

## **Courtesy Resolution Honoring Canon Lynn Bates**

RESOLVED, That this 187<sup>th</sup> Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Vermont voice its deepest gratitude and admiration to Canon Lynn Bates, as she nears her retirement after over 25 years as a member of the diocesan ministry support team; and be it further

RESOLVED, That this diocese wish Canon Bates a long, happy, healthy retirement—full of good books, art and music, and adventures with Marley—knowing that the warmth of her smile, her contagious laugh, and her gift for balancing the profound with the practical, seemingly without effort, will be sorely missed; thank you, Lynn, and Godspeed.

### **BACKGROUND**

Serving with Bishops Mary Adelia McLeod, Thomas Ely and now Shannon MacVean-Brown, Canon Lynn Bates has been a source of both continuity and wisdom for our bishops and for all the congregations of this diocese. As Canon to the Ordinary—among the first lay persons to serve in that role in The Episcopal Church—and Transition Minister, she played a pivotal role in building the ministry support team; overseeing the Safer Church program; restructuring operations at what was then called the Bishop Booth Conference Center; and orchestrating the efforts of congregations around Vermont to respond to material needs that emerged from the devastation Tropical Storm Irene caused here—to name but a few of her roles through the years.

Canon Bates has shepherded congregations through their discernment and search processes; responded to the questions and concerns of church leaders; worked closely with Diocesan Council, the Grants and Loans Committee, and other leadership bodies; and received and responded to disciplinary matters. She is, in the words of Bishop Ely, “a team player, who understands and practices collaborative ministry and has deep and profound respect for the ministry of all, especially the ministry of lay persons.”

At the wider church level, Lynn participated in professional organizations, and, at three General Conventions, served as office manager of the Secretariat for the House of Bishops, coordinating key and complex behind-the-scenes legislative work for the bishops.

All who have worked with Lynn in these contexts have benefited from her wisdom and her perspective as a trained mediator—able to understand the perspectives of all involved, and help each person or group understand the other. She is one who listens and is willing to speak truth, even if difficult to hear.

Lynn has taken the administrative skills she honed early in her career as Town Clerk in Sherburne (now Killington), and senior warden at Church of Our Saviour, Killington, and brought them to bear in her ministry, making her exceptionally effective—even when facing major health challenges of her own. Lynn is simply a gentle-woman of substance, who has been a most extraordinary Canon to the Ordinary.

## **Courtesy Resolution**

### **Honoring the Rt. Rev. Shannon MacVean-Brown**

RESOLVED, That this 187<sup>th</sup> Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Vermont voice its thankfulness to the Rt. Rev. Shannon MacVean-Brown, the eleventh Bishop of Vermont, for her extraordinary and steady leadership during her first year as our bishop during this unique, challenging time of the COVID-19 pandemic; her creation of the Green Mountain Online Abbey, a life raft for many in these turbulent times, is an example of her work as nurturing shepherd for the people of the diocese; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we, the people of the Diocese of Vermont, express our appreciation for Bishop Shannon's ability and willingness to share her own experience with racism, modeling for us her passion, while expressing her clear conviction of the necessity to move our diocese forward in taking on the work that we must do on internal and systemic racism in all areas of our lives and our church; and be it further

RESOLVED, That we express our deep gratitude for her work and support in the area of mutual ministry, particularly in opening opportunities for, providing training for, and supporting lay preaching and worship leadership; this work not only empowers the laity, but also results in making the work of the clergy in our diocese, especially part-time clergy, sustainable, as well as opening new ways to be church; we look forward to many years to come.

#### **BACKGROUND**

Bishop Shannon MacVean-Brown brought to the Episcopal Church in Vermont her liturgical presence and skill, her beautiful chanting voice, and a rich variety of worship styles. Formed in Detroit and Indianapolis, she also brought us a well of powerful and moving music from her childhood, youth, and adulthood, from the churches in which she served, and from her father.

Bishops are always lightning rods for people's distress, and Bishop Shannon has definitely experienced our individual and collective anxiety in the face of the pandemic. In hearing and witnessing our distress, she kept a firm hand on the tiller, and reacted with clarity, guidance, reassurance, comfort and vision.

Bishop Shannon also brought her wonderful family. Her husband, Phil, has served as "congregation" in so many Zoom meetings, and is a loving and supportive presence at her side. Her daughter, Annaliese, brings grace and beauty – and her own personal style – to Vermont. Her "bonus daughter," Indira Samuels, has jumped into the life of the diocese and already been influenced by us and been an influence on us with her conviction and passion.

## **Courtesy Resolution**

### **Commending the Diocesan Restart Team**

RESOLVED, That the 187th Convention of the Diocese of Vermont commend the members of the Diocesan Restart Team (Bishop Shannon MacVean-Brown, Canon Lynn Bates, Dr. Ann Guillot, The Reverends Earl Kooperkamp, Fred Moser, Amy Spagna, Rob Spainhour, Bob Wilson) for their extensive research, consultation, and ongoing work in developing and continually refining guidelines, based on the work of experts in the field of public health, for the reopening of church buildings and the resumption of in-person worship and other activities; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the convention commend the clerical and lay leadership of congregations for working closely with the Restart Team as they develop and implement reopening plans for their own members.

#### **BACKGROUND**

Bishop Shannon appointed the Diocesan Restart Team in the spring of this year, as the lockdown of Vermont, imposed at the start of the COVID-19 emergency in March, began to be relaxed and as the State of Vermont and the Centers for Disease Control began to issue guidelines for the reopening of places of worship and other facilities.

