

*Diocese of Olympia  
Resolutions Committee  
2019 Report to Convention*

*MEMBERS OF THE RESOLUTIONS COMMITTEE: **The Rev. Jonathan Weldon**, chair, St. Paul, Bellingham; **the Rev. Rilla Barrett**; **the Rev. Jedediah Fox**, Church of the Redeemer, Kenmore; **Micah Kurtz**, St. Columba, Kent; **Mary Maxon**, St. Luke, Vancouver.*

*Five Resolutions were received by the September 25 deadline. The Resolutions Committee has considered the resolutions and offers its opinions in this report, based on the process outlined in the diocesan canons.*

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1 **Resolution #1 – 2021 Diocesan Assessment Rate**

2 *Submitted by the Diocesan Council*

3 **Resolved**, That this 109<sup>th</sup> Convention of the Diocese of Olympia approve the recommendation of the Diocesan  
4 Council that the 2021 diocesan assessment rate factor be set at 14.5% of the Net Disposable Income (NDI).

5 Explanation: In accordance with Canon 7, Diocesan Convention determines the assessment rate for the second  
6 year of assessment following determination; thus the 2019 Convention sets the 2021 assessment rate. Over the  
7 past few years the rate has been reduced: the rate was 20% from 2004 to 2006, 18% from 2007 to 2011, 17.5%  
8 in 2012 and 17% in 2013, 2014, & 2015, 16% in 2016, and 15% for 2017 & 2018; it was set at 14.5% for 2019 by  
9 Convention in 2018 and this rate is continued at 14.5% for 2020. The patterns of low levels of non-payment of  
10 assessments by congregations, the strong performance of the investment funds of the diocese, and the careful  
11 expenditure of funds by diocesan staff continue to permit the assessment rate at this level. Future reductions  
12 will require either increased revenue generation and/ or reduced expenditures on diocesan programs.  
13 Obviously, major changes in congregational payment patterns or adverse performance of diocesan investment  
14 funds will change the assessment calculations.

15 **Resolutions Committee Recommendation: DO PASS**

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**Resolution #2 – Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) to Clergy Salary Scale for 2020***Submitted by the Personnel Commission of the Diocese of Olympia*

**Resolved**, That this 109<sup>th</sup> Convention of the Diocese of Olympia set the Cost of Living Adjustment for 2020 parochial clergy salary scale at 2.3%.

Explanation: As required by Canon 23, sections 2 and 5, the Personnel Commission, in August 2019, proposed the Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) for 2020 for the parochial clergy salary scale. This is based on the Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index for the Seattle-Tacoma-Bremerton area for June 2018 to June 2019, which showed an increase in the cost of living of 2.3%. For information purposes the Personnel Commission offers the clergy salary scale adjusted for the proposed COLA increase:

**Personnel Commission – 2020 Proposed Parochial Clergy Salary Scale**

GRADE	MINIMUM	MID-POINT	MAXIMUM
A	\$ 93,831	\$ 117,289	\$ 140,746
B	\$ 85,299	\$ 106,624	\$ 127,949
C	\$ 77,531	\$ 96,914	\$ 116,297
D	\$ 70,494	\$ 88,118	\$ 105,741
E	\$ 64,165	\$ 80,206	\$ 96,247

**Mandatory Policies (applies to rectors and vicars):**

1. If church-owned housing is provided, the range is reduced by 30% plus the amount of any utilities provided, either in form of actual utility costs paid or in allowances provided.
2. Clergy must be paid at least the minimum of the applicable range.
3. Clergy with five (5) or more years of ordained service must be paid at least 90% of the mid-point of their congregation's applicable grade. [See advisory note below.]
4. Clergy with ten (10) or more years of ordained service must be paid at least 100% of the mid-point of their congregation's applicable grade. [See advisory note below.]
5. Exceptions to these policies require the approval of the Bishop.
6. All financial agreements with clergy must be rewritten or amended in their Mutual Ministry Agreement to reflect changes in compensation or provisions and a copy forwarded to the Bishop by January 31 of each year.

