

To the Deputies and Bishops of the Episcopal Church assembled at the 79th General Convention in Austin, TX:

In May of 2016 a group of Generation X and Millennial clergy (most simply defined as clergy born after 1965) gathered for a weeklong conference in Portland, Oregon. This group grew out of Gathering the Next Generation, a convocation which gave voice to previously ignored leaders in GenX. This time, a more specific class of previously ignored voices rose to the forefront: younger clergy identifying as women serving The Episcopal Church. Much of the conversation that week centered around the reality of sexism in our Church. It was a #metoo conversation before the hashtag went viral.

Thanks to the Holy Spirit and the faithfulness of those gathered, a courageous space was created in which women could tell stories of their experiences of harassment, discrimination and abuse within the church. Women spoke to the fact that they have to be mindful of their bodies at all times and in all places. For so many, their bodies are not safe in the world or in the church, just because they are female. For women of color, those who are trans* or gender non-conforming or open about non-hetero sexualities, this fear, hypervigilance, harassment and abuse is all the more pronounced.

Women in the room in 2016 reported instances in which they were discriminated against or harassed - many being verbally harassed, others touched without their consent, still others being subject to wage or hiring discrimination because of their gender. Many of these incidents occurred since the election and consecration of the Most Rev. Katharine Jefferts Schori in 2009. Some were reported to diocesan staff or Title IV officers, but many of those reports came to no consequence.

For many of the men present, this was the first time they had heard these stories from their female-identified colleagues. Although the truths shared were difficult to hear, the men present listened compassionately and gave the women the time and space needed to tell their stories. At the end of the gathering, many men expressed a desire to learn how to be better allies in their own contexts. We have included concrete and timely suggestions for those who wish to be allies and advocates at the end of this document.

Many of us present for these conversation are writing to the leaders gathered in Austin for the 79th General Convention in the hopes this story can be made into a chapter of a longer narrative of truth-telling and reconciliation. We want to continue to this important work of healing and change. The church is failing to protect and advocate for the women we have called to leadership in both clerical and lay capacities. We are failing to nurture and encourage the talent which will be needed to steer the church into a new age. Women continue to be underpaid across the church,

and underrepresented in positions of influence and power.¹ The election of a female Presiding Bishop did not end sexism in the church. It is not the issue of a former age.

Easter is foundational to our story as Christians. All the resurrection narratives in the gospels tell us that, though they were stripped of power in the institutional church for centuries, women were the first witnesses to the resurrected Christ. We need to listen to their stories today - and seek the healing of our God, who through Christ's own abused body opened new possibilities of reconciliation. We need more courageous spaces where those who have been victims of harassment, discrimination and abuse can share their stories. Women need to be heard and believed - and The Episcopal Church must act to discipline abusers and protect potential victims.

We need holy conversations - and we also need action. We need those in positions of power, still predominantly white men, to be compassionate listeners and strong allies; to lift up and empower their female colleagues. We need our bishops to be pastors, our Title IV officers to take complaints seriously and act swiftly, and our vestries and hiring committees to understand and value women's leadership.

It is the hope of those signing this memorial that our time in Oregon can be a model for other holy conversations that our church needs to have, particularly around the ways we categorize ourselves by race, gender, sexuality and other labels which create privileged and minority classes - and the harassment, abuse, and discrimination that is prevalent in our churches even against those called to ordained leadership. We ask The Episcopal Church to take up this call for gender equity and to expend resources to create a more equitable church.

In the Appendix of this Memorial, we offer to the Church recommendations for conversation and action, including suggestions on how to listen and be an ally to those who have experienced gender discrimination, harassment, or abuse. Suggestions are included that may be implemented on the national, diocesan, parish and personal level - while we acknowledge this work is systemic and will take many years, we are also hopeful that individuals and parishes can take decisive and liberating action now. We hope the 79th General Convention will commend these and other action steps like these to the whole Church, and make widely available resources to achieve them. May we all be about the work of restoration and reconciliation together.

In Christ,

¹ See the Church Pension Group's annual report on clergy compensation - for any year in which statistics are broken down by gender. Annually, this report records a disparity in how male and female clergy are deployed, hired, and paid which evidences a wage and hiring gap that begins at ordination and only grows over years of service. Notably, CPG does not record or report the race/ethnicity of priests, which means that we have no body of statistical evidence which allows us to analyze whether, as we suspect, women and men of color are also underpaid or underrepresented in positions of power.

