

FROM THE APOSTOLIC SEE OF MALANKARA METROPOLITAN DR. THEODOSIUS MAR THOMA



Circular No. 141

Blessings to you all the Vicars, Resident Clergy, Trustees, Members of the Sabha Prathinidhi Mandalam and Members of all the Parishes under our authority.

Dearly beloved in Christ,

The decisions and resolutions of the Sabha Prathinidhi Mandalam that met at the Dr. Alexander Mar Thoma Valiya Metropolitan Smaraka Auditorium, Tiruvalla on 17th, 18th, 19th and 20th September 2024 (Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday) presided over by the Metropolitan, and approved by the Episcopal Synod held on 23rd September 2024, as per Clause 107 of the Church Constitution, are hereby published and given below for the information of all. The approved Constitution Amendments are also appended. It is hereby informed through this Circular that all affairs of the Church, parishes, and institutions are to be implemented and directed in compliance with them.

Grace be with you all.

Dated 19th October 2024 from Poolatheen, Tiruvalla

Dr. Theodosius Mar Thoma Metropolitan



**The Decisions of the Sabha Prathinidhi Mandalam that met at
Dr. Alexander Mar Thoma Valiya Metropolitan Smaraka Auditorium, Tiruvalla
on 17th, 18th, 19th and 20th September 2024 (Tue, Wed, Thu, and Fri)**

1. The motion for permission to approve the expenses incurred without or exceeding the budget during the year 2023-2024 in respect of the Church and the institutions was adopted by the Mandalam after explanations and discussions.
2. The administrative report and the audited statement of accounts and balance sheet for the year commencing from 01-04-2023 to 31-03-2024, already printed and published, each in respect of the Church, the Vaideeka Seminary, the Sabha Book Depot, Malankara Sabha Tharaka, M.T. & E.A. Schools Corporate Management, the Episcopal Jubilee Institute, JMM Study Centre, TMAM Research & Orientation Centre, MT Industrial Training Centre, Easow Mar Timotheos Centre for Evangelism & Rural Development – Sihora, Easow Mar Timotheos Memorial Evangelists’ Training Centre – Hoskote/Shivanapura and J.M. & M.A. Memorial Centre for Holistic Development, Ayroor were unanimously passed by the Mandalam.
3. The motion, “The Sabha Prathinidhi Mandalam resolves to earmark Rs. 3 crores as income and Rs. 3 crores as expenditure towards Wayanad Rehabilitation” was unanimously passed by the Mandalam.
4. The budget for the year 2024-2025, each in respect of the Church, the Vaideeka Seminary, the Sabha Book Depot, Malankara Sabha Tharaka, M.T. & E.A. Schools’ Corporate Management, the Episcopal Jubilee Institute, JMM Study Centre, TMAM Research & Orientation Centre, MT Industrial Training Centre, Easow Mar Timotheos Centre for Evangelism & Rural Development – Sihora, Easow Mar Timotheos Memorial Evangelists’ Training Centre – Shivanapura and J.M. & M.A. Memorial Centre for Holistic Development, Ayroor were unanimously passed by the Mandalam.
5. The motion, “Permission be given to the Sabha Council to spend during the first six months of 2025-2026, an amount not exceeding 6/12 of what would be spent during the year 2024-2025” was unanimously approved by the Mandalam.
6. The motion of Sabha Council to appoint the following Chartered Accountants as the auditors for the year 2024-2025 was unanimously approved by the Prathinidhi Mandalam:
 1. M/s. Cheriyan & Cheriyan, Chartered Accountants, Miss East Road, Kottayam - 686001.
 2. M/s. Reji John & Co., Chartered Accountants, Near Children’s Library, Kottayam.
 3. M/s. Kuruvilla & Co., Chartered Accountants, Pathanamthitta - 689645.
 4. M/s. Thomas Mathew & Associates, Chartered Accountants, Power House Road, Tiruvalla - 689101.
 5. M/s. Thomas Jacob & Co., Chartered Accountants, Malankara Building Complex, Palayam, Trivandrum.
 6. M/s. K. C. Koshal & Co., Chartered Accountants, 1507, Wright Town, Jabalpur (M.P).
 7. M/s. Jacob Koor & Co., Chartered Accountants, Kochi.
 8. M/s. K. I. Abraham & Co., Chartered Accountants, Tiruvalla.
 9. M/s. Jacob Abraham & Co., Chartered Accountants, Chengannur.
 10. M/s Joseph John & Co., Chartered Accountants, Thiruvalla.
 11. M/s Thomas Kenny & Co., Thiruvalla.
7. The statement of the Metropolitan regarding the Satna Mission and its institutions, presented as per the decision of the Mandalam in 2023, was approved by the Mandalam with majority.
8. The Motion that “Since there are ambiguities existing about the plan, estimate, construction procedures, and total amount (*adankal thuka*) of the new Sabha Secretariat under construction, and as this may affect the future activities of the Church negatively, this Mandalam resolves to appoint a nine-member committee, consisting of five Mandalam members and four technical

experts, to clarify doubts, to bring transparency, and to conduct a study on existing construction practices and guidelines in construction practices to be followed in the future, including focusing on financial implications and appropriate cost-share of organizations, and to submit the report in the next Mandalam. The Episcopal Synod is requested to appoint the committee,” was unanimously approved by the Mandalam.

9. **Study:** A study was conducted in the Mandalam based on the topic, “Secularism in the Changing Context.” It was decided to hold further studies on this topic in the parish, centre, and diocesan levels.
10. In the motion of the Sabha Council, “In the context of the implementation of the new National Education Policy in our country, there is need for the colleges of the Malankara Mar Thoma Syrian Church to be converted into Autonomous institutions. In accordance with the National Education policy, for their further development, as per the existing law, only colleges that are run by Trusts or Societies can apply to become Autonomous institutions. Therefore, the Prathinidhi Mandalam resolves to form a Trust by the name of the ‘Mar Thoma Educational and Charitable Trust’ consisting of the Mar Thoma Metropolitan as the President, Sabha Secretary, Clergy Trustee, Lay Trustee and Treasurer, representatives of the Episcopal Synod and Sabha Council, Members nominated by the Episcopal Synod and its members and to transfer the existing colleges of the Church under the Trust. This Mandalam also resolves that henceforth, the establishment and operation of educational institutions in the field of higher education shall be under the charge of the Trust so constituted and registered”, the concept of Autonomous colleges was approved in principle by the Mandalam. The Mandalam also entrusted the Sabha Council to present a proposal to convert all colleges of the Church to autonomous colleges, to prepare bylaws of the Trust or Society constituted for the purpose, to study in detail their benefits and drawbacks, and to report it in the next Mandalam.
11. The motion to have a ‘University for the Mar Thoma Church’ was approved by the Mandalam in principle. The Mandalam entrusted the Sabha Council to conduct a detailed study on the colleges to be included under the University to be formed, and to report it in the next Mandalam.
12. The motion of the Sabha Council stating “To demolish the building (Building No. 586) where the offices of the Mar Thoma Sunday School Samajam, Mar Thoma Evangelistic Association and the Sabha Office are functioning, located in S.C.S. Campus, Thiruvalla Municipality Ward XIV, in Thiruvalla Village, Thiruvalla Taluk, Pathanamthitta District”, was deferred after discussions for further study.
13. The Constitution of the Diocese of U.K.-Europe-Africa was approved unanimously by the Mandalam.
14. The Mandalam entrusted the Sabha Council to take necessary action to install a solar power plant system at the new Sabha Secretariat after proper study. Permission was also granted to obtain donations and sponsorships for the same.
15. The Constitution Amendments remaining after the Special Prathinidhi Mandalam for Constitution Amendments held on 7th, 8th, and 9th February 2024 were discussed and approved. (The approved amendments are appended herewith.)
16. The Mandalam decided to print and publish the revised Constitution without delay, containing the clauses approved by the Special Mandalam, after ensuring their grammatical accuracy, consistency of terms, and gender neutrality. The Mandalam also decided to publish the English translation, and granted permission to bear all expenditures for the same.
17. The Mandalam unanimously approved the proposal of the Metropolitan to entrust the Sabha Council to prepare a set of Election Rules for the general elections of the Church, and to present them in the next Mandalam with the approval of the Synod.

