



## Resolutions for the 62nd Arizona Diocesan Convention

### **TITLE: 2022-01 Prayers for God's Creation**

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**Church Name:** Creation Care Council

**Church City:** Diocese of Arizona

**BE IT RESOLVED:** That the 62nd Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Arizona recognizes the imminent threat of environmental disasters to God's Creation and the call of our religious tradition to protect and defend the defenseless; and be it further

**RESOLVED:** That each congregation of the Diocese be strongly encouraged to include prayers for the protection of God's Creation in every Sunday service of worship; and be it further

**RESOLVED:** That this Convention commend for use (1) the prayers in The Book of Occasional Services 2018, *Liturgical Materials for Honoring God in Creation*, (2) the prayers in *Season of Creation: An Ecumenical Celebration*, a liturgical resource authorized for use in the Episcopal Dioceses of Massachusetts and Western Massachusetts which is available for download at <https://www.diocesewma.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/SeasonOfCrea>

tionLiturgicalGuide2022-MADIoceses2.pdf, and (3) any other liturgical materials as the Bishop of Arizona may authorize.

**Explanation:** The Prayers of the People as outlined in the 1979 Book of Common Prayer, page 383, state that “Prayer is to be offered with intercession for”... “The welfare of the world”... and “Those who suffer and those in any trouble”...

As reported by multiple scientific and governmental organizations the world over, wildlife populations have nosedived by two-thirds since 1970. Three-quarters of the entire Earth’s land base has been significantly altered by humanity, as well as two-thirds of the marine environment, all in the last 50 years. The United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the world’s definitive scientific group on the subject, as well as dozens of other international science organizations, tell us that the planet is under existential threat, that climate change is, in fact, the greatest threat to human health in history.

If we are called by the church to pray each week for the welfare of the world and for those who suffer, it is impossible to do so without praying for the land itself, for the oceans, the rivers, the canyons, the wildlife, and the wilderness.

It is not just our recent history in the Episcopal tradition that compels us to pray for the protection of the wild. It is also not just the threat to our personal safety or the suffering that will result if we do not protect it. Our call to pray for the natural world is deeply embedded in our religious tradition. John the Baptist initiates the church in the riparian wilderness surrounding the Jordan River. Our most important sacramental act occurs in the wild. Jesus becomes one with the river and the desert in his baptism. From there, he is propelled back into a desert wilderness to experience his call, a call that formed this church and changed the course of world religion.

It is also not just Christianity that was born and grew in the wilderness. Throughout Hebrew Biblical tradition, our prophets discover God in the wilderness, beginning with Moses, through the founding event of Judaism, the Exodus experience of 40 years in the wild. Spiritual discernment and revelation consistently happen in our tradition in the wilderness. Our religious history begins in the wild and evolves in the wild. Without wilderness, the entire Judeo-Christian tradition would not exist.

The dire facts are reason enough to pray for the protection of God’s creation every Sunday in our worship. But we are also compelled to do so because wilderness is what connects us to God. Not only is the world in danger because of our destruction of the planet, so is our religion. We pray for the welfare of God’s creation to protect our neighbor as well as our faith.

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## TITLE: 2022-02 Protections for LGBTQIA+ Couples

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**Church Name:** Emmaus Church Plant

**Church City:** Surprise

**Endorsed by:** Rector/Vicar & Vestry/Bishop's Committee

BE IT RESOLVED: The 62nd Diocesan Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Arizona affirms General Convention Resolution 2018-A086 "Authorize Marriage Rites and Added Provisions for Same-Sex Couples". This is inclusive of authorized rites such as "The Witnessing and Blessing of a Same Sex Covenant" which reminds us that "Our covenantal life with God is expressed in relationships of commitment and faithfulness, including those of same-sex couples. It is the Church's joy to celebrate these relationships as signs of God's love, to pray for God's grace to support couples in their life together, and to join with these couples in our shared witness to the gospel in the world".

BE IT RESOLVED: That this Convention affirms General Convention Resolution Do29 “Affirming Non-Binary Access and Leadership” and understands “Same-Sex Couples” to be inclusive of all LGBTQIA+ couples, inclusive of partnerships involving transgender, non-binary, and gender-expansive individuals.

BE IT RESOLVED: This Convention affirms that no civil legislative action can annul any sacrament or sacramental rite in the Episcopal Church.

