

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

**Resolution No.:** 2024-D023  
**Title:** Support for the Association for Episcopal Deacons  
**Proposer:** Grinnell, The Ven. Jan  
**Topic:** Clergy Education

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**Directly Related:** (Attached)

2022-A037      Establish a Standing Commission on Formation and Ministry Development

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

None

*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](#).*

# D023 - Support for the Association for Episcopal Deacons

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**Final Status:** Not Yet Finalized

**Proposed by:** Grinnell, The Ven. Jan

**Endorsed by:** Neal, The Rev. Deacon Kristi, Maddux, The Ven. Carole, Campbell-Pearson, The Rev. Connie, Harrigan, The Rev. Canon Kate

**Has Budget Implications:** Yes

**Cost:** \$450,000.00

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

**Requests New Interim Body:** No

**Changes Mandate Of Existing Ib:** No

**Directs Dfms Staff:** No

**Directs Dioceses:** No

**Directs Executive Council:** No

**HiA:** HB

**Legislative Committee Currently Assigned:** 19 - Title III Ministry

**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 celebrate and support the ministry of the Association for Episcopal Deacons (AED) for engaging the *diakonia* of all believers for over 50 years by encouraging, growing, and providing resources and guidelines for the continuing development of the diaconate, an order of ministry in The Episcopal Church; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the Convention acknowledge that AED is the only Episcopal organization building ecumenical diaconal partnerships, and it serves as the church's resource portal for the diaconate, without financial support from the Church; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the Convention consider that Episcopal deacons, the primary supporters of AED, often personally fund their formation, ministries, and on-going professional development; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the Convention encourage individuals, congregations, seminaries, dioceses, and jurisdictions to support the work of AED by becoming members, participating in its

conferences and activities, and engaging the work of *diakonia* in their own contexts; and be it further

*Resolved*, That \$450,000 be budgeted during the next triennium to support the infrastructure necessary for the sustainability and growth of AED.

## **Explanation**

According to the Church Pension Group, there are now over 3000 deacons in The Episcopal Church. The diaconate is the fastest growing order of ordained ministry in the Church.

The exponential expansion of the diaconate has outpaced the growth of AED's infrastructure, and AED's current financial model is not sustainable for this level of growth. Tremendous increases in cost of conferences since COVID and increased costs for staff benefits have added additional financial strain to the organization.

Recognizing this, AED is undergoing a financial model revision, exploring new funding bases, restructuring membership, and seeking sponsorships for events. AED believes this expansion is going to continue, and that the diaconate is essential to the vitality and mission of the future church.

As the sole professional organization for Episcopal deacons, AED is called upon to represent this order at all churchwide gatherings and to serve as a resource for programs and liturgies for those gatherings. This presence demands significant resources of the organization and of individual deacons, who often fund their own travel and related expenses.

While some deacons now receive a \$25 a month stipend from their congregation or diocese to enable them to participate in the many programs and benefits of the Church Pension Group, the majority of deacons fund their formation, ministries, and on-going professional development out of their own pockets.

AED has, to date, been the primary resource to The Episcopal Church for:

- Developing and curating resources for dioceses on how to initiate and best maintain diaconal programming.
- Providing a web-based storehouse of diaconal formation and supervision resources.
- Connecting deacons and those engaging in *diakonia* from all orders by the publication of a magazine *Diakoneo*, and eNewsletter, *Deacon Update*.
- Gathering Deacon Directors and Archdeacons for an annual learning lab for development of new best practices to address current diaconal issues.
- Convening a Triennial Conference for networking and professional development.
- Collaborating with the Fund for the Diaconate and in the development of diaconal theology worldwide. Ecumenical work includes a deacon working in Romania with the Orthodox Church for several years, participating in the international diaconal forums DOTAC (Diakonia of the Americas and Caribbean) and Diakonia World

Federation, and maintaining a warm partnership for action with Anglican Deacons Canada.

- Articulating in all forums our response to the church's challenges when viewed through a diaconal lens.

AED needs support from the Church to continue current programs and increase its reach and presence.



**Resolution Number:** 2022-A037  
**Title:** Establish a Standing Commission on Formation and Ministry Development  
**Legislative Action Taken:** Concurred as Amended  
**Final Text:**

*Resolved, That the 80th General Convention amend Canon I.1.2.n by adding a new subsection 4 thereto, to read as follows:*

**I.1.2.n**

*4. A Standing Commission on Formation and Ministry Development. The Commission shall coordinate and encourage the development of all orders of ministry, encouraging and engaging all the baptized in the work of building up the church and developing best practices to ensure all churches benefit from the diversity of leadership gifts God has given us.*

*It shall be the duty of the Commission to:*

- i. Recommend policies and strategies to the General Convention for the affirmation, development, and exercise of ministry by all baptized persons (lay persons, bishops, priests and deacons).*
- ii. Support Diocesan Commissions on Ministry in their support of the ministry of all the baptized, as set forth in Title III Canons 1 & 2.*
- iii. Encourage the recognition of daily life ministries by Diocesan Commissions on Ministry, congregations, and dioceses, so that those ministries are celebrated as expressions of the ministry of all the baptized, worthy of equal respect with ordained vocations.*
- iv. In collaboration with the churchwide office overseeing formation, develop and recommend to the General Convention comprehensive and coordinated policies for people across all ages and stages of life for lifelong formation as seekers and followers of Jesus.*
- v. Recommend strategies to General Convention for the development and support of networks of individuals, diocesan committees and commissions, agencies and institutions engaged in recruitment, gifts of discernment, education and training for ministry, leadership development, hiring, and appointments.*
- vi. Study the needs and trends of discernment and vocational opportunities for ordained leaders and lay professionals within the Church and the appropriate formation required to live into those opportunities.*
- vii. Collaborate with those developing lay pathways grid and the Association of Episcopal Deacons to raise awareness of the competencies promulgated by those groups as guidelines for formation for those orders of ministry.*
- viii. Recommend policies and strategies to the General Convention to ensure the fair hiring and compensation of lay and ordained employees in all ministry settings, with special attention to parity across those lines which have historically divided us, including but not limited to race, color, ethnic origin, national origin, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, order of ministry, disabilities, or age, except as otherwise provided by these Canons; and be it further*

*Resolved, That the General Convention request the Joint Standing Committee on Program, Budget, and Finance to allocate \$50,000 to fund the work of the Standing Commission for the 2022-2024 triennium.*

**Citation:** General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Baltimore, 2022* (New York: General Convention, 2023), pp. 887-888.