

**Resolution: Formation, Organization, and Support of Missional Communities in the Diocese of Alabama**

**Submitted to the 194th Convention of the Diocese of Alabama by the Abbey, Birmingham; Holy Apostles, Hoover; and St. Thomas, Birmingham**

**Subject: Formation and Support of Missional Communities**

**Resolved**, that the 194th Convention of the Diocese of Alabama commits to the formation, organization, and support of Missional Communities within the diocese, intended as Christ-focused communities dedicated to evangelism, worship and neighborhood engagement, as outlined by the following provisions; and be it further

**Resolved**, that The Diocese of Alabama create a policy for the formation and ongoing support of Missional Communities that includes the following:

**Resolved**, that a Missional Community may be formally recognized upon:

1. Adoption of a constitution or bylaws by the community,
2. Appointment by the Bishop or election by the community's members of a governing body, and
3. Submission of a petition for consent to the Bishop and Standing Committee, affirming that the community will:
  - o Accede to the Constitution and Canons of The Episcopal Church and the Diocese of Alabama,
  - o Remain subject to the oversight of the Bishop,
  - o Uphold loyalty to the doctrine, discipline, and worship of Christ as received by The Episcopal Church, and
  - o Enter into a Ministry Covenant, outlining governance, clergy roles, financial accountability, adherence to diocesan policies on the prevention of sexual misconduct, and mutual rights and responsibilities within the diocesan partnership; and be it further

**Resolved**, that upon receiving consent from the Bishop and Standing Committee, each Missional Community shall enter into a Ministry Covenant with the Bishop, outlining a governance structure agreed upon by the Bishop and Standing Committee; and be it further

**Resolved**, that the Diocese of Alabama shall provide each Missional Community with a system of support and accountability to foster the community's development, including, but not limited to, ministry and visitation by a Bishop, as well as access to diocesan loans and grant programs; and be it further

**Resolved**, that Missional Communities may, when necessary, partner with either the Diocese or a Parish within the Diocese for administrative support and fiduciary responsibilities, as set forth in a Memorandum of Understanding attached to the community's petition for consent; and be it further

**Resolved**, that each Missional Community shall be entitled to representation at the Diocesan Convention, with one clergy delegate and one lay delegate; and be it further

**Resolved**, that each Missional Community shall submit an annual report to the Bishop detailing its activities, ministries, sacramental acts, and leadership, in a format specified by the Bishop; and be it further

**Resolved**, that each Missional Community will participate in a system of mutual support and accountability with the Diocese, which may include financial contributions to the wider diocesan budget, as agreed upon by the Missional Community and the Bishop; and be it further

**Resolved**, that between this Convention and the 195th Diocesan Convention, a group be appointed to study whether this policy should be proposed as an amendment to Canon 9 of the Canons of the Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Alabama

**Explanation:**

As we journey together into a time of immense change for The Episcopal Church, and for churches in general across the United States, we recognize that strength and resilience will emerge from honoring a diverse ecosystem of faithful community expressions - from small and large parishes, to urban and rural faith communities, to campus ministries and missional communities.

Currently, Canon 9 of the Canons of the Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Alabama names only two specific organizational structures for faith communities: Parishes and Colleges. The reality on the ground is much more complex and includes lay-led communities, communities that have established financial, administrative and missional partnerships with larger parishes, and communities that do not meet the definition of "parish" but have committed themselves to ministry with people who are not currently reached by any existing parish.

This resolution provides a formal framework for establishing, governing, and supporting Missional Communities, ensuring their alignment with Episcopal doctrine, diocesan oversight, and access to diocesan resources and support. The goal is to equip these communities to respond dynamically to local needs and participate fully in the life of the Diocese in sharing the Good News of Christ Jesus and reconciling all people to God in Christ.