



**THE 187th ANNUAL CONVENTION
OF THE DIOCESE OF CHICAGO
November 23, 2024**

LEGISLATION

A-187 Amendment of Canon 35 (The Bishop and Trustees)

RESOLUTIONS

B-187 Consolidation of St. Paul's (McHenry), St. Mary's (Crystal Lake), and St. Ann's (Woodstock)

C-187 Minimum Priest Compensation

D-187 On Being Socially Responsible Investors in Palestine and Israel

E-187 Transition of the Diocese of Chicago Sanctuary Task Force to Sanctuary Committee

F-187 Adopting the Net-Zero By 2030 Creation Care Goal for the Diocese of Chicago and Creating Resources to Encourage and Enable Parishes to Achieve Net-Zero

**THE 187TH ANNUAL CONVENTION
OF THE DIOCESE OF CHICAGO**

November 23, 2024

Subject: Amendment of Canon 35 (The Bishop and Trustees)

Sponsor(s): Lonn Myers, First Vice President of The Bishop and Trustees of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Chicago, A Corporation

William Pearson, Second Vice President of The Bishop and Trustees of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Chicago, A Corporation

RESOLUTION

RESOLVED, that the second paragraph of Section 5 of Canon 35 (The Bishop and Trustees) be amended to read as follows:

All deeds, mortgages, contracts, encumbrances or other documents whereby the Corporation shall convey, mortgage, acquire, sell or encumber any real estate, shall be authorized by resolution duly adopted by the Trustees of said Corporation present at a regular or duly called special meeting of said Trustees but in no event by less than five affirmative votes; and shall be executed in the name and on behalf of the Corporation by its President or a Vice President (or such other officer or officers as may be authorized by the Trustees), and when so executed and duly acknowledged shall be binding on the Corporation; provided, however, that no deed, mortgage, encumbrance, or alienation of any real estate owned or used (as the case may be) by a Parish, Mission or Diocesan Agency shall be executed without the previous written consent of the Bishop acting with the advice and consent of the Standing Committee of the Diocese. As used in this Canon, the term "Mission" shall have the meaning given to it in Canon 17, the term "Parish" shall have the meaning given to it in Canon 18, and the term "Diocesan Agency" shall have the meaning given to it in Canon 36A.

EXPLANATION

1. This resolution amends Canon 35 to be consistent with the by-laws of The Bishop and Trustees. The resolution removes the requirement that a Secretary or Assistant Secretary execute real estate documents. Such execution is not needed in current real estate practice and can be an impediment to expeditious closing of a transaction. The resolution also removes apparently duplicative requirements for a resolution adopted by the Trustees of “said estate” and a resolution adopted by the Trustees of “said Corporation.” It also makes minor language changes. All of the changes are highlighted below:

All deeds, mortgages, contracts, encumbrances or other documents whereby the Corporation shall convey, mortgage, acquire, sell or encumber any real estate, shall be authorized by resolution duly adopted by the Trustees of said Corporation present at a regular or duly called special meeting of said Trustees but in no event by less than five affirmative votes; and shall be executed in the name and on behalf of the Corporation by its President or a Vice President (or such other officer or officers as may be authorized by the Trustees), and when so executed and duly acknowledged shall be binding on the Corporation; provided, however, that no deed, mortgage, encumbrance, or alienation of any real estate owned or used (as the case may be) by a Parish, Mission or Diocesan Agency shall be executed without the previous written consent of the Bishop acting with the advice and consent of the Standing Committee of the Diocese. As used in this Canon, the term “Mission” shall have the meaning given to it in Canon 17, the term “Parish” shall have the meaning given to it in Canon 18, and the term “Diocesan Agency” shall have the meaning given to it in Canon 36A.

2. Adoption of this resolution is not expected to require expenditures that would have an impact on the diocesan budget.
3. This resolution is endorsed by The Bishop and Trustees of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Chicago, A Corporation.