18. The Mandalam passed the Deed of Consent to be executed by the Diocesan/Zonal Treasurer and the Form for suggesting the names of priests for the Episcopal office.

Corrigendum

		Incorrect	Correct
1.	Pg. No. I-8, Sl. No. 22	Building No. 585, 586	<i>Omit the number 585.</i>
2.	Pg. No. I-12, Sl. No. 4	The Amendment of Clause 9B, presented by the Hon. Episcopal Synod, according to the decision of the Special Prathinidhi Mandalam held on 7, 8, and 9 February 2024.	The Official Motion of 9B, prepared by the Hon. Episcopal Synod, according to the decision of the Special Prathinidhi Mandalam held on 7, 8, and 9 February 2024
3.	Pg. No. I-12	The Amendment of Clause 9B, presented by the Hon. Episcopal Synod.	The Official Motion of 9B, prepared by the Hon. Episcopal Synod.
4.	Pg. No. II- 3, line no. 24	Mr. Prakash John Vaidyan, Mar Thoma Church in Oman.	Mr. Prakash John Vaidyan, Mar Thoma Church in Oman. <i>Insert space</i> The Metropolitan nominated missionary work.
5.	Pg. No. II-6 Item No. 06	“Decided to entrust 50 lakhs for the same.”	“Decided to entrust 1 crore for the same.”
6.	Pg. No. II-120, 2 nd para	“A grant of 7,00,000 was allocated for the operation of Balawadies outside Kerala during the reporting year.”	<i>Delete this line</i>
7.	Pg. No. II-120 last paragraph	<i>Typo in Malayalam script</i>	
8.	Pg. No. II-120 2 nd para 5 th line	Rs. 23,74,621 in 2022-23	To be read as Rs. 7,82,113.53 in 2023-24
9.	Pg. No. II-121 Item No. 42	Mrs. Jency Manu	Mrs. Jency Manu (upto Sept. 2023)
10.	Pg. No. IV- 41	Rev. Kurian V. Mathews	Mr. Kurian V. Mathews

The following is to be read along with item no. 1.7 on Pg. II-8

Ordination Golden Jubilee Projects of H.G. Dr. Theodosius Mar Thoma Metropolitan:

The Abhayam, Lakshya projects were begun on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee of Ordination and the 75th Birthday of H.G. Dr. Theodosius Mar Thoma Metropolitan. 63 houses have been completed under the Abhayam project, and the construction of 27 houses is in progress. The foundation stones of 41 houses have been blessed. Education aid to 45 economically disadvantaged students who are pursuing professional courses such as B.Sc. Nursing, Engineering, MBA, etc., have been provided under the Lakshya project.

Mar Thoma Sabha Secretariat:

The dedication service of the Mar Thoma Sabha Secretariat (Dr. Joseph Mar Thoma Navathy Office Complex) was held on 21st August 2023 at 11:45 AM by the Most Rev. Dr. Theodosius Mar Thoma Metropolitan. Rt. Rev. Dr. Joseph Mar Barnabas Suffragan Metropolitan, Rt. Rev. Thomas Mar Timotheos Episcopa, Rt. Rev. Dr. Isaac Mar Philoxenos Episcopa, Rt. Rev. Dr. Mathews Mar Makarios Episcopa, Rt. Rev. Dr. Gregorios Mar Stephanos Episcopa, Rt. Rev. Dr. Thomas Mar Theethos Episcopa, Sabha Council members, Office Bearers, and Office Bearers of the Organizations participated.

Mar Thoma Sabha Prathindhi Mandalam
2024 September 17, 18, 19, and 20 (Tue, Wed, Thu, Fri)
Dr. Alexander Mar Thoma Valiya Metropolitan Smaraka Auditorium, Tiruvalla

Constitution Amendments Presented and Approved in the Special Mandalam

Section 9B

An Episcopa who steps down from office shall continue to be a member of the governing bodies, viz. Sabha Prathinidhi Mandalam, Episcopal Synod, and Sabha Council.

Section 9C

The Church shall make all necessary arrangements to maintain and provide for the lifetime subsistence and well being of the Episcopas who step down from office.

Vaidika Selection Committee

Section 47

The Vaidika Selection Committee shall consist of 17 members, of whom 9 shall be ordained Ministers and 8 lay persons. An Episcopa nominated by the Episcopal Synod, the Senior Vicar General, the Sabha Secretary and the Principals of the Theological Seminaries shall be ex-officio members. The rest of the members shall be elected by the Prathinidhi Mandalam, from among its members. The Chairman of the Vaidika Selection Committee will be the Episcopa and the Secretary of the Committee will be the Sabha Secretary. Tenure of office of the Committee shall be 3 years, or until the next election. Quorum of the committee shall be 9 members.

Section 47b

Those who have been elected to the Vaidika Selection Committee for three terms shall not contest as a candidate in the forthcoming elections to the Vaidika Selection Committee.

Chapter V: General Administration of the Church

Section 57

To facilitate convenient administration of the Church, in consultation with the Sabha Council and Episcopal Synod, the Metropolitan shall have power, to organise and re-organise the Church, into Dioceses.

With the sanction of the Episcopal Synod, the Head of the Diocese shall have power, to establish new parishes, divide existing parishes and organise them into new parishes and terminate any existing parish and incorporate the congregation into one or more neighbouring parishes, as and when considered necessary. However, the reorganization of parishes in multiple dioceses shall be done by the Metropolitan with the sanction of the Episcopal Synod.

With the sanction of the Episcopal Synod, the Head of the Diocese shall have the power to propose names for existing or newly formed parishes, or modify the name of existing parishes.

With the sanction of the Episcopal Synod, the Head of the Diocese shall have power, to organise and reorganise parishes into centres, from time to time, so as to facilitate convenient administration and common fellowship.

Section 58(1)

The Metropolitan shall, in consultation with the Episcopal Synod, nominate an Episcopa, as the Head of a Diocese and the Head of the Diocese shall, subject to the control of the Metropolitan, perform the administrative responsibilities of the Diocese. In the absence of Episcopa, the Arch-Deacon or Vicar General may be vested with the administrative responsibilities of the Head of the Diocese.

Section 58(3)

The Metropolitan shall, in consultation with the Episcopal Synod, nominate a Vicar General, ordinarily in active service, to assist the Episcopa, in the administration of the Diocese. The Vicar General so nominated, shall, in addition to the responsibilities conferred on him, by this Constitution, perform also such other functions, under the control of the Diocesan Head, as may be assigned to him by the Metropolitan or the Diocesan Head.

Section 59

For purpose of general administration of the Church, there shall be an Episcopal Synod, a Grand Assembly, with the title, 'Malankara Mar Thoma Suriyani Sabha Prathinidhi Mandalam', a Sabha Council for execution of administrative matters and a Vaidika Selection Committee, to select candidates for the ministry of the Church.

The Sabha Council may also constitute a Coordination Committee to improve the activities of the Church through its institutions and organizations, a Publication Board to hold responsibility for publications of the Church, a Higher Education Board to coordinate the activities in the field of higher education, to revise them in a timely manner and to implement them, a Mission Board to coordinate the activities pertaining to the mission and witness of the Church, and

such other committees or Boards, as the Sabha Council may, in its discretion, consider necessary, from time to time. These will be under the control of the Sabha Council.

Section 61

The Metropolitan, in consultation with the Episcopal Synod, confers powers on the Episcopa. The Metropolitan, in consultation with the Episcopal Synod, has the power to withdraw or modify any of the conferred powers, whenever deemed necessary.

Section 63 A

In circumstances, where the Episcopa in charge of a Diocese, is unable to perform his duties as Head of the Diocese in time, for a continuous period of more than one month, the Mar Thoma Metropolitan may, in his discretion, make such arrangements, for the interim performance of said duties.

Section 63 B

The Head of the Diocese may, in his discretion, authorise the Diocesan Secretary or the Vicar General, to communicate his administrative decisions to the concerned parishes or individuals and so also to attend to correspondence on his behalf.

