

WHEREAS, the original Act and the several amendments thereto have not heretofore been included in the Maryland Code of Public General Law but nevertheless have continued to be in force and effect (see *Bartlett v. Hipkins*, 76 Md. 5; *Brayshaw v. Ridout*, 79 Md. 454; *Stubbs v. Vestry*, 96 Md. 267, and the Act of 1892, Chapter 702, repealed by the Act of 1900, Chapter 450); and

WHEREAS, the purpose of the present Act is to include therein the provisions of the original Act and its several amendments with certain further amendments which experience has shown to be desirable for the administration of their duties by the Vestries of the several Protestant Episcopal Churches owing to changes in practical conditions during the last 150 years, but without impairing the historic continuity or materially changing in basic principle the nature, powers, duties and functions of the Vestries of the several churches, and

WHEREAS, (a) the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Diocese of Maryland, as hereinafter referred to, was incorporated by Chapter 67 of the Acts of 1840 and amended by Chapter 17 of the Acts of 1856 and Chapter 87 of the Acts of 1937, and by Chapter 403 of the Acts of 1878; and by authority of the Convention in 1867, the Maryland Diocese, which originally included all of the Protestant Episcopal Churches in the State was divided by creation of a new Diocese known as the Diocese of Easton, embracing therein all said Protestant Episcopal Churches in nine Counties on the Eastern Shore of Maryland lying east of the Chesapeake Bay and of the Susquehanna River, and in 1896, by like authority of the Convention, the Protestant Episcopal Churches within the four Maryland Counties of Prince George's, St. Mary's, Charles and Montgomery, were, together with the Episcopal church in the District of Columbia, organized into the Diocese of Washington, and as to ecclesiastical matters the said Episcopal Churches in the several Dioceses are governed by the canons of their Diocese and of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America, but with respect solely to secular matters, the Vestries of all of said Churches within the State of Maryland as corporate bodies are subject to the laws of the State.

(b) The word "Parish" as originally used in the Vestry Act referred particularly only to the territorial limits in relation to the churches of the Parish respectively but by common usage the term as now used, dependent upon the context, sometimes refers to the Church Congregation