Dear Companions in Christ,

Our world is changing rapidly around us. Demographic, economic, and cultural shifts are profoundly affecting our nation, our state, and our neighborhoods. The Church is not insulated from these changes as we see all around us the rapid rise of those not affiliated with any church, along with an increase in people of other faiths in our communities. Through all these changes we Christians are called and empowered to live the Good News of Jesus in the realities of a new missional age.

At our 2014 Annual Convention we in the Episcopal Church in Connecticut (ECCT) took creative steps to respond to the changing world around us by calling for the Taskforce for Reimagining the Episcopal Church in Connecticut (TREC-CT). With TREC-CT’s leadership and input from parishes and leaders from across the Episcopal Church in Connecticut, our 2015 Annual Convention embraced wide-ranging changes to our common life and structures. Among these: Ministry Networks were empowered to help Episcopalians in Connecticut come together to serve and extend God’s mission and six Regions were established, each served by a Region Missionary who helps to catalyze new missional energy, connect individuals and parishes, convene gatherings across the Region, and build capability to participate in God’s mission in new and meaningful ways.

The reimagining of the Episcopal Church in Connecticut continued when our 2016 Annual Convention called for a Working Group "to study the current and future financial resources needed to assist Episcopalians in Connecticut to become even more faithful disciples and apostles in God’s mission." After a year spent listening, praying, and giving thanks for the new and exciting ways Episcopalians in Connecticut are engaging with each other and their communities, particularly in our new Regions, the Working Group recommended, and the 2017 Annual Convention called for, a Region Needs Assessment. The Assessment is intended to identify programs and activities to further participate in God’s mission across parishes and Regions and determine the financial resources necessary to achieve identified goals.

To assist with the Region Needs Assessment, I ask that you participate in a conversation with representatives from CCS, a consulting firm we have retained to conduct the Assessment. They will speak with clergy and lay parish leaders across our Regions, Ministry Networks, Region Leadership Teams, and other leadership bodies and groups in ECCT. We ask that you engage actively in these conversations with CCS representatives to help identify programs and activities to further participate in God’s mission across parishes and Regions and determine the financial resources necessary to achieve our goals.

I appreciate your efforts in helping us in the Episcopal Church in Connecticut to discern how we might best participate in God’s mission, traveling lightly together and following Jesus into the neighborhood. (Luke 10)

Faithfully,

Ian

The Rt. Rev. Ian T. Douglas, Bishop Diocesan

God’s Mission in 100 Words

God loved into creation - the universe, earth, humanity. It was diverse, and it was good.
Human sin entered and distorted our relationship with God, one another, and creation.
God yearns to make all whole again. This is God’s mission.
God chose and liberated a people, sent the law and the prophets.
God came in Jesus, fully human and fully divine.
In Jesus’ life, death and resurrection we are restored to unity with God and each other.
God sent the Holy Spirit, empowering the Body of Christ.
God co-missions us in baptism to participate in God’s mission of restoration and reconciliation.

God's Mission in Connecticut Participating in God's Mission

WHO WE ARE: Followers of Jesus
WHAT WE DO: Join God’s mission in our neighborhoods
HOW WE DO IT: With passion, skill, time, and financial resources
The Episcopal Church in Connecticut Today

Parishes in a New Missional Age

ARE COMMUNITIES …

OF THEOLOGICAL IMAGINATION
... where our hearts and minds are moved by God’s presence in our lives, in our neighborhoods, and in the world;

FED BY WORD AND SACRAMENT
... where our stories connect with God’s story in Holy Scripture, and where we experience God’s grace in baptism and Eucharist;

FORMING DISCIPLES AND APOSTLES IN GOD’S MISSION
... where people grow as followers of Jesus and are sent by the Holy Spirit into the world to join God’s work of restoration and reconciliation;

AND CONNECTED TO THE WIDER BODY OF CHRIST
... by sharing our lives with companions in Christ across the Episcopal Church in Connecticut and the wider Church.

Spiritual Practices in a New Missional Age

LISTENING
We listen to God by dwelling in God’s Word and in stories of God in our lives and in our neighborhoods.

DISCERNING
As we hear from God and one another, we ponder how God might be calling us to take action in the world.

TRYING ON
We experiment with new ways of joining in God’s mission, trusting that God uses our failures as well as our successes.

REFLECTING
We wonder together about what God is up to in our lives and in the world.

DECIDING
We adopt new ways of being the Body of Christ as we listen, discern, try on, and reflect.

Traveling lightly together and following Jesus into the neighborhood. (Luke 10)
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