Section 64

With regard to any procedure affecting the Church, Diocese, parish, institution, or, organization or in matters that are not provided for in this Constitution or are ambiguous, the Metropolitan may, in consultation with the Episcopal Synod, make appropriate decision, and such decision shall be final. Such decisions shall be reported at the forthcoming annual meeting of the Prathinidhi Mandalam. The Mandalam has the power to modify or abrogate the decision.

Section 65 A (2)

The Legal Affairs Committee for the Church shall consist of the official members, viz., Metropolitan (Chairperson), Senior Vicar General, Sabha Secretary, Clergy Trustee, Lay Trustee and seven other members appointed by the Synod. Among the above non-official members, one shall be a Chartered Accountant, four shall be legal experts, and two members shall be women. It shall be ensured that experts in the field of educational and employment rules are included in the committee.

Section 65 A (3)

The Legal Affairs Committees for the Dioceses shall consist of the official members, viz., Diocesan Episcopa (Chairperson), Vicar General in active service in the Diocese, Diocesan Secretary, Diocesan Treasurer and five other members appointed by the Synod. Among the above non-official members, there shall be a minimum of two legal experts, two women, and one medical doctor.

Financial Experts Committee

Section 65 B

The Episcopal Synod shall appoint a Financial Experts Committee, to provide guidance and advice to the Church on general financial matters, including Income Tax, GST, FCRA, and Trust Properties. The Metropolitan shall be the Chairman of this committee. The Sabha Secretary, the Trustees of the Church, and not fewer than three people who are experts in the above fields shall be the members of this Committee. The committee's proposals or recommendations shall be reported to the Sabha Council.

Section 68

The majority of the Episcopas shall constitute the quorum for Synod meetings.

The Episcopal Synod may appoint an Executive Committee. Decisions taken by the Executive Committee, shall be reported at the forthcoming meeting of the Episcopal Synod, for its approval.

The proceedings of the Synod shall be recorded in the minutes book, passed at the respective meeting and kept with the signature of the President.

Section 70A

Episcopas shall obtain the permission of the Episcopal Synod to hold membership or office in trusts, societies, organizations or other bodies that are not under the control of the Church, dioceses, parishes, or other institutions of the Church. In such matters deemed appropriate by the Metropolitan, the permission of the Sabha Council shall also be obtained.

All clergy shall obtain the permission of the Episcopal Synod to hold membership, office or any position in trusts, societies, organizations or other bodies that are under the control of the parish or organizations of the Church, or in those that are not under the control of the Church, Dioceses, or other institutions of the Church.

Chapter VII: Sabha Prathinidhi Mandalam (House of Representatives)

Section 73

For considering and deciding all matters, spiritual and temporal, concerning the Malankara Mar Thoma Syrian Church, there shall be a house of representatives, known as the Malankara Mar Thoma Suriyani Sabha Prathinidhi Mandalam, consisting of the Valiya Metropolitan, Metropolitan, Suffragan Metropolitans, Episcopas, Rambans, Arch-Deacons, Vicars General in active service, Ministers appointed as per Section 77, representatives of Parishes, representatives of recognised institutions, viz. Mar Thoma Evangelistic Association, Mar Thoma Sunday School Samajam, Mar Thoma Yuvajana Sakhyam, Mar Thoma Suvishesha Sevika Sanghom, Mar Thoma Voluntary Evangelists' Association, Department of Sacred Music & Communications, Mar Thoma Senior Citizens Fellowship, Malankara Mar Thoma Sabha Development Department, Mar Thoma Students' Conference, and Retired Clergy Fellowship, representatives of those institutions recognized by the Prathinidhi Mandalam from time to time, representatives of those who have become members of the Church as a result of the missionary work of the Church, and persons nominated by the Metropolitan.

Section 77A (1)

A minimum of 33% (thirty-three percent) of the parish representatives, elected as per the provisions of paragraph-1 of Section-77, shall be women and for the purpose of effectuating the said object, the arrangement hereinafter set out, shall, subject to the direction of the Metropolitan, be enforced, under the responsibility of the Heads of Dioceses.

Section 77A (2)

The number of parish representatives from each Diocese, shall be ascertained first and thereupon, not less than 33% (thirty-three percent) of the said number or the number closest thereto, shall be declared as women's reservation seats.

Section 77A (13)

When the Edavaka Sanghom meets for the purpose of electing members to the Mandalam, in pursuance of the provisions of Section 228 of the Sabha Constitution, in the case of parishes entitled to send more than one member, but subject to women's reservation of the nature referred to in Sections 77 and 77-A, if it happens that the name of only one woman has been nominated to such reservation seat, the said woman-nominee shall be declared elected. If the number of other nominees exceeds the number of members to be elected to general seats, the rest of the election proceedings shall be completed, by ballot, in accordance with the provision of Section 238 of the Sabha Constitution. However, voters may vote for any of the candidates.

Section 85 A (1)

The elections for the positions of Sabha Secretary, Clergy Trustee, and Lay Trustee, and to the Vaidika Selection Committee, as well as the voting process, are to be conducted at each diocese level before the first session of each Mandalam. If deemed necessary, the voting process in dioceses/zones outside Kerala may be conducted through postal ballots.

The responsibility for elections to the aforementioned positions is vested in the Metropolitan. If deemed appropriate, the Metropolitan may delegate the responsibility for conducting the voting process at the Diocesan/Zonal level to the respective Diocesan Episcopas.

The Sabha Council shall determine the necessary rules of procedure to complete the voting process, including postal ballots, in all Dioceses/zones, within the specified time.

Necessary steps must be taken to ensure that postal ballots are received by the Metropolitan within the specified time.

The sealed ballot boxes containing the ballot papers of the voting process for the positions of Sabha Secretary, Clergy Trustee, and Lay Trustee, and to the Vaidika Selection Committee, that were conducted at the Diocesan level, shall be brought to the place determined by the Metropolitan and shall be kept under the custody of the Metropolitan.

Section 85 A (2)

Under the supervision of the Metropolitan, the votes shall be counted and tabulated, and the results shall be declared in the Mandalam.

Section 85 A (3)

Election petitions related to the elections for Sabha Secretary, Clergy Trustee, Lay Trustee, and Vaidika Selection Committee may be submitted in writing to the Metropolitan or to a person appointed by the Metropolitan within ten days of the announcement of the results.

Only members of the respective Mandalam shall have the right to submit such petitions.

Every election petition shall be accompanied by a deposit of five hundred rupees (Rs. 500/-), which shall not be refunded under any circumstances. Along with the election petition, the petitioner shall also submit an affidavit.

Section 85 A (4)

Petitions received as mentioned above shall be inquired upon and adjudicated in accordance with the procedure specified in subsections 5 to 9 of Section 164C of this Constitution.

Treasurer Section 86

The lay trustee shall also be the treasurer of the Church.

The duties of the treasurer will include, presentation of the budget for the current year, in the annual meeting of the Mandalam, with the approval of the Sabha Council, and seeking sanction of the Mandalam for incurring expenditure, in the ensuing year, up to a specified period.

The accounts maintained by the Secretary under Section 83, shall be submitted periodically by the Treasurer, to the Sabha Council, together with necessary explanations.

It is the responsibility of the Treasurer to ensure that the expenditure does not exceed the budgeted amount. However, if any expenditure is incurred without the budget and/or in excess of the budget, under any head, the Treasurer shall furnish full details to the Sabha Council and the Sabha Council will take appropriate decisions. Such items of expenditure, without the budget and/or in excess of the budget, shall be reported to the Mandalam, at the ensuing annual meeting, with request for approval by the Mandalam.

Section 92

The Trustees shall preserve and deal with the trust properties with the same care and diligence, as a prudent person would deal with his own property.

The Trustees shall ensure that appropriate registers, in the form and manner prescribed by the Prathinidhi Mandalam or Sabha Council, from time to time, are maintained regularly, setting out clearly and correctly, all relevant details in regard to trust properties and so also of the accounts of the trusts, as specified in Section 83.

The Sabha Secretary shall keep the deed of consent, and the oath of fidelity referred to in Section 36.

The Trustees shall be responsible for furnishing full particulars regarding the amount and status of the Trust properties as required by the Prathinidhi Mandalam or the Sabha Council.

