

## REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON RESOLUTIONS

The committee presents three resolutions, found to be in order in the following form and hereby submitted to the 237<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts.

### 1. Establishing Minimal Assessable Compensation for Permanent Deacons – 2022

Submitted by:

The Rev. Deacon Liz Good (Canonically Resident Clergy), St. John's, Holbrook

The Rev. Deacon Elizabeth Whitmore (Canonically Resident Clergy)

Ms. Betsy Ridge (Lay Delegate), Church of the Advent, Boston

The Rev. Edwin Johnson (Canonically Resident Clergy), St. Mary's, Dorchester

The Rev. Dr. Karen Coleman (Canonically Resident Clergy), Boston University and Trinity, Boston

Mr. Kevin Miller (Lay Delegate), Epiphany, Walpole

The Rev. Chris Wendell (Canonically Resident Clergy), St. Paul's, Bedford

Mr. Brian Litzenberger (Lay Delegate), Trinity, Concord

The Rev. Deacon Hilary Greene (Canonically Resident Clergy), St. Peter's, Osterville

The Rev. Deacon H. Mark Smith (Canonically Resident Clergy)

The Rev. Tamra Tucker (Canonically Resident Clergy), The Crossing, Boston

The Rt. Rev. Dr. Cn. Carol Gallagher (Canonically Resident Clergy), Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts

Mr. William Boyce (Lay Delegate), Grace, New Bedford

The Rev. Deacon Mary Beth Emerson (Canonically Resident Clergy), St. John's, Duxbury

The Rev. Deborah Phillips (Canonically Resident Clergy), Grace, Salem

### THE RESOLUTION

**Resolved**, that this 237<sup>th</sup> Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts affirms it to be the policy of the Diocese for each Permanent Deacon to be provided with minimal compensation of \$25.00 per month, with assessments of 18% (\$4.50) monthly to be forwarded to the Church Pension Fund on their behalf.

### *Explanation For*

The Episcopal Church provides robust clergy wellness resources, access to significant financial planning assistance, and professionally managed investment opportunities, through the Church Pension Fund's (CPF) programming. CPF is barred by pension law from sharing these resources with unassessed individuals. Since permanent deacons of our diocese generally serve their parishes and the diocese without pay, they traditionally have had no access to these ministry supports. In 2018, CPF revised its policies and removed minimum compensation requirements for access to many of its benefits. CPF's intention was to its reach to lower-compensated clerics in a changing church. Among young deacons surveyed by the Association for Episcopal Deacons, worry about access to the financial

supports available to fund retirement expenses to a prior generation (such as Medicare, Social Security, and employer-provided retirement benefits) is their top priority to address, and they indicate these concerns inhibit young diaconal vocations. Many dioceses are passing these resolutions, including several in Province I.

### ***Statements Against***

- Permanent deacons gain moral credibility for their prophetic voice by serving without pay. Deacons' ability to prophetically critique The Episcopal Church could be impaired by fostering financial dependence on that institution.
- The parishes can't afford this, and even minimal compensation could have the effect of changing deacons' focus from social action to parish pastoral care.
- Deacon participation in CPF could make it harder for priests to be provided for in retirement years.
- The benefits this resolution would secure for deacons have no great value, in any event.
- This is the beginning of a slippery slope to requiring deacons to be paid, right when the parishes are facing post-pandemic decline.

### ***Implementation Requirements***

Upon approval of the 237th Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts, clergy and vestry of each parish which has an assigned permanent deacon should implement the resolution, institute a schedule of regular payments to the deacon as well as regular contribution to the Church Pension Fund on behalf of that deacon.