\_\_\_\_ Article of the Apostles’ Creed.
2. The Universal Church is “one, holy, catholic, and \_\_\_\_\_.”
3. The Anglican Communion consists of those Anglican or Episcopal Churches in communion with \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Parish members in good standing are eligible to be elected to the parish \_\_\_\_\_.
5. The Archbishop of Canterbury has a place of \_\_\_\_\_ but no formal \_\_\_\_\_ outside the Church of England.
6. An Episcopalian traveling overseas may receive the Sacraments in other Churches of the \_\_\_\_\_ Communion.

### True or False

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| 1. The clergy leader of a parish is the rector, vicar, or priest-in-charge. | T | F |
| 2. The Episcopal Church is a Diocese of the Anglican Communion.             | T | F |
| 3. The Universal Church consists only of Episcopalians and Anglicans.       | T | F |
| 4. The General Convention consists of two Houses.                           | T | F |
| 5. To be in good standing, one must receive Communion monthly.              | T | F |
| 6. The Lambeth Conference governs the Episcopal Church.                     | T | F |
| 7. The parish sends clergy & lay delegates to the Diocesan Convention.      | T | F |
| 8. The annual Diocesan Convention elects a new bishop.                      | T | F |