

## General Convention of The Episcopal Church 2024 Archives' Research Report

**Resolution No.:** 2024-A096  
**Title:** Task Force on Equipping a Church Grounded in Justice as Christian Ministry  
**Proposer:** Task Force on Imagining a Church Grounded in Social Justice as Christian Ministry  
**Topic:** Racism, Reconciliation

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### Directly Related: (Attached)

2022-A078 Create a Task Force on Imagining a Church Grounded in Social Justice as Christian Ministry

### Indirectly Related: (Available in the [Acts of Convention](#) database, searchable by resolution number)

2018-A056 Create a Task Force on the Theology of Social Justice Advocacy as Christian Ministry  
2015-A096 Affirm Relationships in Approaches to Social Justice Ministry

*In preparing this report, the Archives researched the resolutions in the Acts of Convention database for the period 1973 through 2022, selecting “direct” resolutions that have a substantive bearing on the proposed legislation. The “direct” resolutions are attached and “indirect” resolutions are available in the Acts of Convention database. Committee members who require other research assistance should contact the Archives through the [Research Request Form](#).*

# A096 - Task Force on Equipping a Church Grounded in Justice as Christian Ministry

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**Final Status:** Not Yet Finalized

**Proposed by:** Task Force on Imagining a Church Grounded in Social Justice as Christian Ministry

**Has Budget Implications:** Yes

**Cost:** \$40,000.00

**Amends C&C or Rules of Order:** No

**Requests New Interim Body:** Yes

**Changes Mandate Of Existing Ib:** No

**Directs Dfms Staff:** No

**Directs Dioceses:** No

**Directs Executive Council:** No

**HiA:** No House Assigned

**Legislative Committee Currently Assigned:** No Committee Assigned

**Completion Status:** Incomplete

**Latest House Action:** N/A

**Supporting Documents:** No

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## Resolution Text

*Resolved*, the House of \_\_\_\_\_ concurring,

That the 81st General Convention direct the appointment of a new task force be created for a term of six years or two triennia, to carry on and deepen the work begun by the Task Force on Imagining a Church Grounded in Social Justice as Ministry (Mandate A078- of the 80th general Convention) with a diverse group to include 2 bishops, 2 priests, 2 deacons, and 10 laypersons, and recommend the appointment of some members from the previous A078 Task Force in order to maintain some continuity. The new Task Force can begin immediately to address the work enumerated below and report to the 83rd General Convention; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the work of the newly created task force include the following in order to

- a) consider what the church must look like if we put our vocation to love our neighbor and to be repairers of the breach at the center of our work;

b) continue the work of the previous task force in reaching out to local, diocesan, and churchwide groups that are doing social justice and racial reconciliation work focused on systemic change, in order to understand what resources and gifts we already have in this work and where the gaps are;

c) work with churchwide staff to support the creation of a digital hub to connect to and provide a one-stop place for church members to reach existing justice resources;

d) develop an experiential model for listening to and documenting the experiences of justice workers at our local levels; and

e) liaise with relevant interim bodies on consideration of these questions and how to address the institutional barriers to change in the church;

f) be charged with making recommendations to the 83rd General Convention for specific ways that the Church can equip and train local leaders to do justice work and coordinate networks of justice work across our provinces and churchwide;

And be it further

*Resolved*, That the General Convention requests the Joint Standing Committee on Program, Budget, and Finance to consider a budget allocation (excluding meeting expense already in GCO budget) of \$40,000 to primarily address the development of a digital hub including accessibility, training, and maintenance for the implementation of this resolution.

## **Explanation**

At the outset, to focus on the concept of social justice, the Task Force built the framework for its work, by agreeing to view social justice through an integrative lens encompassing environmental and racial justice. As a result, the efforts of this Task Force led to the following Statement of Need for the Church and Recommended Next Steps.

The importance, scope, and change impact of this mandate requires substantive analysis and robust rationale for application throughout The Episcopal Church (TEC). Given the abbreviated timeframe to accomplish this (less than 11 months), the Task Force has focused on building a strong beginning and foundation to move the concept forward. The initial findings point to a need, a willingness, and an activism to include Social Justice as a Christian Ministry. Innovative thinking and open minds can bolster the support of identification of concrete activities, resources, and steps leading to institutional change.

For that reason, the Task Force under the guidance of the Task Force Chair Bishop Marc Andrus and Ms. Sarah Lawton, crafted this new resolution designed to address the following:

- Establish a new task force focused on prioritizing and subsequently completing the planks of the initial mandate that the current task force was not able to complete.

