

TO: The 190th Annual Convention of the Diocese of Kentucky
FROM: The Reverend Benjamin Sanders+
SUBJECT: **Crisis of Abuse and Mental Illness**

WHEREAS, reports abound in all the media regarding the epidemic of opioid drug abuse, heroin addiction, and most recently the rebound of sexually transmitted diseases, sometimes linked with HIV infections; and

WHEREAS, hidden from view in this troubling scene is a long-standing persistence of profound mental illness: and

WHEREAS, together, these maladies strike all kinds of people at all levels of society. At their worst they ravage families and communities, outpacing resources and availability of effective therapies; and

WHEREAS, law enforcement lacks the ability to bring resolution to the crises that arise. Jail is seldom the place for addicts and mentally ill to find needed help; and

WHEREAS, churches, mental health professionals, medical institutions, and people of good will are falling behind in attempts to intercept the growing tide of dissolution. Therefore be it

RESOLVED, given the severity of the problems our society faces, the church needs to sound the alarm; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the 190th Convention of the Diocese of Kentucky convey to the Kentucky Council of Churches, the Bishops of the Episcopal Church, and to the membership of the congregations within the Diocese of Kentucky, our profound concern about the crisis of abuse and mental illness in this country, calling on all and sundry to do the following:

- a. Assess the current situation regarding mental illness, drug addiction, HIV infection, and prevalence of sexually transmitted diseases, noting especially how these interact in localities, regions, and nationally.
- b. Review the present state of efforts to prevent, intercept, and remediate these illnesses and the impediments that stand in the way of effective response.
- c. Challenge the civic authorities at every level to join with churches, charitable organizations, medical and mental health agencies, and the legal and law enforcement communities to take decisive action to provide resources, strategies, and personnel for addressing and remediating the broken lives of those who suffer with these maladies.
- d. Individually and corporately to minister to those who suffer in our several communities, offering welcome, assistance, prayer and counsel, not waiting on the civil authorities to act but doing what we can and inviting other churches and people of good will to join in this ministry.