The documents mentioned in this section shall be kept safely by the Sabha Secretary. On vacation of office, the outgoing Sabha Secretary shall hand over the said documents to the new Sabha Secretary. All documents mentioned in this section shall be digitized and preserved.

Section 99

Except with the permission of the Prathinidhi Mandalam, the Trustees shall not have power to sell, mortgage or hypothecate any immovable property, or alienate any fixed deposit, comprised in any Trust. The Trustees may deal with dividends from companies, interest on fixed deposits and other income, in conformity with directions given by the Sabha Council, from time to time.

Prior permission of the Sabha Prathinidhi Mandalam shall be obtained before taking up new projects or constructions on trust properties except in emergency situations. Appropriate environmental impact study also must be conducted.

Section 104

The Annual session of the Prathinidhi Mandalam shall meet once in a year, at the place and time, determined by the Council. The Secretary shall give notice in writing to the members and parishes, setting out the venue, date and time, and the subjects for consideration, one month in advance of the meeting.

The annual report, accounts, balance sheet and budget of the Church, shall be presented at the annual session of the Prathinidhi Mandalam.

In circumstances in which it is not possible, as required by this Section, to convene the Sabha Prathinidhi Mandalam, or to assemble together at one place for the meeting, or to conduct elections for the posts of the Office Bearers of the Church, or to the Sabha Council, or the Episcopal Nomination Board, or the Vaidika Selection Committee, in order to avoid administrative deadlock, the Sabha Council, in consultation with the Episcopal Synod, shall have the power to conduct the elections for the above mentioned positions, or to make alternative arrangements, or if necessary, to convene the Sabha Prathinidhi Mandalam online, or to conduct elections through postal, online or digital methods.

Notwithstanding anything contained in this Section, the Metropolitan has the inherent power, to convene the meeting of the Prathinidhi Mandalam, at any time.

Section 137

If a member desires to move an urgent motion, regarding any matter of immediate concern to the Church, he shall obtain the permission of the President, before commencement of the session of the Mandalam on the respective day and then only move the motion.

Section 138A

The Sabha Council shall study the discussions in the Mandalam related to the Presidential Address, interpellations, Annual Report, Accounts, and Budget; the topic of the Mandalam Study; and the facts contained in other motions. The actions taken by Sabha Council on the above shall be included in the Annual Report of the subsequent Mandalam.

Section 145

In respect of the elections to the Diocesan Assembly, rules regulating election notice, the last date, time, and place for submission of nomination forms as appended in Form B(1) of this Constitution; the date, time, and place of scrutiny of nomination forms; the last date and time for withdrawal of nomination forms; the date, time, and venue of polling; the date, time and place of declaration of results after counting of votes; eligibility for candidature, Returning officer, polling officers, ballot papers as appended in Form B(3) of this Constitution, and declaration of election results, as prescribed in Chapter 11 of this Constitution, will apply mutatis mutandis, to election to the Prathinidhi Mandalam also.

Section 146

The Vicar shall immediately intimate in writing, to the Sabha Secretary, the names of elected candidates in the prescribed B (5) Form within seven days.

Section 147

Immediately upon receipt of the Metropolitan's Kalpana, for conduct of elections, the recognised institutions shall elect their representatives and send their names, in writing, to the Sabha Secretary within seven days.

Section 149

Any member, who refuses to sign and submit the oath, shall forfeit his right to the said office and thereupon, substitute member shall be elected, nominated or appointed, as the case may be, in his place, as provided for in Section 125. A member who refuses to sign the oath is not eligible to be elected in the next two elections.

Section 154

Upon election and nomination of members, their names shall be published on the notice board of the Sabha Office, and if possible, on the website of the Church.

Section 155

Petitions in challenge of election of Mandalam members, shall be submitted within 15 days from the declaration of election result by the Returning Officer, to the Sabha Secretary or such other person, as may be authorized by him in that behalf, in the Sabha Office.

Section 157

Every election petition shall be accompanied by a deposit of Rs. 500, which shall not be refunded, under any circumstances.

Section 159

The petitioner may withdraw the petition subject to the decision of the Metropolitan at any stage before the petition is adjudicated. Accordingly, if a petition is withdrawn, no further action shall be taken on the petition.

Section 160

On the death of the petitioner, the petition will be treated as abated.

However, if for any reason the Metropolitan is convinced that an inquiry should be made on the matter raised in the petition, the Metropolitan may conduct such an inquiry and take a decision on the matter.

Section 164 (1) (b)

In Dioceses from where three or more members have to be elected, to the Sabha Council, there shall be elected a minimum of one minister, one layman and one laywoman. Where four or more members have to be elected, the fourth member shall be the lay person, who has secured the largest number of votes, among the remaining lay contestants and the fifth member shall be the person who has secured the largest number of votes, among the remaining contestants, comprised of both clergy and laity.

There shall be five members in the Sabha Council from among persons, who have become members of the Church, as a result of the Church's missionary work. Two among them shall be women. If it happens that aforementioned members are not elected, the Metropolitan shall nominate adequate number of persons from the said category, based on the highest percentage of votes polled by them in the Sabha Council election, but so that not more than one person shall be nominated from one Diocese.

Section 164 C (1)

Petitions in challenge of election of Sabha Council members, shall be submitted within ten days from the declaration of said election result, to the Sabha Secretary or such other person, as may be authorized by him in that behalf, in the Sabha Office.

Section 164 C (2)

Election petitions concerning members elected from each diocese shall be submitted only by the Mandalam members of that particular election from the respective diocese.

Section 164 C (3)

Every election petition shall be accompanied by a deposit of Rs. 500, which shall not be refunded, under any circumstances.

Section 164 C (4)

When submitting each election petition, the petitioner shall also submit an affidavit along with the election petition.

Section 164 C (5)

If there is any inconvenience to submit the election petition and affidavit directly to the Sabha Secretary, they may be submitted before either the Vicar General of the Diocese, or the Diocesan Secretary, or a person designated by the Diocesan Episcopa. The individual who receives the petition submitted thus, shall send the petition along with the affidavit and the 500 rupees deposited by the petitioner, to the Sabha Secretary in writing within three days. The petitioner shall also send a copy of the petition to the Sabha Secretary on the day of submission.

Section 164 C (6)

Election petitions shall be inquired upon and adjudicated by an Election Tribunal, comprising at least three members including legal experts, appointed by the Episcopal Synod, according to the tenure of the Mandalam. The report of the Tribunal shall be submitted to the Metropolitan, and the decision of the Metropolitan thereon shall be final. The petition shall be inquired upon and adjudicated as far as possible within six months.

Section 164 C (7)

The petitioner shall have the right to withdraw the petition before the commencement of its hearing. Accordingly, if a petition is withdrawn, no further action shall be taken on the petition.

Section 164 C (8)

On the death of the petitioner, the petition will be treated as abated.

However, if for any reason the Metropolitan is convinced that an inquiry should be made on the matter raised in the petition, the Metropolitan may conduct an inquiry as per subsection 6 above and take a decision on the matter.

Section 164 C (9)

Impersonation, bribery, undue influence, threat, irregular acceptance or rejection of a nomination paper, or procedural errors, or any reasons that materially affect the result of the election shall be sufficient reason to invalidate the election.

Section 166

Tenure of office of the Council and the office-bearers viz., Sabha Secretary and Sabha Trustees and so also, Committees elected by the Mandalam, shall commence, immediately upon conclusion of the first session of the Annual Meeting held after the election of the new Mandalam and end with the conclusion of first session of the Annual Meeting of the succeeding Mandalam, held after the next general election. Even if it happens that the existing office-bearers and other council-members, do not have membership in the new Mandalam, they shall be entitled to

participate up to the conclusion of the first session of the Annual Meeting of the new Mandalam, in the capacity as office-bearers and council-members, but such persons shall not have the right to vote in the Mandalam.

Chapter X: Administration of Diocese/Zone

Section 187

Definitions: The definitions of terms used in Chapters Ten to Fifteen are as follows.