Memorial submitted by Deputy Michael Burke, Alaska and Deputy Helen Svoboda-Barber, North Carolina

Endorsed by Deputy Molly James, Connecticut and Edwin Johnson, Massachusetts. Also supported by additional deputies and other priests of The Episcopal Church:

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Paul Fromberg, California
Gia Hayes-Martin, California
Cameron Partridge, California
Stacy Alan, Chicago
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Amy Dafler Meaux, Lexington
David Sibley, Long Island
Tommy Dillon, Louisiana
Sara Shisler Goff, Maryland
Anne Nicholson, Maryland
Amy McCreath, Massachusetts
Deon Johnson, Michigan
Justin P. Chapman, Minnesota
Jered Weber-Johnson, Minnesota
Beth Scriven, Missouri
Marisa Tabizon Thompson, Nebraska
Ruth Anne Garcia, New York
Martha Korienek, New York
Yejide Peters, New York
Mary Catherine Young, New York
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Jedediah Fox, Olympia
Robert C. Laird, Olympia
Helen McPeak, Olympia
Karen Tiegs, Oregon
Eric Bond, Pennsylvania
Callie Swanlund, Pennsylvania
Noah H. Evans, Pittsburgh
Anna Carmichael, San Joaquin
Glenna Huber, Washington DC

APPENDIX

Calls to action:

The lack of gender equity is a systemic problem that will require change and participation by all members, at all levels and all manifestations of the church. Individuals on their own cannot solve the problem of sexism, nor the problems of racism, transphobia or homophobia which are intertwined with it. We must recognize that these are systemic problems that demand systemic solutions which involve everyone in the church committing to changes in culture and practice.

For individuals, at the personal and parish level:

- All members of the church, lay and clergy, need to listen to the stories of women and people of color about their experiences in the church, and believe them.
- Search Committees should work to ensure women and people of color are part of search processes. Clergy in a search process should ask how many women and people of color are being considered for the same position.
- Lay and clergy must be open and active about discussing compensation, seeking to reduce the blanket of silence cast over discussions of money under which inequality thrives.
- Church leadership, lay and ordained, must work to create a culture of transparency within congregations. At minimum, all vestry members know the compensation of each individual staff person, lay or ordained.
- If you are on a vestry or in senior leadership and privy to knowledge of staff salaries, consider whether staff are paid equitably, considering such objective factors as years of service, level of education, and size of your congregation. If they are not, ask why and suggest that the parish consider how to rectify this.
- If you are a senior clergy person, be intentional about how you can make it better for other clergy, especially those who are female, people of color, LGBTQ+, and/or younger. We do not need to perpetuate cycles of discrimination and exclusion; what you went through does not have to be the way things are.
- For those calling a new leader, recognize that female leadership models might be different from male norms and are not inherently wrong or inferior. In fact, the changing religious landscape calls us all to adapt.

For diocesan leadership:

- Engage in thorough training in Title IV practices and procedures for all and take Title IV seriously as a resource for healing and reconciliation.
- Be proactive, not merely reactive, in preventing misconduct.
- Provide mechanisms to ensure that those who have a history of sexist or racist behavior, even if it does not rise to the level of a Title IV offense, are not permitted to serve in positions of significant leadership or perpetuate a culture of discrimination.
- Provide family leave for all clergy and staff, regardless of gender.
- If your bishop is female, be supportive and respectful of her leadership.
- Actively support women in transition processes and throughout their tenures.

- Provide and require training resources for search committees to prevent implicit bias.
- Publish salaries, and be transparent about pay and benefits for clergy in the parish and working for the diocese.
- Provide comprehensive guidelines on clergy compensation based on objective factors such as size of parish and years of service to ensure justice and equity, taking into consideration the top of the range as well as the bottom.

Churchwide:

- Provide an extra-diocesan intake officer to ensure that no one fears reporting a Title IV offense to their diocesan officer or bishop.
- Record and publish statistics, by diocese, of Title IV charges, including the number of complaints filed, number of investigations launched, and number of disciplinary measures taken.
- Broaden the scope of Title IV to apply not only to TEC clergy, but also laypeople and clergy from other denominations serving in TEC.
- Suspend the Statute of Limitations for filing of Title IV charges, at least temporarily, so that those offenses not previously reported can be brought to light and investigated, and perpetrators disciplined.
- Provide Churchwide training resources for hiring to promote women in leadership, including implicit bias training for search committees, and targeted recruitment opportunities for women and people of color.
- Realize that hiring and compensation *do* matter - to individuals and to the Church as a whole - and that the inequalities in hiring and compensation which are well-documented by CPG are part of systemic oppression.
- Realize, too, that the current reporting on hiring and pay is incomplete, as it does not include race/ethnicity. Ask that CPG collect race/ethnicity data from participants and include it in their reporting. Many of our siblings in the clergy live at the intersection of two or more marginalized identities. Intersectionality must always be considered in combating injustice.
- Given that variations in compensation frequently have more to do with sexism and racism than objective factors or the ability of a candidate to negotiate, consider offering a formal process of review, when requested, for those in and approaching retirement who have been underpaid in their service to the church. Ask that CPG make a fund available to supplement egregiously small pensions.
- Work to have more women in senior leadership positions, including but not limited to the House of Bishops; recruit women into senior leadership and support them as they serve there.
- Provide churchwide mechanisms that invite discernment about the leadership of Bishops, including reimagining the role of bishops in a variety of ways. If the House of Bishops is to reflect the full diversity of the Church, the role of a bishop will not look the same from one diocese to the next, nor from one decade to the next.

May we all be about the work of restoration and reconciliation together. #ustoo