**Advisory Policies:**

1. For additional paid clergy (associate, assistant), it is recommended that minimum compensation be established at two salary grades below that established for the parish or mission, depending upon qualifications and experience.
2. A clergy person with less than five (5) years should be given pay raises greater than the cost-of-living adjustment so the salary reaches the 90% of mid-point by the fifth year.
3. A clergy person approaching (10) years in the same grade or congregation should be given pay raises greater than the cost-of-living adjustment so the salary reaches the 100% of mid-point by the tenth year.
4. If a congregation is moving toward a higher grade, that congregation would be wise to increase toward that new salary grade incrementally.
5. Congregations are encouraged to consider clergy performance when deliberating compensation increases in excess of the COLA.
6. For interim clergy of a parish or mission, it is recommended that compensation shall be at the grade level of the parish or mission, prorated for the percentage of time committed.

**Resolutions Committee Recommendation: DO PASS**

**Resolution #3 – Updating Policy on Medicare Supplemental Insurance for Clergy & Lay Diocesan Employees Employed Prior to January 1, 2001**

*Submitted by the Diocesan Council & the Canon for Governance & Human Resources*

**Resolved**, That this 109<sup>th</sup> Convention of the Diocese of Olympia update the Policy on Medicare Supplemental Insurance for clergy & lay diocesan staff employed prior to January 1, 2001, originally adopted by the convention in 2000 and updated in 2014, as follows:

1. Effective January 1, 2020, provide annual payments up to the lesser of, 1) \$3,552 (80% of the 2019 cost) for eligible clergy & lay diocesan employees, or 2) the cost of an HMO in the retiree’s community (if an eligible diocesan-sponsored plan is unavailable in the retiree’s community).
2. The Diocesan Council will review current costs every other year with a goal to maintain the annual maximum at approximately 80% of the annual cost.
3. Funds will be provided in 2020 to assist current retirees for whom transitioning to paying 20% of the cost would be a hardship.
4. All retirees and spouses, who, as of December 31, 2000, were currently provided diocesan-paid post-retirement medical benefits continue to be eligible to participate under the then current vesting schedule, subject to the new maximum amounts.
5. Active employees 50 years old or older on December 31, 2000, continue to be eligible to participate under the then current vesting schedule, subject to the new maximum amounts.
6. Active employees under age 50 on December 31, 2000 (born after January 1, 1951) who were employed as of December 31, 2000, are eligible to participate under the new vesting schedule, subject to the maximum diocesan contribution noted in #1. *Vesting schedule included below.*
7. The years of service within the Diocese of Olympia immediately prior to retirement determine the percentage of the maximum diocesan contribution to be paid.
8. In keeping with our practice for active employees, all coverage to be paid under this policy must be obtained through the Episcopal Church Medical Trust (ECMT), with no reimbursement provided for outside coverage, except when an ECMT plan is not available in the retiree’s community.
9. Dental coverage is not included under this policy, as either a direct cost or as a reimbursement.
10. Eligibility begins at age 65, without reference to what the Social Security Administration defines as the “normal retirement age.”