**THE 187st ANNUAL CONVENTION OF
THE DIOCESE OF CHICAGO**

November 23, 2024

Subject: Consolidation of St. Paul’s (McHenry), St. Mary’s (Crystal Lake), and St. Ann’s (Woodstock)

Originator(s): The Convention Delegations of St. Paul’s, St. Mary’s, and St. Ann’s: Mr. Jeff Zabor, St. Paul’s McHenry; Ms. Marilyn Bell, St. Paul’s, McHenry; Ms. Patrice Braun, St. Paul’s, McHenry; Deacon Deb Lang, St. Paul’s McHenry; The Rev. Eileen Shanley-Roberts, St. Paul’s, McHenry; Mr. Mike Higgins, St. Mary’s, Crystal Lake; Mr. Andrew Wild, St. Mary’s, Crystal Lake; Mr. Doug Murphy, St. Mary’s, Crystal Lake; Ms. Holly Williams, St. Ann’s, Woodstock; The Rev. Dick Hattan, St. Ann’s, Woodstock; Joanel Powers, St. Ann’s, Woodstock; Ven. Mike Choquette, St. Mary’s, Crystal Lake; The Rev. Scott Zaucha St. Ann’s, Woodstock and St. Mary’s, Crystal Lake.

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS St. Paul’s Episcopal Church, McHenry (“St. Paul’s”), St. Mary’s Episcopal Church, Crystal Lake (“St. Mary’s”), and St. Ann’s Episcopal Church, Woodstock (“St. Ann’s”) have voted at a joint congregational meeting held on May 4, 2024 in conformity with the Constitution and Canons of the Diocese of Chicago (“Diocesan Canons”) to consolidate and form Trinity Episcopal Parish (“Trinity”); and

WHEREAS, Trinity proposes to maintain two church campuses at which worship may be held: the church campus presently known as St Mary’s Church, Crystal Lake, Illinois, and the church campus presently known as St. Ann’s Church, Woodstock, Illinois;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that this Convention hereby approve the consolidation of St. Paul’s, St. Mary’s, and St. Ann’s (the “Constituent Congregations”) to form Trinity (the “Consolidation”); and

FURTHER RESOLVED, that this Convention hereby ratify and confirm that because all of the Constituent Congregations are, as of this date, admitted into union with this Convention, Trinity shall, upon completion of the Consolidation, be admitted into union with this Convention without further action of this Convention; and

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the boundaries of Trinity be coextensive with the boundaries of McHenry County, Illinois; and

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Consolidation be effective as of January 1, 2025, or such later date as the Constituent Congregations may agree upon with the Ecclesiastical Authority.

EXPLANATION

In support of this resolution, the leaders of St. Paul's, St. Mary's, and St. Ann's provide the following additional information:

- Leaders from St. Mary's and St. Ann's entered discussions about parish partnership in early 2022, began sharing a priest in August of 2022, entered into a 3-year Covenant to share a common life February of 2023, and since that time have moved toward sharing both ministry and the supporting parish business functions that serve the ministry. The two parishes have a common priest-in-charge and their vestries meet together regularly.
- While there are many benefits of the covenant, the priest-in-charge and vestries discerned that the benefits of the covenant can be better realized and amplified by becoming a single parish with two campuses (churches).
- The leadership of St. Paul's discerned that this congregation was nearing the end of its life as a standalone parish. St. Paul's entered into conversation with the other two parishes and expressed their interest in joining the consolidated parish.
- St. Paul's sold its property with Standing Committee approval in 2020 and worships in rented space. The St. Paul's congregation held their last worship service in the town of McHenry on All Saints' Sunday, 2024, after which point their members joined the worshipping communities in Woodstock and Crystal Lake.
- By operating together as Trinity, the Constituent Congregations will realize increased efficiencies in having one governance and business structure, and relational and missional benefits in being a single parish that serves all of McHenry County.
- A consolidated Trinity will have sufficient financial resources to pay its operating expenses, contribute to the Diocese based on its normal operating budget, continue to develop sound stewardship practices, engage a priest to work an appropriate amount of time as agreed with the Bishop, and pay the salary, pension contribution and health insurance premiums of the priest as recommended by Diocesan guidelines.
- New bylaws have been drafted that provide provisions for the transition of existing vestry terms and the establishment of a vestry initially composed of current members of St. Paul's, St. Mary's, and St. Ann's. By the end of the terms of the initial vestry of Trinity, the vestry will be composed equally of members who attend worship services at each campus, regardless of previous parish affiliation.
- Members of all three parishes have been active participants in discerning a way forward.
- At a gathering of the voting members of all three congregations on May 4, 2024, all three congregations voted overwhelmingly to consolidate on January 1, 2025, to form Trinity, with campuses in Woodstock and Crystal Lake.

