

August 6, 2009

Resolution presented to 34th Annual Diocesan Convention of Alaska 2009:

Resolved, that the 34th Diocesan Convention of The Episcopal Diocese of Alaska commend to the deaneries and parishes within the diocese of Alaska *The Charter for Lifelong Christian Formation* (attached) for the purpose of study, collaboration and implementation over the next three years, and

Resolved, that *The Charter for Lifelong Christian Formation* be made available on the website of The Episcopal Diocese of Alaska, as a teaching and planning resource for all deaneries, congregations and people.

Sponsors / Endorsers (as of August 6, 2009): Michael Burke, Dawn Allen Herron, David Elsensohn, Thelma Jackson, Stacy Thorpe, Mark Boesser, Heather Hall, Gayle Nauska, Mary Margaret Davis, Clarence Bolden, Connie Jones, Becky Snow, Paul Klitzke, Nancy Burke, Ann Lovejoy, Katherine Hunt, Mary Ellen Harris and Ann Whitney.

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Explanation:

THE CHARTER FOR LIFELONG CHRISTIAN FORMATION was presented to the 76th General Convention of The Episcopal Church, meeting in Anaheim, California in July 2009.

Resolution A083, to which the Charter was attached, called upon all dioceses to promote and encourage lifelong Christian formation. In part, it read:

Resolved, the House of Bishops concurring, That the 76th General Convention strongly encourage all dioceses to formulate a strategy for Lifelong Christian Formation in the next triennium; and be it further

Resolved, That such strategies should encompass and be suitable for all persons (e.g. various ages, languages and abilities). These strategies should be responsive to diocesan and societal contexts and accurately depict the current education and formation status. Because formation is not limited to a cognitive experience (classroom), formation should be holistic (encompasses learning, action and reflection)."

In the spirit of resolution A083, this resolution commends this charter and its study and use to our people and churches here in Alaska. Lifelong Christian formation is essential in "making disciples who make disciples". (*from Gospel Based Discipleship materials*).

Attachment:

THE CHARTER FOR LIFELONG CHRISTIAN FORMATION

Lifelong Christian formation in The Episcopal Church is growth in the knowledge, service and love of God as followers of Christ and is informed by Holy Scripture, tradition and reason.

I have called you friends... John 15:14-16

Through The Episcopal Church, God INVITES all people:

- Into a prayerful life of worship, continuous learning, intentional outreach, advocacy and service.
- To hear the Word of God, to honor church teachings, and continually to embrace the joy of Baptism and Eucharist, spreading the Good News of the risen Christ and ministering to all.
- To respond to the needs of our constantly changing communities, as Jesus calls us, in ways that reflect our diversity and cultures as we seek, wonder and discover together.
- To hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people, placing ourselves in the stories of our faith, thereby empowering us to proclaim the Gospel message.

...You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit... John 15:14-16

Through The Episcopal Church, God INSPIRES all people:

- To experience Anglican liturgy, which draws us closer to God, helps us discern God's will and encourages us to share our faith journeys.
- To study scripture mindful of the context of our societies and cultures, calling us to seek truth anew while remaining fully present in the community of faith.
- To develop new learning experiences, equipping disciples for life in a world of secular challenges and carefully listening for the words of modern sages who embody the teachings of Christ.
- To prepare for a sustainable future by calling the community to become guardians of God's creation.

I am giving you these commands that you may love one another.
- John 15:17

Through The Episcopal Church, God TRANSFORMS all people:

- By doing the work Jesus Christ calls us to do, living into the reality that we are all created in the image of God, and carrying out God's work of reconciliation, love, forgiveness, healing, justice and peace.
- By striving to be a loving and witnessing community, which faithfully confronts the tensions in the church and the world as we struggle to live God's will.
- By seeking out diverse and expansive ways to empower prophetic action, evangelism, advocacy and collaboration in our contemporary global context.
- By holding all accountable to lift every voice in order to reconcile oppressed and oppressor to the love of God in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Lifelong Christian formation in The Episcopal Church is a journey with Christ, in Christ, and to Christ.

Resolution A083 to The General Convention in Anaheim:

*** FINAL VERSION - Concurred**

Resolution: **A083**
Title: **Directive for Dioceses to Formulate a Strategy for Lifelong Christian Formation in the Next Triennium**
Topic: **Christian Formation**
Committee: **15 - Education**
House of Initial Action: **Deputies**
Proposer: **Standing Commission on Lifelong Christian Education and Formation**

Resolved, the House of Bishops concurring, That the 76th General Convention *strongly encourage* all dioceses to formulate a strategy for Lifelong Christian Formation in the next triennium; and be it further

Resolved, That such strategies should encompass and be suitable for all persons (e.g. various ages, languages and abilities). These strategies should be responsive to diocesan and societal contexts and accurately depict the current education and formation status. Because formation is not limited to a cognitive experience (classroom), formation should be holistic (encompasses learning, action and reflection); and be it further

Resolved, That the Congregational Life Center design an instrument and system of collection that will document currently available and successful programs, activities and resources. The instrument will pay special attention to resolutions adopted and resources highlighted at the 76th and each successive General Convention. In addition, such an endeavor will seek to gather the aspirations for diocesan future programs/activities concerning Christian formation; and be it further

Resolved, That the information and data collected be forwarded to the SCLEF by January 31, 2011.

EXPLANATION

Most importantly, formation is so crucial to our life as disciples that we must be more and more intentional about it. This Resolution calls upon dioceses not only to share their wisdom and

aspirations, but also mandates that every diocese must have a purposeful plan for Christian Formation that is appropriate to their context.

The importance of this Resolution stems from our work over the past triennium, as well as the work from PEALL. We embarked on a charge that calls us to implement "coordinated policies for children, youth, young adults, adults and seniors for lifelong Christian formation."

As we prepare for a new decade, it is appropriate to survey and coordinate the church's resources. The called for survey will enable greater collaboration between dioceses, seminaries, diocesan schools, The Episcopal Church Center, camps, conference centers and educational programs. In this age of reduced financial resources, it is urgent that we exercise good stewardship and not duplicate our formational efforts. In addition, as The Episcopal Church Center decentralizes and seeks to be more responsive to the whole church, it is necessary to discern the needs and hopes of those involved in formation in all places.

Moreover, the church flourishes when we share our experiences and resources. Such a survey will enable us to do more programs, projects and activities together-more effectively. We can better live out the axiom that 'we should only do apart what we cannot do together.' The final report from PEALL clearly states, "One consequence of this lack of effective networks is that Christian education leaders have developed identical parallel programs and replicated the same trainings, wasting both talent and resources. The need is critical for a commonly networked system with a common commitment to mission, a system that improves access to resources for all congregations. Currently there is a proliferation of resources and local networks, but these are not yet equally distributed nor equally accessible or available or even known about."

The members and congregations of The Episcopal Church are active in mission and outreach in their communities as well as in the wider society and world. Our call to attention to Christian formation recognizes the role of outreach and mission. Rather than viewing formation as related only to education (especially in a formal interpretation), the PEALL report helps us understand that experiences-grounded in mission-are formational for persons of all ages. How can we hold up these experiences-be they on a Habitat build or working in a soup kitchen-as essential to our formation? This survey of diocesan policies, practices and resources will include attention to these formational contexts for persons of all ages and thereby broaden our definition of formation.

** Note: The final language, as well as the final status of each resolution, is being reviewed by the General Convention office. The Journal of the 76th General Convention and the Constitution and Canons will be published once the review process has been completed.*