

## Resolutions with Debate

### Resolution 5 Denominational Health Plan and Lay Pensions

*Resolved*, That the 144th Convention of the Diocese of Easton, in accord with Resolution A177 of the 2009 General Convention, that all “lay employees of parishes, missions, and other ecclesiastical organizations or bodies” in the Diocese of Easton working at least 1,500 hours per year be offered health benefits, through the Denominational Health Plan, no later than January 1, 2013; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the minimum cost-sharing policy is that all eligible employees will be offered individual coverage at no cost to the employee. If the individual is covered by a spouse’s policy, the employee may choose to receive the equivalent in cash, up to the cost to the spouse of the coverage by the other institution. If dependent coverage is offered by the employer, the increased coverage must apply equally to lay and clergy employees of the ecclesiastical institution. Dependent coverage may be paid for by the employee if not paid by the institution; and be it further

*Resolved*, in accord with Resolution A138 of the 2009 General Convention, That lay employees of parishes, missions, and other ecclesiastical organizations or bodies in the Diocese of Easton working at least 1,000 hours per year be enrolled in the Church Pension Group’s Lay Pension System no later than January 1, 2013.

**Explanation:** The 2009 General Convention of The Episcopal Church passed two resolutions requiring health benefits and lay pension benefits for certain lay employees, beginning no later than January 1, 2013. These benefits, as well as health benefits for clergy, are to be provided by the Church Pension Group, unless a waiver is granted by the CPG in specific instances. With regard to the health benefits, a diocesan-wide minimum cost-sharing policy must be established, and apply equally to clergy and lay employees scheduled to work 1,500 or more hours per year. This resolution will not affect the diocesan budget, as eligible employees already receive these benefits. There will be financial ramifications for institutions that do not already offer these benefits to their employees.

**Submitted by:** Personnel & Compensation Committee, the Very Rev. Frieda Malcolm, Chair

**Financial impact:** No impact on diocesan budget

### Resolution 6 Clergy and Lay Compensation Guidelines

*Resolved*, That all clergy and lay employees be granted an annual review of performance that should consider merit increases in compensation as appropriate, and be it further

*Resolved*, That the recommended annual salary increase for parochial clergy and congregational lay employees for 2013 be the total of a Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) on the 2012 salary plus any salary adjustment based on responsibilities and performance; in considering compensation, vestries should take into account the recommended salary, adjustments based on responsibility, the performance review, the COLA, and the financial health of the institution; and be it further

*Resolved*, That this Convention adopt the following suggested minimum honoraria for supply clergy for 2013: 1 Sunday service, \$145; 2 Sunday services/day, \$175; 3 Sunday services/day, \$200; Midweek service, \$90; Wedding, including 3 counseling sessions, \$300; Funeral (including planning), \$240; Graveside service, \$120; Guest Preachers – Compensation should be appropriate to the circumstances;

and further directs that travel expenses be reimbursed in compliance with the Internal Revenue Service Guidelines; and be it further

*Resolved*, That this Convention urge all congregations and ecclesiastical institutions to provide fair, equitable, and competitive compensation to all persons providing program services such as, but not limited to, Director of Music, Choir Director, Director of Christian Education, and Director of Youth Programs. Suggested salary ranges are available for the compensation of Church Organists and Choir Directors based on information from the American Guild of Organists and the Association of Anglican Musicians (AAM). AAM information is available on the web at [www.anglicanmusicians.org](http://www.anglicanmusicians.org); and be it further

*Resolved*, That this Convention urge all congregations and ecclesiastical institutions to provide clergy living in supplied housing with an equity allowance equivalent to 5-10% of cash salary; and be it further

*Resolved*, That this Convention urge all congregations and ecclesiastical institutions to provide an additional cash benefit of the equivalent of the employer's contribution to FICA, based on total assessable compensation, as clergy are subject to SECA, which includes cash compensation and housing allowance or its equivalent (fair rental value plus equity allowance); and be it further

*Resolved*, That this Convention urge all congregations and ecclesiastical institutions to compensate part-time clergy according to time served and proportional to the number of hours worked

**Explanation:** Although the Personnel and Compensation Committee usually recommends annual adjustments reflecting the Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) for Social Security for the year of convention, no adjustment is recommended this year to the published guides for 2011. The annual recommendations provide norms for salaries, recognizing that each parish will negotiate salaries according to their circumstances.

It is important to note that any performance review tied to compensation is not to be misconstrued as either a substitute for a Mutual Ministry Review (MMR) nor is it to be a part of a MMR, as a MMR needs to be detached from all matters of compensation in order to be beneficial to clergy, vestries, and congregations.

The Diocese of Easton has not previously issued guidelines for equity allowances in cases where housing is supplied. However, we recognize that even in a stagnant housing market, clergy who are purchasing their houses are able to build equity. This enables clergy to take advantage of tax breaks for homeowners and build equity for housing in retirement. Providing an equity allowance compensates for this advantage.

