

# 2015 - Discernment Resolutions – June

**RECOMMENDATION #1: Establish Clusters of neighboring parishes in the Diocese of Easton** and charge them to organize and collectively find areas of cooperation, sharing and collaboration to further the mission of the church in their geographical area. Clusters would address issues identified in Recommendation #3 and would be supported through Recommendation #2.

**RECOMMENDATION #2: Reorganize the Department of Missions** to oversee, encourage and provide assistance for carrying out the mission of the Diocese through the sharing of resources and increased collaboration among parishes, building on the strengths of our congregations and addressing areas of weakness and decline.

**RECOMMENDATION #3: Department of Missions and Clusters shall identify sharing and collaboration opportunities**, addressing these areas: Worship, Buildings, Clergy and Staff, Youth Ministry, Outreach and Mission, Evangelism, Fundraising/Stewardship, Christian Formation, Cooperative services, e.g., payroll, publications, maintenance, etc. The Department of Missions shall gather information on such collaboration opportunities from the clusters and diocese and report these findings to the 2016 Diocesan Convention.

**RECOMMENDATION #4: Institute the AWE – Average Weekly Evangelism report.** The church has for years recognized the need to maintain data on average Sunday attendance (ASA). In addition to this information, it is recommended that other metrics be recorded that will more accurately reflect each parish's effectiveness in and value to its surrounding community. Pertinent data should include the number and type of ministries and people who utilize the church facilities on Monday through Saturday. The Department of Missions as part of its evangelism and mission ministry should develop these metrics and develop an effective way for parishes to log their AWE and gather this information from the parishes.

**RECOMMENDATION #5: Conduct a Diocesan-wide Evangelism Audit.** Determine how well parishes and the Diocese are undertaking evangelism and where there could be room for improvement. Develop a questionnaire to help parishes audit their evangelism efforts – determining how well they are proclaiming the good news, letting their communities know about their ministries, and inviting them to be part of the Body of Christ.

**RECOMMENDATION #6: Organize Evangelism efforts at the Cluster level** Should an existing ministry have evangelism as a part of its goals, the active members of these ministries along with people with self-identified interest, i.e. those expressing interest via convention commitment cards, should be invited to lead evangelism efforts at the cluster or convocation level. Such evangelism efforts may include organizing meetings for the purpose of training, sharing resources, and developing action plans.

**RECOMMENDATION #7: Provide resources on evangelism and outreach to the Diocese and parishes.** Episcopal Relief and Development Diocesan Representative the Rev. Mary Garner will be available to assist with efforts at integrating the goals and resources available to the church from Episcopal Relief and Development. In addition, The Episcopal Church has personnel and a variety of resources for evangelism. These resources need to be reviewed and communicated to the diocese and individual parishes

**RECOMMENDATION #8: Establish a Diocesan Christian Formation Commission.** The mission of the Commission would be to promote lifelong spiritual growth in our relationships with God and neighbor, and to embrace the role of the Holy Spirit and Jesus Christ in our lives throughout the Diocese. To that end, the Commission will offer educational and experiential opportunities in Christian formation to all people of all ages,

laity and clergy alike. This mission is Anglican/Episcopal in nature, focusing upon equipping the saints for ministry, building up the community of the body of Christ, and promoting maturing into the full stature of Christ, as envisioned by Baptism; becoming one with Christ, that he might dwell in us and we in him, as sought in the Eucharist; and embracing the Great Commandments on love, and the Great Commission, as Christ expects us to do.

The Commission will make its ministry known, and assist and support parishes, clusters, ministries, leaders, and individuals in the lifelong development, enhancement, and realization of their Christian formation. The Commission serves as a resource for information and networking by researching, publishing, obtaining, and sharing information on materials, curricula, programs, and events on Christian formation. The Commission sponsors retreats and assistance in spiritual journeys at the Diocesan and cluster levels.

**RECOMMENDATION #9: Form a marketing team** to discuss how the Diocese needs to more effectively market ourselves and assist individual parishes in complementary roles. This would involve working with their existing Communications Director and possibly the Youth Minister. A number of delegates have volunteered to be part of such an effort. The team could also offer “how to” workshops to clusters and at the Diocesan level.

**RECOMMENDATION #10: Establish the Diocese of Easton’s Heritage Awareness Sunday** on the Second Sunday of October as an opportunity to tell our story and celebrate our history as the Episcopal Church on the Eastern Shore of Maryland in our parishes and throughout the Diocese.