

R2020-03: Political Change through Nonviolence

Whereas, Jesus Christ in the Gospel of Matthew acknowledged that his teachings would create conflict [10:34-36] but insisted that his disciples not resort to violence [26:52], *and*

Whereas, the General Conventions of 1994, 2000, and 2003 approved resolutions calling upon “the Church at every level to oppose violence and the means by which violence is perpetrated in all areas of our common life” [1994-D005, 2000-D022, 2000-A058, 2003-D031], *and*

Whereas, both the U.S. and Ohio Constitutions protect the rights of petition, instruction of representatives, and assembly, which are fundamental rights needed to bring about political change [U.S. Constitution, 1st Amendment; Ohio Constitution, Article 1: Section 3], *and*

Whereas, the United States is in the midst of a political awakening, with a number of political and social movements making historic progress, *and*

Whereas, many Episcopalians throughout the Diocese of Southern Ohio have been active in the aforementioned movements, and even more Southern Ohio Episcopalians may become similarly engaged politically in the coming years, *and*

Whereas, we acknowledge and denounce both the personal and structural violence done against black and brown bodies and the systemic racism which have spurred the public outcry that we are seeing in our nation today, *and*

Whereas, even the most necessary and moral political movements carry with them a risk of violence, coming not only from opponents, but sometimes even from supporters of such movements, *and*

Whereas, violence has unfortunately broken out sporadically during some of the rallies, marches, and protests that have taken place so far this year, *and*

Whereas, Martin Luther King Jr., in his famous letter from the Birmingham Jail, spoke of an arduous process of “self-purification” that his followers underwent, committing themselves resolutely to nonviolence, before launching into direct action to expose the evils of segregation; *therefore be it*

Resolved, that we, the Episcopalians of Southern Ohio, in the spirit of Martin Luther King Jr., commit ourselves to nonviolence in the exercise of our constitutional rights to

petition and instruct our government and to assemble publicly to express our concerns; *and be it further*

Resolved, that we make all our various allies in political change, regardless of their backgrounds or beliefs, aware of our own prior commitment to nonviolence and make clear that, for us, nonviolence is the only acceptable means to effect political change; *and be it further*

Resolved, that we (re-)affirm our support for General Convention resolutions 1994-D005, 2000-D022, 2000-A058, 2003-D031; *and be it further*

Resolved, that we affirm that our commitment to nonviolence flows out of our awareness that the Gospel message calls for significant social and political transformation; *and be it further*

Resolved, that we affirm our conviction that nonviolent means are the most effective in bringing about deep, enduring social and political change.