

**GENERAL CONVENTION OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH 2018
ARCHIVES' RESEARCH REPORT**

RESOLUTION NO.: 2018-D053
TITLE: Stewardship of Creation with Church-Owned Land
PROPOSER: The Rev. Nurya Parish
TOPIC: Environment

Directly Related: (Attached)

2015-A030 Support Ecologically Responsible Stewardship of Church Property
2003-D046 Urge Stewardship of Water Resources
1991-A195 Affirm Environmental Responsibility and an Environmental Stewardship Team
1982-A111 Request Dioceses to Respond to Issues of Land Use and Stewardship
1979-D143 Urge Local Churches to Influence Land Development in Their Communities

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

2012-B023 Seek Environmental Justice
2006-C018 Recognize Global Warming and Reaffirm Church's Environmental Responsibility
1982-B006 Develop an Educational Process on Judicious Land Use

In preparing this report, the Archives researched the resolutions in the Acts of Convention database for the period 1976 through 2015, 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 at 800-525-9329 before Convention or at Convention in the General Convention Secretariat.

D053 Stewardship of Creation with Church-Owned Land

Proposer	The Rev. Nurya Parish
Endorsed by	Berlenbach, The Rev. Kirk; Diehl, Mr. Jeff
Sponsored by	
Page numbers	Blue Book: p. N/A; Constitution & Canons: p. N/A
HiA / Leg. Cttee	HB / 20 - Environmental Stewardship and Care of Creation
Current Status	Resolution Filed
Version	Original (as filed)
Review Status	Not yet reviewed

RESOLUTION TEXT

- 1 *Resolved*, the House of _____ concurring, That the 79th General Convention recommends that all dioceses, parishes and missions create partnerships enabling the use of church-owned land for regenerative agriculture and biodiversity conservation projects in order to mitigate climate change; and be it further
- 2 *Resolved*, That the General Convention requests that the Church Pension Group make available to the Advisory Council on the Stewardship of Creation and to each Diocese an inventory of all church-owned properties insured by the Church Insurance Company that contain unimproved land of one half acre or more which may be suitable for such projects; and be it further
- 3 *Resolved*, That the General Convention requests that each Diocese consider the potential for utilization of church-owned land for new ministries integrating the stewardship of Creation, particularly in situations where properties are no longer regularly utilized by a parish congregation; and be it further
- 4 *Resolved*, That the Advisory Council for the Stewardship of Creation is directed to develop model processes by which dioceses and parishes may collaborate with partner agencies to sequester carbon through regenerative agriculture and to conserve species through habitat restoration and development.

EXPLANATION

Resolution 1991–A195, adopted by the 70th General Convention over 25 years ago, declared that Christian Stewardship of God's created environment, in harmony with our respect for human dignity, requires response from the Church of the highest urgency. This urgency has only grown in the passing decades.

In Genesis we read that God created humanity from the dust of the earth and placed us in a garden to till it and to keep it. We see in Revelation that when Christ returns, the earth becomes a garden city, with the water of life flowing freely and the tree with the leaves for the healing of the nations at its center. As we wait for that day we are mindful that God made us of one substance with the soil. As

witnesses to the love of God, the Church has the opportunity to make better use of our underutilized property to create tangible projects that sequester carbon and preserve species. We can do this on land we already own, in partnership with neighbors whom we are called to love and serve. Such ecological ministry projects create opportunities for us to show and tell the love of God in Jesus Christ and demonstrate that Christianity and science are partners, not enemies.



Resolution Number: 2015-A030
Title: Support Ecologically Responsible Stewardship of Church Property
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred as Substituted and Amended
Final Text:

Resolved, That the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society is directed to implement a program to develop parish and diocesan resources designed to support local ecologically responsible stewardship of church-related properties and buildings. The program shall be implemented in cooperation with an Advisory Council on the Stewardship of Creation composed of one person from each province by April 1, 2016. Each province member of the Advisory Council shall convene, in their respective provinces, Regional Consultive Groups ("RCG's") on the Stewardship of Creation. Each RCG shall be comprised of no fewer than five experts in areas of environmental sustainability appropriate to the demographic, ecological, cultural and geographic specifics of each region. These should include, but not be limited to, consultants in food and water security, property development, alternative energy, and engineering. Each RCG will also include theologians, educators and liturgists to provide resources in education and formation. These RCGs shall:

1. Compile and develop theological and formational material for teaching the theology of stewardship of creation;
2. Create networks designed to share ideas and information for practical application among the regions, such as sustainable development and green conversions of church-related properties, including without limitation, energy audits, solar conversions and other alternative energy, community gardens, and development of fallow property;
3. Be available for consultation to the Dioceses and Parishes.

