

# TASK FORCE TO STUDY SEXISM IN THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH & DEVELOP ANTI-SEXISM TRAINING

## Membership

Ms. Laura Russell, <i>Chair</i>	Newark, II	2021
The Rt. Rev. J. Scott Mayer, <i>Vice-Chair</i>	Northwest Texas, VII	2021
The Rev. Dr. Helen Svoboda-Barber, <i>Secretary</i>	North Carolina, IV	2021
The Rt. Rev. Mark Beckwith	Newark, II	2021
The Rev. Brooks Cato	Central New York, II	2021
Dr. John Harris	Oklahoma, VII	2021
The Rev. Spencer Hatcher	Maryland, III	2021
The Rt. Rev. Michael Buerkel Hunn	Rio Grande, VII	2021
The Rev. Tracy Johnson Russell	Connecticut, I	2021
Dr. Katherine Karr-Cornejo	Spokane, VIII	2021
Dr. Alexandra Killewald	Massachusetts, I	2021
The Rev. Yein Kim	Los Angeles, VIII	2021
Ms. Sophia Kitch-Peck	Bethlehem, III	2021
Ms. Katie Sherrod	The Episcopal Church in North Texas, VII	2021
The Most Rev. Michael Curry, <i>Ex Officio</i>	North Carolina, IV	
The Rev. Gay Clark Jennings, <i>Ex Officio</i>	Ohio, V	

## Changes in Membership

The Rt. Rev. Susan Snook Brown resigned on Feb. 7, 2019 after her election to the episcopate and was replaced by The Rev. Spencer Hatcher on Feb. 12, 2019.

## Representation at General Convention

Task Force members Spencer Hatcher and Laura Russell are authorized to receive non-substantive amendments to this report at General Convention.

## Mandate

### **2018-Co60 and 2018-Do23 2018-Co60 Breaking the Episcopal Stained Glass Ceiling**

*Resolved*, the House of Deputies concurring, That the 79th General Convention of the Episcopal Church authorize a task force with a membership of twelve members consisting of 3 bishops, 3 priests or deacons and 6 lay persons, including at least two young adults, appointed by the President of the House of Deputies and Presiding Bishop, of which women shall compose at least half of the membership, to research sexism in The Episcopal Church, and the role it plays in pay equity, status, and gender-based harassment. The task force shall report back to the 80th General Convention of the Episcopal Church with a plan to provide materials and resources to combat sexism in the Church.

### **2018-Do23 Amend Canons III.6.5.g.4, III.8.5.h.4, and III.10.1.c.4 and Establish Task Force**

*Resolved*, That the 79th General Convention establish an Anti-Sexism Task Force to research and develop a training program for the purpose of addressing the systemic sexism within the church and the larger society with the goals of raising awareness of bias, eliminating sexist hiring practices within the church, and identifying intersectionalities of discrimination across multiple cultural identities; and, be it further

*Resolved*, That the Task Force be appointed consisting of 2 bishops, 2 priests, 2 deacons, and 6 lay persons, with the Presiding Bishop appointing the bishop members, and the President of the House of Deputies appointing the priests, deacons, and lay members. At least one half will be women with at least one woman appointed for each of the orders; and, be it further

*Resolved*, That the Task Force complete development of the training program by December 31, 2019; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the Task Force shall submit the training program to Executive Council for its approval by December 31, 2019; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the training, once developed and approved for use, be required for all bishops, priests and deacons, and all lay persons elected or appointed to leadership in The Episcopal Church including, but not limited to, Executive Council, diocesan Standing Committees, diocesan Councils, diocesan Boards of Trustee, and similar bodies by whatever name, diocesan search committees for the election of bishops and all congregational search committees; and be it further

*Resolved*, That this Task Force shall report to Executive Council yearly, and to the 80th General Convention on the status of the training implementation with recommendations for continued development and improvement.

## Summary of Work

### Meetings

Meetings of the entire Task Force were held in-person on March 19-21st, 2019 in Chicago, Illinois and via Zoom video conferencing on January 3rd 2019, May 16th 2019, June 18th 2019, November 4th, 2019, December 19th 2019, January 21st 2020, January 30th 2020, October 15th 2020, December 22, 2020 and January 13th 2021. Subcommittees of the Task Force also met at additional times to complete their work.

