**Resolution Title:** Pastoral Response to the LGBTQ Members of the Diocese of Tennessee

**Proposed by**: The Vestry and Rector of St. Ann’s Episcopal Church

**In:** Nashville

Whereas, same-sex marriage is now legal in Tennessee and The Episcopal Church authorized at the 78th General Convention in Salt Lake City the use of trial liturgies to celebrate the marriages of same-sex couples and to bless civil unions; and

Whereas, our Bishop has decided not to permit the use of these trial liturgies in any church or church owned property in the Diocese of Tennessee; or to permit clergy canonically resident in the diocese to officiate or bless same-sex marriage locally or in other dioceses where such marriages and blessings have been authorized; and not permitting clergy licensed in the diocese to officiate locally; and

Whereas, in the Baptismal Covenant in our Book of Common Prayer (page 305) we state the promise to grow in the knowledge and love of God as “we strive for justice and peace among all people” and “respect the dignity of every human being”; and

Whereas, we recognize and affirm the essential contributions of LGBTQ members in our congregations, in the diocese and in our communities; and

Whereas, LGBTQ members are painfully excluded from the full sacramental ministry of the Episcopal Church in our diocese causing delegates to this Convention to be mindful of the need of LGBTQ members for pastoral support from clergy, fellow lay members and our Bishop; and

Whereas, our Bishop has expressed his commitment to “continued prayer, study and conversation” regarding this matter; therefore be it

Resolved, that this 184th Annual Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Tennessee recognize, celebrate and lift up the gifts, talents, ministries and faith of LGBTQ members in our congregations, the diocese and the wider community; and be it further

Resolved, that our Bishop and Bishop and Council initiate and fund a task force to engage with the congregations of the diocese in “continued prayer, study and conversation” concerning the inclusion of LGBTQ members in the life of the church and report to the 185th Diocesan Annual Convention; and be it further

Resolved, since we as a diocese are not of one mind on this matter, we urge our clergy and lay leadership and members to maintain the unity and support of the diocese and to stand in continued solidarity with our Bishop if he reverses or revises his decision during this trial period.