

[This document is followed by a listing of the Resolutions as Submitted]

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON RESOLUTIONS FOR DEBATE

The members of the Committee on Resolutions for Debate are Gordon Fronk, Chair, The Rev. Michael Lokey, The Rev. Nicholas Sichangi, Debra Dragone, and The Venerable Laura Harbaugh, *ex officio*. The Committee received [four proposed Resolutions](#), as hereinafter described.

Resolution 1. Thanksgiving for the Mission and Ministry of St. Paul's Vienna. This Resolution has been sponsored by Ms. Susan Burkholder, The Rev. Mary Friel, Ms. Carol Niemand, The Rev. Henry M. Sabetti III, Mr. Charles E. Vance, and The Rev. Nathaniel W. Pierce, who will present the Resolution.

St. Paul's Vienna has not been permanently closed; therefore, the Committee recommends **DISAPPROVAL**.

Resolution 2. Recognizing a Stewardship Challenge, Diocesan Council Called to Respond. This Resolution has been sponsored by Ms. Susan Burkholder, The Rev. Charles J. Hatfield, Jr., Ms. Carol Niemand, The Rev. Henry M. Sabetti III, Mr. Charles E. Vance, and The Rev. Nathaniel W. Pierce, who will present the Resolution.

The proposed Resolution is supported by an explanation, which compares the 2022 average pledge for the Dioceses of Easton (\$2,860) to the 2022 average pledge for the 13 dioceses in Province 3 of \$3,814, and the 2022 average pledge for the 102 domestic dioceses in the Episcopal Church of \$3,628. The Committee reviewed the full report from which the statistics were extracted and concluded that the average pledge in the DOE was not disproportionately low, when compared to other provinces in the Northeast Region. The Committee found that the 2022 average pledge in Province 1 (the New England states) was \$2,835, and the 2022 average pledge in Province 2 (New York, New Jersey, Puerto Rico, and Virgin Islands) was \$2,614. Province 3 includes large metropolitan areas, such as Washington, Virginia, Southwestern Virginia, and Maryland, which have higher average incomes than are reported for the nine counties in the DOE. In fact, the *per capita* income for 2020 in the State of Maryland was \$65,680, whereas the *per capita* income of the Diocesan counties was an average of \$55,054, or 16% less than the Maryland average. There are many ways to interpret metrics; however, the Committee believes that it is reasonable to surmise that the DOE average pledge is not as distressing as it may appear and is a subject of continual focus by the Diocesan Council, the Treasurer, and the Department of Finance. The Committee takes note of the fact that concerns expressed at the 2023 Convention by Charles Bohn, Treasurer of the Diocese, have been resolved over the past year and that, in fact, responses from the parishes to support apportionment were higher than anticipated, and the investment portfolio has recovered substantially, such that the monthly draw was not reduced.

Project Resource is a stewardship conference planned for this fall and is part of a three-year program, which began in 2021. Additionally, the Diocesan Council has tasked the Department of Finance to revisit the apportionment algorithm used to compute each parish's apportionment.

The Committee believes that the concern is being adequately addressed and that an additional Report would add a layer of bureaucracy, which is unnecessary; therefore, the Committee recommends **DISAPPROVAL**.

Resolution 3. Rules of Order for the 2025 Diocesan Convention.

This Resolution has been sponsored by Mr. Craig D’Amario, The Rev. Mary Friel, Mr. Gary Lewis, The Rev. Henry M. Sabetti III, Mr. Charles E. Vance, and The Rev. Nathaniel W. Pierce, who will present the Resolution, proposes to amend the Rules of Order, so that:

