

2019 Resolution of Policy : Welcoming the Stranger

Submitted by the Diocesan Commission for Sanctuary

RESOLVED that the 131st Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Oregon urge all congregations and their members to support and participate in training and educational opportunities to welcome the stranger into our midst; and be it further

RESOLVED that, as part of this training, the Diocesan Commission for Sanctuary will offer workshops on Welcoming the Stranger in the Portland metro area and in the southern portion of the Diocese, with simultaneous transmission to satellite locations with local facilitators on-site at these locations; and be it further

RESOLVED that, as a follow-up to the Workshops, the Diocesan Commission for Sanctuary will offer a plan for a series exploring aspects of the reality of welcoming the stranger to be offered in diocesan congregations; and be it further

RESOLVED that all congregations of the Diocese be urged to offer the series this coming Advent (2019) or the Sundays after Epiphany (2020) in a format appropriate for their congregation.

Explanation:

This resolution is inspired by the resolution titled, “Confronting Hate, Racism, and Poverty in the Diocese of Oregon,” approved by the 129th Convention of the Diocese of Oregon in 2017. Among its several resolves, this resolution called for the creation of a Commission for Sanctuary to provide guidance on implementing the Biblical imperative to welcome the stranger.

The Biblical imperative is, of course, evident throughout the Scriptures, but is perhaps most clearly stated in the parable of the Good Samaritan: Jesus’ answer to the lawyer’s question, “Who is my neighbor?” At the end of that parable, Jesus tells the lawyer to “go and do likewise.”

But also providing foundational support for both this proposed resolution and the one approved in 2017, are our Baptismal Vows, where we promise that, with God’s help, we will

- Continue in the Apostles’ teaching and fellowship and in the breaking of the bread and in the prayers
- Persevere in resisting evil and whenever you fall into sin, repent and return to the Lord
- Proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ
- Seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself
- Strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being

And while the last two of these promises may seem to pertain most clearly to this resolution, in fact, all are embodied in our efforts to follow Jesus’ lead as we identify our neighbors and embrace the strangers among us.

This resolution is also a response to the Resolution (C009), of the Episcopal Church, meeting in its General Convention in July 2018, which recommended “that its institutions and congregations become places of welcome, refuge, healing, and other forms of material and pastoral support for those targeted for deportation due to immigration status or some perceived status of difference.” It further encouraged “its members to connect with local and national sanctuary communities and institutions, faith-based coalitions, and immigrant rights groups and coalitions, and engage in educating, organizing, advocacy, and direct action” with the focus of ensuring “the safety, security, and due process for immigrants.”

In keeping with the resolution of The Episcopal Church (C009), this resolution offers ways for all of us in the Episcopal Diocese of Oregon to learn more about the plight and needs of immigrants and refugees, within and beyond our worshipping communities, and how best to accompany them as they confront countless daunting obstacles to their health, safety, and general well-being.

There will be no financial impact on the 2020 Operating Budget of the Diocese of Oregon.