**Explanation:** In 2000, the Diocesan Convention adopted a policy on Medicare Supplement Insurance. The convention authorized changes in the Diocese of Olympia’s post-retirement medical benefits for eligible clergy and lay diocesan staff employees that became effective January 1, 2001. The action was taken to limit future costs and liabilities as, at that time, the practice in most dioceses was to pay for all retirees’ policies (clergy and lay) which resulted in massive liabilities. At the same time, the stock market was appreciating dramatically, and the Church Pension Fund (CPG) assumed payment of Medicare Supplement Part A insurance for retired clergy, which is still paid by CPG to this day. The 2000 convention action was intended to ensure lay diocesan staff would have the same benefit coverage as the clergy; it set the maximum diocesan contribution at \$1,044 for clergy and \$2,292 for lay employees. While the 2000 policy included no provision for reviewing or increasing annual payments based on rising costs, practice has been to cover the full cost, at the current vesting level for each person. There are currently 15 eligible retirees receiving retirement benefits under this policy, with another six active employees, who were employed as of December 31, 2000, who may be eligible for benefits when they retire. The 2019 cost estimate is \$71,000; with the annual single coverage cost for 2019 at \$4,440. The annual cost will continue to fluctuate as Medicare costs increase, and as retirees are added to and removed from the retiree list. There is no obligation for post-retirement benefits for clergy or lay staff employed after January 1, 2001.

46	<u>Vesting Schedule as of 1/1/2001:</u>		
47	Years of Service	% Diocesan Contribution	% Diocesan Contribution
48	Immediately prior	Provided – Full Time	Provided – Part Time
49	Retirement		
50	10	10	0
51	11	20	0
52	12	30	0
53	13	40	0
54	14	50	0
55	15	60	0
56	16	70	0
57	17	80	0
58	18	90	0
59	19	100	0
60	20	100	10
61	21	100	20
62	22	100	30
63	23	100	40
64	24	100	50
65	25	100	60
66	26	100	70
67	27	100	80
68	28	100	90
69	29	100	100
70	30+	100	100

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1 **Resolution #4 – Increasing Affordable and Supportive Housing**

2 *Submitted by the Bishop’s Taskforce on Homelessness, the Rev. Deacon Brian Wright*

3 **Resolved** that this 109<sup>th</sup> Convention of the Diocese of Olympia and its member parishes commit to support  
 4 efforts locally, statewide, and federally for funding the construction of additional affordable housing for  
 5 households classified by HUD as Extremely Low Income and Very Low Income, (i.e. households earning less than  
 6 50% of the Average Median Income), **and be it further**

7 **Resolved** that the Diocese of Olympia and its member parishes support efforts locally, statewide, and  
 8 federally for increasing financial support to those who are classified by HUD as Extremely Low Income and Very  
 9 Low Income, (i.e. households earning less than 50% of the Average Median Income), through additional HUD  
 10 Section 8 vouchers and through local levies for subsidized housing, **and be it further**

11 **Resolved** that the Diocese of Olympia and its member parishes support efforts locally and statewide to fund  
 12 additional supportive transitional housing for those seeking to leave homelessness, **and be it further**

13 **Resolved** that the Diocese of Olympia seek ways to assist parishes in working with charitable organizations  
 14 that assist un-housed and under-housed persons, **and be it further**

15 **Resolved** that parishes of the Diocese of Olympia be encouraged to identify persons with the necessary  
 16 skills to establish teams of experts for developing affordable housing on underutilized spaces within their  
 17 respective communities, **and be it further**

18 **Resolved** that the Diocesan Board of Directors seek ways to make prudent investments in affordable  
 19 housing developments that will benefit those who are un-housed and earning incomes less than 50% of the  
 20 Average Median Income within the geographic area of the Diocese.

21 Explanation: The crisis of homelessness in the diocese will not be resolved until there is adequate available  
 22 housing that requires 30% or less of a family’s income. The current status throughout the diocese for affordable  
 23 housing is many lists are closed. Those fortunate enough to be on a list have waiting times of over 2 years and  
 24 in specific cases of the elderly and disabled the wait time is much longer. Until additional housing stock  
 25 becomes available there are no places for persons who are un-housed to go.