- 3.a. *Time indications on our Agenda are followed and altered only by a majority vote of all those present, who are entitled to vote.* The time indicators on the Agenda are for guidance only. If debate goes on too long, a motion to close the debate/call the question is in order; and experience confirms that such a motion invariably passes. Canon 203 provides that Robert's Rules of Order govern parliamentary procedure of Conventions, which the Committee believes adequately addresses the suggested amendment; accordingly, the Committee recommends **DISAPPROVAL**.
- 3.b. *Electronic voting shall be independently certified by a third party, as ensuring the anonymity of all those who cast a ballot.* Until the 2021 Convention all Resolutions and all votes on the Constitution and Canons were public. After the question was called, the Chair called for ayes and nays. If it was unclear which side prevailed, the chair called for ayes and the delegates held up green cards; then the chair called for nays and the delegates held up red cards. It was all public. In 2021, we had to go to electronic voting because of COVID, and those on the electronic dais and electronic floor had no idea who voted for what. Canon 901.5 provides that Convention balloting and voting may be conducted anonymously, using a virtual voting system, approved by the Secretary of Convention. The Committee does not believe that an independently certified third party is necessary to ensure the anonymity of electronic voting; therefore, the Committee recommends **DISAPPROVAL**.
- 3.c. *A personal attack on any Delegate or a group of Delegates because of how they voted on any issue shall not be tolerated.* Personal (*ad hominem*) attacks are already frowned upon by Robert’s Rules of Order. All debate must be directed to the presiding officer. If there is a personal attack, it is raised by a "point of order," which is a privileged motion taking precedence over anything else which is going on. The Committee believes that Robert’s Rules of Order adequately provide for the curtailment of any personal attacks and that the suggested amendment that such attacks shall not be tolerated is unnecessary; therefore, the Committee recommends **DISAPPROVAL**.
- 3.d. *There shall be a presentation on “Safe Church, Safe Communities” at our 157th Convention, lasting for at least one hour.* The Rev. Elizabeth Phillips (St Phillips, Quantico) is the Administrator of Safe Church and Communities, which is a program created and mandated by the Episcopal Church and provides policies and training for all parishes and other organizations to successfully achieve compliance. Reverend Phillips has reported that recent efforts have yielded very positive results through improved

accessibility on the Diocesan website and through her personal monitoring of the various ordained and lay leaders, who are in the process of taking the eight programs provided online. The Committee agrees with Reverend Phillips that one hour of training as part of Convention is not recommended; therefore, the Committee recommends **DISAPPROVAL**.

Resolution 4. Approve Curriculum Fulfilling Requirements for Anti-Racism Training. This Resolution has been sponsored by the Diversity Awareness Commission, including The Elizabeth N. Phillips, The Rev. Deacon Jim Kamihachi, and The Rev. Kevin M. Cross, who will present the Resolution.

The Resolution is intended to formally adopt the programs to be used at Diocesan and parochial levels, pursuant to General Convention Resolution 2000-B-49. The Committee recommends **APPROVAL**.

Respectfully submitted,

Gordon D. Fronk

Gordon D. Fronk, Chair

SUBMITTED RESOLUTIONS FOR DEBATE

#1 – Thanksgiving for the Mission and Ministry of St. Paul’s, Vienna

Resolved, That this 156th Convention of the Diocese of Easton, meeting on March 7, 2024, via zoom, gives thanks and offers deep appreciation for the 302 years of mission and ministry of St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, Vienna Parish, in Vienna, Maryland.

The following information is submitted as required by Canon 512.3(a):

(1) The signature of each sponsor:

Ms. Susan Burkholder
The Rev. Mary Friel
Ms. Carol Niemand
The Rev. Nathaniel W. Pierce
The Rev. Henry M. Sabetti, III
Mr. Charles E. Vance

(2) The name of the Convention participant who sponsors and will present the resolution at Convention: The Rev. Nathaniel W. Pierce

(3) An explanation of the purpose of or policy underlying the resolution:

The purpose of this resolution is to express gratitude for the mission and ministry of St. Paul’s Parish, Vienna, Maryland, which was founded in 1702 as a Chapel of Ease, on the occasion of its permanent closing.

(4) A financial impact statement that addresses all anticipated costs of implementation by the Diocese and/or parishes:

Estimated cost of adopting and implementing this resolution is \$0.00.

(5) A statement of the reasons that the Convention is an appropriate forum for consideration of the resolution

Our Diocesan Convention is the legal incarnation of the Diocese of Easton. The members of Convention are the Bishop(s), the clergy canonically resident in this Diocese, and the lay delegates elected by each parish. When a parish is closed, it means that the number of lay delegates to this Convention will be reduced. It seems rather appropriate in these unfortunate circumstances to express our appreciation and thanks for the years of mission and ministry of a constituent parish which is now coming to an end.

#2 – Recognizing a Stewardship Challenge, Diocesan Council Called to Respond

Resolved, That this 156th Convention of the Diocese of Easton, meeting on March 7, 2024 via zoom, takes note of the decline in parish pledging in the Diocese of Easton during the five year period of 2018 – 2022, as reported by the Secretary of General Convention, hereby urges our Bishop and Diocesan Council to address this issue in whatever way they deem appropriate, and calls for a written report of their work on this issue in 2024 to be presented to the Convocation meetings and the 157th Convention in 2025.