1. Diocese/Zone: The region functioning under the Head of a Diocese, in which the various parishes of the Church are arranged into centres, for the effective functioning of the mission of the Church, and for the management of the Church's recognized organizations and institutions that are connected to these parishes.
2. Assembly: Assembly means Diocesan Assembly / Zonal Assembly;
3. Council: Council means Diocesan Council / Zonal Council
4. Head of the Diocese: Head of the Diocese means the Episcopa nominated as Diocesan Head from time to time to administer the Diocese / Zone.
5. Auxiliary Episcopa: Auxiliary Episcopa means the Episcopa who is appointed from time to time to assist the Head of the Diocese in administration.
6. Vicar General: Vicar General means the Vicar General who is appointed from time to time to assist the Head of the Diocese in administration of the Diocese/Zone.

Section 188

For efficient administration of the Diocese/Zone, there shall be an Assembly/Zonal Assembly, and in order to aid the Episcopa in implementing decisions of the Assembly/Zonal Assembly, and to render him advice, there shall be a Council/Zonal Council, elected by the Assembly members/Zonal Assembly members, from among themselves.

Provided that in view of the special features of Dioceses situated outside Kerala, the Head of the respective Diocese shall have power to make special arrangements, to facilitate their administration, in consultation with the Sabha Council and with sanction of the Episcopal Synod. Such administrative arrangements shall be reported, in the forthcoming meeting of the Prathinidhi Mandalam, and approval shall be obtained.

Section 189

The Assembly shall be constituted of the following members viz.

- (i) All clergy-personnel, including Deacons, who either reside or work, in the Diocese.
- (ii) Representatives of parishes of the Diocese, elected in accordance with the provisions hereinafter appearing.
- (iii) Representatives of Recognized Institutions of the Church, viz., Mar Thoma Sunday School Samajam, Mar Thoma Yuvajana Sakhyam, Mar Thoma Suvisesha Sevika Sanghom, Mar Thoma Voluntary Evangelists' Association, Department of Sacred Music & Communications, Mar Thoma Senior Citizens Fellowship, and Malankara Mar Thoma Sabha Development Department, and representatives of those institutions recognized by the Prathinidhi Mandalam from time to time.
- (iv) Representatives of those who have become members of the Church, as a result of missionary work of the Church.
- (v) Persons appointed by the Episcopa.

Section 193

Parishes will be entitled to send representatives to the Diocesan Assembly, in proportion to their number of members, in the following ratio viz., parishes with membership up to 500, one; 501 to 1500, two; 1501 to 3000, three; 3001 to 5000, four; and those with membership exceeding 5000, five. However, from parishes entitled to send more than one representative, up to three representatives, at least one shall be a woman, and if more than three representatives are sent, at least two shall be women.

Section 205

The Diocesan Assembly /Zonal Assembly shall elect a Secretary and a Treasurer.

The elected Treasurer shall, before he assumes charge, execute a written deed of consent in the form and manner as appended in this Constitution, affix his signature, and submit it before the Diocesan Episcopa.

Ordinarily, the Secretary and Treasurer of the Diocesan Assembly/Zonal Assembly shall also be the Secretary and Treasurer of the Council, and Trusts, Societies and other bodies constituted by the members of the Diocesan Assembly/Zonal Assembly, respectively.

Section 212

Notwithstanding anything contained in the foregoing sections, the Episcopa has the power, to convene meetings of the Assembly/Zonal Assembly, at any time.

Section 220

Members shall have the right to interpellate as well as put supplementary questions to the Secretary, regarding any matter mentioned in the annual report or about the receipts and payments account, income and expenditure account or balance sheet, or about any event that has happened in the Diocese, or any event which is of concern to the Diocese, during the reporting year.

Section 244

On the request of a voter, who is unable to affix the mark by himself, he may use the assistance of a member of the Edavaka Sanghom to vote for the candidate/s whom the voter proposes. A prior affidavit regarding this shall be submitted to the Returning officer. The said assistant shall not cast votes on behalf of more than one voter.

Section 246

Upon completion of voting, the votes shall be counted and tabulated, and the Returning Officer shall declare the result of the election. The proceedings of the election and the election result shall be recorded in the minutes book of the Edavaka Sanghom, under the signature of the Vicar and the Returning Officer, and a true copy of thereof, attested by the Vicar, shall be sent to the Diocesan Episcopa, for his approval. The result of the election shall be recorded in Form B (4) appended to this Constitution and published on the notice board.

Section 247

The candidate or a member of the Edavaka Sanghom nominated by the candidate shall be entitled to be present at the place where votes are counted.

Section 248

Ballot papers which do not bear the signature of the Polling Officer or on which more votes than the required number are marked, or from which it is not possible to discern the person for whom the vote has been cast, or on which indications disclosing the identity of the voter appear, shall be invalid.

Section 250

The Returning Officer shall securely seal and hand over to the Vicar, the list of names of elected persons, ballot papers and their counterfoils, and the voters list containing the signatures of the voters. The Vicar shall keep them in his custody until, the adjudication of court cases or election petitions, if any.

Section 251

The Vicar shall send the names and particulars of the elected persons, by recording it in Form B (5) appended in this Constitution, within seven days to the Diocesan Office.

Section 252

Upon issuance of the Kalpana directing election, the Recognised Institutions shall expeditiously elect their representatives and report their names and particulars, to the Diocesan Episcopa.

Section 254

Any member who refuses to sign the oath shall thereby forfeit his right to the said office.

The Episcopa shall thereupon direct the concerned parish or institution from which the member was elected, to hold fresh election and if he was a nominee or appointee, fresh nomination or appointment shall be made. A member who refuses to sign the oath is not eligible to be elected in the next two elections.

Section 259

Upon election and appointment of members, their names shall be published, on the notice board of the Diocesan Office, so that all concerned can see the same.

Section 260

Election petitions in challenge of Assembly election, shall be submitted in the Diocesan Office, to the Head of the Diocese or such other person as may be authorized by him in that behalf, within 15 days from the date of declaration of election result by the Returning Officer.

Section 261

Persons whose names are borne in the Edavaka Sanghom Register of the respective parish, shall, alone, be entitled to submit election petitions in the said parish. Persons who are members on the voters' list of an organization, shall, alone, be entitled to challenge the election in the respective organization.

Section 262

Every election petition shall be accompanied by a deposit of Rs. 500, which shall not be refunded, under any circumstances.

Section 264

The petitioner shall have the right to withdraw the petition in writing at any stage before the petition is adjudicated. Accordingly, if a petition is withdrawn, no further action shall be taken on the petition.

Section 265

The death of the petitioner shall cause the inquiry to abate.

However, if for any reason the Diocesan Episcopa is convinced that an inquiry should be made on the matter raised in the petition, the Diocesan Episcopa may conduct such an inquiry and take a decision on the matter.

Chapter XIII: Diocesan/Zonal Council

Section 293 (1)

There shall be a Council known as the Diocesan Council/Zonal Council to implement decisions of the Assembly, which have been approved by the Episcopal Synod and published by the Episcopa, by means of Kalpana, and to consider and decide other matters concerning administration of the Diocese, and to aid and advise the Episcopa, in other manner.

Section 293 (2)

Tenure of office of the Council and the office-bearers viz., Diocesan/Zonal Secretary and Treasurer and Committees elected by the Assembly, shall commence immediately upon conclusion of the first session of the Annual Meeting held after the election of the new Assembly and end with the conclusion of the first session of the Annual Meeting of the succeeding Assembly, held after the next general election. Even if it happens that the existing office-bearers and other council-members, do not have membership in the new Assembly, they shall be entitled to participate in the first session of the Annual Meeting of the new Assembly, in their capacity as office-bearers and council-members, but such persons shall not have the right to vote in the Assembly.

Section 294 (3)

The Episcopa shall be the President of the Diocesan/Zonal Council, Auxiliary Episcopa and Vicar General, its Vice Presidents, the Secretary and Treasurer of the Assembly, the Secretary and the Treasurer of the Council/Zonal Council, respectively.

Section 295

50% of the members elected to the Council, at every election, shall be new members.

Persons who have been members of the Council for three consecutive terms, shall not be eligible to seek further election, in the forthcoming election to the Council.

