

**Title: On Episcopal Authority, the General Convention, the Trial Use Rites for Marriage in the Episcopal Church, and the Diocese of Tennessee**

A substitute resolution proposed by the General Resolutions committee of the 185th Annual Convention of the Diocese of TN

*Whereas* this Annual Convention has received three resolutions expressing comparable concerns for the care and well-being of every member of the Diocese during a season when disagreement over the place of the Trial Use rites for marriage is widespread; and

*Whereas* the 184th Annual Convention of the Diocese of Tennessee passed a resolution on “Pastoral Response to the LGBTQ Members of the Diocese of Tennessee” (see attached) originated by the clergy and Vestry of St. Ann’s Episcopal Church, Nashville; and

*Whereas* the Task Force created by that resolution is organized, meeting, and continues its work in the calendar year 2017; therefore be it

**RESOLVED**, that this 185th Annual Convention of the Diocese of Tennessee direct the Task Force to assess the role of Episcopal authority, as described and implemented by the 2015 General Convention of the Episcopal Church, in providing a compassionate response to those LGBTQ members who would seek access to ecclesiastical rites for marriage within the boundaries of the Diocese of Tennessee as presided over by clergy canonically resident or licensed to serve in the Diocese of Tennessee.

Specifically, this Convention directs that

- the Task Force organize Diocesan-wide gatherings to inquire after the effect of the requirement for a bishop’s permission in the application of the Trial Use liturgical texts for marriage on local congregations and local clergy;
- the Task Force provide periodic updates to the Bishop and the people of the Diocese including a written report (due 11/01/2017) to the 186th Annual Convention of the Diocese of Tennessee, summarizing what it has learned regarding the exercise of Episcopal authority and the Trial Use liturgical texts for marriage in the Diocese of Tennessee;
- the Task Force include in its report any recommendations for action by the 186th Annual Convention of the Diocese of Tennessee, including any Diocesan memorial to be considered for the General Convention 2018.

**Resolution on Pastoral Response to the LGBTQ Members of the Diocese of Tennessee, passed by the 184th Annual Convention of the Diocese of Tennessee**

**Proposed by:** The Vestry and Rector, St. Ann’s Church, Nashville

*Whereas*, same-sex marriage is now legal in Tennessee and The Episcopal Church authorized at the 78th General Convention in Salt Lake City the Use of Trial Liturgies for Marriage to celebrate the marriages of same-sex couples and to bless civil unions; and

*Whereas*, our Bishop has decided not to permit the Use of the Trial Liturgies for Marriage in any church or church-owned property in the Diocese of Tennessee; nor to permit clergy canonically resident in the diocese to officiate at or bless same-sex marriages locally or in other dioceses where such marriages and blessings have been authorized; nor to permit clergy licensed in the diocese to officiate locally; and

*Whereas*, in the Baptismal Covenant in our Book of Common Prayer (page 305) we state the promise to grow in the knowledge and love of God as “we strive for justice and peace among all people” and “respect the dignity of every human being”; and

*Whereas*, we recognize and affirm the essential contributions of LGBTQ members in our congregations, in the diocese, and in our communities; and

*Whereas*, delegates to this Convention are mindful of the need of LGBTQ members for pastoral support from clergy, fellow lay members, and our Bishop; and many in our Diocese believe that LGBTQ members are painfully excluded from the full sacramental ministry of the Episcopal Church in our Diocese; and

*Whereas*, our Bishop has expressed his commitment to “continued prayer, study, and conversation” regarding this matter; now therefore be it

*Resolved*, that this 184<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Tennessee recognize, celebrate and lift up the gifts, talents, ministries and faith of LGBTQ members in our congregations, the diocese, and the wider community; and be it further

*Resolved*, that our Bishop and the Bishop and Council initiate a task force to engage with the congregations of the diocese in “continued prayer, study, and conversation” concerning the inclusion of LGBTQ members in the life of the church and report to the 185<sup>th</sup> Diocesan Annual Convention; and be it further

*Resolved*, since we as a diocese are not of one mind on this matter, we urge our clergy, lay leadership, and members to maintain the unity and support of the diocese and to stand in continued solidarity with our Bishop.