### Why do this work?

“In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters... Then God said, let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness... so God created humankind in [God’s] image, in the image of God, [God] created them... God saw everything [God] had made, and indeed, it was very good<sup>(1)</sup>”

The work of the Taskforce to Study Sexism in The Episcopal Church and to develop an anti-sexism training is rooted in God’s act of creation and in God’s continued saving action in that creation, inviting us time and time again, though the process of repentance and reconciliation, towards wholeness and liberation; towards a creation truly made in God’s own image. We remember this narrative of God’s saving acts in the words of Eucharistic Prayer C: “Again and again, you called us to return. Through prophets and sages you revealed your righteous Law. And in the fullness of time you sent your only Son, born of a woman, to fulfill your Law, to open for us the way of freedom and peace.<sup>(2)</sup>”

In our Baptismal Covenant, with God’s help, we promise to “persevere in resisting evil, and whenever [we] fall into sin, repent and return to the Lord.<sup>(3)</sup>” We covenant to “seek and serve Christ in all persons<sup>(4)</sup>” and to “strive for justice and peace among all people and respect the dignity of every human being.<sup>(5)</sup>” And yet, we also know that we have fallen short of these commitments made to God and to one another, both as individuals and as an institution. We have “denied [God’s] goodness in ourselves, in each other, and in the world [God has] created.”<sup>(6)</sup>

Systemic and intersectional sexism and gender-based discrimination is just one way in which we fall short. It is our hope that, incomplete as it may be, the offering of this Taskforce is one way the Episcopal Church might seek to “repent and return to the Lord” through an intentional process of learning, dialogue, truth-telling, and policy change at all levels of our institution. We believe that God

continues to call us to return here and now and that our vocation as the people of God is to hear and respond to that call to the best of our abilities.

## **Work on 2018-Co60 Breaking the Episcopal Stained Glass Ceiling**

### **Identifying the Problem**

Evidence of gender inequality and sexism in The Episcopal Church comes from multiple sources. The report “Called to Serve: A Study of Clergy Careers, Clergy Wellness, and Clergy Women” was prepared as a result of resolutions passed by General Convention in 2006. Though the data contained in the report need to be updated to reflect the church today, many of the issues flagged by the report remain, especially in regards to gender disparities in compensation, employment, and employment in the episcopate and other positions of relative prestige.<sup>(7)</sup>

“The 2019 Episcopal Clergy Compensation Report,” produced by the Church Pension Group, shows that the typical (median) male clergy member earns about \$9,000 more annually than his female counterpart. Put differently, the typical female clergy member earns about 89 cents for every dollar her male counterpart earns.<sup>(8)</sup>

Domestically, Provinces VII and I show the most pronounced pay disparity with the typical male clergy member receiving more than \$14,000 per year more than the typical female clergy member.<sup>(9)</sup> In these provinces, the typical female clergy member earns about 81 (Province VII) and 83 (Province I) cents for every dollar earned by the typical male clergy member. Province VIII is the most equitable domestically, but the typical male clergy member still receives nearly \$5,000 per year more than the typical female clergy member. Congregations with the highest Average Sunday Attendance, the Program and Resource-sized Parishes, domestically, have the highest disparity in annual compensation, with the typical male clergy member receiving about \$30,000 to \$35,000 more than the typical female clergy member.

The pay disparities are not limited to Dioceses. At The Episcopal Church Center, currently, there is only one female Officer, and of the principle employees, only 30% are female. Combining Officers and Principal Employees, women hold only slightly more than 25% of these positions. The majority of these positions, some of the highest paid positions at The Episcopal Church Center, are occupied by men.

Gender differences in position type are one contributor to pay disparities: domestically, male clergy are about twice as likely to be employed as senior rectors (15% vs. 8% of female clergy), while female clergy are overrepresented as assistants (21% vs. 14% of male clergy). Narrowing the gender pay gap

among clergy will require attention both to equitable pay for those in similar positions and equal access to high-paying positions. Some dioceses have attempted to address pay inequity, and this Task Force encourages ongoing conversation with those dioceses to observe how effective their efforts prove to be over time.

