



TransEpiscopal
Episcopal Urban Caucus
Episcopal Peace Fellowship
Union of Black Episcopalians
Partners for Baptismal Living
Episcopal Network for Economic Justice
Associated Parishes for Liturgy and Mission

An Epistle from The Consultation to the 80th General Convention of the Episcopal Church

May 2022

To ++Michael, Gay+, all members of Executive Council, and all bishops and deputies called to attend the 80th General Convention in Baltimore:

May the grace and peace of God the Father and the Lord Jesus the Anointed live in you. We are grateful for the care and consideration you have brought to revising plans for the conduct of our upcoming General Convention. Your efforts to safeguard the health and well-being of our church's leaders bear witness to the love that seeks to care for God's people, most especially "the least, the lost, and the left out," as Bp. Barbara Harris named them. We especially appreciate the work of the staff in the General Convention and presiding officers' offices, in service of the church.

These are urgent times. Our world is facing profound and interlocking crises of climate change, global pandemic, and deterioration of democratic norms that threaten the well-being of all humanity. The pressures of politics and public health have amplified the stresses generated by economic, social, cultural, gender, and theological differences, complicated by systemic racism, sexism, ableism, and fear of "the other." As the Episcopal Church, we have had an historical relationship with systems that enforce oppression, marginalization, and disenfranchisement. Too often we have failed the hopes of those who have believed the Christian church will honor them as precious children of God.

Our complacency and our silence have empowered the rise of ethno-religious nationalism, anti-democratic authoritarianism, white supremacy, destructive forms of individualism including gun culture, and hyper-capitalism. We see the horrific murders in Charleston, Pittsburgh, El Paso, Buffalo, and beyond. We see the laws being passed across many U.S. states to severely limit women's health care and trans health care. We see human and civil rights being curtailed along ethnic lines around the world from Xinjiang, to India, Hungary, and Israel/Palestine. We see the attack on the U.S. Capitol building in the attempt to overturn a presidential election—and in ongoing work to undermine electoral systems. We see the high death toll among frontline essential workers, many of them low-wage, immigrant workers of color who are invisible at best, or at worst, seen as disposable, by our policymakers and electorate.

When we choose to believe that these events are individual aberrations, we ignore the ways in which they are interconnected. We ignore the ways in which, taken together, these moments serve domination systems and amount to the intentional punishment of those in our society who are not white, wealthy, cisgender, heterosexual men.

Where will the Christian church stand in the midst of this breach? Too many of our fellow Christians are leading the charge of white Christian nationalism. The Episcopal Church utterly rejects this theology, and we have a responsibility to stand against these forces in Christian witness alongside friends of other faiths and no faith. The Gospel is calling us to attend to the big issues we are facing, keeping foremost the common good of all God's people.

These are urgent times. Episcopal Church leaders have called for a shortened convention that focuses on "critical issues and essential legislation," in order to lessen COVID-19 exposure risks during this legislative gathering. At the same time, our convention leadership is prioritizing the work of the [Presiding Officers' Working Group on Truth Telling, Reckoning, and Healing](#). Their report, which includes a call for the formation and funding of the Episcopal Coalition for Racial Equality and Justice, offers a framework for Church-wide participation in the Gospel-centered work of truth-telling, reckoning, and healing.

Quoting the report of the [Task Force on Theology of Social Justice Advocacy](#), “There is no neutral position in this world. To be silent is to be complicit. The church cannot avoid a choice.... Social justice advocacy is core to the church’s mission ... [because it] is at the core of the Gospel.” Just as we prioritize the health and safety of our elected church leadership, how will we respond to the Spirit’s call to prioritize the oppressed, the marginalized, the disenfranchised, and the poor?

Taking action for social justice is an urgent and critical matter. Social justice work is an essential component of General Convention, even more so in this time of global crisis that is making it so difficult to meet together.

As The Consultation, we urge the 80th General Convention to

- treat as essential the resolutions speaking to issues of social justice which will come up on the Convention floor
- encourage and support the work of legislative committees in holding hearings and moving legislation prior to the beginning of General Convention
- strongly support and facilitate placing resolutions on the consent agenda for expeditious adoption
- urge, post-convention, that resolutions adopted by the convention be widely publicized and supported at the diocesan level
- call on the wider church to do the work of dialogue in dioceses and faith communities about social justice as the essential work of the church
- work for the intentional, timely implementation of social justice resolutions at the local level

As The Consultation, we pledge to

- support the use of the consent agenda to move essential legislation
- be disciplined in our focus on implementation churchwide of measures that will fight the intensification of white supremacy and ethno-nationalisms and promote truth-telling, reckoning, and healing
- work to support dioceses and faith communities in social justice action called for by General Convention
- oppose using the COVID-19 adaptations as a model for shrinking future conventions; specifically, we strongly oppose reducing the number of deputies, which would diminish the diversity of voices and further marginalize the voices of people of color and queer and trans people
- equip people at the local level to welcome the marginalized, including trans people, their families, and children; and further, equip faith communities to advocate for civil rights of all, lifting up a vision of Beloved Community that honors the dignity of every human being and strives for the common good and the healing of creation

We write to you in confidence that, with God’s help, we the church can do all things through Christ who strengthens us. We rejoice that we are gathering in July to do the urgent, essential, critical work of the church. May we be moved to do the work that the Spirit has placed before us.

And may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.

Alt. Deputy Tivaun Cooper
(Diocese of New York; UBE)

Deputy Sarah Lawton
(Diocese of California; TransEpiscopal)

Deputy Joe McDaniel
(Diocese of Central Gulf Coast; UBE)

Deputy Eric Metoyer
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Deputy Ruth Meyers
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Deputy Carolyn Mok
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Deputy Laura Russell
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Deputy Dianne Smith
(Diocese of Ohio; UBE)

Deputy Tieran Sweeney-Bender
(Diocese of Olympia; PBL)

Deputy Warren Wong
(Diocese of California; AAPI Network)

You may find the following links helpful:

[The Consultation’s home page](#)

[The Consultation’s Platform](#)

[The Consultation’s priority resolutions](#)

[Statement from the Deputies of Color Endorsing The Report of The Presiding Officers’ Working Group on Truth Telling, Healing, and Reckoning](#)