Explanation

\$3,628	2022 Average Pledge for 102 domestic dioceses in TEC
\$3,814	2022 Average Pledge for the 13 dioceses in Province III
\$2,860	2022 Average Pledge for the Diocese of Easton

Total Inflation for 2018 – 2022: 16%

If pledging increased by more than 16%, the actual income in dollars increased.

If pledging increased by exactly 16%, the actual income in dollars remained constant.

If pledging increased by less than 16%, the actual income in dollars declined.

23%	2018 – 2022 average increase in parish pledges for 102 dioceses in TEC (+ 7%)
32%	2018 – 2022 average increase in parish pledges 13 dioceses in Province III (+ 16%)
10%	2018 – 2022 average increase in parish pledges for the Diocese of Easton (- 6%)*

* On this metric, the Diocese of Easton was ranked fourth from the bottom on the list of 102 TEC domestic dioceses. That is to say, there were three other dioceses which had an average increase in the period 2018 – 2022 of less than 10%, and 98 dioceses which achieved an increase of greater than 10%.

Bottom line: while parish pledging in the Diocese of Easton in the five year period of 2018 – 2022 increased by 10%, inflation during this period was 16%. In other words, in 2022 parish pledging in terms of real dollars decreased by 6% when compared to 2018.

As Mr. Charles Bohn, Treasurer of the Diocese, noted in his report to the 2023 Convention, “The amounts pledged for 2023 are ‘disappointing.’”... Mr. Bohn said many of the concerns he raised at the 2022 Convention remain worrisome: the effects of inflation on income and expenses; the poor performance of financial markets; and uneven support of parishes in meeting their obligations to the Diocese. The Finance Committee looks at its investments quarterly; it has already reduced the percentage of income it draws from investments but may need to lower the percentage further by the end of this year. In closing, Mr. Bohn offered prayers for the people of Ukraine and all nations facing disasters. (Diocese of Easton 2023 Journal, page 26)

The following information is submitted as required by Canon 512.3(a):

(1) The signature of each sponsor:

Ms. Susan Burkholder

The Rev. Charles J. Hatfield, Jr.

Ms. Carol Niemand
The Rev. Nathaniel W. Pierce
The Rev. Henry M. Sabetti, III
Mr. Charles E. Vance

(2) The name of the Convention participant who sponsors and will present the resolution at Convention: The Rev. Nathaniel W. Pierce

(3) An explanation of the purpose of or policy underlying the resolution:

The purpose of this resolution is to recognize a serious problem in our Diocese pertaining to stewardship (see the comments of the Diocesan Treasurer as noted above), to encourage our Bishop and Diocesan Council to address this issue in whatever way they deem to be appropriate in 2024, and report to the 157th Convention in 2025.

(4) A financial impact statement that addresses all anticipated costs of implementation by the Diocese and/or parishes: Estimated cost of adopting and implementing this resolution is \$0.00.

(5) A statement of the reasons that the Convention is an appropriate forum for consideration of the resolution:

Our Diocesan Convention is the legal incarnation of the Diocese of Easton. The voting members of Convention are the Bishop(s), the clergy canonically resident in this Diocese, and the lay delegates elected by each parish. While Vestries carefully monitor local situations and congregations, and while Diocesan Council is called to manage the day-to-day details of our Diocesan life, members of this Convention are called to look at the big picture, to stand on the shore of the present moment, scan the distant horizon, identify indications of a potential problem on that distant horizon, and then deal with it before it becomes a major issue. When there is a problem with parish pledging, as noted above, and indeed, when the Diocese of Easton is ranked fourth from the bottom on any national metric, Convention should consider this to be a loud and persistent wake-up call. Eventually this decline, if it continues, will have a major negative impact on the ability of our parishes to support their local mission and their various ministries as well as impact their ability to pay their annual apportionment. This apportionment income is a key component of the financial resources which are needed to carry on the important work of this Convention. In many respects our Diocesan Council is the “Convention between Conventions;” others have called it the “Vestry of our Diocese.” In any case, the Council, under the leadership of our Bishop, is the appropriate body to address this serious issue in the coming year “in whatever way they deem appropriate.” Through its Constitution and Canons, this Convention created the Diocesan Council. Thus, it is certainly appropriate for this Convention to assign a task to the Council, especially one as important as this, for further work and immediate action.