- Each step of the process leading to this Petition has been taken in consultation with, and with the support of, the Bishop and the Diocesan staff. Standing Committee consented to this consolidation on October 16, 2024.

Adoption of this resolution is not expected to require expenditures that would have an impact on the diocesan budget.

**THE 187TH ANNUAL CONVENTION
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November 23, 2024

Subject: Minimum Priest Compensation

Sponsor(s): Diocesan Council, Mr. Keith Kampert, Diocesan Treasurer

RESOLUTION

RESOLVED, that the required minimum cash compensation (includes cash stipend and self-employment tax) to be paid to a priest working in Congregations in the Diocese for the calendar year of 2025 shall be:

	Full-time Priest	Half-time Priest* (20 hours/week)
No Church Housing / Utilities provided by the Church	\$74,976	\$37,488
Church Housing / Utilities provided by the Church	\$54,664	\$27,332

*All priests (including working retirees) should be compensated at a level commensurate with the number of hours the priest is providing to the Church as a percentage of the full-time priest compensation.

Further **RESOLVED** that Congregations that employ priests consult the [compensation report](#) submitted to the Convention.

Further **RESOLVED** that Congregations employing any priest less than full-time are highly encouraged to pay 100% of the priest’s medical and dental insurance, including family coverage when appropriate. If coverage at 100% is not feasible, then it is suggested to use the same formula as used when calculating salary. If a priest is covered under a spousal plan, it is highly suggested that the priest’s compensation be increased per the exact amount the spouse is required to pay per their employer. The compensation is taxable and pensionable to the priest.

Further **RESOLVED** that this resolution be required annually and that it reflect an inflationary adjustment to the required minimum cash compensation for all priests working in congregations and on the Bishop's staff.

Further **RESOLVED** that this resolution be reviewed in its entirety every two years by a task force appointed by Diocesan Council. The cost-of-living adjustment must be recommended annually by the Diocesan Treasurer and Diocesan Council.

EXPLANATION

This resolution is offered by the Diocesan Treasurer and the Diocesan Council as required by the 165th Diocesan Convention (2002) in connection with its adoption of a resolution concerning compensation. The resolution, adopted in 2002, required that the Diocesan Treasurer recommend annually an inflationary adjustment to the required minimum cash compensation for full-time priests working in congregations and on the Bishop's staff. As contemplated in 2002, the resolution was advisory for priests in other positions and for priests who are working less than full-time. Effective with this resolution, the resolution would be mandatory for all part-time and full-time priests. The compensation figures included in this resolution reflect a 2% recommended inflationary increase from 2024 to 2025.

The increase of 2% reflected in the minimums given above is in consideration of the 3.4% increase in the "Consumer Price Index (CPI) All Items Less Food and Energy – All Urban Consumers" for the Chicago-Naperville-Elgin, IL-IN_WI Core Based Statistical Area and the 3.0% increase in the CPI for all items. (https://www.bls.gov/regions/midwest/news-release/ConsumerPriceIndex_Chicago.htm). The Chicago-Naperville-Elgin includes the counties of Cook, DeKalb, DuPage, Grundy, Kane, Kankakee, Kendall, Lake, McHenry, and Will Counties in Illinois.