The Advisory Council on the Stewardship of Creation shall create a structure for allocation of money to fund RCG initiatives at Parish and Diocesan levels within a year of the 78th General Convention, and serve as the granting body; and be it further

Resolved, That \$700,000 be allocated for this purpose, which includes the \$500,000 already allocated to the Fifth Mark of Mission, so that \$100,000 will be available for the support of the RCGs themselves, and \$600,000 be available to provide direct grants to Dioceses and Parishes in the implementation of these programs and support of measurable pilot projects. Of the \$100,000 funding the RCGs, \$40,500 is to be allocated for the Task Force meetings. Recognizing that this is new work, and a newly formed taskforce, they shall convene in person for their initial meeting, and thereafter determine their needs for future meetings, with funding available for them to meet once yearly. The remaining \$59,500 is to be used for regional meetings of the RCGs according to regional needs; and be it further

Resolved, That the Advisory Council shall report back to the 79th General Convention on the progress and ongoing results at the local and provincial levels.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Salt Lake City, 2015* (New York: General Convention, 2015), pp. 882-883.



Resolution Number: 2003-D046
Title: Urge Stewardship of Water Resources
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred
Final Text:

Resolved, That the 74th General Convention urge dioceses, congregations, and communicants to regard water resources as precious, and to recognize that the right use of water is an explicit means to show love for one's neighbor, since water connects people and all creatures throughout the global community; and be it further

Resolved, That the 74th General Convention encourage dioceses, congregations, and communicants to become active stewards of their water resources through conservation efforts including reduction of consumption; through examination of water discharge such that contaminated water does not improperly leave church grounds; and through the creation of environmental programs for stewardship of water and the whole of creation and for the education of congregants in regard to good and faithful stewardship of the earth's resources; and be it further

Resolved, That the General Convention encourage dioceses, congregations, and communicants to undertake one or more of the following four stewardship steps:

- **When and where possible, install water-saving devices, such as low-flow commodes and aspirators on sink faucets.**
- **Replant church grounds and home gardens with plants and trees that are drought-tolerant and have low needs for water, and that are native to the region and therefore able to survive local climatic conditions.**
- **Devise drainage systems that allow rainwater to flow from gutters and drain pipes to spread onto the lawn and landscaped areas of church grounds and home gardens, thereby reducing water lost to sewer systems.**
- **Pave new or repave existing parking lots with materials that are pervious, so that water penetrates into soil beneath parking areas, thereby reducing the flow of oil and other auto fluids into streams.**

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Minneapolis, 2003* (New York: General Convention, 2004), p. 314f.



Resolution Number: 1982-A111
Title: Request Dioceses to Respond to Issues of Land Use and Stewardship
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred
Final Text:

Resolved, That the 67th General Convention of the Episcopal Church ask Dioceses to work ecumenically in their states to help form land stewardship councils dedicated to responding spiritually to issues of land use ownership and stewardship; and be it further Resolved, That Dioceses report their learning to the next General Convention, through the Standing Commission on the Church in Small Communities.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, New Orleans, 1982* (New York: General Convention, 1983), p. C-132.



Resolution Number: 1979-D143
Title: Urge Local Churches to Influence Land Development in Their Communities
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred
Final Text:

Resolved, That this 66th General Convention urge that the Dioceses and congregations of the Episcopal Church seek to assure that the appropriate public agencies in their communities examine all proposals to convert undeveloped lands to recreational, residential, or commercial use in the light of long-term and irreversible effects of such conversion upon local and worldwide food, energy, housing needs, and supplies.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Denver, 1979* (New York: General Convention, 1980), p. C-124.