26 Subsidized support of the households among us who earn less than 50% of the Average Median Income  
 27 is necessary in order to place them into stable housing. The number of HUD Section 8 vouchers has decreased  
 28 over the past several years as a result of federal funding shortfalls. State action needs to be taken to extend this  
 29 program through budget allocation and local action to address the issue through local levies. Without  
 30 subsidized support those who might qualify for affordable housing will not be able to pay for it. Go here for  
 31 information on HUD AMI <https://www.hudexchange.info/faqs/843/how-is-area-median-income-calculated/>

32 Homeless persons suffering from addictions, mental illness, or sociologic issues require a time of  
 33 residence in transitional supportive housing in order to be restored to wholeness. There is a critical shortage of  
 34 this housing. Additional housing needs to come online in order to break the cycle of people being stabilized  
 35 through detox/counseling and then forced back on the streets only to repeat the cycle. The work initiated  
 36 through the Bishop’s Taskforce on Homeless needs to continue in order for lessons learned and best practices  
 37 for ministering to the un-housed and under-housed persons be documented and support for implementing  
 38 them provided to parishes desiring to engage in this ministry.

39 Recognizing the need to construct additional affordable housing requires a team effort. We seek to  
 40 encourage parishes to identify persons with expertise in the areas of real estate, law, finance, and engineering  
 41 who are willing to come together to establish teams that will identify underutilized spaces within our  
 42 communities that could be used for affordable housing. The crisis of affordable and supportive housing makes  
 43 it incumbent upon us as part of our Baptismal Covenant to seek ways to properly invest funds in companies and  
 44 organizations that can help address these issues within the Diocese. Hence it is requested that the Diocesan  
 45 Board of Directors seek ways to accomplish this and commit to making prudent investments in those companies  
 46 and organizations.

47 **Resolutions Committee Recommendation: DO PASS**

1 **Resolution #5 – Creation of a Committee on Land Acknowledgement**

2 *Submitted by the Rev. Jedediah Fox, Church of the Redeemer, Kenmore*

3 **Resolved**, That the 109<sup>th</sup> Convention of the Diocese of Olympia direct the Bishop to appoint a committee of no  
4 less than 8 persons to examine the subject of Land Acknowledgement of Indigenous Peoples in the Diocese of  
5 Olympia, with specific attention to policies that the Diocese can enact, **and be it further**,

6 **Resolved**, that the committee bring a full report, written and verbal, including recommendations for  
7 specific diocesan policies moving forward, to the 110<sup>th</sup> Convention of the Diocese of Olympia, **and be it further**,

8 **Resolved**, that the first meeting of the committee take place no later than January 28, 2020.

9 Explanation: Every church in the Diocese of Olympia stands on land that was occupied prior to Euro-colonial  
10 contact. In most, if not all cases, this land was taken, without permission, with or without force from peoples  
11 who had stewarded the land from time immemorial. This theft is a silent sin, exacerbated by our inability to  
12 grapple with it. Our silence also perpetuates the myths that the land was ours to take, without claim; and that  
13 indigenous peoples no longer exist.

14 Land Acknowledgement is one tool for the Diocese of Olympia to use to grapple with this sin of  
15 omission. In their document Guide to Indigenous Land and Territorial Acknowledgements for Cultural  
16 Institutions, Felicia Garcia (Chumash), M.A. NYU and Jane Anderson, M.A. NYU explain, “These  
17 acknowledgements have an educational function that makes them universally applicable, regardless of an  
18 institution’s particular focus. They are about respecting and recognizing Indigenous peoples, and their  
19 relationships to land through the protocols of naming people, elders, ancestors, and the times of past to future.

20 Acknowledgement statements confront institutional legacies as agents of colonialism. Cultural  
21 institutions have utilized deeply colonial methods to develop mainstream representations of the “other” as  
22 territory, in addition to perpetuating and reinforcing destructive colonial narratives. Further, because of the  
23 authority of cultural institutions, these narratives have been accepted as truth, informing policies that  
24 negatively affect Indigenous peoples. The ongoing effects of settler colonialism need to be addressed.” (The full  
25 text can be found [here](#).)

26 Link: <http://landacknowledgements.org/>

27 **Resolutions Committee Recommendation: DO PASS**