



The Episcopal Diocese *of* Vermont

2022 Diocesan Convention Courtesy Resolutions

The 2022 Courtesy Resolutions honor:

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Courtesy Resolution Expressing Condolences to the Family of the Right Reverend Mary Adelia McLeod

RESOLVED, That this 189th Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Vermont send its heartfelt condolences to the Rev. Mac McLeod (former Rector of St. James', Essex Junction) and his family upon the news of the death of his beloved wife, Mary Adelia Rosamond McLeod, the Ninth Bishop of Vermont. May Mac and his family know of our continued love and our fondest memories of Bishop Mary Adelia and him, as well as our hope that we might carry out in our lives so much of her purpose as we can; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the convention extend its gratitude for all that Bishop McLeod did during her 8-year episcopacy: her fierce commitment to justice for all people, especially women and the LGBTQIA+ community; her passionate embrace of the ministry of all the baptized (and not just the clergy); her honesty and her leadership. We remember her courage as the first Bishop Diocesan in The Episcopal Church, her mentoring other women clergy, and her constant encouragement. She often assured us, "Y'all think you're pitiful! You are NOT pitiful!" And then she would help us see, through her vision for the diocese, that we weren't. In an early convention address, she said to us, "We're going to go for a ride!," and we did—wonderfully so. Thank you, so much Bishop Mary Adelia, for taking us on that ride with you.

Courtesy Resolution Thanking THRIVE

RESOLVED, That this 189th Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Vermont voice its thankfulness for the hard and fruitful work of the Task force for Hope, Revitalization, Innovation, Vision, and Efficiency (THRIVE) over the past year and a half. THRIVE, composed of Diocese of Vermont clergy and lay leaders, was formed, when as a Diocese, “we felt the wind and waves lapping at our feet;” and be it further

RESOLVED, That we lift up prayers of thanksgiving for the success of THRIVE at this crucial time in the life of our diocese and hold in prayer the new governance structures created by THRIVE with approval of this Convention. May they be inspired to create new ways of being church. As Bishop Shannon told us at our full-day gathering October 8, “Our boat—our faith—is built to take us to new places. We will not turn back, sure in the knowledge that Jesus’ outstretched hand steadies us.” We pray that we undertake our new work with dedication and joy, embracing the possibilities that flow from it. Even as we hold before God our natural anxiety when facing change, we are filled with excitement and hope at the anticipation of new systems, and a new day to come!

Background

When Bishop Shannon announced in July 2021, that the diocese faced a financial cliff, she appointed a task force of clergy and lay leaders to consider “how new models of ministry and new collaborative relationships might offer our diocese ways to discern our future.”

The group, which named itself THRIVE (Taskforce for Hope, Revitalization, Innovation, Vision, and Efficiency), was co-chaired by Ellen McCulloch-Lovell of Christ Church, Montpelier, the Rev. Scott Neal of St. Paul’s, White River Junction, and Ann Guillot of the Cathedral Church of St. Paul. It operated through three sub-groups focused on key areas of concern: financial sustainability, chaired by the Very Rev. Greta Getlein of the Cathedral Church of St. Paul; missional vitality, chaired by Luke Krueger of St. Paul’s, Wells; and governance and collaboration, chaired by the Ven. Stannard Baker of the Cathedral Church of St. Paul, Burlington.

The work of THRIVE, which concluded that we were facing a “financial hill,” not a cliff, was completed in early fall of this year, and implementation of new governance structures is the next step. There are three new groups and some reorganized structures: the Committee on Congregational Development and Formation, (part of the Commission on Missional Vitality, along with the Committee on Ministry), the Commission on Finance, and the Commission on Diocesan Organizations.

Find the final report of THRIVE, which includes a list of its members, [here](#).

Courtesy Resolution Thanking and Commending Bishop Shannon MacVean-Brown for Her Leadership

RESOLVED, That we give thanks for the steadfast leadership and vision of our Bishop, Shannon MacVean-Brown, who, in spite of the great disruptions of the COVID pandemic, has encouraged our ministries while helping us recognize difficult truths and envision new ways of being church. In calling together and inspiring the THRIVE committee and subcommittees, she reminded us all not to be afraid “to step out of the boat” and reach for Jesus’ outstretched hand. With this Convention’s initiation of the THRIVE recommendations, Bishop Shannon said in her sermon to our October 8 gathering that we have indeed stepped out in faith, and we will not go back. Her address today offered a clear articulation of a vision founded in the love of God, the example of Jesus’ love and the power of the Holy Spirit, and an expression of our mission to “foster conciliation and reconciliation” in our communities based in our values of standing with the marginalized, caring for creation and striving for economic justice. May we, along with our bishop, be empowered by God to continue to step out, go toward Jesus and be a new and thriving church.

