

Report on the 111th Episcopal Convention of the Northern California 2021

As a Lay Delegate at this year's convention, I was impressed with how much better the virtual experience was from last year. You could tell that the Diocese worked diligently to improve the technology and streamlined the discussion and voting process so that everything flowed smoothly and was an enjoyable experience. Gathering in person is wonderful, but the travel involved and cost to attend an in-person convention precludes some from attending. It is my hope that the Diocese will continue a virtual or a hybrid experience so that everyone can attend in the future.

The following resolutions were presented at our conventions and were approved to be presented at the upcoming 80th General Convention in 2022:

R1-2021 Resolution to add John Lewis to the Episcopal Commemorations Calendar and **R2-2021** Resolution to add Howard Thurman to the Episcopal Commemorations Calendar. The resolutions designate dates on the calendar for recognition and were unanimously passed and will be presented at the general convention. Both resolutions spoke to their accomplishments and why they should be honored for their work in government, civil rights, and reconciliation and inclusion.

R4-2021 – All Are Welcome to the Table – This resolution would remove the Episcopal Church's barrier that excludes unbaptized persons from being able to receive communion. Points of consideration: The Episcopal Church is known for welcoming all who attend services. According to the Gospels, during the last supper Jesus made no mention of the requirement for the Disciples to be baptized before receiving the Bread and Wine in remembrance of Him. There is no mention in our Catechism of baptism being a prerequisite for receiving communion. The church has removed many barriers that were not consistent with the teachings of Jesus, and this would be one more. By removing this barrier visitors would not feel uncomfortable or excluded.

Bishop Megan spoke against this resolution because she supports the canons and tradition of the church. Six people gave testimony for or against the resolution. The resolution was passed and will be presented to the General Convention next year. It was not unanimous and will be a hot topic for debate and consideration.

As Trinity is an inclusive and loving community, we have always welcomed everyone to our church and to God's table to receive Holy Communion. This has been my experience since coming to Trinity Church in 1984. We may not follow the dictates of Canon Law, but we follow Jesus' example. It is my hope that this resolution will be adopted at General Convention.

We were able to see a preview of the Quilt Project, and it will be remarkable when completed. Hopefully, it will be on display for all to see or sent to churches to admire in the future.

One of the highlights for me was the keynote address given by The Right Reverend Canon Stephanie Spellers. She was moving and enthusiastic and spoke truths that many Episcopalians do not want to believe or even consider. For myself they were concepts that I had never considered as part of our history as a church and country from the beginning-- white domination, white supremacy. I was both appalled and moved by Rev. Stephanie's speech. I never realized how we have created the good old boy, White society, which is pervasive in every organization and community throughout the United States. As I listened to Rev. Stephanie, I realized that there is much work to be done in our churches and in our country if we are to be a free and democratic society for all Americans.

I would recommend that the Vestry investigate having a program through Sacred Ground or other recommended study regarding racism and inclusion that would be open to the congregation during the coming year. The Diocese has resources available to us.

Noreen Lafferty, Lay Delegate