#3 – Rules of Order for the 2025 Diocesan Convention

Whereas it is important at all times and in all places that we honor our Baptismal Covenant and respect the dignity of every human being; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That this 156th Convention of the Diocese of Easton, meeting on March 7, 2024 via zoom, hereby commits itself in future Diocesan Conventions to amend our Rules of Order so that:

- (a) the time indications on our Agenda are followed and altered only by a majority vote of all those present who are entitled to vote;
- (b) electronic voting shall be independently certified by a third party as insuring the anonymity of all who cast a ballot;
- (c) a personal attack on any Delegate or group of Delegates because of how they voted on any issue shall not be tolerated;
- (d) there shall be a presentation on *Safe Church, Safe Communities*, at our 157th Convention lasting for at least one hour;

and be it further

Resolved, That the Secretary of this Convention forward a copy of this resolution to all Wardens serving in our congregations by no later than April 15, 2024.

The following information is submitted as required by Canon 512.3(a):

- (1) The signature of each sponsor:

Mr. Craig D’Amario
The Rev. Mary Friel
Mr. Gary Lee Lewis
The Rev. Nathaniel W. Pierce
The Rev. Henry M. Sabetti, III
Mr. Charles E. Vance

- (2) The name of the Convention participant who sponsors and will present the resolution at Convention: The Rev. Nathaniel W. Pierce

- (3) An explanation of the purpose of or policy underlying the resolution:

The purpose of this resolution is to improve the Rules of Order in an effort to reaffirm our Baptismal Covenant in which we promise to respect the dignity of every human being at all times and in all places, including our Diocesan Conventions.

- (4) A financial impact statement that addresses all anticipated costs of implementation by the Diocese and/or parishes: Estimated cost of adopting and implementing this resolution is \$0.00 if the Wardens are sent a copy via email.

(5) A statement of the reasons that the Convention is an appropriate forum for consideration of the resolution: Our Diocesan Convention is the legal incarnation of the Diocese of Easton. The members of Convention are the Bishop(s), the clergy canonically resident in this Diocese, and the lay delegates elected by each parish. When the Convention behaves in a manner which is disrespectful of others, in violation of our Baptismal Covenant, we are called to repent and return to the Lord, so that henceforth we may delight in God's will and walk in God's ways.

Emailed on 11/17/2023 to the Secretary of Convention with a copy to Bishop Santosh Marray, Mr. Gordon Fronk, and Ms. Lynn Anstatt. A paper copy of these resolutions was mailed via USPS to the Secretary of Convention on 11/17/23.

If the Committee on Resolutions has any questions or concerns about these resolutions, please contact the Rev. Nathaniel W. Pierce at nwpierce@verizon.net or 410-330-0704.

#4 - Approved Curriculum Fulfilling Requirements For Anti-Racism Training

RESOLVED, that the One Hundred Fifty Sixth Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Easton stipulates that required anti-racism training can be fulfilled by completing any of the following: the Difference Course, the Sacred Ground curriculum, the DOE anti-racism series by Dr Catherine Meeks, or training through the Absalom Jones Episcopal Center for Racial Healing and be it further;

RESOLVED, that all members of the diocese are encouraged to view anti-racism training as an on-going process of which the curriculum of the Difference, the Sacred Ground, the DOE “Dr. Meeks” series, and the Absalom Jones Center for Racial Healing are a part, and be it further;

RESOLVED, all members of the diocese are urged to continue to engage in ongoing study, conversation, community programs, and other forms of education designed for the purpose of eradicating racism and promoting racial healing.

EXPLANATION

General Convention resolution 2000-B-49 requires anti-racism training for lay and ordained leadership of The Episcopal Church and stipulates “**that each diocese select and authorize appropriate programs that will be used at the diocesan and parochial levels.**” This resolution officially designates the Difference Course, the Sacred Ground curriculum, the DOE “Dr Meeks” anti-racism series and training through the Absalom Jones Center for Racial Healing are means of fulfilling this requirement in the Diocese of Easton. This resolution also encourages the Diocese of Easton to view anti-racism training as an on-going educational process and suggests means for doing so.

Proposed by:

Diocese of Easton Diversity Awareness Commission

The Reverend Kevin Cross

The Reverend Elizabeth N Phillips

The Reverend Deacon Jim Kamihachi