Section 295 AA (1)

If as a result of reorganization of Dioceses, it happens that an existing parish is included in a newly constituted Diocese or in a re-constituted Diocese, Diocesan/Zonal Assembly members already elected or appointed from that parish, shall be reckoned as Assembly members of the said newly constituted Diocese/Zone or reconstituted Diocese/Zone, as the case may be.

Section 295 AA (2)

If anyone of the Diocesan Assembly/Zonal Assembly members referred to in subsection (1), was a member of the Diocesan/Zonal Council of the previous Diocese, such person shall be reckoned as a member of the Council of the new Diocese/Zone or re-constituted Diocese/Zone, as the case may be, and such membership shall continue until the expiry of the tenure of that Council.

Section 295 AA (3)

If as a result of the application of sub-section (1), the aggregate membership of the Diocesan/Zonal Council happens to exceed the aggregate number specified in sub-section (2) of Section 294, in the special circumstances referred to above, such excess membership, will be lawfully allowed to continue, until expiry of the tenure of the existing Diocesan/Zonal Council.

Section 299

Ordinarily the Council will meet, once in every three months.

The Secretary shall issue notice in writing to all members of the Council, 10 days in advance of the meeting, setting out the date, time, place, and agenda of the meeting.

Section 303

The Secretary shall prepare an agenda of the subjects to be considered in the Council meeting and send a copy of the same, along with the notice, to every member.

Section 305

Any member of the Diocese, not being a member of the Council, desirous of bringing any matter of concern to the Diocese, for consideration of the Council, may inform the same in writing to the Secretary, fourteen days before the date fixed for meeting of the Council, and the Secretary shall, with the sanction of the Episcopa, place that subject before the Council.

Section 311

Minutes of the previous meeting shall then be read and passed. If any alteration becomes necessary in the minutes, it shall be proposed as a motion, and, if agreed to by the majority, the said alteration shall be included in the minutes of that day's proceeding.

Section 315

The President will regulate the proceedings of the meeting and his decision in respect thereto, shall be final. The minutes of the Council meeting shall be read and passed in the respective meeting.

Section 316

The Council members shall speak in the Council, looking at the President, with due respect. Only one person may speak at a time, no person shall interrupt or obstruct a member, while speaking in the Council.

Section 317

Council members may query the Secretary for information on any matter and the Secretary shall give the required information.

Section 317 A

If the Head of the Diocese or the Diocesan Council is convinced that there has been lapse in the functioning, or any other irregularities, by the Diocesan Secretary/ Zonal Secretary or Treasurer, in regard to the Diocesan/Zonal Assembly, Diocesan/Zonal Council, or the trusts or societies formed by the members of the Diocesan Assembly/Zonal Assembly, or other bodies, the Diocesan Episcopa shall inform the Metropolitan along with a detailed report. If necessary, the Metropolitan may appoint a Commission to investigate and submit a report on the matter and, after hearing the Secretary and Treasurer, the Metropolitan shall have the authority to take necessary disciplinary action. The said decision shall be sent to the Diocesan Episcopa, and the Diocesan Episcopa shall take further steps after informing the concerned officials in writing. The decision of the Metropolitan shall be final.

Section 322 B (1)

Persons and families accepting Christian faith, as a result of the missionary work of the Church, shall be admitted to membership of the particular parish, if any, existing in such place, subject to other relevant provisions of the Constitution, according to the government laws prevailing in the respective regions.

Section 322 B (2)

In places where the Church does not have an existing parish, if believers desire to be admitted to the Church, the Minister of the Church may, with the permission of the Diocesan Episcopa, admit them to membership of the Church by fulfilling the regulations of the Church. It shall be the responsibility of such Minister, to organize and provide them Holy Communion and other appropriate pastoral care.

It shall be the responsibility of such Minister, to maintain a register of such members, on the model of the Edavaka (Parish Membership) register, contemplated by Section 318 of the Sabha Constitution.

Section 323

Prayer Groups

For purpose of fulfilment of the spiritual and temporal commitments of the parish, the Kaisthana Samithi (Executive Committee) shall, ordinarily divide the parish into prayer groups, made up of families and other individuals, as far as possible, who are located nearby, consistent with geographical viabilities of the place.

Section 327

If transfer from one prayer group to another prayer group is desired, it may be made, only upon clearing the liabilities, if any, due to the former prayer group and upon obtaining permission of the Vicar, in that behalf.

Section 328

Receipts and payments account of every prayer group shall be presented to the prayer group and be approved, at the end of the year, and a copy of the account under the signature of the office bearers, shall be forwarded to the Vicar.

Office Bearers of the Parish

Section 329

Every parish shall have an appointed Vicar, other appointed co-ministers, according to requirements of the parish and the following office bearers, elected by the parish and confirmed by the Diocesan Episcopa or by the Vicar General, acting on his behalf viz., not more than two Vice-Presidents, two trustees (a treasurer, in charge of cash and assets, and an accountant, in charge of accounts), a Secretary, and not more than two lay ministrants. In parishes where more than one Vice-President is elected, at least one shall be a woman. Those elected as Trustees shall have completed 24 years of age.

Trustees

Section 330

Trustees shall be elected for a period of one year and upon approval of election by the Diocesan Episcopa or the Vicar General, acting on his behalf, the Vicar shall arrange execution by the Trustees, of the prescribed deed of undertaking and submit the same to the Episcopa and upon receiving the Episcopa's Kalpana, confirming the appointment, it shall be published in the Church and only thereupon, the Trustees shall assume office.

Subject to retention of the responsibilities and obligations vested in the previous year's Trustees, as per the provisions of the Constitution and the deed of undertaking executed by them, the Trustees of the Parish for the new year shall, in accordance with the other provisions of the Constitution, be admitted to office, from the commencement of the financial year, with the approval of the Head of the Diocese.

The Trustees of the Parish for the new year shall be invited as special invitees at subsequent meetings of the previous year's Kaisthana Samithi.

Section 331

Trustees shall be entitled to resign from office, at any time during the prescribed tenure, and the Edavaka Sanghom or the Diocesan Episcopa shall have the power to remove them from office at any time during the prescribed tenure, but subject to the provisions of the deed of undertaking.

A person shall not be elected as Trustee, for more than three consecutive years.

If the Diocesan Episcopa is satisfied that it is not possible to convene the Edavaka Sanghom and conduct election of Trustees, he may, in order to protect the financial interests of the parish, appoint any two members of the Edavaka Sanghom of the parish, as Trustees, to hold office, until the next election.

Section 334

The Treasurer and the Accountant shall be jointly and severally responsible, to present the audited receipts and payments account and balance sheet, in the prescribed form, at the annual meeting of the Edavaka Sanghom.

Secretary

Section 335

The Secretary shall be responsible to maintain such records, as may be prescribed by the Edavaka Sanghom, the Church, and the Diocese, correspond on behalf of the parish, to maintain the minutes of the Kaisthana Samithi and Edavaka Sanghom, and to present the annual report, at the annual meeting of the Edavaka Sanghom.

Section 335 A

Under the direction of the Vicar, the Secretary shall be responsible for convening the Kaisthana Samithi and other committees, and as per the decision of the Kaisthana Samithi, the General Body (Edavaka Sanghom). Under the direction of the Vicar, the Secretary may make announcements during worship.

Section 335 B

The Vicar shall have power to convene the Kaisthana Samithi in the absence of the Secretary. But a recording secretary shall be selected in such meeting of the Kaisthana Samithi, and the circumstances under which the Kaisthana Samithi meeting is held, shall be recorded in the minutes. If the Secretary is unable to continue his service and there is a situation where the Edavaka Sanghom of the parish needs to be convened, a person from the Kaisthana Samithi may be assigned to perform the duties of the Secretary temporarily. After intimating the said information to the Diocesan Episcopa and obtaining permission, the new interim secretary may, as per the decision of the Kaisthana Samithi,

convene the Edavaka Sanghom. The interim secretary may continue until the Edavaka Sanghom elects a new secretary.

Lay Ministrants

Section 336

In order to assist the Minister in worship service and to lead worship service, in the Minister's absence, the Edavaka Sanghom shall elect, not more than two competent persons, as per Section 13 of the Constitution, irrespective of gender, as Lay Ministrants, in respect of which, approval shall be obtained from the Diocesan Episcopa or the Vicar General, acting on his behalf.