BE IT RESOLVED: That in the event existing marriage equality law recognizing, validating, and allowing to be celebrated both liturgically and secularly, the marital union of LGBTQIA+ couples is overturned or otherwise abrogated at a federal, state, or local level, the Episcopal Church in Arizona will:

- 1) continue to recognize and affirm all existing marriages and continue to provide couples denied by any change to current law, access to rites authorized for use where the civil jurisdiction in which the marriage would occur does not allow the marriage of “same-sex” couples.
- 2) with regard to clergy, Title IV.4.1.H.1 shall not be imposed in the discipline of any member of the clergy on the basis that the aforementioned member of the clergy continue to cohabit or engage in consensual sexual acts with the person to whom they were previously legally married nor upon any clergy whose relationship has been recognized by rites authorized for use where the civil jurisdiction in which the marriage would occur does not allow the marriage of opposite-sex or non-cis-gendered people.
- 3) neither shall any lay employee or member of a local congregation be similarly sanctioned or demeaned on the basis that the aforementioned member of the laity continue to cohabit or engage in consensual sexual acts with the person to whom they were previously legally married nor shall such be taken up against any lay member whose relationship has been recognized by rites authorized for use where the civil jurisdiction in which the marriage would occur does not allow the marriage of “same-sex” couples.
- 4) ensure that employment benefits, including but not limited to, medical benefits, life insurance, and pensions shall continue to be made available for all employees whose existing legal marriages are civilly annulled or are no longer afforded equal legal status with other marriages and shall be made available to both spouses on an equal basis with those available to fully legally recognized and protected marriages through the Church Pension Group's domestic partner registry."

**Explanation:** As there is a growing visible anti-LGBTQIA+\* initiative in our federal, state, and local government there is increasing concern among LGBTQIA+

couples that their unions will no longer receive legal protection. Simultaneously we are witnessing increasingly vocal discord within our Episcopal Church and the wider Anglican Communion. LGBTQIA+ couples within our diocese seek reassurance that our diocese remains committed to the full protection of their unions in the Church, and to work for the preservation of legal protections and equality in the secular world.

Recognizing that, even within our diocese, we are not of one mind, this resolution offers existing couples the peace of mind to know that, in the event, their legal marriages are nullified, no disciplinary actions will be levied against any partnered LGBTQIA+ community member, clergy or lay, for the reason of their cohabitation or consensual sexual acts with the person to whom they were previously legally married and that full benefits of employment will continue to be protected by their employer and the faith communities in which they live and serve.

\* LGBTQIA+: LGBT is a familiar abbreviation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender. It is often used as an umbrella term to reference a much more diverse community. LGBTQIA+ adds abbreviations to name Queer, Intersex, and Asexual identities and also "+" to more fully include the full diversity of the community. This full diversity is inclusive of Demisexual, Two Spirit, Non-Binary, Agender, Pansexual, and many other gender identities and sexualities.

**TITLE: 2022-03 Creation of a Committee for LGBTQIA+ Inclusion and Ministry**

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**Church Name:** Emmaus Church Plant

**Church City:** Surprise

**Endorsed by:** Rector/Vicar & Vestry/Bishop's Committee

BE IT RESOLVED: The 62nd Diocesan Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Arizona calls for a diocesan committee for LGBTQIA+ Inclusion and Ministry to be established.

BE IT RESOLVED: That this convention affirms General Convention Resolution 1976-A071 "Support the Right of Homosexuals to Equal Protection of the Law", understands this to apply to the entire LGBTQIA+ community, and charges the committee for LGBTQIA+ Inclusion and Ministry to work for the creation and maintenance of such protections.

BE IT RESOLVED: That this committee will help the Diocese of Arizona to welcome, affirm, and include members of the LGBTQIA+ community and their families as full and equal members in the communal life, worship, leadership, and governance of the Episcopal Church.

BE IT RESOLVED: That the Bishop Diocesan shall appoint a steering council of four (4) individuals, two from the clerical order and two from the laity, to organize the committee. These appointments shall last three (3) years. LGBTQIA+ individuals will be prioritized for these appointments.

**Explanation:** Absent a standing committee focused on this historically marginalized group or a coordinated visible presence in our diocese, this committee will

exist to help our diocese and our Church live more fully into the vows of our Baptismal Covenant. To this end, the committee's scope of work will be multi-dimensional and embrace each of the five Baptismal Vows and a call to action.

The committee will work to: Educate our neighbors in matters pertaining to the health and physical, emotional, and spiritual safety of LGBTQIA+ identifying persons; Build community with LGBTQIA+ community members and their families; Create a coordinated, courageous, visible presence of supporters within our congregations and in our towns and cities; Identify and name the forces and actions that exclude and marginalize; Engage in healing work, reconciliation, and restoration where the evil we have done, the evil done on our behalf, and the evil we have witnessed in silence have caused harm; Be agents of systemic change working to amend existing church canons, secular laws, policies, and procedures that marginalize the LGBTQIA+ community and their families and for the creation and passage of legislation that upholds greater equity and more full inclusion.

Members of this committee shall be individuals, both members of the LGBTQIA+ community and active allies, willing to stand up and take the personal risks needed to do the work to accomplish these goals.