Courtesy Resolution Commending Bishop Shannon MacVean-Brown's Witness at the 2022 Lambeth Conference

RESOLVED, that the 189th Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Vermont commend the Right Reverend Shannon MacVean-Brown for her honesty and courage in addressing multiple complex and intertwined issues (racism, imperialism, colonialism, heterosexism and sexism) during her time at this past summer's Lambeth Conference. We give thanks for her witness to the love that she has seen "between same sex partners and how they have provided examples of wholesome and committed relationships which have encouraged [her] in [her] marriage," as she shared in her Bible study group with bishops from around the globe, including Belize, South Sudan and Tanzania. We look forward to hearing more from Bishop Shannon as she continues to unpack her experience at the Lambeth Conference and continues her witness in the future.

Background

Bishop Shannon's words in her September 21, 2022 reflection in *The Mountain* on the Lambeth Conference serve as a guide for all of us:

"I know that the conversations I had with my Bible study partners and with other bishops I encountered during our two-week stay made a positive difference. And in turn, they changed my understanding of just how complex the conversation of human dignity and inclusion is across the communion.

"It is my prayer that we can stay in these Anglican Communion conversations—most importantly, to bear witness to the belovedness of LGBTQ people and the holiness of their relationships. But I also know that by staying in relationship with Anglicans across the globe, we are rejecting the legacy of colonialism and refusing to play out the imperial pantomimes that too often draw on the worst parts of our shared history to separate us from one another. Those Anglican traditions are not worth keeping, and I pray that we commit ourselves to throwing them off and creating a new, shared Anglican history in which all of God's children are free."

<https://diovermont.org/2022/09/21/the-lambeth-conference-changed-by-experience/>

Courtesy Resolution Thanking the Reverend Lorenzo Lebrija

RESOLVED, That this 189th Convention of the Diocese of Vermont, express its thanks to the Reverend Lorenzo Lebrija for his address on innovation and experimentation in the Church. We were inspired by his energy, enthusiasm, and expertise, and challenged by the questions “What brought you life today?” and “What took away life from you today?” Thanking him for the assurance that the Church of Jesus Christ will not die, we look to use his three-step system of generating, developing, and trying out ideas with curiosity, playfulness, and boldness, better to spread the Good News to each other and around Vermont. We send our prayers for the continued success of TryTank Experimental Lab.

Courtesy Resolution Thanking the Rev. Canon Whitney Rice

RESOLVED, That this 189th Convention of the Diocese of Vermont commend the Rev. Canon Whitney Rice for her address on evangelism with integrity. We appreciate her insight; her clarity of thought; her definitions of evangelism as “building spiritual intimacy” and “any activity or encounter that reduces fear”; and her reminder that, as the Church, we are called to bring God’s message of “Fear not!” to each other and to all God’s beloved, beginning with the question, “What’s been on your mind lately?” We send our prayers for her continued success as an evangelist and author.

Courtesy Resolution Thanking and Honoring the Reverend Shelie Richardson

RESOLVED, That the 189th Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Vermont offer its hearty thanks and congratulations to the Reverend Shelie Richardson, on her retirement, having spent the entirety of those 20 years shepherding Christ Church, Bethel, on its journey in mutual ministry. We are grateful for Shelie's wise and empathetic guidance—and her big smile—both at Christ Church and in the Diocese, and we wish Shelie, and her stalwart husband, Eric, the very best.

Background

Shelie was the second priest called through the mutual ministry model Christ Church adopted 25 years ago, which meant that Christ Church covenanted to become a community of disciples equipped for ministering to one another, sharing responsibility for worship, preaching, outreach and mutual care. Shelie's calling to Holy Orders was a God-given conviction leading to a new identity as a bi-vocational priest, affirmed by the Christ Church congregation and the Diocese. It involved not only presiding at the altar as a "sacramentalist," but also acting as a teacher and leader. Shelie gracefully embodied these new identities despite having two young children and a full-time job in the private sector. In the Diocese, Shelie served on the Diocesan Commission on Ministry, providing the valuable perspective of her experience with the mutual ministry model in a vibrant small congregation.

Shelie's combination of empathy, humor, grace and professionalism sustained and empowered Christ Church in difficult times while maintaining a calming, supportive pastoral presence for her flock. Her presence as a celebrant was described by a parishioner as "simultaneously unassuming and disarmingly intimate."