



THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA  
*The Diocese of Central Pennsylvania*

Resolution for the **Inclusion** of all persons regardless of sexual orientation as full and equal participants in the life of Christ's Church.

**WHEREAS**, our baptismal covenant calls us to "respect the dignity of every human being" and,

**WHEREAS**, Title III, Canon 1, Section 2 of the Canons of The Episcopal Church states that "No person shall be denied access to the discernment process for any ministry, lay or ordained, in this church because of race, color, ethnicity, national origin, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, disabilities or age;" and

**WHEREAS**, The Diocese of Central Pennsylvania is committed (Ref: Resolution No. 4 of the 130<sup>th</sup> Convention -2000) "...to celebrating the richness of our church communities, inclusive of all diversity of gender and sexual orientations, at all levels of the Church's life"; and further, to "... stand together in opposition to all acts of exclusion or ostracism of, or violence toward gay and lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered persons (or those perceived or thought to be so), at all levels of the Church's life", and

**WHEREAS**, this commitment was reaffirmed by resolution at the Diocesan Convention in 2008,

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT** The Diocese of Central Pennsylvania, being guided by the Holy Spirit, reaffirms its commitment to celebrate the richness of our church communities and to insure that all persons regardless of sex or sexual orientation are full and equal participants in the Life of Christ's Church, by:

Encouraging our Deputies to the General Convention 2009 to support legislation that would ensure compliance with Title III, Canon 1, Section 2, which supports the full and equal participation of all persons regardless of sexual orientation in all aspects of the Church's ministries, lay and ordained, by voting for legislation that would effectively end the restrictions imposed by Resolution B033, passed by the General Convention 2006.

**Sponsored By:** Joanne Bevilacqua, The Rev. Charles Hoffacker, Donald Hopkins, Robert Passow.

**Co-sponsors:** The Rev. Joseph DeLauter, Jason Dench, The Rev. Alexander Dyakiw, The Rev. James Edwards, Ann Gibboney, Richard Gibboney, Kathryn M. Grossman, Karen Harvey, Mildred B. Hopkins, Ph.D., The Rev. Robin Jarrell, The Rev. John X. Jobson, F. Scott Mauger, Barbara Passow, Kay Putnam, Toby Scott, The Ven. Canon Daniel L. Selvage, The Rev. James Zmyslo.

## Background Information

As a result of the Windsor Report, the 75<sup>th</sup> General Convention was under extraordinary pressure to enact a moratorium on the election, consent, and consecration of further gay or lesbian bishops. The House of Deputies rejected such a resolution (A161) on June 20, 2006. However, the very next day, the former Presiding Bishop used highly unusual parliamentary tactics to force a vote on Resolution B033—which called upon "Standing Committees and bishops with jurisdiction to exercise restraint by not consenting to the consecration of any candidate to the episcopate whose manner of life presents a challenge to the wider church and will lead to further strains on communion." To everyone present, it was clear that "manner of life" was code for "gay and lesbian persons with same-sex domestic partners." The new Presiding Bishop expressed her reluctant support for the resolution, as did a few gay and lesbian deputies. The resolution was passed by both houses with great emotion.

In the days following General Convention, canon law experts began pointing out that B033 is a violation of the ecclesiastical laws that govern the Episcopal Church. The Canons of General Convention (Title III, Canon 1, Section 2) prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation: "No person shall be denied access to the discernment process for any ministry, lay or ordained, in this Church because of race, color, ethnic origin, national origin, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, disabilities or age, except as otherwise provided by these Canons." The canons do not prohibit gay and lesbian persons who are in same-sex, domestic partnerships from being elected, consented, and consecrated to the episcopate.

Resolution B033 was presented as a move necessary to "keep everyone at the table" of the Anglican Communion. It is difficult to know how successful it was in that regard. On the surface, at least, it did not have much effect. In public statements, those opposed to recent developments in the Episcopal and Canadian churches remain insistent on an absolute ban on further elections of openly gay bishops and the performance of blessing ceremonies of same sex couples, neither of which was guaranteed by Resolution B033. The passing of the resolution also did not slow movement toward the development of an "alternate" Anglican Communion exemplified by the conference of likeminded primates and bishops, known as GAFCON, in Jerusalem in June of 2008, and the boycott by many of these bishops of the subsequent Lambeth Conference.

Also, the resolution has not altered the plans of the bishops in the dioceses of San Joaquin, Pittsburgh, Fort Worth and Quincy to lead members of those dioceses out of the Episcopal Church and to take steps toward the formation of an Anglican province that would be parallel to the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Church of Canada.

Meanwhile, faithful members of the Episcopal Church have been placed in a special restricted class because of their sexual orientation, in spite of the clear intent of past General Conventions.