SUBJECT: Call for Basic Human Needs to be Met

RESOLVED, that the 183rd Convention of the Diocese of Michigan urge congregations to seek information in order to more fully understand the gospel human obligation and necessity to provide for currently unmet basic human needs for water, food, shelter and health care for every human being; and be it further resolved that

RESOLVED, that Episcopalians urge lawmakers and other public officials to commit to meeting the basic human needs for water, food, shelter and health care; and be it further

RESOLVED, that in addition to meeting and communicating with their elected officials, Episcopalians in the Diocese of Michigan seek collaboration in study and action with other congregations and community groups that are finding ways to meet the basic human needs for water, food, shelter and health care.

EXPLANATION/RATIONALE:

The Bible contains many stories about water, food, shelter and healing, and the commands of God and Jesus that people of faith act to care for their fellow human beings and provide for their basic needs. This foundation is the basis for the study and actions called for in the above resolves. Additionally, in the fifth Baptismal Covenant in the Book of Common Prayer, we pledge that we will “strive for justice and peace among all people and respect the dignity of every human being.”

In 2015, the 78th General Convention concurred as amended a Resolution that “affirms full funding support for safety net programs that address poverty, nutrition and health care of vulnerable populations.”

WATER: “Anyone who gives a cup of cold water to drink…” Previously passed General Convention resolutions have called us to educate ourselves “about public environmental decisions that affect society’s most vulnerable;” for “the Church at all levels to become active stewards of water resources through conservation efforts and stewardship steps,” and to “work on public policy that makes clean water accessible to all persons.”

People in Michigan have varying degrees of awareness about the events and deliberate or neglectful actions by elected and other public state and local officials concerning drinking water that have harmed the lives and health of our fellow human beings. Additional threats to the Great Lakes water basin and the people who depend on them for clean drinking water include aging pipelines and for-profit withdrawals of water. In our own diocese, we have a theologian and prophet who has written about this in “Where the Water Goes Around: Beloved Detroit.” We offer this suggested resource for your consideration. See also <http://www.oilandwaterdontmix.org/problem> and [http://www.mlive.com/news/index.ssf/2016/12/why\_nestle\_pays\_next\_to\_nothin.htmlhttp://www.mlive.com/news/index.ssf/2016/12/why\_nestle\_pays\_next\_to\_nothin.html](http://www.mlive.com/news/index.ssf/2016/12/why_nestle_pays_next_to_nothin.html)

FOOD: “Feed my lambs.” In 2015 the 78th General Convention passed a Resolutions that “affirms food ministries and programs within the Church and encourages Church-wide commitment to food systems focused on sustainability, equity, cultural diversity, and accessibility to healthy food.” Another Resolution that passed affirms “public policies that promote sustainable farms and land use, safe and healthy food cultivation, production and distribution, the labor rights and safety of farm workers, and public food programs for the poor.”

|  |
| --- |
|  |

One in 6 children in Michigan and one in seven people are not able to meet their own needs for food without assistance. More than 34% of households that receive Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits in Michigan include children. The proposed federal budget for 2018 and beyond would hit Michigan very hard. Many congregations in the EDOMI are working on hunger issues. It is hoped that we could work together even more to feed more hungry people and help them achieve the means to afford food for themselves. [http://www.feedingamerica.org/hunger-in america/michigan/?referrer=https://www.google.com/](http://www.feedingamerica.org/hunger-in%20america/michigan/?referrer=https://www.google.com/)

SHELTER: “The Son of Man has no place to lay his head.” In 21st century America there is serious concern that changes in the economy such as rising economic inequality and declining incomes in the lower and middle classes, as well as proposals for changes in state and federal housing funding assistance are leading to an increase in homelessness and a rising need for shelter. There are also concerns about the rise in children living in shelters and otherwise unstable housing. General Convention previously reaffirmed “its commitment to provide affordable housing for those with low-and moderate income.” <https://www.cbpp.org/research/2017-federal-rental-assistance-factsheets-sources-and-methodology>

HEALTH CARE: “Heal the sick.” We are called. In a Resolution Concurred to as Amended, the 78th General Convention “calls on states to fund Medicaid and publicly funded home and community services for the disabled, and end the segregation of developmentally disabled persons.” The ongoing struggle to provide health care for every person in our country continues to be complex and difficult. The need continues to be great.

ACTIONS: Suggestions for ways to learn more about these issues include adult education forums, book study, community workshops and other learning opportunities. Suggestions for acting on them include identifying other congregations, organizations, that are advocating and working for systemic change as well as providing hands-on services. Please share what you learn with others in the Diocese and with the Covenant 5 website.

More information and suggestions for action can be found on the Covenant 5 website: [www.covenant5.org](http://www.covenant5.org)