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## **TITLE: 2022-04 Telling the Truth about The Episcopal Church's History with Indigenous Boarding Schools**

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**Church Name:** Council for Native American Ministry

**Church City:** Diocese of Arizona

BE IT RESOLVED: The 62nd Diocesan Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Arizona affirms the 80th General Convention of the Episcopal Church's Resolution A127 Resolution for Telling the Truth about The Episcopal Church's history with Indigenous Boarding Schools and commits to fulfilling the diocesan expectations presented therein.

BE IT RESOLVED: That the Episcopal Diocese Arizona will, before the 81st General Convention, begin an audit of the relationship, financial or otherwise, between the federal government, the diocese and/or its subsidiary entities, its churches, and any Episcopal or non-Episcopal missionary societies with respect to any Indigenous residential boarding school operated within the territorial jurisdiction of the diocese;

BE IT RESOLVED: That the Episcopal Diocese Arizona will, before the 81st General Convention, begin to gather information from boarding school survivors and their descendants about the experiences of Indigenous children and families in Episcopal run and/or supported residential boarding schools within the territorial jurisdiction of the diocese;

BE IT RESOLVED: That the Episcopal Diocese Arizona will, before the 81st General Convention, provide a public platform through which the stories of boarding school survivors of any Indigenous residential boarding schools within the territorial jurisdiction of the diocese and their descendants might be preserved and shared;

AND BE IT RESOLVED: That the Council for Native American Ministry of the Episcopal Diocese of Arizona is charged with facilitating the above work to be done by our congregations and ministries and also being a liaison between our diocese and the related programs offered by the Office of Indigenous Ministries and other churchwide entities.

**Explanation:** The legacy of Indigenous Boarding Schools and the history of present-day Arizona are linked. The Federal Indian Boarding School Program involved 408 institutions, 47 of those institutions, 12%, existed within what is now the state of Arizona. Only present-day Oklahoma has a greater legacy of Indigenous Boarding Schools than Arizona. Our responsibility to be a leader in this work with our denomination is clear in order to provide pastoral support for the communities in which we take up ministry. The Council for Native American Ministry has already begun the work of identifying the role of the Episcopal Church in the Boarding Schools listed in Secretary of Interior Deborah Haaland's recently released (May 2022) Investigative Report on account of Arizona being identified as the



state with the second largest number of boarding schools recorded in the report.

## **TITLE: 2022-05 Vocational Deacons Compensation**

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**Church Name:** Deacon's Council

**Church City:** Diocese of Arizona

BE IT RESOLVED: The 62nd Diocesan Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Arizona declares it to be the policy of this diocese that all active vocational deacons shall be paid amounts sufficient to enable them to participate in programs offered by the Church Pension Fund;

BE IT RESOLVED: That this Convention requests that all congregations or organizations in the Diocese of Arizona served by vocational deacons, excepting deacons listed as retired in the parochial report pay such deacons an honorarium of at least twenty-five dollars (\$25) per month during fiscal year 2023 and make the corresponding contribution to the Church Pension Fund of eighteen percent (18%); and

BE IT RESOLVED: That beginning in fiscal year 2024, every congregation or organization served by a vocational deacon, excepting deacons listed as retired in the parochial report, shall pay such deacon an honorarium of at least \$25 dollars (\$25) per month and make the corresponding contribution to the Church Pension Fund of eighteen percent (18%).

BE IT RESOLVED: That such honorarium is subject to the Letter of Agreement (LOA) signed with the Diocesan Bishop, and is in addition to the reimbursement of expenses incurred by the deacon in ministry, travel, continuing education, and professional organizations appropriate to the function of the deacon in their ministry.

**Explanation:** Deacons serve in their parish and diocesan positions as deacons without remuneration. The Church Pension Fund provides resources for clergy and lay employees of churches in the Episcopal Church. One of the resources is CREDO, a wellness resource, that helps both active and retired clergy pension plan participants by presenting a holistic approach to wellness for mind, body, spirit, and heart. Participants examine and evaluate their health and wellness from the spiritual, vocational, physical, and emotional health and financial points of view. The Church Pension Fund also provides pension and retirement savings plans, health benefits, and educational services. At recent conferences, representatives of the Church Pension Fund have stated that if deacons were paid a nominal amount, the deacons would be eligible for these benefits. This proposed amendment asks that congregations make such a nominal payment of \$25 a month to deacons, as well as a payment of 18% (\$4.50) to the Church Pension Fund to enable them to participate in the programs and benefits available through the Church Pension Fund.

This resolution prepares the Diocese of Arizona to conform to Resolution Co47 from the 80<sup>th</sup> General Convention of the Episcopal Church. This resolution was concurred with a Referral to an Interim Body on account of minimum wage laws, not in play within the state of Arizona. Similar resolutions have been passed by and are being taken up by dioceses on a denomination-wide level in preparation for this compensation guideline revision.