As these are minimum cash compensation amounts, we recommend that Congregations pay their priests above these levels based on tenure (e.g., with that particular church or as an ordained priest), parish size (e.g., average Sunday attendance or annual budget), parish growth, diversity in programming, etc. In cases where parishes wish to pay more than these minimums, but have difficulty doing so, other forms of compensation (e.g., such as additional vacation, sabbaticals, professional education) should be offered.

Additionally, each Congregation or institution is expected to review the compensation of its priest(s) on a yearly basis and make the necessary adjustment based on the cost-of-living increase.

Resources are available from Bishop's staff and Church Pension Group to assist Congregations and priests with cash compensation determinations.

These minimums, along with total compensation of priests in the Chicago Diocese, should be examined to ensure that Diocese of Chicago priests are paid fairly relative to their ecclesiastical peers in The Episcopal Church.

This resolution has been reviewed and approved by the Diocesan Council on September 21, 2024, as contemplated by last year's resolution.

Diocesan staff salaries are set separately through the annual budget process and are already reflected in the Diocesan budget. Therefore, adoption of this resolution is not expected to require expenditures that would have an impact on the Diocesan budget.

**THE 187TH ANNUAL CONVENTION
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November 23, 2024

Subject: On Being Socially Responsible Investors in Palestine and Israel

Sponsor(s): The Rev. Jenny Hulen, the Antiracism Commission, the Peace & Justice Committee, the Sanctuary Task Force

RESOLUTION

RESOLVED, that in keeping with Episcopal Church policy approved in Resolution B-016 *Develop Investment Criteria for Israel and Palestine Based on a Human Rights Screen* (https://episcopalarchives.org/cgi-bin/acts/acts_generate_pdf.pl?resolution=2018-B016) at the 79th General Convention in 2018, the 187th Annual Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Chicago direct the Diocesan Foundation to supplement its established No-Buy List by adding those U.S. and foreign corporations listed in the American Friends Service Committee’s (AFSC) Divesting for Palestinian Rights List (<https://afsc.org/divest>), which includes “publicly traded companies that consistently, knowingly, and directly enable or facilitate human rights violations or violations of international law as part of prolonged military occupations, apartheid, and genocide”; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Diocesan Foundation and congregations of the Diocese commit to a good faith effort to discontinue all financial involvement in corporations engaged in violations of international law and human rights described in the AFSC list.

EXPLANATION

Our Baptismal Covenant calls us to “strive for justice and peace among all people and respect the dignity of every human being.” Matthew 6:21 reminds us: “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” Inspired by the Apostle Paul’s poem of love in 1 Corinthians 13, the aim of an investment screen for Palestine and Israel is to liberate both the perpetrators and the victims of injustice. As one of the time-honored economic tools for resisting injustice while maintaining

a Christian commitment to nonviolence, an investment screen is a response to Scripture. This screen answers the calls issued by Kairos Palestine and Global Palestine for Justice, representing the voices of Palestinian Christians, urging Christians and other people of faith and conscience worldwide to stand prophetically for justice and equality, the only bases for a lasting peace.

The Episcopal Church has a rich history of scrutinizing its endowment investments to ensure that they are consistent with the Church's core beliefs, teachings, and policy. TEC approved divestment from and sanctioning of South African apartheid (1985 D-073, 1988 B-050 and B-052, 1991 A-154), and, among other measures, divestment from private prisons (2015 D-067) and from fossil fuels (2018 A-020). Resolution B-016 approved by General Convention in 2018 resulted in the historic sale in October 2019 of shares in three companies – Caterpillar, Inc., Motorola Solutions, and the Israel Discount Bank – all found to be complicit in the illegal Israeli occupation of Palestinian Territories of the West Bank. Subsequently, TEC divested from Bank Leumi and DXC Technology in 2020 and from Bezeq Israeli Telecommunication Corp and Mivne Real Estate in 2023. B-016 reflected the evolving understanding that The Episcopal Church has a moral responsibility as a community of faith to cease financial dealings with injustice. We in the Diocese of Chicago share this moral responsibility.