In special circumstances, the Diocesan Episcopa may directly appoint Lay Ministrants irrespective of gender and the Lay Ministrants so appointed, shall also be office bearers of the parish, within the purview of Section 329.

Section 338

The Vicar shall be the President and the co-ministrants (if any) and lay Vice-Presidents elected by the Edavaka Sanghom shall be Vice-Presidents of the Edavaka Sanghom. The Vicar and in his absence, one of the clergy Vice-Presidents nominated by the Vicar, and in their absence, one of the lay Vice-Presidents nominated by the Vicar, shall preside over the meeting of the Edavaka Sanghom. If it happens that the Vicar has not made any nomination, in this behalf, the Edavaka Sanghom may elect one of the clergy Vice-Presidents and in their absence, one of the lay Vice-Presidents, to preside and proceed with the meeting.

Section 340

The Edavaka Sanghom shall ordinarily meet at the place and time determined by the Kaisthana Samithi (Executive Committee). One meeting shall be held before the end of February (the eleventh month of the current financial year), at which the lay Vice Presidents, Trustee (finance), Trustee (accounts), Lay Ministrants, Secretary, other members of the Kaisthana Samithi, and auditors for the coming year, shall be elected. Another meeting, which shall be the Annual meeting, shall be held before the end of May (the second month of the new financial year) and in that meeting, the report, audited receipts and payments account, and balance sheet of the past year, and budget for the new year, shall be presented.

The outgoing Trustees shall hand over the balance cash, as per accounts, receipt books and cheque books, to the incoming trustees, when they step down from office. The remaining account books, receipt books, deeds of properties, registers mentioned in items 10 to 13A of Section 366, and other records, shall be handed over to the incoming trustees in a meeting of the Kaisthana Samithi held subsequently after the minutes of the Annual General Body Meeting are approved by the Head of the Diocese. The details of the documents handed over shall be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

Section 340 (1)

When notice for the meeting of the Edavaka Sanghom, to be held before the end of February, is first announced, it shall be stated that, the representatives of the prayer groups and other bodies shall be elected by the respective bodies, according to their by-laws, and shall be informed to the Secretary. If the representatives are not so elected and informed to the Secretary, the Annual Edavaka Sanghom shall have power to elect and appoint representatives to the above positions.

Section 340 (2)

The Kaisthana Samithi of the past year, shall continue in office, until the completion of the procedures of the annual Edavaka Sanghom, in which the past year's annual report, audited receipts and payments account, balance sheet and budget are submitted. In the annual Edavaka Sanghom, held before the end of May, the Secretary shall report the elections held for the positions of representatives of prayer groups and other bodies, according to their respective by-laws, and obtain approval. But if elections are yet to be held for any of the above positions, the Edavaka Sanghom shall complete the election to the new Kaisthana Samithi by electing and appointing representatives to the said positions only, according to the respective by-laws. The outgoing Secretary shall hand over the parish records and minutes books to the new Secretary.

Section 340 (3)

If the Kaisthana Samithi commits default in presenting the past year's annual report, audited receipts and payments account, balance sheet and budget, at a duly convened meeting of the Edavaka Sanghom before the end of May, the new year's Kaisthana Samithi shall be inducted into office from the first of June, with the permission of the Head of the Diocese. The former Trustees and Secretary shall be responsible for submitting the previous year's annual report, audited receipts and payments account, balance sheet and budget to the Edavaka Sanghom through the new Kaisthana Samithi without delay.

Section 340 (4)

If the previous year's annual report, audited receipts and payments account, balance sheet and budget are not submitted and approved by the previous Kaisthana Samithi, then the former Trustees and Secretary shall submit these to the new Kaisthana Samithi and get approval, and then the new Kaisthana Samithi will convene the Edavaka Sanghom, and the former office bearers shall submit the previous year's annual report, audited receipts and payments account, balance sheet and budget and get approval.

Section 340 (5)

If the former Trustees and Secretary fail to submit the previous year's annual report, audited receipts and payments account, balance sheet and budget to the new Kaisthana Samithi, the Vicar shall submit a detailed report on this matter to the Diocesan Episcopa as per the decision of the Kaisthana Samithi, in the month of June itself. Further action shall then be taken as directed by the Diocesan Episcopa. The Diocesan Episcopa shall have the authority to take appropriate disciplinary action against the defaulters.

Section 340 (6)

In countries that follow a different financial year, the Diocesan Episcopa, in consultation with the Episcopal Synod, will have the power to change the months and dates mentioned in this Section.

Section 343

Minutes of proceedings of the Edavaka Sanghom, shall be approved and signed in the respective meetings and a copy of the same, shall be sent, within three days, to the Diocesan Episcopa.

Section 344

No decision of the Edavaka Sanghom shall be implemented, without the written assent of the Diocesan Episcopa, or the Vicar General.

The Diocesan Episcopa alone shall have authority, to keep in abeyance, decisions of the Edavaka Sanghom. However, on those decisions of the Edavaka Sanghom kept in abeyance, the Episcopa shall, within two months, seek explanations, make decisions and inform the parish.

Section 344 A

In Dioceses, so circumstanced, that the Head of the Diocese becomes obliged to stay away from the headquarters, for fairly long periods of time, in the interests of smooth functioning of parishes in the Diocese, the Diocesan Head may, with the sanction of the Metropolitan, authorise the Vicar General, Diocesan Secretary or any senior Minister, to act on his behalf, in matters of issue of marriage licence, and according approval to annual election of office bearers, annual report, audited receipts and payments account, balance sheet and current year's budget of parishes approved by their Edavaka Sanghom, as required by Sections 329, 330 and 344, either in respect of the whole Diocese, and if the Diocese has been divided into different Zones, in respect of specified Zones, and may make necessary arrangements accordingly.

Should any disputed issue arise in the performance of the aforementioned functions, by authorised senior Ministers, the authorised Senior Ministers shall, instead of taking a decision, on such disputed issue themselves, send the related documents together with their own report, to the Sabha headquarters, for decision by the Metropolitan.

Approval proceedings performed by the authorised Ministers, shall be sent to the Diocesan headquarters, from month to month.

Section 347

If twenty percent of the total membership or an aggregate of fifty members of the Edavaka Sanghom, make a written request to the Vicar, to convene a meeting of the Edavaka Sanghom, together with the proposed subject for consideration, the Vicar shall convene the Kaisthana Samithi, to fix the date and place of the proposed meeting, and proceed to convene the Edavaka Sanghom, by due notice, as per due procedure, with only the proposed subject as the agenda. In case, the Kaisthana Samithi fails to take necessary preliminary steps within two weeks, the Vicar shall nonetheless proceed to convene the Edavaka Sanghom, within thirty days, from the date of request. If the Vicar also commits default in convening the Edavaka Sanghom, the matter may be reported to the Diocesan Episcopa, and further steps shall be taken, as directed by him.

Section 350

The Vicar, Co-Ministers, Lay Vice Presidents, Trustees, Lay Ministrants, Secretary, representatives of the prayer groups, representatives of the recognised institutions, functioning within the parish, and members of the Diocesan Assembly and Sabha Prathinidhi Mandalam, shall be members of the Executive Committee. Clergy retired from active service shall also be members of the Kaisthana Samithi by virtue of their membership in the Diocesan Assembly.

The Lay Ministrants appointed by the Diocesan Episcopa, shall also be members of the Executive Committee.

Tenure of membership of Diocesan Assembly members and Sabha Prathinidhi Mandalam members in the Kaisthana Samithi, will be the tenure of the said Houses, as provided in Sections 78 and 194.

Section 351

If under any circumstance, election to the post of the office bearers of the parish or members of the Kaisthana Samithi becomes necessary, election by secret ballot may be carried out there and then.

Section 353

Office bearers of the Edavaka Sanghom shall also be the office bearers of the Kaisthana Samithi.

