

Resolution on Action to Improve Economic Justice in the Diocese

Submitted by Rev. Jeffrey MacKnight, Rector, St. Dunstan's Episcopal Church, Bethesda

RESOLVED, that the One Hundred Sixteenth Convention of the Diocese of Washington call upon the churches and people of the Diocese of Washington to identify and examine the clear effects of impoverishment within our parish boundaries; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the One Hundred Sixteenth Convention of the Diocese of Washington call upon the churches and people of the Diocese of Washington to identify and develop opportunities to treat the effects of impoverishment within each parish (e.g., feeding, housing, clothing, education, health care) and to do so both directly and in combination with other churches and charitable organizations; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the One Hundred Sixteenth Convention of the Diocese of Washington call upon the churches and people of the Diocese of Washington to allow our outreach decisions to be informed by this examination and to study and learn about the choices available to us in order to express our compassion in meaningful ways and also to provide examples of Christian compassion and concern for our communities; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the One Hundred Sixteenth Convention of the Diocese of Washington call upon the churches and people of the Diocese of Washington to review and reflect on our own economic choices as churches and individuals and assessing whether we measure up to the highest ethical standards when deciding such issues as living wage pay and benefits for church employees and church contractors such as maintenance and janitorial workers; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the One Hundred Sixteenth Convention of the Diocese of Washington call upon the churches and people of the Diocese of Washington to evaluate, in particular, and then implement, as possible, a policy of paying all direct and indirect support staff a minimum wage of at least \$15 an hour, in accordance with the Federal minimum wage measure for which we are advocating; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the One Hundred Sixteenth Convention of the Diocese of Washington call upon the churches and people of the Diocese of Washington to seek out allies and potential allies who share our concerns with the aim of learning together and supporting common efforts in our communities and in the Diocese, such as support for poverty-prevention efforts like living-wage laws and publicly-funded early childhood education and adequate public transportation (especially for low-wage workers); and be it further

RESOLVED, that the One Hundred Sixteenth Convention of the Diocese of Washington call upon the churches and people of the Diocese of Washington to urge Diocesan personal charged with directing the investment decisions of our actively managed Diocesan endowment to consider investing these funds with fund managers who are using a living wage commitment screen for companies whose stock is being acquired or whose bonds are part of the portfolio; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the One Hundred Sixteenth Convention of the Diocese of Washington call upon the churches and people of the Diocese of Washington to meet in Regional convocations to discuss parish needs, ideas and initiatives (resulting from the study and reflection named above) and report to the 2017 Diocesan Convention, with recommendations for further action.

Explanation: We find ourselves ministering in and to a society that has allowed wealth and income to become concentrated among the few and leaving the many with inadequate shares of resources, choices and power. We understand this problem to be one that results from choices and policies made by us collectively. We understand that we participate as individuals and as churches in the system that produces and perpetuates concentration of wealth and power to the detriment of us all. We see that while we devote charitable resources to alleviating the extreme effects of poverty and hopelessness caused by wealth and income imbalance, we have not acted effectively to identify factors that drive increasing disparity, not even those that are, to any degree, under our control. We understand, as illustrated in the accompanying background material, that our Diocese contains high levels of poverty, hunger and income inequality.