In 2018 B-016 focused on the Israeli role in the Occupied Palestinian Territories and the settlements. Since that General Convention, we have seen the passage in Israel of the Nation State Law, the intensifying expansion of settlements in the West Bank, the publication by all the major human rights organizations, including Israeli, of reports documenting Israel's apartheid, and since October 7, 2023 the devastation of Gaza and in recent months similar assaults in East Jerusalem and the West Bank. In light of these developments, the investment screen's criteria need updating.

In 2021 our Diocesan Convention approved by a resounding majority Resolution F-184 *Confronting Apartheid* based on recognition that Israel systematically contravenes international law and human rights and practices apartheid in its treatment of Palestinians. Those inside Israel live under a legal system akin to Jim Crow. More than fifty laws discriminate against non-Jewish citizens, particularly Palestinians. The Nation-State Law of 2018 provides that the right to national self-determination is a uniquely Jewish right, that Hebrew is Israel's only official language, and that Jewish settlement is a state-promoted national value. In the West Bank, the discriminatory legal regime is two-tiered: Israeli settlers live under Israeli civil law; Palestinians are subjected to an arbitrary military regime of on-going and accelerating ethnic cleansing, dispossession, displacement, collective punishment, limited freedom of movement, and inequities between Palestinian residents and Jewish settlers in infrastructure, legal rights, and access to land, water, and other resources. Some two-thirds of Palestinian men have been detained in Israeli prisons where torture, lack of access to lawyers, and detention without charge or trial are standard practice. Yearly some 500 to 700 Palestinian children under the age of 18 are ripped from their homes in the middle of the night, detained by the Israeli military, denied legal counsel and contact with their parents, physically and psychologically abused, and often forced

to sign confessions in Hebrew, a language most do not understand. Prior to October 7, 2023, Israel had imposed a blockade on Gaza, creating an open-air prison in which United Nations officials reported that conditions were “unlivable.”

In response to the Hamas attacks of October 7, Israel has maintained an on-going, devastating assault on Gaza’s civilians and infrastructure that the International Court of Justice and people around the globe consider “potentially genocidal” and certainly war crimes and crimes against humanity. In keeping with long-standing practice, the United States has been providing financial, military, and diplomatic support. As of mid-September 2024, the death toll in Gaza had reached some 41,000, with 95,000 injured. Some estimates put the number killed at more than 186,000; many are buried under rubble. Countless thousands more are suffering from diseases such as cholera and polio and from famine brought on by the violence. The Israeli government has systematically targeted historical, religious, and archaeological sites, archives, libraries, museums, and centers for art and culture and destroyed all of Gaza’s universities. These policies are often termed “cultural genocide.” Most hospitals, 85% of school buildings, 60% of residential buildings, and 80% of commercial facilities have been severely damaged or destroyed, as has 57% of Gaza’s agricultural land. Meanwhile, under cover of its assault on Gaza, the Israeli military and settlers have expanded fatal attacks on Palestinians of East Jerusalem and the West Bank and destroyed infrastructure, orchards, and homes.

As a member of The Episcopal Church and a Christian community, the Episcopal Diocese of Chicago shares the moral responsibility to screen its investments to avoid complicity in violations of international law and human rights.

Adoption of this resolution is not expected to require expenditures that would have an impact on the Diocesan budget.