In addition to statistics regarding clergy compensation, stories from the #MeToo and #ChurchToo movements have shed light on how sexism manifests in our churches and our church structure, from harassment and abuse in church settings to disparities in the hiring process. Many men in the church expressed shock at the number of stories emerging from their colleagues and fellow parishioners, while many women saw their own stories affirmed by the experiences of others. The church as a whole is learning just how pervasive sexism is, and we are seeing how it affects people of all genders, not solely women. Slates of all-female Bishop nominations bring additional sexist attitudes, stating an all-female slate is not appropriate. We do not see these outcries with all male slates. In addition, the intersectional realities of those who identify as women provide further evidence of the many places and moments the church has failed to live into its promises to protect its flock, respect the dignity of every human being, and seek Christ in all persons.

### **Work in Progress**

Many groups and individuals are working to address sexism and gender inequality in The Church.

People within the church are taking notice and demanding change. The House of Deputies Committee on Sexual Harassment and Exploitation and the Liturgy of Listening from the 79th General Convention are examples of this work happening on a legislative level. From the grassroots, groups like Women Embodying Executive Leadership (WEEL) and Leading Women have been birthed to support and encourage ordained women in discernment for senior level positions through the church.

Women have come forward to, through social media and other forums, to help break the stained glass ceiling. Groups on Facebook, and other platforms, help each other, not only by sharing stories, but also by giving guidance and encouragement to those who feel called to senior positions. These groups, created by women and for women, are helping to call out sexism and guide women to their callings.

Institutional Church actors are also working to reduce sexism and gender inequality in The Church. The Office of Transition Ministry is working with search committees and provides trainings aimed at addressing sexism within the search process. Some dioceses are doing internal audits looking at gender and representation. Bishop trainings regarding sexism are also underway. Efforts to collect

and share data are also ongoing. The Church Pension Group has begun to enhance their data reporting on gender, dioceses are improving their ability to share information, and historical documents are more readily available.

### **Next Steps**

The topic of sexism is so great that the work of Resolution 2018-C060 cannot be completed in a single triennium. Conversations that have only just begun must continue, and more information must be collected and made available to bring us closer to the justice we seek for all people, especially in the church.

One of the challenges to documenting and disrupting sexism and gender inequality in the church is a lack of coordinated resources and data. While many parishes, dioceses, church-wide entities, and groups are seeking to address these issues, discovering these efforts often requires being “in the know” and personal connections. This makes it challenging for interested individuals to know how to find information about pay disparities in their diocese or templates for equitable search processes or where they might find support. We strongly urge The Episcopal Church to create a single, centralized web dashboard with links to these resources.

Although the Church Pension Group provides excellent data on gender disparities in pay among clergy working in the United States, other pay information is much less readily available. Data on gender disparities in clergy salaries for those working outside the United States is not publicly available. Additionally, level of compensation is not readily available for the laity. As a start, we urge dioceses to collect information on lay staff compensation at both the parish and diocesan level and to inspect these data for gender inequalities. The Church has a responsibility to ensure pay equity of all its employees, not only the ordained.

We also urge additional analyses of the pay data that are already available. The Church Pension Group provides important information about gender pay disparities by characteristics including position and province, but the joint roles of these factors are typically not analyzed. Thus, at this time we are not able to assess the relative contributions to the gender pay gap of variation in experience, variation in placement conditional on experience, and variation in pay conditional on position. Understanding the underlying processes contributing to gender pay disparities will allow the Church to intervene more effectively to reduce them. We urge the church to fund a deeper analysis of the Church Pension Group data, either conducted by Church Pension Group employees or designed by an outside analyst (and, if necessary, implemented by Church Pension Group employees to avoid sharing the underlying, confidential data).

Understanding the full scope of gender inequality and sexism in the church also requires data other than compensation. There is very limited data regarding the status of women in positions of power. It would benefit the church to have full data on the gender of those in charge of Cardinal parishes and cathedrals. Likewise, the church has not collected data on the number of lay women who are wardens or serve on vestries, search committees, boards, standing committees, commissions on ministry, as Chancellors, or bishop's councils and diocesan boards. There is very little information covering hiring practices and search committee policies from parish-to-parish and diocese-to-diocese. Additionally, we could not find information reflecting the number of women who are finalists in job searches or who occupy leadership roles in seminaries.

