Status of St. Paul’s Episcopal Church in Darien, CT

Submitters:
Submitted By: The Right Reverend Ian T. Douglas, The Right Reverend Laura J. Ahrens, the members of The Standing Committee, the members of The Mission Council, the members of The Commission on Ministry, Chancellor Bradford S. Babbitt, and the Faith & Order Commission

RESOLVED, that pursuant to Title III, Canon III.9.15(e)(2) of The Episcopal Church, St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, located in Darien, be placed under the supervision of the Bishop as a Mission, which is understood in the Episcopal Church in Connecticut as a Worshiping Community (ECCT Canon V, Section 1).

Explanation:

St. Paul’s Vestry asked that the pastoral relation with its Rector, the Reverend Canon George Kovoor, be dissolved under Canon III.9.15 of The Episcopal Church. After mediation, Bishop Douglas issued a godly judgment under Canon III.9.15(d) that the pastoral relation be maintained and that the Rector and the Vestry take specific steps to promote reconciliation. Canon Kovoor complied; the Vestry refused to comply with the godly judgment. In this situation, Canon III.9.15(e)(2) authorizes Diocesan Convention to place the Parish under the supervision of the Bishop as a Mission, which ECCT Canon V, Section 1 describes as a Worshiping Community.

How does this resolution further God’s mission of restoration and reconciliation with all of creation?

The Canons of The Episcopal Church provide that every Parish is responsible to live within a system of support and accountability that links its life and ministry with that of the Bishops and those of other Parishes in the Diocese. That principle is embodied in the unequivocal obligation of a Parish vestry to comply with a godly judgment issued by the Bishop regarding a request to dissolve the pastoral relation between a Parish and its Rector. The godly judgment issued by Bishop Douglas in this instance
promoted restoration and reconciliation with all of creation by maintaining the pastoral relation between St. Paul’s and Canon Kovoor and by requiring that each party take specific steps toward reconciliation. While Canon Kovoor has undertaken those steps, the Vestry of St. Paul’s has refused to comply with the godly judgment. Changing St. Paul’s from a Parish to a Worshiping Community will enable the Bishops to return St. Paul’s to a right relationship with ECCT and thus help St. Paul’s to move forward in pursuing God’s mission.

Statement of Requirements to Implement the Resolution:
This resolution does not require any funding or further action by ECCT.