Section 354

The Kaisthana Samithi shall meet at least four times in a year, as per notice to be issued by the Secretary, as per direction of the President. Minutes of the Kaisthana Samithi shall be passed, in the respective meetings. The Secretary shall report the actions taken on the decisions of the Kaisthana Samithi in the next Kaisthana Samithi meeting. Matters related to previous decisions in which action is pending shall be included in the minutes of that day's meeting.

Quorum shall be 40 per cent of the total number of members and opinion of the majority shall prevail. If there is no quorum for a meeting, the Secretary shall issue notice again, as per direction of the President, fixing another date and including only such subjects, as have already been notified and the meeting so convened, may be proceeded with, even if there happens to be no quorum.

However, a minimum of three days notice shall be given for meeting of the Kaisthana Samithi.

Section 354 (A)

In emergent situations, the Kaisthana Samithi may meet without giving 3 days' notice, by giving written intimation to the members of the Kaisthana Samithi. Attendance of the participants in the Kaisthana Samithi so convened shall be recorded and signed.

Section 354 (B)

If it is not possible to complete the agenda in a meeting of the Kaisthana Samithi, the Kaisthana Samithi may be adjourned to continue the said meeting. The following meeting so convened may discuss and decide only the matters remaining on the agenda of the previous meeting of the Kaisthana Samithi, and the minutes shall be passed at the second meeting as well. For the meeting of the Kaisthana Samithi adjourned for a second day, notice shall be given to the members who were not present on the first day in the Kaisthana Samithi so convened.

Section 357

The Kaisthana Samithi shall have power to appoint sub-committees, to perform any function, on its behalf. Conveners of such sub-committees shall be appointed, from among the members of the Kaisthana Samithi, itself. The Secretary shall be the Convener unless a Convener is specifically appointed.

Section 360

Immovable properties shall be purchased, only as per decision of the Edavaka Sanghom, in the names of the trustees of the Parish, on behalf of the Parish. Sale or encumbrance of immovable properties, shall be made, only as per decision of the Edavaka Sanghom and with the prior sanction of the Diocesan Episcopa.

Section 363

The Treasurer shall have power and shall be bound (without separate sanction of the Edavaka Sanghom or the Kaisthana Samithi), to remit to the headquarters of the Church, customary dues and other amounts now payable or becoming payable hereafter by the parish, as per decision of the Mandalam and brought into force by the Metropolitan's Kalpana viz., KAIMUTHU, RESISA, COMMON NITHYACHILAVU (allocated share of common expenses of the Church) and so also to expend moneys, to meet sanctioned fixed expenses of the parish on salary of Ministers and parish staff and sanctioned variable expenses on materials required for worship service, correspondence, postage, travel and other heads of out-goings, set out in the trust deed (deed of undertaking). However, if any expenditure on salary or other heads, is restrained by Kalpana of the Diocesan Episcopa or the Metropolitan, such expenditure shall not thereafter be incurred until sanction is accorded, by further Kalpana.

Section 365

Audited receipts and payments account shall be prepared periodically, at intervals not exceeding three months, and the said account shall be presented, at the meeting of the Kaisthana Samithi. Receipts and payments account for the year shall be prepared, as described in the trust deed, at the end of year and presented to the Edavaka Sanghom, for approval, and the approved account, signed by the Vicar, Secretary, Accountant, Treasurer and the two auditors, shall

be sent to the Diocesan Episcopa, and upon return of the said document, by the Episcopa, it shall be preserved in the records of the parish.

Section 366

The following records shall be maintained by the parish.

1. Edavaka Register (Parish Register)
2. Register of General Body Members
3. Baptismal Register
4. Banns-Register
5. Marriage-consent Register
6. Marriage Register
7. Birthday Register
8. Funeral Register
9. Worship Service Register
10. Register of Assets and Liabilities
11. Day Book
12. Ledger
13. Stock Register of movable and immovable properties
- 13A. Grave Register
14. Minutes Book of Edavaka Sanghom
15. Minutes Book of Kaisthana Samithi
16. Copies of correspondence
17. File containing Kalpanas and letters.

Records listed in serial Nos. 1 to 9 shall be in the custody and keeping of the Vicar; records listed in serial Nos. 10 to 13A shall be in the custody and keeping of the Trustees and the records listed in serial Nos. 14 to 17 shall be in the custody and keeping of the Secretary.

(Registers 10 and 13 are to be updated annually).

Section 366 A

The deed documents of the parish properties, receipts of taxes paid, and other official information shall be included in the Register of Assets and Liabilities. These deed documents, along with other permanent records, shall be digitized and maintained regularly. Furthermore, these records shall be subjected to annual auditing.

Section 369

Ministers have the responsibility to advise and teach prospective parties to marriage, before solemnisation of their marriage, that Christian marriage is a sacred and life-long relationship and that the grace of God is essential for proper fulfilment of their responsibilities, as a married couple.

Organization of classes at centre-level and parish-level, for the benefit of prospective parties to marriage, in accordance with the directions of the Heads of Dioceses, is the responsibility of Ministers. Prospective parties to marriage, shall make efforts, to derive utmost benefit from these classes. The parish Vicars shall certify the same.

Section 375 B

The definition of the term "Third Church" includes the places of worship of other denominations. If there is a necessity to use such places of worship, it shall be done only with the permission of the Metropolitan or the respective Diocesan Episcopa.

Section 377 (3)

Banns shall be published on two Sundays (days of weekly worship).

Appendix

Written Consent Letter by Diocesan/Zonal Treasurer as per Section 205

I, S/o or D/o, aged years, residing at, and member of Parish, elected as the Treasurer of the Diocesan/Zonal Assembly, willingly grant my written consent before the Diocesan Episcopa of the Diocese of the Malankara Mar Thoma Syrian Church.

I, elected as the Treasurer of the Diocesan/Zonal Assembly, for a term of [term duration], as per Section 205 of the Church Constitution, at the meeting of the Diocesan/Zonal Assembly, duly convened on [date], shall be committed to,

subject to the faith, teachings, traditions, and practices of the Church, actively participating in the implementation of decisions taken by the Diocesan/Zonal Assembly to carry out social and economic development projects for the people of the Diocese/Zone, and for the enhancement of spiritual life and progress of evangelistic work.

I promise to collect all revenues of the Diocese/Zone by issuing receipts at their respective instances and promptly deposit them into the bank accounts of the Diocese/Zone. Furthermore, I shall ensure that all project expenditures, sanctioned by the Diocesan/Zonal Council, according to the budget approved by the Diocesan/Zonal Assembly, are disbursed, in a timely manner, in accordance with the directions of the Diocesan Episcopa and as per the Income Tax Act and GST regulations. I shall diligently collect income from immovable and movable properties belonging to the Diocese/Zone and deposit them in the bank accounts of the Diocese/Zone. Additionally, I undertake to pay salaries and other allowances to the Diocesan/Zonal employees and evangelists on time. I shall consolidate the annual accounts received from the parishes along with the certificates as per the Income Tax Act within the stipulated time, and include them in the receipts and payments account of the Diocese/Zone, and send the same to the Mar Thoma Sabha Office. These shall be incorporated along with the receipts and payments account and income and expenditure account of the Diocese/Zone, and prepared for submission, after auditing, during the Assembly meeting of the Diocese/Zone for the next year. I shall also prepare a budget for the Diocese/Zone for the next year and present it during the meeting of the Assembly.

If it becomes evident that I have acted contrary to the directions of the Diocesan Episcopa or the Diocesan/Zonal Council in any of the above matters, I hereby agree that the Diocese/Zone has the authority to take appropriate disciplinary action against me and recover any losses suffered by the Diocese/Zone, if found to be recoverable from me.

Thus, I agree to and affirm these terms.

Treasurer: Mr./Mrs./Ms. [Full Name]

Witnesses:

[Witness 1's Full Name]

[Witness 2's Full Name]

**Malankara Mar Thoma Syrian Church
Form for Nomination of Clergy to the Episcopate
Form - A(9)**

1. Name and address of the Nominee:	
2. Home Parish:	
3. Position held currently by the Nominee, place:	

Name and Signature of the Proposer:

Address:

Parish:

Phone Number:

E-mail:

N.B.: The proposer shall submit a certificate of membership from the respective Vicar along with this form.