

DIOCESE OF PENNSYLVANIA
231st CONVENTION
NOVEMBER 15, 2014

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Deadline for submitting resolutions is September 6, 2014

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RESOLUTION TO RECEIVE, ADOPT AND INCORPORATE
A WAY FORWARD INTO OUR DIOCESAN COMMON LIFE

RESOLVED: That this Convention receive, adopt and recommend the document entitled A Way Forward, to all Diocesan governing bodies including, but not limited to, the Bishop, Standing Committee, Diocesan Council, Finance Committee, and all vestries of the diocese as a primary instrument of understanding and assessing congregational vitality and viability, and where/when appropriate, employ the recommended next steps toward “Renewal of a Congregation”.

EXPLANATION: At the 230th Convention, the Diocesan Consultation team and Diocesan Council were charged with developing strategies and making recommendations to the bishop and other governing bodies regarding a “proposed process for dealing pastorally with imperiled congregations, for renewing their health and missionary zeal and in some cases caring for those congregations that must seek closure.”¹ Through a series of conversations with leadership groups and individuals within the diocese, as well as a review and consideration of model practices currently being deployed in the wider church, what has emerged is an emphasis on mutual interdependence of individual congregations and the diocese as a whole, and the concepts of vitality (a congregation's lively response to God's mission) and viability (the stability and strength of a congregation's finances, property and administrative functions).

At the May meeting of the Diocesan Consultation Team, a preliminary draft document was reviewed and discussed. By unanimous consent, the DCT voted to share this document with Diocesan Council as well as other governing bodies in order to begin a process of dialog and discernment. After presentations and conversations within several leadership bodies including Diocesan Council, Standing Committee and working in collaboration with the Canon for Congregational Care and Development, the attached document entitled A Way Forward has been submitted for consideration and approval at the 231st Diocesan Convention.

A Way Forward, sets forth two sets of congregational characteristics; one for Vitality and one for Viability, with the vitality characteristics organized according to the themes of *inviting*, *forming*, *sending* and *servicing* by which we join one another in God's mission. Additionally, we offer a “Covenant of Mutual Interdependence”, which seeks to deepen our shared accountability and interdependence within the diocese. Finally, we offer a process to review and renew a congregation when it is no longer viable, in order to provide a more intentional and pastoral way forward.

REFERENCES: A Way Forward, Prepared and submitted by the Diocesan Consultation Team (DCT) in collaboration with the Diocesan office of Congregational Care and Development, 2014

Submitted by:

Members of the Diocesan Consultation Team

Ms. Nora Adelmann
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And

The Rev. Nancy Deming, Canon to the Ordinary for Congregational Care and Development

¹ Address to the 230th Convention of the Diocese of Pennsylvania, Bishop Clifton Daniel, November 2013