

# PUTTING GOD'S MISSION FIRST



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF CONNECTICUT 227th ANNUAL CONVENTION

## **RESOLUTION #1 — Mutual Responsibility and Interdependence as the Body of Christ**

**Submitted by** the Program and Budget Committee | Contact: Barbara Curry, Chair— email [barbcurry@mindspring.com](mailto:barbcurry@mindspring.com)

**RESOLVED** | That the 227th Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut affirms that our common participation as the Diocese of Connecticut in God's mission of restoration and reconciliation invites us to mutual responsibility and interdependence as the Body of Christ; and be it further

**RESOLVED** | That the Convention reaffirms Resolution #2 (Stable Funding for Unity in Mission) of the 1993 Annual Convention that each Parish and Mission Station agrees to contribute 12.5% of its total operating revenues as listed on the parochial report to the Diocesan Convention's Budget in support of our common participation in God's mission as the diocese; and be it further

**RESOLVED** | That, seeking to develop mechanisms that support and encourage our mutual responsibility and interdependence in the Diocese, this Convention agrees that Parishes and Mission Stations contributing at least 10% of total operating revenues to the Diocesan Convention's Budget will be granted the following:

- preference for appointments to diocesan committees and councils at the discretion of the bishops
- eligibility to seek grants and loans from the diocesan-wide resources
- permission to move forward in a search for a rector or appointment of an assistant/associate
- eligibility for the posting of a deacon; and be it further

**RESOLVED** | That in the interests of transparency, mutual accountability, reconciliation and our collective desire to participate together in God's mission locally and globally, this Convention hereby empowers the Bishop and Diocesan Executive Council, pursuant to Diocesan Canon I, Sections 12 and 13, to create regional co-operative ministry teams that will work with Parishes and Mission Stations whose contributions to the Diocesan Convention's Budget fall below 10% of the Parish's or Mission Station's total operating revenues; and be it further

**RESOLVED** | That if a Parish or Mission Station fails to contribute 10% of its total operating revenues to the Diocesan Convention's Budget for two consecutive fiscal years, beginning in Fiscal Year 2012, the Bishop may declare it an "aided parish" exercising full authority over its day-to-day administrative, financial and spiritual life pursuant to Canon I, Section 13 (a).

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

The Convention adopts all of these provisions in the interest of promoting our common life in service to God's mission as the Diocese of Connecticut reflective of the bounty with which God has blessed us. This resolution will strengthen the ties that bind us together and enable us to increase the ways in which we collectively participate in God's mission of restoration and reconciliation.

### **Explanation**

"Be sure to set aside a tenth of all that your fields produce each year." (Deut. 14:22)

"Our desire is not that others might be relieved while you are hard pressed, but that there might be equality. At the present time your plenty will supply what they need, so that in turn their plenty will supply what you need. The goal is equality, as it is written: 'The one who gathered much did not have too much, and the one who gathered little did not have too little.'" (2 Cor 8:13-16)

"In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'" (Acts 20:35)

"Jesus answered, 'If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.'" (Matt 19:21)

## **Our Mutual Responsibility and Interdependence as the Body of Christ**

In his first letter to the church at Corinth, Chapter 12, St. Paul outlines what it means for the church to be the Body of Christ in the world. Just as the human body is an integrated, inter-dependent system, so also is the church. And in that same chapter, St. Paul makes it clear that:

- no part of the body can reject another part without sacrificing its own integrity;
- every member must support the work of the other parts for the body to work the way God designed it.  
“Those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor.” (1 Cor. 12:21)

So it is in the life of our Diocese. Each member Parish or Mission Station brings a special gift to the life and work of the Diocese, and each Parish and Mission Station requires the support and gifts of the other members of the diocesan body to become most fully the organic Eucharistic community that God desires for us to be. This being true, our life together in the Diocese of Connecticut requires us to be mutually accountable, one to another, not only for the welfare of our brothers and sisters but also to build up our local eucharistic communities as the Body of Christ in faithfulness to God’s mission.

## **Our Mutual Accountability and Responsibility**

The Episcopal Church lives within the Anglican tradition of catholicity, under the oversight of bishops, as opposed to a congregational system of independent congregations. Our local eucharistic communities are interdependent. There are huge benefits of being part of our Diocese – In giving we share and receive empathy, healing, support, advice, fellowship, professional and spiritual wisdom, companions for the journey. We are not complete without each other.

The purpose of this resolution is to remind all of the congregations, that together constitute the Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut, of our common obligations pursuant to Canon I, Section 13, and to articulate a strategy for mutual support, justice, reconciliation and encouragement among congregations in meeting those obligations.

Canon I, Section 12 of the Diocesan Canons states *“Every Parish is responsible to live within a system of support and accountability that links its life and ministry with that of the Bishop and with those of other Parishes in the Diocese.”*

Canon I, Section 13, begins *“a) The Bishop shall make available to the parishes of the Diocese a system of support and accountability to encourage and enable the development of their life and ministry. Specific provisions shall be made to assist parishes not served by full-time clergy, or unable to meet financial obligations. Such assistance may be in the form of financial subsidy included in the diocesan program budget, permission to make use of different forms of ordained ministries . . . or pastoral intervention. Such parishes shall be subject to the following conditions: They shall work with the Diocese within a system of accountability and support in close relationship with the Bishop’s Office with special emphasis on the development of their life and ministry. Their clergy shall be designated Vicars and shall be appointed by the Bishop in consultation with the Vestry.”*

## **Requirements to Implement the Resolution**

This resolution requires that all Parishes and Mission Stations, beginning in Fiscal Year 2012, affirm their commitment to 12.5% in making their pledge to the diocese. Those Parishes and Mission Stations that fall below 10% in their annual giving will be provided with the assistance of a regional co-operative ministry team. These teams are to be made up of clergy and lay leaders of parishes that have been successful in meeting their pledge without drawing on their endowment (beyond a reasonable draw down in light of the circumstances). These teams will offer technical assistance, share best practices, and work with the leadership of the Parish or Mission Station in question to develop a plan with clear benchmarks, financial, missional and collaborative, that will help the congregation to meet their commitments to the Convention’s Budget, and in general serve as a mechanism for mutual accountability to our common life together.

There are no additional costs associated with this resolution. The expenses of implementing the assistance to Parishes and Mission Stations outlined above have already been reflected in the budget for the staff and materials for Diocesan House offices.