

DIOCESE OF CENTRAL FLORIDA
Fifty-First Annual Convention
January 24 & 25, 2020

R-1: Ending Gun Violence

Presented by: The Rev. Canon Angela S. Ifill
St. Mark's Episcopal Church, Haines City, FL

Date: November 15, 2019
Results: **January 25, 2020**
Resolution-1 DID NOT PASS

Amendment Proposed: **Resolution R-1 stands, with final paragraph deleted.**
Amended Resolution-1 DID NOT PASS

RESOLVED that we of this 51st Annual Convention of the Diocese of Central Florida condemn gun violence; grieve with all who have been affected; proclaim solidarity with our neighbors near and far who have suffered and, in the absence of effective action, will continue to suffer from chronic gun-related trauma in these United States of America; and be it further

RESOLVED that we honor the tradition of hunting; respect responsible gun ownership; commit to engage in sensitive, respectful dialogue with people of varying perspectives on this issue; and pray that together we might identify common sense solutions to end gun violence in this country; and be it further

RESOLVED that we give thanks for the witness of Bishops United Against Gun Violence and commend their efforts to promote the safety and dignity of every human being; and be it further

RESOLVED that we commit ourselves to giving the highest priority to becoming familiar with state and federal gun laws and to advocate for legislation and other measures which can reduce gun-related deaths and injuries; and be it further

RESOLVED that we have a moral obligation to demand our elected officials to act with courage in safeguarding the public good, to set aside our own fears and indifference, and to act with that same courage as we engage in faithful conversation with those whose viewpoints may differ from our own; and be it further

RESOLVED that, although we recognize that guns can have legitimate and even necessary uses, we reject arguments designed to thwart remedial action, including contentions that unfettered gun rights under the U.S. Constitution are paramount to the common good of our communities and the lives of the innocent; and be it further

RESOLVED that in the spirit of all of the above we call for a ban on assault weapons and for extended background checks for gun ownership.

EXPLANATION:

Our baptismal covenant calls us to respect the dignity of every human being and to love our neighbors as ourselves. Therefore, it is morally imperative that Christians respond to the tragedy of gun violence that has affected so many lives in our country and act to reduce its impact as much as possible.

The issue is not a simple one. Guns serve a useful purpose in the lives of many people. Some use them for hunting, which is both a tradition and a means of sustenance for many families. Some use them to protect their livestock from predators. Some keep them for personal protection or sport. These responsible uses should not be discounted; however, we must acknowledge that innocent lives are lost in seconds in random acts of unpredictable violence.

We must work to find a solution that both brings us towards a safer future yet acknowledges the meaningful role guns play in the lives of non-violent people. Every human life has dignity, and all voices are worthy of being heard.

We hope that the Bishop, Diocesan Board, clergy, vestries, and Episcopalians throughout Florida will encourage our local, state, and national representatives to propose and support sensible gun legislation, such as a ban on assault weapons and the implementation of comprehensive background checks, that affirms responsible gun ownership and promotes the safety of our children, our public safety officials, and all our citizens.

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R-2: Do No Harm

Presented by: The Rev. Canon Angela S. Ifill
St. Mark's Episcopal Church, Haines City, FL

Isaiah Initiatives

Date: December 4, 2019

Results: **January 25, 2020**
Resolution-2 PASSED

RESOLVED: that we of this 51st Annual Convention of the Diocese of Central Florida acknowledge

that we are living in troubling times, surrounded by many who cause harm through their words and actions, and we must act as beacons of light; and be it further

RESOLVED: that we re-commit ourselves to the tradition of our faith as outlined in the Baptismal Covenant of the Episcopal Church to persevere in resisting evil, to proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ, to seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving our neighbors as ourselves, to strive for justice and peace among all people and respect the dignity of every human being; and be it further

RESOLVED: that we practice the principle Do No Harm, interpreted to mean one's actions should not cause injury or injustice to another; and be it further

RESOLVED: that we give thanks for the leadership of this diocese and for the witness of the Episcopate in caring for all in this diocese and the world.

EXPLANATION:

We live in a society in which the media often clouds the differences between right and wrong, truth and fiction. Often, hatred is more apparent than love, and irreverence and disrespect are held in high esteem. It seems today that everything and anything goes in terms of dealing with one another - the truth has been corrupted, decency compromised, our Christian beliefs attacked, respect for one another and civility demeaned. Prayer was removed from public schools and other actions, taken in the name of political correctness, have created a vacuum in which children do not have the opportunity to learn our morals and values. This atmosphere is destructive to the values and morals which we, as a Christian people, believe.

We are called to be the church in the world. We are to uphold the values and morals and serve as an example in the midst of this darkness.

We cannot be afraid to share our beliefs through action and words. Our forefathers created government that called for separation of church and state, not a dismissal or ignorance of church. Belief in God has been part of America's story. When the pilgrims arrived on these shores, they were fleeing persecution and seeking religious freedom. Many words in our historical documents reflect a belief in God, such as the words of our Declaration of Independence, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." Our currency is imprinted with the words "In God we trust."

All major religions of the world share some basic tenets. For example, below are "15 Great Principles Shared by All Religions" from *Oneness: Great Principles Shared by All Religions* by Jeffrey Moses:

1. The Golden Rule / Law of Reciprocity – The cornerstone of religious understanding. "Do unto others what you would have them do unto you."
2. Honor Thy Father and Mother – Knowing them is the key to knowing ourselves.
3. Speak the Truth
4. It's More Blessed to Give than to Receive – generosity, charity, and kindness
5. Heaven is Within
6. Love Thy Neighbor / Conquer With Love / All You Need is Love – Acts of faith, prayer and deep meditation provide us with the strength that allows love for our fellow man to become an abiding part of our lives. Love is a unifying force.
7. Blessed Are the Peacemakers – When people live in the awareness that there is a close kinship between all individuals and nations, peace is the natural result.
8. You Reap What You Sow
9. Man Does Not Live by Bread Alone – The blessings of life are deeper than what can be appreciated by the senses.
10. Do No Harm – If someone tries to hurt another, it means that she is perceiving that person as something separate and foreign from herself.
11. Forgiveness
12. Judge Not, Lest Ye Be Judged
13. Be Slow to Anger
14. There is but One God / God is Love – Nature, Being, The Absolute. Whatever name man chooses, there is but one God.
15. Follow the Spirit of the Scriptures, Not the Words

In an era when there is violence and hatred spewed and displayed in the media, we must remember that actions speak louder than words; and we must demonstrate love, generosity, goodness, kindness, and forgiveness.

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R-3: **79th General Convention: Nine Amendments, 63 Resolutions Referred to Dioceses for their reading and consideration.**

Presented by: The Rev. Dr. Jim Sorvillo
Church of the Ascension, Orlando, FL

Date: January 25, 2020

Results: **January 25, 2020**
Resolution-3 PASSED

RESOLVED to remand these resolutions to a task force appointed by the Standing Committee of the Diocese of Central Florida for study, review and consideration and be it further

RESOLVED that a copy of the completed task force results will be available on the Diocesan website and will be sent electronically to all clergy and lay delegates of this convention.