Young Adults: Evangelism and God’s Mission


RESOLVED, that the 235th Annual Convention of the Episcopal Church in Connecticut (ECCT) recognizes young adults of post high school or college age (17-21) and older (22-39) as a crucial priority for evangelism, and as a crucial missional priority for ECCT; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this Convention responds to the crisis of young adults’ lack of representation in the church; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this Convention authorizes the creation of a Task Force on Evangelism of and by Young Adults with members recruited by the co-sponsors of this resolution and approved by the Mission Council; and be it further resolved

RESOLVED, that the Task Force will identify successful strategies employed within ECCT and in the wider church, which:
(1) provide inspiring worship, community building and engagement in social justice by and for the full diversity of young adults;
(2) form young adults as disciples and apostles;
(3) engage young adults in ministry and leadership; and
(4) use the gifts of young adults to further God’s mission through expanding campus ministries across ECCT, expanding young adult networks across ECCT, and other means; and be it further
RESOLVED, that this Task Force report back to the 236th Annual Convention with specific proposals for evangelism of young adults in ECCT and the human and financial resources required to implement them.

Explanation:
In spite of declining attendance and “graying” of parishes, most see children and youth (0-16) as a core ministry focus. Young adults (17-39), however, have largely abandoned churches, which struggle with how to engage them. Of 35 colleges in Connecticut, three have Episcopal chaplains, and of about 7,300+ Episcopal college students, campus ministries serve barely 100. Only one “young adult network” exists in ECCT. TEC has no data on the representation of young adults in parishes, which simply distinguish between members under and over 16. If the church wishes young adults to be part of its future, it must act.

How does this resolution further God's mission of restoration and reconciliation with all creation?
The dramatic disengagement of young adults from church denies them the opportunity for spiritual formation as disciples and apostles, and for development as evangelists and missional leaders, at precisely the time they are developing an adult faith, and making the most consequential decisions on their spiritual journey. This also leaves the church without their voices and leadership, both crucial for creating the emerging church of the future. If God’s mission is to reconcile and restore all people and creation to Godself, ignoring the spiritual formation of this core group compromises both the present and any imaginable future for the church.

Requirements to Implement:
There are no costs or materials or time required to implement this resolution, other than the time contributed by members of the Task Force.