In addition, there is limited information available regarding Title IV complaints of gender-based harassment. Dioceses have disparate systems for handling harassment complaints, there is no database of harassment policies for all dioceses, most knowledge around harassment complaints comes from hearsay and rumor (and is not always correct). Without this information it is very difficult to determine if the church as a whole encourages or allows a hostile environment. We do, however, applaud Resolution 2018-A120, which calls for the creation, administration, and maintenance of “a central database registry to track data pertinent to proceedings under this Title [IV]” and recognize the potential it holds for future study.

We recognize that gender inequality and sexism will take different forms in different places. Thus, addressing sexism will require not only action by this task force and The Episcopal Church, but by diocesan and congregational leaders. We ask that all bodies and groups of this church be required to examine their own composition, discuss the gaps, and create plans to narrow those gaps. Leadership should be having these conversations, should explain the problems, and work along with these bodies to correct what is broken in our church.

To continue its work, this task force needs more data and needs the partnership of The Church in collecting these data and making them centrally available. Talking about the issue of sexism in the church and gathering this data will help to normalize conversations around a subject that has been taboo for far too long. It should be the norm that these conversations inform the work we do in the church, from the creation of slates to discussions with clergy and lay leaders about toxic environments. With all due sensitivity, this data — along with the stories that accompany the data — must be collected, available, and shared. With these data and the stories told, the church will be better positioned to hold people accountable, to monitor and work to improve pay gaps, complaints, and the gender composition of leadership bodies.

## **Work on 2018-Do23: Amend Canons III.6.5.g.4, III.8.5.h.4, and III.10.1.c.4 and Establish Task Force**

This mandate revolved around creating an anti-sexism training, that would be presented to Executive Council for approval and promulgation. For the Task Force to better understand the mandate to create anti-sexism training, we began by reaching out to the wider church to discuss trainings in general to learn what has been effective, what would be used, and any lessons others could teach us from the past. We quickly realized several key points regarding church trainings in general:

- People are in different places, both literally and figuratively, and must be met there
- Begin with the basics
- Trainings need to fit into already existing schedules that are often quite full
- Multiple modes of delivery, such as in-person, as well as synchronous and asynchronous online options, are important
- Adaptable modules are most effective
- Accountability is key to performance and compliance
- Sexism varies from diocese to diocese and from setting to setting

Taking the example of meeting people where they are, we reflected on scheduling programs and trainings. If you do not begin with a shared understanding of terms, progress cannot be made. If you expect participants to spend 8 hours for an in-person training with a 2-hour one-way commute, participants are less likely to come and, if they do, are less likely to be engaged in transformative learning during the time they are present. Church groups should be able to take these trainings before a meeting or online in multiple, small segments. These trainings should be adaptable to each diocese. Local facilitation, rather than a nationwide group of trainers, allows for greater flexibility for those undergoing the training and is more cost-effective for all. Pedagogically, trainings should include multiple types of input and modes of instruction and learning.

Finally, we learned that trainings had to be easy to use. Church members (whether lay or clergy) are busy. Though they are eager to learn and change when needed, they also do not have the time to create and host trainings so something that could be used with very little preparation that maintained effectiveness is desired.

The Task Force, with all this information in mind, decided the best training we could create was a modular one which would allow flexibility for time and context and make it more likely that the



trainings would be used. These training modules could be done before an already-scheduled meeting and could be led by coordinators with minimal preparation. Modules allow groups to choose their path through the training and to complete it in their own time. Our goal was to make it as accessible as possible to groups who we know are already heavily committed. Given that these church bodies have a shared purpose and often will have already built trust and relationships together, these trainings will leverage that community to allow a safer space for growth for participants.

We therefore created ten modules (in English only at this point) as a proof of concept. We believe these modules are the beginning of a complete anti-sexism training which would consist of assorted modules, each under one hour, that respond to specific competencies that the Task Force identified as necessary for this work. These competencies focus on participant objectives related to definitions and terminology, reflective practices, best practices, and the role of the participant in the transformative work of the Church. Specific learning outcomes are detailed in the modules. Eventually, the goal is to have different sets of modular training; for example, trainings for search committees; trainings about sexism and intersectionality; and trainings to understand how women of color experience sexism differently than white women; among others. Groups would be able to choose from different categories, so that they would be required to take a certain number of modules in each category to have completed the training satisfactorily.

