



# THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA

*The Diocese of Central Pennsylvania*

## A resolution concerning Congregations at Crossroads

Submitted by the Commission on Congregational Development

Whereas, without question, Western Christianity is in a period of great evolution and rapid change. Some may see some issues and challenges confronting them as overwhelming, while others may see the same issues as minor, while others see them as essential. Sometimes these issues and challenges are subtle whereas others cause great controversy. Nevertheless, the church of today is vastly different from the church of the near past.

Whereas the Episcopal Church, the Diocese of Central Pennsylvania, and all congregations are involved in this evolutionary change. Many congregations and individuals are overwhelmed with the broad array of issues they are being challenged to address. Sadly, many congregations and individuals find the pivotal moment to change and adapt is at the point they realize that the benefits of change outweigh the cost or consequences of not changing.

Whereas the purpose of Crossroads is to assist identified congregations to adapt ministries to the changing religious environment. The Diocese desires to assist congregations in making healthy choices with supportive partnership. In turn, the Diocese does not want to prescribe solutions or scenarios to identified congregations. Instead, the Diocese desires identified congregations to take time and to reflect upon their ministry.

Whereas it is the aim of the Diocese to empower congregations to assess their situation and to develop short term and long term goals on how to proclaim the message of Jesus Christ amidst a period of great evolution and change.

Whereas it is necessary to note, that in the process of making adjustments there will be successes and failures. This is to be expected. This is natural. Sadly, all too often when individuals and congregations notice that they are at crossroads they either quit or overreact. Instead the Commission would like individuals and congregations to look at their situation with an open heart and clear thinking, and ask themselves, "What did we learn in this effort?", and "How can we approach the issue with different perspectives?"

Therefore, be it resolved that:

- A. Each January, identified Crossroad congregations will provide the Commission on Congregational Development and the Bishop a report of their ministries and stewardship efforts of the past year. It would be

appropriate for congregations to review their situation after six months in order to assess their benchmarks and determine how they are progressing. It would be useful for congregations to discuss this with a member of the Commission.

- B.** Identified congregations will develop an initial three year plan on how to finance:
  - i. ordained ministry costs
  - ii. Fairshare
  - iii. other congregational ministry costs
  - iv. building and other related ministry costs
  
- C.** In years two and three, congregations will provide:
  - i. a review on how these costs are either on target or falling short
  - ii. an updated and adjusted plan

Be it further resolved that Congregations will provide a report on how they provide community outreach and Christian Education.

Be it further resolved that Congregations will provide a report on how they are adjusting their ministry in relation to their financial realities.

Be it further resolved that a congregation will be designated as at Crossroads by a committee appointed by the bishop. The committee will consider issues such as attendance, level of pledging, adherence to the Diocesan Fairshare and visibility and vitality of church ministry efforts. Churches deemed to be at a Crossroads will be advised of the specific areas which they should consider for re-mediation.<sup>1</sup>