Resolutions

Resolution 1: Land Use History
Resolution 2: Transition to Renewable Energy
Resolution 3: FY2021 Budget; 2021 Alleluia Fund

188th Annual Convention
October 31, 2020
Commission for Land Use History in the Diocese of Vermont

SPONSOR: The Rev. Rachel Field (Mission Farm, Killington, and St. Thomas and Grace, Brandon)

RESOLVED, That the 188th Convention of the Diocese of Vermont recommend and strongly encourage each congregation, and the diocese as a body, to learn the history of our land as a way of understanding and unearthing our complicity in systems that oppress persons of color and afford privilege to white persons in Vermont; and be it further

RESOLVED, That in commitment to this deep work, this Convention ask for a gathering and sharing of stories from our collective research to be shared as a report at our 189th Convention.

EXPLANATION
Acknowledging the history of genocide and land seizure that has made it possible for the Episcopal Church to have properties for us to gather in is a step in the process of learning from our history to make healing and racial reconciliation possible. Entire dioceses, like Rhode Island, and individual churches have explored the history of their buildings to understand the relationship between the land and colonialism. We are inviting congregations to trace the history of their buildings, and also the history of their local ecology and the peoples who have called that land home.

Tracing the relationships among peoples (Abenaki, Black, Latino, White) and the land and between wealth and property will help us to learn together what effects from colonization persist, and how our current structures and systems reinforce a colonial system of thought. We encourage this historical retrospective as a step on the road to healing from racism, which harms all people, including white people, in Vermont today. This resolution is offered in hope. Hope that understanding our history with the land, and how the land informs our spirituality may help us all in this healing; that the door may be further opened to the way that the Spirit moves in our hearts, in the creatures, and in the landscape.

This resolution was prayed over and dwelled in the hearts of: Rachel Field, Lisa Ransom, Earl Koopercamp, and Auburn Watersong. As a result of drafting this resolution, Mission Farm is committing to exploring, and in conversation about, officially opening the land for hunting and gathering to the Abenaki. We encourage others to come along with us and explore this path as well.

For information, contact:
Rachel Field
rachel@missionfarmvt.org
Resolution on the Transition to Renewable Energy

SPONSOR: Jon Felde (St. Barnabas, Norwich)

RESOLVED, That the 188th Convention of the Diocese of Vermont ask diocesan leadership to offer to the 189th Convention in 2021 a plan to end the use of fossil fuels in each of the parishes and properties of the Episcopal Church in Vermont and to transition to 100% renewable energy by 2030.

EXPLANATION
For the better part of two decades the Diocese of Vermont, through its convention and led by its Bishops, has encouraged the transition to renewable energy and away from fossil fuels. This drive has been consistent with policies adopted by The Episcopal Church General Convention. In February of this year, the Diocese of Vermont went on record supporting a bill in the Vermont legislature calling for the state to meet a goal of 100% renewable energy for Vermont by 2030. This resolution confirms that the congregations of Vermont endorse this goal and intend in good faith to make sacrifices and investments to meet this goal within the church.

The Diocese should inventory the use of fossil fuels in each of its parishes and in collaboration with local parishes determine the best way for each parish to forego fossil fuels, consulting with engineers, architects and preservation experts.

The pandemic offers opportunities to build community and church outside of physical sanctuaries. Remote internet connection for assemblies and meetings reduces reliance on fossil fuel. Fellowship no longer depends upon proximity.

To finance changes, the Diocese should consider whether resources of its Unit Trust endowment fund may further the goal through targeted investments, loans, and financing. Additional resources through private foundations and federal, state and local government should be considered.

Climate Action Day Statement
https://diovermont.org/2020/02/20/faith-climate-action-day-statement/
Excerpt from statement by Bishop Thomas Ely, retired, on behalf of the Diocese of Vermont: “This threat we are facing is why we are here today. However, environmental issues are not just scientific, political, or economic, but are also profoundly moral and spiritual. In the face of the current climate crisis, people of faith cannot remain silent. It is our conviction that we are called by God to engage, by word and action, in the healing and reconciling work of protecting and caring for, as we say in the Episcopal Church’s Book of Common Prayer, “this fragile earth, our island home.” (BCP page 369)

Episcopal Church Policy for Action 2018
Calls upon the Church to practice environmentally sound and energy-efficient living. (GC ’97)
Calls upon The Episcopal Church to engage the topic of divestment from fossil fuels and reinvestment in clean energy. (GC’15)
https://episcopalchurch.org/OGR/general-advocacy-resources
Episcopal Public Policy Network Creation Care Series

Excerpt:
“The Episcopal Church is working toward a future of renewable energy as a both socially and environmentally sustainable source of energy, and we support the government’s ambitious investment in this technology and auxiliary systems such as batteries and a more efficient electric grid. Previous generations of Americans invested in coal and oil, in rural electricity, and other pieces of the technology we take for granted today. We must invest in the systems and technologies to provide for future generations.”

For information, contact:
Jon Felde
felde@post.harvard.edu
(603)322-341
Resolution to Adopt the FY2021 Budget for the Diocese of Vermont and Set the goal for the 2021 Alleluia!fund

SPONSOR: Diocesan Council (Approved unanimously September 5, 2020)

RESOLVED, That the 188th Convention of the Diocese of Vermont approve the recommendation of the Diocesan Council and adopt a balanced diocesan operating budget for the calendar year 2021 in the amount of $993,450; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a congregation’s contribution be based on a real time 4-tier percentage of Operating Income reportable on Line A of the Parochial Report, the tier being determined by an average of the preceding 3 years (FY2017, FY2018, FY2019) Line A Parochial Report Operating Income; for 2021, these tiers based on the average above will be 11% [$1- $39,999]; 13% [$40,000-$99,999]; 15% [$100,000- $199,999]; and 16% $200,000 or more; and be it further

RESOLVED, That if actual mission support from congregations (budget line 1) is a surplus of greater than 5% or a deficit of greater than 5% compared to Diocesan budgeted revenue, Diocesan Council make an appropriate adjustment with each parish; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the 2021 Alleluia!fund goal be $30,000 to fund mission programs and ministry activities broadly embracing the General Convention priorities of reconciliation, evangelism and creation care, as determined by Diocesan Council.