**THE 187TH ANNUAL CONVENTION
OF THE DIOCESE OF CHICAGO**

November 23, 2024

Subject: Transition of the Diocese of Chicago Sanctuary Task Force to Sanctuary Committee

Sponsor(s): The Rev. Canon Sandra Castillo (Santa Teresa de Avila), The Rev. José Arroyo (Sagrada Familia), Ida Butler (St Philip's), Ellen Lindeen, (St Michael's), Chicago Sanctuary Task Force, Anti-Racism Commission, Hispanic Affairs Committee, Peace & Justice Committee

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the 182nd Annual Convention established the Diocese's Sanctuary Task Force for the implementation of Resolution F-182, "On Becoming a Sanctuary Diocese" ("Sanctuary Diocese") and the implementation continues on a long-term basis,

RESOLVED, that this 187th Annual Convention establish the Sanctuary Task Force as the Diocesan Sanctuary Committee with an allocation of the annual Diocesan budget to continue the work of implementing Resolution F-182.

EXPLANATION

Within the last two years, more than 47,200 asylum seekers and migrants have arrived in the Chicago metropolitan area, part of the Diocese of Chicago's geographic area. The realities facing our immigrant brothers and sisters continue as described in "F-182, On Becoming a Sanctuary Diocese." Our Congregations and Institutions are increasingly entering this field of ministry. The need for a Diocesan Sanctuary Committee is required to support these various ministries to our brothers and sisters who are members of the established immigrant communities and our new arrivals.

Please refer to the attached “F-182, On Becoming a Sanctuary Diocese” that describes the environment in which the 182nd Convention passed and the parameters of the resolution. Please also refer to the Sanctuary Task Force’s Report to this 187th Annual Convention which describes the current environment, the support provided by the Sanctuary Task Force to our congregations, institutions, and the ongoing need to implement the Sanctuary Resolution.

Present policy statements by political candidates include: plans for the largest mass detention and deportation program in the nation’s history that will lead to people being stopped, arrested or detained simply because they “look foreign”; the dismantling of the asylum system created after World War II to prevent a repetition of the Holocaust that occurred during that global conflict; ending birthright citizenship which is embedded in the U.S. Constitution; depriving undocumented children of their right to a public education; and, the reinstatement of family separation at the border. (Source: <https://www.aclu.org/news/immigrants-rights/trump-on-immigration-tearing-apart-immigrant-families-communities-and-the-fabric-of-our-nation>).

The cost impact of implementation will include the annual diocesan budget allocation yet to be determined as of the date of submission of this resolution. In anticipation of its transition to the status of a Diocesan Committee, the Sanctuary Task Force has submitted a budget request of \$5,000.00. In addition to this diocesan support, much of the cost impact of these activities will continue to be absorbed through monetary and in-kind donations provided through the several networks, partnerships, and collaborations in which the Sanctuary Task Force interacts.

**THE 187TH ANNUAL CONVENTION
OF THE DIOCESE OF CHICAGO**

November 23, 2024

Subject: Adopting the Net-Zero By 2030 Creation Care Goal for The Diocese Of Chicago and Creating Resources To Encourage and Enable Parishes to Achieve Net-Zero

Sponsor(s): Richard Benson (Atonement, Chicago) with support from Eco DioChicago; Elizabeth Simpson-Falck (Ascension, Chicago), Rev. Scott Elliott (Atonement Chicago), Rev. Charles Everson (Atonement, Chicago), Rev. Charles Ferrell (Atonement and Ascension, Chicago), Joseph Bail Gauss, BSG (Atonement, Chicago), Kenneth Kelling (Ascension, Chicago), Very Rev. Courtney Reid (All Saints Ravenswood, Chicago), David Reeves (Ascension Chicago), and Dennis Pattey-Warner (Atonement, Chicago).

