

PRESS RELEASE

The Episcopal Diocese of Rhode Island's 219th Annual Diocesan Convention

The 219th Annual Convention of The Diocese of Rhode Island concluded Saturday afternoon, October 24, 2009, following the annual Address of The Rt. Rev. Geralyn Wolf and adoption of the budget for the next fiscal year and of ten other resolutions. The Resolutions ratified companion relationships with the Diocese of Ezo in the Sudan and the Diocese of Louisiana. Bishop Wolf and her husband, Thomas Bair, visited the Diocese of Ezo for ten days last December. Bishop Wolf and other members of the Diocese, both clerical and lay, have been actively involved with assistance in the rebuilding of New Orleans.

The Convention adopted resolutions to form a Task Force to review diocesan priorities, to adopt the Charter for Lifelong Christian Formation, to endorse the Earth Charter, and to urge the support of community gardens and providing fresh produce for those in need. The Convention also adopted resolutions affirming diocesan programs for prison ministry, for formation of and ministerial support for children, youth and college students, and for the affirmation of two specific resolutions adopted by the General Convention of The Episcopal Church last July, Resolutions D025 and C056.

Resolution D025 reaffirms various commitments previously made by the Church as to the accessibility of all positions in the Church, particularly to any ordained ministry in The Episcopal Church. While ordination is not a "right" guaranteed to any individual, access to the Church's discernment and ordination process is open to all baptized members. Resolution C056 honors diversity of theological perspectives within The Episcopal Church. Although Resolution C056 allows bishops, particularly those in dioceses within civil jurisdictions where same-gender marriage, civil unions or domestic partnerships are legal, to provide a generous pastoral response to meet the needs of members of the Church, it does not authorize public liturgical rites for the blessing of same-gender unions. The policy in the Diocese of Rhode Island remains the same: until General Convention provides official authorization, Bishop Wolf will not authorize the use of public liturgical rites for the blessing of same-gender unions.