

FORWARD MOVEMENT

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The Rev. Jay Sidebotham, *Director of RenewalWorks*
Ms. Tania Z. Jones, *Executive Assistant*

Mandate

Forward Movement is an agency of the Episcopal Church chartered by the 51st General Convention in 1934 “to reinvigorate the life of the church and to rehabilitate its general, diocesan and parochial work.”

Forward Movement’s mission is “Inspire disciples. Empower evangelists.” An agency of the Episcopal Church, Forward Movement was chartered by the 51st General Convention in 1934 “to reinvigorate the life of the church and to rehabilitate its general, diocesan, and parochial work.” From its inception, Forward Movement has understood that for the Episcopal Church to be healthy, its congregations

must be healthy. For congregations to be healthy, they must be filled with disciples rather than habitual Christians. Our work, then, is to encourage discipleship and evangelism.

Over twenty-five (25) full and part-time staff members manage Forward Movement's work, some stationed in offices in downtown Cincinnati and others around the United States. Together, we edit and design the publications, market them, fill orders and respond to the diverse concerns of those who call and write with comments and questions. We welcome suggestions from congregations and readers on how we can be of more use and offer better service.

Summary of Work

Today, Forward Movement carries out this work in widely varied ways. We organize conferences, including Discipleship Matters and Evangelism Matters (offered in partnership with the Presiding Bishop's Office). We offer free online resources, such as Grow Christians (www.growchristians.org), which encourages faith at home. For several years, we have worked with the Rev. Tim Schenck to offer Lent Madness (www.lentmadness.org), a fun, informative, and inspiring Lenten devotional. Thanks to a grant from the Constable Fund, we have offered high-quality free curricula in English and Spanish for all ages, most notably three (3) one-year courses for congregations: *Exploring the Bible*, *Celebrating the Saints*, and *Practicing Our Faith*. We have offered seasonal apps for iOS and Android to encourage full participation in Advent and Lent. We have a full-time social media missionary on staff, part of whose responsibilities include posting inspiring and informational content on our social media channels and others.

During Lent/Easter 2018, Forward Movement will work with many organizations across the church to encourage Episcopalians to read the Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts. The Presiding Bishop has invited us all to go on this journey through Jesus' life and ministry into the work of the Holy Spirit in the Church. Visit the Good Book Club website (www.goodbookclub.org) for free resources and details about how this project invites all Episcopalians and their congregations to take part.

In the print realm, our focus has moved to books, many of which offer opportunities for small group discussion and reflection. We seek to offer resources that encourage discipleship, whether through daily meditation or engagement with the richness of our prayer book tradition. We continue to offer some pamphlets, the cutting-edge technology of our founding era in the 1930s, which continue to be useful in many congregations.

Material for Latino/Hispanic Episcopalians and seekers is an important part of Forward Movement's ministry. We have offered free resources, such as a guide for multi-cultural congregations who wish

to celebrate *Las Posadas*. We have created new print and online resources. Our flagship devotional is available in Spanish as *Adelante Día a Día* in print, as an e-book, on social media, and in other channels.

Our first publication was a Lenten devotional focused on discipleship in 1935. *Forward Day by Day* was the immediate successor to that first publication and has been published continuously since then. Today *Forward Day by Day* is published as a print quarterly with a circulation of about 300,000 copies per quarter, over ninety (90) percent of which is in The Episcopal Church. We have subscribers in nearly every province of the Anglican Communion, over sixty (60) nations, with the largest number outside the U.S. going to the Anglican Church of Canada. In addition to print, the devotional is available as a podcast, in Braille, as an e-book, on a smartphone app, by e-mail, and through our social media channels (Facebook and Twitter). More than one hundred thousand (100,000) copies of *Forward Day by Day* – along with other literature – are distributed free of charge each year to prisons, military bases, hospitals and nursing homes.

We enjoy working with our partners. This work enables us and them to focus on core mission, collaborating for greater effectiveness. We now carry out work in collaboration with the Center for Biblical Studies, ChurchNext, the Episcopal Church Center, the Episcopal Church Foundation, The Episcopal Network for Stewardship, and Episcopal Relief & Development, among others.

Forward Movement operates RenewalWorks, a donor-funded ministry aimed at encouraging congregations to assess their spiritual health and vitality and to respond based on what they learn in their assessment. To date nearly two (200) Episcopal congregations have undertaken this work, and a good deal of data on the spiritual health — and challenges — of The Episcopal Church have been amassed. Some early insights have been published in a book called *Footsteps: Making Spiritual Growth the Priority* (Forward Movement, 2014). Led by the Rev. Jay Sidebotham, RenewalWorks is expanding to offer more resources to congregations.

Forward Movement's offices are located in Cincinnati, OH, as they have been since inception. The Executive Director, the Rev. Canon Scott Gunn, oversees a staff of thirteen (13) full-time and eight (8) part-time people. While most staff are based in Cincinnati, there are also staff based in Illinois, North Carolina, Louisiana, and elsewhere in Ohio. In addition to Canon Gunn, the leadership team comprises Ms. Richelle Thompson (Deputy Director and Managing Editor), Mr. Jason Merritt (Marketing Director), Ms. Miriam McKenney (Development Director), Ms. D. Jane Lyman Paraskevopoulos (Director of Business Operations), the Rev. Jay Sidebotham (Director of RenewalWorks), and Ms. Tania Z. Jones (Executive Assistant).

The Forward Movement Board of Directors meets twice each year, most often in Cincinnati. The Presiding Bishop serves as president of the Board and appoints its members. Current members include the Ms. Anne Schmidt (Dallas, TX; *Chair*), the Rev. James Harlan (Palm Beach, FL; *Vice Chair*), Ms. Julie Thomas (Valrico, FL; *Treasurer*), Mr. Miguel Escobar (New York, NY; *Secretary*), Ms. Pamela Wesley

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To learn more about Forward Movement and its work, please visit <https://www.forwardmovement.org/>. Early in its history, a collect for the ministry of Forward Movement was written, and we hope you will use it to pray for our ministry in the church and beyond.

O God, we ask your guidance and blessing for the Forward Movement of your church. Use it, we pray, to open our eyes to your glory and to the opportunities that lie before the church to reach people everywhere with the good news of Christ. Grant that the leaders of Forward Movement may be both wise and daring disciples, and stir up in us the will to share joyfully in this work with our prayers and gifts. Let not our purpose grow slack, that the nations of this world may become one holy people under the kingship of God and of our Lord Jesus Christ. This we ask in His name. Amen.

Budget

The current combined annual budget is about \$3 million. Forward Movement is self-sustaining. Funding comes from sales, donations, grants and investment income. The largest expense is personnel costs. Other major expenses include printing and publication purchase, warehousing and shipping, donations of materials, marketing and general & administrative. No funding is requested from the General Convention budget.