

## Courtesy Resolution #2

### Honoring the Life and Legacy of the Venerable J. Stannard Baker, Archdeacon of the Diocese of Vermont

RESOLVED, That the 193<sup>rd</sup> Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Vermont give thanks for the presence among us of Archdeacon J. Stannard (Stan) Baker, a champion of the diaconate, whose gentle wisdom, kind heart, and unwavering hand offering help or caring presence will be sorely missed by all whose lives he touched in the community, the Cathedral Church of St. Paul, the Diocese of Vermont, and the wider Episcopal Church; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Convention acknowledge with gratitude Stan's trailblazing challenge to the State of Vermont on behalf of same-sex couples that led to Vermont civil unions and ultimately to marriage equality; and celebrate Stan's contributions to full inclusion for the LGBTQ+ community in The Episcopal Church and to its 2024 formal recognition of marriage equality in its liturgies and teaching; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Convention extend deepest condolences to Stan's husband Peter Harrigan and his extended family and loved ones (and treats to their beloved poodle, Ginger); may we strive to emulate the example of Archdeacon Baker, who embodied the words of the prophet Micah: "He has told you, O Mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6:8).

#### EXPLANATION

The Venerable J. Stannard Baker (May 3, 1946 – June 23, 2025) modeled the example of Christ in his peaceful, yet forceful, demeanor as an ardent advocate for the marginalized of our society and in his offering of love to all persons. Ordained to the diaconate on 6 January 2009, Stan served as deacon at the Cathedral Church of St. Paul, Burlington. He was appointed archdeacon in 2021 and served the diocese in a number of ways throughout his ministry: he was a member of the Commission on Ministry, the Standing Committee, the Resolutions Committee, a Safer Church coordinator, and chaplain to retired clergy.

Stan's vibrant wardrobe expressed outwardly the soul of a person who wished to shine forth God's love on all whom he met. Our resolution honors his vim and optimism that helped to galvanize those around him into action, or simply brightened their day through his resplendent kindness.

Stan brought his passion for galvanizing his community into our diocese, a gift recognized early in his life by his peers at Millikan High School, when they elected Stan as Rally Chairperson. To those who knew Stan, such a title is hardly surprising. His unflagging spirit held firm against all adversities to help see his work for the people of God come to fruition. Whether it be in advocating for marriage equality in the landmark case *Baker v. Vermont* (1999), his service as a member of the Diocese of Vermont's Task Force on the Blessing of Persons Living in Same-Gender Relationships (2004), or his laser-focused rigor in guiding the church in changing our canons and liturgies to ensure marriage equality, it was Stan's unshakeable sense of justice that guided his work.

A five-time Vermont Clergy Deputy to the General Convention (2012-2024), Stan gave the gift of his arduous labor as vice chair for the House of Deputies Legislative Committee on Marriage at the 2015 General Convention; as a member of the Task Force on the Study of Marriage from 2016 to 2018; and as chair of the House of Deputies Legislative Committee on Prayer Book, Liturgy and Music at the 2024 General Convention. He became the only deacon elected in 2024 to the Executive Council of the Episcopal Church, a position he sought at the last minute after labored discernment led him to hear God's call for him to bring his unique leadership to that body. Sadly, Stan died suddenly while attending a meeting of Executive Council in June 2025.

Robert Frost wrote, "My object in living is to unite/My avocation and my vocation/As my two eyes make one sight." Stan achieved this simpatico. His work as a counselor for the young, in particular those on the autism spectrum, no doubt gave him daily reminders of how we are all children of God, worthy of the Almighty's love based on the unique qualities with which God has blessed every person. While in his professional life Stan worked with the youth of our community, he also served as chaplain to Vermont's retired clergy. His counsel was lauded by retired clergy for his compassionate approach to helping them transition to a new phase of their lives and ministry, and showing them that, though their time in the pulpit may have come to a close, their work in the name of Christ was never done. Young or old, Stan saw the invaluable qualities each individual could bring to improve their world.