

# Resolution: A Renewed Commitment to African American Congregations in the Diocese

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## Resolved Clauses

**Resolved**, that this Convention of the Diocese of East Carolina recognizes the historic and ongoing witness of African American Episcopal congregations as vital to the spiritual, cultural, and theological life of our Church; and be it further

**Resolved**, that this Convention affirms that the experience and struggle of African Americans in the United States are distinct and cannot be fully understood or addressed within the broad framework of *multiculturalism*; and be it further

**Resolved**, that this Convention commits the Diocese to a renewed partnership with African American congregations that honors their unique history, nurtures their future vitality, and addresses the systemic and structural inequities that continue to affect them; and be it further

**Resolved**, that this Diocese will establish a **Task Force on the Future of African American Congregations** to engage African American clergy and lay leaders in discerning specific strategies for sustainable ministry, leadership development, and equitable resource allocation for historically Black congregations; and be it further

**Resolved**, that this Convention calls upon every parish and diocesan body to learn from the African American Church's distinctive spiritual traditions, prophetic witness, and resilience as essential gifts to the whole Body of Christ.

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## Explanation / Rationale

For centuries, African American Episcopalians have sustained a distinct and powerful witness within the life of the Church. Born from the crucible of slavery, segregation, and exclusion, the Black Episcopal experience embodies a theology of endurance, liberation, and hope that speaks uniquely to the Gospel's call for justice and reconciliation.

In recent years, the Church has often spoken of inclusion through the language of *multiculturalism*. While this framework seeks to honor diversity, it can inadvertently flatten the particularity of the African American story — a story marked by a struggle for survival and dignity in the face of systemic racism that continues to this day.

To fold the African American Church solely into a broad “multicultural” category risks erasing the unique historical, social, and theological dimensions of Black life in America. It is precisely this distinctiveness that must be recognized, supported, and celebrated if our Church is to live faithfully into its baptismal promise to “strive for justice and peace among all people.”

This resolution calls our Diocese to name and honor that distinction - not as a means of separation, but as a path toward deeper understanding, equity, and healing within the Body of Christ.

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## Implementation

1. **Formation of Task Force:**

Within 18 months of the adoption of this resolution, the Bishop shall appoint a **Task Force on the Future of African American Congregations**, composed primarily of African American clergy and lay leaders, with representation from Diocesan Council and the Commission on Ministry.

2. **Mandate:**

The Task Force shall:

- Conduct listening sessions with African American congregations and leaders across the Diocese.
- Assess historical patterns of inequity in diocesan support, leadership development, and clergy deployment.
- Recommend specific strategies for sustainable ministry, financial equity, leadership formation, and congregational renewal.

3. **Reporting:**

The Task Force shall present an initial report to Diocesan Council within one year and a full set of actionable recommendations at the next Diocesan Convention.

4. **Funding:**

The Bishop and Diocesan Council shall allocate appropriate funds in the annual diocesan budget to support the work of the Task Force, including consultation, travel, and program development.

5. **Ongoing Commitment:**

The Diocese shall ensure that the work of the Task Force transitions into a **permanent structure of support and accountability** for African American congregations, to be reviewed annually by Diocesan Council and reported to Convention.