RESOLUTION

RESOLVED: The Diocese of Chicago:

1. Support the spirit of General Convention resolution 2022-A087 calling for net greenhouse gas emission neutrality (“Net-Zero GHG emissions”) and recognize our duty as Christians and Episcopalians to make deliberate and sustained effort to reduce our contribution to greenhouse gas emissions that cause climate change;
2. Adopt the goal of Net-Zero GHG emissions for Diocese of Chicago property and activities by 2030;¹
3. Call for parishes and missions in the Diocese of Chicago to strive for Net-Zero GHG emissions by 2030, where practically and financially feasible, and create green teams or similar committees to focus on their parish’s environmental efforts;
4. Direct the Eco Working Group of the Diocese of Chicago (“Eco DioChicago”) to coordinate meetings for current green teams, encourage the formation of new green teams, and communicate successes and needs to the broader Diocese;
5. Direct Eco DioChicago to gather and publish a list of creation care formation and liturgical resources on the diocesan website by January of 2025;

¹ *Journal of the General Convention of The Episcopal Church, Baltimore, 2022* (New York: General Convention, 2023), pp. 545-546.

6. Direct Eco DioChicago to research and collate existing Net-Zero project opportunity guides, draft a comprehensive and professional electronic guide for parishes in the Diocese of Chicago addressing the knowledge and opportunities needed for parishes to achieve Net Zero GHG emissions by 2030, and publish the guide by June 2025;
7. Encourage the Bishop to appoint members to Eco DioChicago to promote representation and engagement across the diocese and encourages the diocese to track completion of net zero goals;
8. Request \$15,000 for Eco DioChicago's coordination and guide writing work to make the guide for parishes achieve a more professional and accountable form above what would be expected from volunteer compilation alone; and
9. Request Episcopal Charities and Episcopal and private grantmaking bodies to consider funding parish support grants for ASHRAE Level 2 quality energy audits, initial planning work, and bridge loans for worthy parish projects, and otherwise support the mission of this resolution through creative grantmaking and funding opportunities.

EXPLANATION

Climate change is a present and growing crisis and concern. Christians and Episcopalians are called to care for and be stewards of creation. Creation Care is also a stated priority for the Episcopal Church and is one of Bishop Paula Clark's stated priorities.

Frontline communities globally – including people of color, immigrants, indigenous communities, persons experiencing poverty, people with disabilities, and individuals who are unhoused – are already disproportionately suffering the impacts of climate change, and will continue to bear unjust burdens from increasing temperatures, sea level rise, the spread of disease, and the economic consequences of inaction on the climate crisis.

Reducing and eventually eliminating greenhouse gas emissions is necessary to prevent the climate crisis from worsening, and achieving Net-Zero GHG emissions is a major step in meeting that goal. Scripture directs us to care for God's created world (Gen 2:15) and to love our neighbors as ourselves (Mk. 12:31).

The General Convention of the Episcopal Church in 2022 established a goal and framework for the Episcopal Church's governing bodies and General Convention activities to be Net-Zero by 2030 and called upon dioceses and parishes to do the same in their own contexts. Unfortunately, the General Convention did not provide funding or substantial resources to assist dioceses and parishes to accomplish that goal. The 2024 General Convention passed several creation care resolutions and included some funding for creation care networks as well as a national staff position for climate.

Several parishes in our area have made successful efforts to ascertain their greenhouse gas impact and reduce or eliminate their impact through creative and dedicated work, including Saint Michael's, Barrington; the Church of the Atonement, Chicago; St. Paul's, Peoria; several ELCA churches; and others.

Several dioceses have made net zero or similar commitments including diocese of [Virginia](#); [Northern California](#), which currently has 39 parishes working on energy assessments; and San Joaquin, which [has nearly achieved Net-Zero](#) across all of its parishes.

Perceiving the magnitude of the climate crisis, especially with recent disasters like hurricane Helene and vast wildfires, can lead to the unhelpful feelings of despair and fatalism leading to inaction. The way through the climate crisis is wise and deliberate choices to improve what we have influence and control to change while encouraging more stakeholders to join and support efforts like Net Zero GHG emissions.

