

The 202nd Annual Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Maine
Held via Zoom conference October 23, 2021
Summary for St. Bart's

OVERVIEW

The main purpose of the annual Diocesan Convention is three-fold:

- Approve the Diocesan Budget for the upcoming calendar year
- Approve/Reject resolutions brought forth by various parties within the Diocese
- Elect officials for Standing Committee and other committees as required

This document will provide a brief summary of results and implications for St Bart's.

BUDGET

The budget passed. Income was projected to be down by 11%, with a concomitant need to reduce spending:

- "Lean" - travel expenses reduced/use Zoom instead. Part of Loring House is rented out.
- Same assessment rate as 2021

Lael Sorenson, budget committee chair, spoke about how leaner resources and increased reliance on electronic meetings created a sense of more cohesiveness, better coordination and feeling more closely knit. This echoes what we have felt at St Bart's as well.

RESOLUTIONS

Nine resolutions were brought forward this year. All passed. Several of them focused on the following themes:

- Recognition of climate change and our role to uphold all of God's creation (Resolutions #2 and #4)
- Recognition of Maine's indigenous population's sovereignty and acknowledgment of territorial lands our parishes occupy (Resolutions #1 and #3)

Resolution #2—Declaration of Climate Emergency and Observance of Season of Creation

- Parishes are urged to take action for creation care; adopt best practices for sustainable living and environmental health.
- Parishes are urged to observe the Season of Creation from 1 September through the Feast of St Francis of Assisi (4 October).

Implications for St Bart's: We have fully embraced the Season of Creation. Are there other things we all can be doing to promote caring for the environment?

Resolution #4—Faith, Farming and *Good News Gardens*

The Good News Garden movement is a church-wide endeavor that seeks to connect Episcopalians with agrarian ministry, connecting faith, farming and food. Episcopalians are encouraged to plant more and share the bounty. This can be at the parish level, on church grounds, or at individual homes. Some parishes have started raised vegetable garden beds on church land or elsewhere and have donated food to local food banks.

Opportunity at St Bart's: We would like to form a group to explore how we could implement a Good News Garden, either with raised beds at church or at individual homes. This could also be a good opportunity to get our Youth involved in growing, harvesting and donating food to local food pantries. Anyone who is connected with the Yarmouth Community Garden would be welcome to provide input. Is there an opportunity to use the Community Garden as a resource? Calling all gardeners, too. This effort ties in nicely with our Reimagining Outreach program and our core values. Please reach out to someone on the vestry for further information.

Resolution #1—Support of LD 1626 Changes to the Maine Indian Claims Settlement Act

LD 1626 would bring the State of Maine in conformity with Federal Indian law to restore tribal sovereignty and on par with 570 other recognized tribes in the US. This would allow indigenous populations in Maine to apply for Federal Programs (financial support) available to other indigenous groups in the US.

Implications for St Bart's: Please reach out to your local representatives to pass this bill.

Resolution #3—Territorial Acknowledgement

The Diocese and its member parishes are to engage in a process of self-education and raising awareness of the lands we occupy and their connection to indigenous origins. Further background here:

https://www.mainewabanakireach.org/acknowledging_the_land

The Diocese will write to each parish providing resources to assist in the process and availability of templates to create a territorial acknowledgement.

Implications for St Bart's: This could be an opportunity for a Youth or Adult Education project to research the origins of the land the church occupies, supported by parishioners who have been involved with the various WabanakiReach programs. A written territorial acknowledgement is expected to be submitted to the Diocese for inclusion in the 2022 Convention materials. If you have connections with WabanakiReach or have been involved in indigenous recognition programs, or would like to get involved in any way, please contact a vestry member for further information.

Change of Status Resolutions

Two resolutions were in support of changes in status of two churches:

- Forfeiture of Union for Saints Matthew and Barnabas in Hallowell due to lack of leadership and funds. This church will now be converted to a community center/housing for New Mainers.
- Saint Andrew in Winthrop status moved from Mission to Full Parish.

OTHER BUSINESS

- The Rev. Suzanne Roberts, MD, of Portland was elected as our region's clergy representative on the Standing Committee.
- Recognition of 16 new clergy to the Diocese this year, 3 of whom are transition priests, two of whom are deacons.
- Recognition of 9 clergy who left the diocese this year, including our dear Nina of course.