The strong recommendation to include the equivalent of the employer's contribution for Social Security and Medicare promotes a benefit that has become mandatory in some dioceses, and is in fact standard in this diocese.

Total Assessable Compensation (TAC) is the assessable compensation reported to the Church Pension Fund and includes cash salary, utilities, cash provided to offset higher Social Security and Medicare taxes, equity allowances, other miscellaneous allowances, and housing, either in the form of a housing allowance or, if a rectory is provided, as 30% of salary. Compensation also includes such items as contributions to individual retirement accounts, cash gifts to clergy and the payment of school fees for clergy children. This compensation amount does not include the pension payments made to the Pension Fund; any of the standard employee benefits such as health, life, and dental insurance; or reimbursed employee expenses as long as the reimbursement is based on actual expense.

Most organizations establish salary ranges for a position based upon the responsibilities of the position, the qualifications of the person in the position and the prevailing compensation paid in the geographical area in question. Within those ranges, an employer sets compensation on the basis of experience and job performance. The proposed Resolution provides information for clergy in the Diocese and allows the clergy and Vestries to negotiate fair compensation for each position in light of the size, demands, and resources of each congregation.

*continued*

**Submitted by:** Personnel & Compensation Committee, the Very Rev. Frieda Malcolm, Chair

**Financial impact:** No impact on diocesan budget

## **Resolution 7**

### **Congregational Visioning**

*Resolved,* That the 144th Convention of the Diocese of Easton encourage and support the Diocesan Vision Team to engage our congregations in open and direct conversation about our mission and future. The process may include providing a framework for discussion, calling meetings or forums, and providing appropriate resources; and be it further

*Resolved,* That each congregation call forth representatives to facilitate a dialogue both in their churches and regionally, with the guidance and support of the Diocesan Vision Team; and be it further

*Resolved,* That the Diocesan Vision Team report on outcomes and make recommendations to the Diocesan Council, Clericus, and Convocations by November 15, 2012 and the 145th Diocesan Convention.

**Explanation:** The 143rd Convention of the Diocese of Easton (2011) passed resolution 5, “Discerning Our Future,” which encouraged the bishop to appoint a Structures & Governance Task Force that would be authorized “to engage the diocese and its congregations in open and direct conversation” about our “structural, financial, and missiological future.” The Task Force was asked to produce a report for Convention delegates by December 15, 2011. Bishop Shand responded to the resolution in May by first meeting with its proposers and other clergy to hear their thoughts about how to proceed with the resolution; no consensus was reached. Later that month he continued the conversation with some lay people. This group, which began with two, expanded to include representatives from each convocation, and met once each month from May through the end of the year. For the first several months, the group’s focus was on the diocesan budget and structure, then progressed to deeper thinking about mission. In September, they met with a consultant, and through prayer and discernment came to clarity that conversation and listening needed to continue at the grass roots level throughout the diocese; that only through broad participation would God’s future for the congregations of the Diocese of Easton be made clear; and that their focus was being directed less toward structure and governance and more toward making disciples of Jesus. A summary of their work was distributed to delegates at the pre-Convention convocation meetings in late 2011. The task force then turned its focus to writing this resolution for the 144th Convention, in order to carry the dialogue forward.

**Submitted by:** Structures & Governance Task Force

**Financial Impact:** \$2000 for study materials and other resources

## **Resolution 8**

### **Rites of Blessing**

*Resolved,* That this Convention and the Diocese of Easton express its firm and vocal opposition to the proposed adoption of a trial-use Liturgy for the Blessing of Same-Gender Relationships by the 2012 General Convention; and be it further

*Resolved,* That this Convention and the Diocese of Easton express great disappointment should any deputy to the General Convention from the Diocese of Easton support the adoption of such Liturgies.

*continued*

*Res. 8, continued*

**Explanation:** The Episcopal Church claims to be part of God’s holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. As members of the worldwide Anglican Communion, the Episcopal Church has historically claimed its authority from Scripture, informed by reason and tradition (to paraphrase the Rev. Richard Hooker). As Christians, we acknowledge that the Bible is the inspired Word of God and contains all that is necessary for salvation.

While many in today’s Episcopal Church may choose to reject the clear Word and meaning of Scripture, or claim a revisionist interpretation, in the name of “inclusion” or a sincere desire to be welcoming to all, incorporating a “blessing” of same-sex relationships is contrary to Scripture. Why? For the simple reason that such a “blessing” is condoning behavior which is contrary to God’s inspired Word. This does not mean that we, as Christians, should not be welcoming to all who seek Christ’s love and saving Grace. We should, as each one of us falls short of the Glory of God.