- Designate the new task force with a mandate for specific and achievable recommendations for institutional change within our faith tradition supporting social justice as a christian ministry including but not limited to: (a) areas of governance and structure, (b)prayer and liturgy, (c) catechesis and lifelong discipleship formation for all especially for the laity, (d) ensure consistency with an equitable and inclusive polity

As described above, several insights were identified through the focus groups and meetings that were conducted. Preliminary learnings as a basis for the proposed new task force recommends that the task force begin with a focused work plan and include the following:

- There is much good justice work happening already across our church! For which we give thanks.
- Our local leaders, in congregations, chaplaincies, and other ministries, want to be equipped and trained to do justice work.
- People in our local ministries want to be better networked across provinces and the whole church to improve collaboration along with shared access to resources, and to overcome siloing across different issues (such as creation care, racial justice, economic justice, LGBTQ+ justice) – understanding that siloing is itself a tool of white supremacy culture.
- A how-to-guide to equip our local leaders and improve networking and collaboration should be an outcome of the new task force.



**Resolution Number:** 2022-A078  
**Title:** Create a Task Force on Imagining a Church Grounded in Social Justice as Christian Ministry  
**Legislative Action Taken:** Concurred  
**Final Text:**

*Resolved, That the 80th General Convention affirm:*

1. That social justice advocacy is a primary ministry of the Church; it is our corporate, public witness to the Mission of God “to restore all people to the unity of God and each other in Christ.” [BCP Catechism, page 855];
2. That social justice is about right relationships among and between all of us, centering the voice and experience of the marginalized (as we read in Matthew 25), and these are the relationships that have been, and continue to be, harmed by the systemic, unjust distribution of wealth, opportunity, and privilege;
3. That social justice ministry includes acts of mercy or charity but also must include dismantling institutions, structures, and policies that cause harm and divide us from each other; and it includes repairing the breach by rebuilding systems of justice, fairness, and equity (Isaiah 58);
4. Over this past triennium, (2018-2021) the global pandemic, racial justice uprisings, and escalation of the climate crisis including extreme wildfires and storms, as well as the societal fissures and institutional failures that these events have revealed, demand we understand this to be a revolutionary moment of accountability, repentance and renewed commitments to the mission of God. We are called to account for our failures to live the words we preach and pray. We acknowledge that historical practices, policies, and structures of the institutional church have played a role in the persistence of the systemic inequality and call out for out for immediate, urgent and enduring redress;

And be it further

*Resolved, That all dioceses and congregations be called upon to ground every planning or business meeting or convention with prayers inviting an examination of conscience regarding the specific impact of the decisions of such meetings upon those who are poor, dispossessed, disadvantaged, or marginalized, and to provide and model forms for such examination of conscience; and be it further*

*Resolved, That all dioceses be called upon to offer, at least once a year, a diocesan-wide event or program and liturgy to engage our congregations and members in listening to and understanding the history and current context of our diverse local communities, with attention to those who have historically been dispossessed or disadvantaged; and be it further*

*Resolved, That this General Convention direct the creation of a Task Force on Imagining a Church Grounded in Social Justice as Christian Ministry be formed as a diverse group to include 2 bishops, 2 priests, 2 deacons, and 10 laypersons, in order to a) consider what the church must look like if we put our vocation to love our neighbor and to be repairers of the breach at the center of our work; b) to reach out to local and diocesan groups that are doing social justice and racial reconciliation work focused on systemic change, in order to understand what resources and gifts we already have in this work and where the gaps are; c) to liaise with the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music and the Standing Commission on Governance, Structure, Constitution and Canons, the Presiding Officers’ Advisory Group*

**on Beloved Community Implementation (if it is extended in the next triennium), and other relevant interim bodies on consideration of these questions and how to address the institutional barriers to change in the church; and d) be charged with making recommendations to the 81st General Convention for institutional change to support social justice as Christian ministry in the areas of governance and structure, prayer and liturgy, catechesis and lifelong formation for discipleship, especially with laypeople and consistent with an equitable and inclusive polity; and be it further**

***Resolved, That the General Convention request the Joint Standing Committee on Program, Budget and Finance to consider a budget allocation of \$55,000 for the implementation of this resolution.***

**Citation:** General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Baltimore, 2022* (New York: General Convention, 2023), pp. 848-849.