The Restart Team's charge was to develop procedures and benchmarks that congregations could use as they reopen their buildings and resume in-person worship and other activities. Relying heavily on CDC and Vermont Department of Health guidance and consulting broadly with experts in public health, the Team issued three sets of reopening guidelines – one in June, one in September and a third in October – that established roadmaps that congregations could follow throughout the reopening process.

Over the past few months, many congregations have begun to offer outdoor worship services in accordance with these guidelines. These services have provided members of those congregations a welcome opportunity to reconnect with each other in person, even while face coverings are being worn and social distancing is being maintained. As colder weather approaches, some congregations are now preparing plans for the resumption of indoor worship and other gatherings, while continuing to adhere to the health and safety requirements mandated by the Restart Team's guidelines. At the same time, Zoom and other forms of online worship continue to be offered, enabling our collective life as the people of God to go forward.

Even as Vermont continues to have one of the lowest COVID-19 case counts in the nation, concerns about the resurgence of the virus, both regionally and nationally, have increased, and Vermonters must remain vigilant in the months ahead. Adherence to guidelines for wearing masks, frequent hand-washing and sanitation, and maintaining social/physical distancing will be crucial to maintaining the health of all Vermonters, especially the most vulnerable among us. The Restart Team will continue to monitor the latest guidance from state and national public health authorities and will adapt its guidelines as appropriate in the months ahead.

## **Courtesy Resolution**

### **Commending Congregational Resilience and Green Mountain Online Abbey**

RESOLVED, That the 187th Convention of the Diocese of Vermont commend congregations and clergy for their resiliency and flexibility as they face the 33rd week of COVID-tide (otherwise known as Coronatide); and be it further

RESOLVED, That this convention applaud congregations and clergy as they navigate the intricacies of worship via Zoom, Facebook and other chat groups; learn how to offer music via the internet; keep a sense of humor when people do not use the “mute” button; and, as congregations move toward in-person worship, find ways to maintain physical distancing, while providing spiritual proximity and hope; and be it further

RESOLVED, That this convention give thanks for Bishop Shannon’s creation of an online community of prayer, now known as the Green Mountain Online Abbey, for the members of that community for their steadfast daily prayer at 8:00 AM and 8:00 PM weekdays and Sunday mornings at 11:00 via Zoom, and for their holding the people of Vermont and the world constantly on their hearts in prayer.

#### **BACKGROUND**

In the very early days of the corona virus pandemic, congregations and clergy scrambled to find ways to offer worship. With their buildings closed, congregations and clergy began to explore what it means to be “church,” when forced to gather for worship and meetings virtually. Many people had a crash course on how to manage Zoom or Facebook.

At the same time, Bishop Shannon began to offer daily online prayer, in addition to praying with people on Sundays. Up until June 30th, Bishop Shannon led the worship, but, since then, members of what became known as the Green Mountain Online Abbey have taken turns leading worship. Even now, a core group of about 40 people gathers to pray, share intercessions and even welcome the occasional “photobomb” moments from their pets, including a crowing rooster one morning. The Green Mountain Online Abbey currently is offering a Novena of Prayer for an Election as the country moves toward Election Day.

For more information, go to this article:

<https://diovermont.org/2020/07/08/born-in-a-pandemic-an-online-congregation-prepares-for-its-future/>

For worship links, go here:

<https://diovermont.org/2020/10/17/online-prayer-with-bishop-shannon/>

## **Courtesy Resolution**

### **Honoring the Reverend Canon Stanley Irving and Betty Irving**

RESOLVED, That the 187th Convention of the Episcopal Church in Vermont offer heartfelt thanks and gratitude for the lives and ministries of the Reverend Cannon Stanly H. Irving and Betty Edith Mae (Benoit) Irving.

#### **BACKGROUND**

The Reverend Canon Stanley H. Irving, who died August 26, 2020 at the age of 96, served as rector of St. Luke's, St. Albans, Vermont, from March, 1961, until his retirement in 1989. His wife, Betty Irving, whom he married in 1949, died in 2017.

Canon Irving oversaw the complete renovation of the interior of St. Luke's, as well as work on the bell tower, the demolition of the rectory to make way for the construction of a parking lot, and the acquisition of a new rectory. He was known as a traditionalist regarding many church issues, but those who knew him respected his ability to discuss a variety of subjects, particularly theology.

Betty Irving was very active in St. Luke's Altar Guild and Choir. She was greatly respected for her warmth and devotion to God, her children and to the parish.

Born in Brome, Quebec, Canon Irving served in the Royal Canadian Air Force from 1943-1946, and upon discharge, continued his education at Concordia University, McGill University, and Montreal Diocesan College. He was ordained as deacon and priest in the Diocese of Montreal and served congregations in Canada before being called to St. Luke's. After retirement, he served as supply priest in Vermont and Quebec.

Canon Irving's obituary may be found [here](#).

**Courtesy Resolution**  
**Thanking the Clergy of St. Mark's, Newport**

RESOLVED, That the 187<sup>th</sup> Convention of the Diocese of Vermont echo the Vestry of St. Mark's, Newport, in their wholehearted expression of gratitude to the Reverend Bob Wilson and the Reverend Christine Moseley for their tireless love and care for the parish of St. Mark's and the communities in which they live and work while receiving little to no monetary compensation for their efforts; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Convention offer its deep thanks to the clergy and lay leaders of all Vermont congregations for their service and flexibility during this year of unexpected challenges.