There is a hunger and need across the Diocese for coordination, encouragement, and guidance to achieve Net-Zero GHG emissions by 2030, but there is a knowledge gap about opportunities and procedures in many parishes that holds them back from working toward this goal. Successful projects in our Diocese have been accomplished through individual parishes and groups recreating the proverbial wheel. There is no currently existing complete and user-friendly guide for mainline churches across Illinois to leverage these opportunities from start to finish, although valuable resources do exist.

The Diocese of Chicago is large and diverse, with many small and modest congregations and significant concern for financial readiness. Fortunately, we currently exist in a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for public and private funding for parishes, missions, and diocesan properties to reduce their greenhouse emissions through programs offered by the Inflation Reduction Act, State Renewable Energy Credits like those available through Illinois Solar for All, and others. Illinois programs are often generous for community organizations and houses of worship as Illinois has written into law in the Climate Equity and Jobs Act a goal that Illinois be 100% renewable energy by 2050² with steps in-between. Many of these programs contain preferences and bonus awards for projects that focus on areas facing poverty or those who face the legacy of environmental racism. Projects can be close to entirely funded through such subsidies.

Successfully completed creation care projects serve as a witness to our values and genuine desire to care for creation and can result in reduced energy bills for a parish and promote healthy cashflow. Savings from reduced energy bills can be redirected to more fruitful mission work to better accomplish the work of the Church. Thus, creation care work can often be a thrifty and wise investment choice for parishes.

² 20 Ill. Stat. Comp. Ann. 735/ (10-5).

The Diocese of Chicago had a creation care task force organized under Bishop Lee and currently has a volunteer coordination group formed this year, known as Eco DioChicago. Eco Dio Chicago is energized and desiring to do this work.

There are numerous organizations and fellowships helping faith communities and their creation care goals, including parish green teams, Faith in Place (Interfaith Power and Light for the Midwest region), Sustainable Solutions for Sacred Spaces, Lawyers for the Common Good, and some Episcopal affiliated climate groups and resources, with whom Eco DioChicago can work and from whom it can learn.

Eco DioChicago intends to address at least the following elements in the guidance document for parishes:

- A summary of the climate crisis, the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and The Episcopal Church's goals, incorporating the use of environmental justice and anti-racism lenses;
- List accessible project ideas for Parishes to help meet Net-Zero goals (e.g., solar and geothermal energy and electric vehicles charging infrastructure);
- A detailed explanation of available tax credits and subsidies, including but not limited to:
 - Federal tax credits available (e.g., investment tax credit and bonus credits);
 - Illinois programs (e.g., Illinois Solar for All and Illinois Shines); and
 - Utility and local programs;
- Financing options to help with capital projects, including but not limited to:
 - Episcopal and interfaith organizations;
 - Illinois Finance Authority and Climate Bank; and
 - Private foundation and philanthropic support
- Potential cost savings and financial benefits to parishes;
- Lessons learned from completed and in-progress projects from churches across Illinois;
- A sample timeline for parishes to reference in creating a plan to accomplish Net-Zero GHG emissions by 2030; and
- Resources for parish energy audits and a list of consultants willing to work with parishes;

The work of decarbonization in the church context is often a multi-year process involving professional energy audits, architectural studies, repair work, iterative improvements making marginal but significant gains, grants, and multiple grant and fundraising funding cycles. However, this process can be made easier when parishes can coordinate with one another, as well as when parishioners are educated on the nature of the process. Thus, in order for the goal of Net Zero GHG emissions to be achievable for most of our parishes, the diocese must promptly provide the resources to allow for such coordination and education.

Funding:

The originators have confirmed with diocesan staff that \$3,000 is currently available in the creation care line of the diocesan budget. Implementation of this resolution clause 8 will require an additional \$12,000. Thus, if this resolution is adopted by Convention, its implementation will be subject to allocation of funding by Diocesan Council.