We should also, individually, acknowledge that each and every one of us is a wretched sinner, broken, and eternally separated from God *but* for the saving Grace of His Son, Jesus Christ. The Church, to the best of my knowledge, has never chosen to condone, much less bless, behavior which is clearly contrary to His inspired Word. Adoption of a trial-use Liturgy for the Blessing of Same-Gender Relationships does just that.

Our brothers and sisters within the Anglican Communion have expressed concern over this issue. The 2004 Windsor Report requested that the Episcopal Church, and other provinces, place a moratorium on the blessing of same-sex unions. Anglicanism is part of our heritage as Episcopalians. We, as a denomination, are defined within our constitution as a member of the Anglican Communion. Yet, we appear to be choosing to place that heritage, one of the things which defines us as Episcopalians, in jeopardy by adopting this trial-use liturgy.

If this liturgy is adopted, from where does our authority, as a denomination, come? Only an extreme, revisionist interpretation of Scripture could survive within the Episcopal Church. Tradition, which has already been trampled to the point of being all but unrecognizable, would be gone. An appeal to reason? That too is suspect. Even if it were not, the authority claimed by historical Anglicanism is not the three-legged stool many seem to believe. As noted above, our authority as Anglicans rests on Scripture, *informed* by reason and tradition. Even if it were, try sitting on a stool with only one leg.

**Submitted by:** Michelle D. Harrison, Delegate, St. Peter’s, Salisbury, on behalf of G. A. Harrison, member, St. Peter’s

**Financial impact:** None

## **Resolution 9** **Anglican Covenant**

*Resolved,* That this 144th Convention of the Diocese of Easton memorialize the 2012 General Convention of the Episcopal Church to call for and encourage further study and reflection on the proposed Anglican Covenant (the fourth Draft); and be it further

*Resolved,* That the Secretary of the Convention of the Diocese of Easton be directed to send a copy of this resolution and the accompanying report to the Secretary of General Convention, c/o the Episcopal Church Center, 815 Second Avenue, New York, New York 10017 by no later than March 25, 2012.

**Explanation:** The Task Force began its work just about a year ago on Draft IV of the proposed Anglican Covenant. We sponsored three Convocation meetings, two presentations at Clericus, and purchased information kits for parishes which desired them. We concluded that not only we in the Diocese of Easton, but perhaps members of the Episcopal Church as well, would benefit from further study of the proposed Anglican Covenant. In our listening process in this diocese, we learned that many individuals

are still responding to one or more of the previous three drafts of the Covenant, and thus it continues to be difficult to focus our attention on this fourth and final draft, carefully noting what it says and does not say.

**Submitted by:** Anglican Covenant Task Force: The Rev. Dr. Charles Walthall, the Rev. Nathaniel Pierce, the Rev. Nanese Hawthorne, the Rev. Charles Osberger, Dr. George A. Maxwell, Mr. Eddie Vance, Ms. Edith Foley

**Financial impact:** \$0.55

## **Resolution 10**

### **Resolution for Structural Reform**

*Resolved,* That the Convention of the Diocese of Easton direct this resolution to be filed with the Secretary of the General Convention for consideration by the 77<sup>th</sup> General Convention of the Episcopal Church:

*Resolved,* the Houses of Convention concurring, That there shall be a Special Commission on Missional Structure and Strategy, the composition of which shall be at the discretion of the Presiding Bishop and the President of the House of Deputies and the members of which shall be appointed jointly thereby no later than thirty days following the adjournment of this 77<sup>th</sup> General Convention. The Commission shall be charged with presenting a plan to the Church for the possible reforming of its structures, governance, administration and staffing to facilitate this Church's faithful engagement in Christ's mission to proclaim the good news, care for the poor, release to the captives, recovery of sight to the blind, freedom to the oppressed, and the acceptable year of the Lord (Luke 4:18) in such a way that maximizes the resources available for that mission at all levels of the Church.

*Resolved,* That this Special Commission endeavor to issue its report and recommendations, along with resolutions necessary to implement them, including proposed amendments to the Constitution and Canons of this Church, so that they might be considered by a special General Convention prior to the convening of the 78<sup>th</sup> General Convention in 2015, but in any event, not later than February 1, 2015.

*Resolved,* That the General Convention request the Joint Standing Committee on Program, Budget, and Finance to consider a budget allocation of \$100,000 for the implementation of this resolution.

**Explanation:** The administrative and governance structures of The Episcopal Church comprise nearly forty-seven (47) percent of the Church's budget. Recognizing the continued need for the Church to further its engagement in God's mission, there may well be ways in which finding "reforms" will open opportunity for strategic engagement with the Gospel and our call to be in mission in this world. In the world as we see it, we are called to be the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society and do the work we've been called to by our Lord.

**Submitted by:** Diocesan Council

**Financial Impact:** None