The modules that we have proposed so far teach the basic concepts of sexism and gender bias, how scripture can be misused to continue sexist beliefs, and how our baptism teaches us to honor all people. The trainings each have a learning component as well as a conversation piece, and the host (or trainer) needs only to review the materials in advance. They can be used by any group, before or after a meeting, and at any time. The goal of these trainings was to create the beginning framework of an anti-sexism course. They can be rolled out as they are since they are the beginning of the framework. Other modules can be added in time, with specific groups in mind. Eventually, more advanced modules can also be added, so those who have taken the basic framework can then move to more advanced courses.

We feel they are a cumulative effort of our work to show General Convention a plan forward to teach gender bias, and to work together to eliminate sexism. We envision next steps including pilot programs in several dioceses and the creation of a structure for ongoing assessment of effectiveness of the trainings.

We have presented these to Executive Council and hope they will embrace our plan and continue by creating more modules that can expand on our work and enhance these already created trainings. Since our Task Force is due to sunset this triennium, we ask that a Task Force be appointed and

charged with both creating more training modules and implementing the current modules, once approved by Executive Council, in the next triennium.

We heard from many groups within the church involved with formation and training that without a mechanism to track who has been trained, the trainings fall off the radar, and there is limited to no accountability. This mechanism for accountability should be linked to other required trainings for deputies and church leaders. There should be a group that is charged with confirming that all church leaders have taken the requisite number of modules to complete an appropriate level of training.

Our goal is to use all this gathered information and the future modeled behavior from leadership to deploy this task force's training modules, report back to the committee with feedback on the process, improve the training in time, and, ultimately, to build awareness that leads to true change at every level of The Episcopal Church.

## **Conclusion**

There is a lot of work going on around the issue of sexism in The Episcopal Church and how to combat the gender inequities that continue to persist, but information is not all easily accessible. Disparate groups within the church are collecting data, but currently, there is no centralized, easily accessible bank of data. Even given all this work, there is still considerably more data to collect to fully understand sexism and the role it plays in The Episcopal Church. At this time, we are unable to compare the presence of sexism within the church to the secular world; we don't know if we are better, the same, or worse than the rest of society. However, we believe that if we're only on par with the rest of society, we're not doing what we're supposed to be doing as a church body. We should be leading on this, not mirroring or even trailing behind. Episcopalians can continue to work to stop sexism by calling it out, engaging in trainings, taking it out of the shadows, talking about it whenever and wherever it exists, and following best practices for leadership appointments, hiring, and compensation. The newly created training modules will help with this, but for a robust and more complete offering, continued work is necessary to develop additional modules, monitor their effectiveness, and develop additional interventions to reduce sexism within the church. We request that this Task Force continue its work in order to expand and continue the study of sexism, attempt to obtain and centralize more data, and to continue to develop the trainings and monitor their efficacy. We further recommend that these tasks be divided among multiple bodies in the next triennium: the work of creating educational materials and the work of collecting and analyzing data are both substantial and would benefit from focused attention by two distinct groups.

## End Notes

- (1) Genesis 1:1-2, 26a, 27 a, 31, NRSV
- (2) Eucharistic Prayer C, Book of Common Prayer, 1982, pg. 370
- (3) Holy Baptism, Book of Common Prayer, 1982, pg. 304
- (4) Holy Baptism, Book of Common Prayer, 1982, pg. 305
- (5) Holy Baptism, Book of Common Prayer, 1982, pg. 305
- (6) Enriching Our Worship 1, 1998, pg. 56
- (7) <https://www.cpg.org/globalassets/documents/publications/called-to-serve-a-study-of-clergy-careers-clergy-wellness-and-clergy-women.pdf>
- (8) Church Pension Group. 2020. The 2019 Episcopal Clergy Compensation Report: A Geographic and Demographic Analysis of Clergy Compensation. <https://www.cpg.org/globalassets/documents/publications/report-2019-church-compensation-report.pdf>
- (9) Church Pension Group. 2020. The 20219 Episcopal Clergy Compensation Report: An Interactive Tool <https://www.cpg.org/global/research/clergy-compensation-report/#/start>

