



THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN VERMONT
Together in Christ...growing locally, serving globally

Resolutions

(updated 10/20/20)

Resolution 1: Land Use History

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187th 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
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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.”

<https://episcopalchurch.org/posts/ogr/eppn-creation-care-series-renewable-energy>

For information, contact:

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**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.

Resolution Establishing Minimum Clergy Compensation for 2021

SPONSOR: Diocesan Council (approved unanimously October 14, 2020)

RESOLVED, That the 188th Convention of the Diocese of Vermont approve the recommendation of the Diocesan Council that the minimum 2021 full time Total Clergy Compensation (TCC) for priests receiving compensation in the Diocese of Vermont is proposed to be – \$67,690, of which \$45,826 (67.7%) represents the stipend portion; this proposed increase to be adjusted when the 2019 data is available from Church Pension Fund for the median TCC in Province One for clergy serving congregations with less than 75 Average Sunday Attendance (ASA); this minimum TCC is all-inclusive and has been designed to compensate for stipend, housing, utilities, SECA reimbursement and equity allowance, when applicable; for clergy living in church provided housing, the actual total value of the Fair Rental Value of the property plus actual utilities provided will be used when determining minimum TCC; travel allowance shall be reimbursed at the current IRS standard rate; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the 188th Convention of the Diocese of Vermont endorse a corresponding minimal increase for the year 2021 of 1.5% in monetary compensation to all compensated clergy and lay employees throughout the Episcopal Church in Vermont.

RESOLVED, That each parish with a currently serving deacon shall pay \$25 a month to their deacon as remuneration. Each such parish shall also make the required contribution to the Church Pension Fund for the benefit of the deacon.

EXPLANATION:

Canon 6.7 of the Episcopal Diocese of Vermont requires that Diocesan Council annually review the minimum stipend for full-time equivalent clergy and the travel allowance and make recommendations to the Convention. Such a minimum shall be binding on all parishes and missions upon ratification of the Convention.

The recommended TCC for 2021 represents a 1.5% increase from the 2020 TCC minimum of \$66,690. In adopting this Resolution, Diocesan Council authorize the Bishop and Canon to the Ordinary to revise the numbers, if / when the Church Pension Group information for 2019 is received, and if they are different from what are contained in this document. The figures to be supplied by the Church Pension Fund are of the 2019 median TCC in Province One for clergy serving congregations with less than 75 Average Sunday Attendance (ASA). This was the agreed upon formula for determining minimum Total Clergy Compensation adopted by the 2016 Diocesan Convention.

The resolution that Deacons be paid gives them the opportunity to participate in the benefits of the Church Pension Group services and to invest their own money in qualified retirement plans offered by this Group.

Support for Total Ministry Parish Clergy

***Resolutions Committee Note:** This resolution, which is an outgrowth of discussions at the 2019 Convention, came to the committee after the deadline of September 10, 2020, and the Rules of Order specify that Convention must decide whether to consider late-filed resolutions. The committee is recommending that it be considered by Convention. Prior to debate and voting, the Bishop will ask if there are objections. If none, debate can proceed. If someone objects, Convention will be asked to vote on whether to suspend the Rules of Order so that it may be considered.*

SPONSORS: The Rev. Dr. Richard R. Swanson, St. John's in the Mountains, Stowe
The Rev. Shelie Richardson, Christ Church, Bethel

RESOLVED, That the 188th Convention of the Diocese of Vermont, encourage the vestries of Total Ministry Parishes to offer a stipend to locally ordained clergy serving in the congregation, suggested to be no greater than \$25 per month, as well as make the requisite contribution to the Church Pension Group, for the cleric's participation in Church Pension Group benefits; the compensation amount must be approved by the Bishop of Vermont.

EXPLANATION:

This resolution is intended to support Total Ministry clergy and parishes by offering a nominal stipend to locally ordained clergy, along with the corresponding contribution to the Church Pension Group (CPG), giving locally ordained clerics (priests and deacons) access to the wide range of CPG resources offered to stipendiary clergy and laity.

The Church Pension Group provides multiple resources for clergy and lay employees of churches and institutions of the Episcopal Church. One of the resources is CREDO, a wellness resource offered solely to clergy enrolled in the CPG. CREDO helps both active and retired clergy pension plan participants by presenting a holistic approach to wellness for mind, body, spirit, and heart. Participants examine and evaluate their health and wellness from the spiritual, vocational, physical, emotional health and financial aspects of the individual's wellbeing. The Church Pension Group also provides pension and retirement savings plans, health benefits, and educational services.

Currently, Total Ministry clergy are serving in a non-stipendiary capacity. This resolution allows Total Ministry Parish Vestries to offer a minimal compensation to their clergy for the sole benefit of CPG offerings. The role of the bishop in the life of Total Ministry congregations is vital; therefore this resolution ensures the parish vestry, the bishop and the clergy person(s) are in mutual agreement on the compensation amount. The stipend is solely for access to CPG and is not intended as compensation for ministry as understood in non-Total Ministry parishes in the Episcopal Church in Vermont.