Resolution #6: Establishing a Covenant between the Episcopal Church in Connecticut and Integrated Refugee & Immigrant Services (IRIS)

Submitted by:
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RESOLVED, that the 230th Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut gives thanks for the thousands of refugees served by Integrated Refugee & Immigrant Services (IRIS) with the help of Episcopal churches and others across Connecticut;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the 230th Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut forges a new mutually-beneficial relationship by ratifying the covenant, attached hereto as exhibit 1, between the Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut and IRIS to take effect January 1, 2015;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the 230th Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut permits the Executive Council and the Bishops to establish a Covenant Committee and to appoint members from the Episcopal Church in Connecticut to the Covenant Committee, to implement the goals described in the covenant, to ensure the faithful compliance of both parties, and to address any concerns about the covenant or the relationship.

Explanation:
Since 1982, refugee resettlement has been a key expression of participation in God’s mission. IRIS has been the primary means by which our participation in we have accomplished this mission. Over the past decade IRIS has become increasingly self-sustaining. At the same time, the Episcopal Church in Connecticut has moved away from centralized diocesan programming to an emphasis on supporting mission engagement at the local parish level. Recognizing IRIS’s desire for self-governance, IRIS will best be served as an organization fully independent from, but in a covenanted relationship.
How Does the Resolution Further God’s Mission of Restoration and Reconciliation With All Creation?
By continuing our relationship with IRIS, we respond to a scriptural mandate to welcome the stranger in our midst. We uphold the values expressed in our Baptismal Covenant. We recognize the hope and promise of Easter in the life of each refugee person. We believe that the mission of God is happening throughout the world, and that we are called to participate here—at home—in God’s worldwide mission. We embrace this call by supporting refugees, and we are grateful for our partnership with IRIS, which enables us to do so.

Statement of Requirements to Implement:
The Episcopal Church in Connecticut, through its Social Justice and Advocacy Committee, will assist IRIS in its outreach efforts in Connecticut by offering introductions to new Episcopal parishes in order to facilitate connections, expand IRIS’s network, and increase opportunities for parishes to support refugees and other displaced people in Connecticut. The Executive Council and bishops will establish a Covenant Committee and appoint members from the Episcopal Church in Connecticut to the Covenant Committee.