## Proposed resolutions

### **A061 Amend Canon I.4.6.j to include data regarding gender**

*Resolved*, the House of \_\_\_\_ concurring, that the 80th General Convention amend Canon I.4.6.j by the addition of a second sentence, as follows:

Canon 1.4.6.j

**j.** Each Diocese shall annually report to the Executive Council such financial and other information pertaining to the state of the Church in the Diocese as may be required in a form authorized by Executive Council. *Such Diocesan report shall include demographic information, such as gender, age and race, for the following positions: Standing Committee, Bishop Search Committee (if any), Chancellor and Vice-Chancellors, Trustees, all Wardens and Vestries.*

#### EXPLANATION

The Task Force to Study Sexism in The Episcopal Church and Develop Anti-Sexism Training, during its work, continually found a lack of consolidated information regarding the demographics, especially gender, on diocesan positions. One of the challenges to disrupting sexism and gender inequality in the church is a lack of coordinated data. Though Church Pension Group has begun to collect data on clergy compensation and roles, there is no collection of data on either lay participation in senior positions, nor on demographics of key positions in a diocese or parish. To disturb the status quo, and work towards gender equality, we must see what currently exists. By requiring dioceses to report this information, we can create a consolidated source of information by which we can study the disparities and make meaningful recommendations.

### **A062 Requiring Dioceses to Create a Plan to Narrow Gender Gaps**

*Resolved*, the House of \_\_\_\_ concurring, that the 80th General Convention require each Diocese to submit to the 81st General Convention a plan to narrow the gender equity gaps which exist in their Diocese; and be it further

*Resolved*, that this plan shall be created after careful examination into the composition of diocesan bodies, gender pay equity of both clergy and lay, and the demographics of parish leadership, including any search committees.

#### **EXPLANATION**

The Task Force to Study Sexism in The Episcopal Church and Develop Anti-Sexism Training realized during their work that each Diocese must commit to combat gender inequality. We commend the few dioceses who have done work to understand the gender disparities in their own dioceses. We recommend that each Diocese be required to examine the composition of their bodies of leadership, understand the dynamics of gender at play with each, and to create a plan to narrow any gender equity gaps. Each diocese is different, and therefore they must create their own plan. No one body can undertake to do this for every diocese, so this must come from the diocese. The plan, which should be reflective of where the diocese currently stands on gender equality, should be created by the diocese and then submitted to the next General Convention.

### **A063 Creation of a Director of Women’s Ministries**

*Resolved*, the House of \_\_\_\_ concurring, that the 80th General Convention direct the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society to establish a staff position of Director of Women’s Ministries; and be it further

*Resolved*, that this staff person be empowered to create networks to train and mobilize women leaders, both lay and ordained; and to collect any data relevant to gender equality within The Episcopal Church.

#### **EXPLANATION**

When the position commonly referred to as the “Women’s Desk” was eliminated, The Episcopal Church lost a place for women to go to when seeking assistance with gender equality issues. There was no longer a repository of data regarding gender equality, a human “dashboard” of programs for gender equality, or a place to ask a question regarding women in the church. Though other positions are still in existence; a position dedicated to women’s issues has never been recreated. Throughout

this triennium, the Task Force to Study Sexism in The Episcopal Church and Develop Anti-Sexism Training continually found the need for a more consolidated effort on data around women's issues. From the lack of gender data on lay leadership, to templates to equitable search processes, to how to find support for gender equality, there is no central location or person coordinating these areas. We are asking dioceses to create plans for gender equality, but there is no staff to assist them. If we want to disrupt sexism, we must create a coordinated response along with accurate data. The Episcopal Church is committed to gender equality, and therefore should fund a staff person, not only to show their commitment, but to help empower women within the church.

## Continuance recommendation

The Task Force to Study Sexism in The Episcopal Church and Develop Anti-Sexism Training recommends a continuing opportunity to collect and study data to more fully understand sexism within The Episcopal Church over the coming triennium. To that end, the task force will need to be repopulated with current and/or new members to meet, collect and analyze data, roll out trial training sessions to be implemented by another body, and respond to feedback to further develop training modules.