

**RESOLUTION FOR THE 135th ANNUAL CONVENTION OF
THE DIOCESE OF WESTERN MICHIGAN
APRIL 24-25, 2009**

SUBJECT: Church Wide Task Force on Older Adult Ministries

ORIGINATOR: Ellyn Weihi, Trinity Episcopal Church Grand Ledge, and a member of the National Church's Senior Ministries Committee; and the Vestry of Trinity Grand Ledge.

RESOLVED, that this 135th Convention of the Diocese of Western Michigan urge the 76th General Convention to establish a Task Force on Older Adult Ministries at the national level. The task force would support the work of the Church to formulate a comprehensive plan to raise awareness and address the emerging crisis in health, care giving, and faith issues which cross generational and economic lines. Emphasis will be placed on support of congregational, diocesan and provincial programs for ministry by, with, and for older adults and their families.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Joint Standing Committee on Program, Budget, and Finance consider a budget allocation to cover the expenses of the Task Force.

RATIONALE: As a Christian people, it is important to ask, "What in the life and teaching of Jesus supports this resolution?"

When Bishop Desmond Tutu retired he said, "You have your point of view but if you say you are retired, for goodness' sake, look at the sign that says exit and follow it." Many retired clergy model an active retirement by becoming mentors and educators of older parishioners and providing leadership in service to the elderly. Over 1 in 3 Episcopalians are age 65+, and they range from very active to the homebound members. Yet another 41% are age 45-64, which means 3 of every 4 members are 45 or older.

The unprecedented rapid growth of the older adult population nationwide and worldwide, and the resultant burden on the social and economic system demands that the church. address this crisis. Currently 1 in every 8 Americans is 65 or older and over 1 in 4 of these seniors live alone in two years, these same "baby boomers" will start turning 65. Every 10 years, the 85+ population increases by 40%.

To raise awareness and help meet the crisis in care, the work of this proposed new task force is vital. It must be recognized that this work cannot be done without the awareness and collaboration of a myriad of church, faith-based and community resources. This would create a new kind of networking matrix for the Church statewide, nationwide, and worldwide.