

Report on the 235th Massachusetts Diocesan Convention:

Held via Zoom on Saturday, November 7, 2020.

Delegates from CHS, Celia Calhoun and Dianne Fromm

The convention was held via Zoom with over 400 attending. We conducted business and received reports of Commissions, generally via videos, which were very well produced and interesting. Leaders were elected to councils of the church through balloting software on our phones. The budget for 2021 was passed with little discussion; total expenditure was less than the previous year. Over \$600,000 was set aside for targeted pandemic related relief to congregations. All resolutions were voted on through the zoom program, which efficiently handled 400 responses accurately in seconds. We voted on 3 compound resolutions on Mission Strategy which are detailed below, and on resolutions from Bishop Alan Gates' Address towards the end of the session (again detailed below). The day closed with a video from the Youth working with the Diocese, showing their passion for the various topics we are all confronted with today.

Bishop Alan Gates delivered an inspiring address that we highly recommend you listen to and/or read. [Click here](#) for the video as well as the full written version of his message.

Also, [click here](#) for the full description of the convention including all of the "Greeting" video messages from the diocesan parishes including the one that CHS submitted..

Resolutions on Three Mission Strategies, which all passed:

1. Call for Repentance and Reparations:

A challenge to deeper conversations about racism and taking meaningful action, long overdue.

- * To explore the historic involvement in wealth derived from the forced labor of enslaved people.
- * Prepare a tool box of resources and expertise to assist congregations and individuals.
- * To report progress
- * Recommendations for remedies, including distribution of funds in acknowledgement of, and repentance for, the sin and legacy of slavery.

2. Response to Bishop Curry's Declaration of a Climate Emergency:

- * Bishops will issue a proclamation of the climate emergency.
- * Encourage clergy, communities and laity to expose greed at the root of the destruction of God's creation, through preaching, education and outreach, working with the Diocesan Creation Care Justice Network, other local dioceses, and other faith and secular communities.

3. Call to Address the Neglect of the Seven Historically Black Churches in the Dioceses.

- * These churches are part of the Diocese in the Boston area.
- * They are a response to our Mission Strategies of Reimagining our congregations and to build relationships.
- * Commends the Racial Justice Commission to appoint a committee of representatives from the seven historically Black churches in the Diocese to address the neglect and unequal treatment of these churches.
- * The committee will work collaboratively to develop the capacity, through a discernment process of deep listening, and shared histories to reach mutual goals, and report on the same.

Resolution in Response to Convention Address by the Rt. Rev. Alan M. Gates

- * Resolved, that the 235th Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts recognize that in 2020 brave change embraced us as a church and larger world, calling upon us to respond towards "every purpose under heaven"; and be it further
- * Resolved, that to everything there is a season, and that COVID-19 has brought with it many challenges and much suffering, especially to all who mourn loved ones who have died, and it has also opened possibilities for hope in response to forced innovation; and be it further
- * Resolved, that we express our deep gratitude to our bishops and diocesan staff, as well as the public health experts whom they consulted, the diocesan regathering shepherds for their spiritual and practical support during this challenging time of pandemic, and to all parishioners, lay leaders, vestry members, and clergy who have striven to meet the challenges we face; and be it further
- * Reserved, that we affirm the new Task Force to Re-Imagine Our Common Mission in the Commonwealth with our siblings in the Diocese of Western Massachusetts, raising up the bonds of affection that we share in a spirit of collaboration to build up and deepen our relationship across diocesan lines; and be it further
- * Resolved, that we affirm the bishop's call for the creation of the Collaborative Ministries Working Group to "gather stones together" in our diocese at this moment to seize the energy of collaborations already happening throughout various bodies in our diocese and share the good news of these collaborations; and be it further
- * Resolved, that we affirm the reconfigured and expanded Racial Justice Commission for our shared work ahead not only to recognize and confess our own sinfulness in the personal, social, and structural dimensions of racism, but also to take up our Christian responsibility to do the gospel work of racial justice in its multiple dimensions; and be it further

* Resolved, that we pray to God that, called to follow the star of resurrection hope in the Way of Love, our hearts and the hearts of all people of this land are moved so that the barriers which divide us may crumble, the plywood of fear may fall, suspicions disappear, and hatreds cease; and that our divisions being healed, we may live in justice and peace through Jesus Christ our Lord (ref. Book of Common Prayer, p. 823); and be it further

* Resolved, that we go forth from this Convention, empowered by the Holy Spirit, to be the Church in Community, to be the Body of Christ, who--even though masked, even though physically distant, even though gathering mostly virtually, even though sad, anxious, and tired--are loved and capable, blessed to be a blessing, serving those who need us.