



St. Peter's Episcopal Church

A Resolution Regarding General Convention 2003



July 27, 2003

The Vestry of St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Purcellville, Virginia has passed the following resolution and instructed that it be forward to the Bishops and Deputies to the 2003 General Convention of the Episcopal Church.

WHEREAS,

We at St. Peter's find ourselves called and devoted to faithfully pursuing our mission: Building Christians for Service. Through the rapid growth in our county, we have an unprecedented opportunity to reach out to a large and increasingly diverse population and offer a welcoming home to all who will hear the message of the Gospel of Christ with respect and love.

Simultaneously, the Episcopal Church faces a time of unprecedented opportunity to reach out to the unchurched as never before through the 20/20 initiative.

Yet, as we face these historic opportunities, the Episcopal Church also faces contentious sexuality issues, in particular, the ordination of homosexual clergy and the blessing of same-sex unions. There are people sincerely committed to a range of views regarding these issues here at St. Peter's and throughout the Episcopal Church. The only agreement is that there is no consensus as to what the Church's response should be.

Taking action on these issues at this year's General Convention will effectively bypass the process of careful and respectful dialog that has been the hallmark of how the Episcopal Church handles contentious issues and will badly damage the process of reconciliation that is struggling to surface within the church.

Given the deep divisions on these issues, if action is taken now without consensus, outright schism is a frightening possibility, both at the national and international levels.

Such divisions will divert the Episcopal Church from its mission and from the goals of 20/20, will hurt churches at all levels and damage our efforts at St. Peter's to reach our growing local population and to build Christians for service.

THEREFORE,

The vestry of St. Peter's does hereby call on the Bishops and deputies of this diocese to take a strong message of unity and focus on mission to the general convention. We strongly commend the focus of the diocese's Center Aisle on unity around a center that is defined not as "a mid-point along a theological and political spectrum" but rather as the "foundational faith in Christ that binds us together."

We urge our Bishops and Deputies to act for the sake of the unity and mission of the church by not supporting the initiatives that will de facto change the Church's doctrine and



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discipline on human sexuality before there is a consensus on this change. We specifically ask that you (1) support Resolution B007 Diversity: Affirmations for Facilitating Emergence of Consensus, (2) withhold consent for the election of the Bishop Coadjutor-elect of New Hampshire and (3) refrain from authorizing the development of liturgical rites for the blessing of same sex unions. We realize that holding off on these initiatives may be painful to some who yearn to develop a more diverse witness, but we ask your forbearance and restraint for the sake of our corporate unity, love and witness.