

# Resolution 1: on Christ Church, Accokeek's Separation from the Diocese of Washington

**Submitted by:** The Rev. Ethan Bishop-Henchman, Deacon, St. Paul's, K Street; Mr. Nathan Brown, member and Lay Delegate, St. Paul's, K Street; The Rev. Joan Crittenden, Deacon, Christ Church Port Tobacco; The Rev. Elizabeth Dixon, Deacon, St. Thomas, P.G. County; The Rev. Martha Eldredge, Deacon, Church of the Ascension & St. George's Churches; The Rev. Susan Fritz, Deacon, St. James', Indian Head & Christ Church, Durham; The Rev. Steve Seely, Deacon, St. Paul's, Piney.

- 1 **RESOLVED**, that the Convention commends the leadership of Bishop Mariann and the Standing
- 2 Committee for showing gracious restraint and pastoral leadership in the matter of Christ Church
- 3 Accokeek amicably separating from the Episcopal Diocese of Washington; and be it further,
- 4 **RESOLVED**, that the Convention endorses and affirms Bishop Mariann's public statement
- 5 on April 29th, 2021 saying, "I am personally grateful to Father Brian Vander Wel, Mr. Frank
- 6 McDonough, and all the leaders of Christ Church for the spirit in which we entered and completed
- 7 this process together. May God bless and guide them and those they lead in their lives and
- 8 ministries."

## *Explanation*

On April 29th, 2021 it was publicly announced that the Episcopal Diocese of Washington and Christ Church Accokeek reached terms of an amicable separation. Amicable parish departures in the Episcopal Church are rare, especially those involving property. In recent years more often than not parties involved have entered into pitched legal battles and messy public spats. Bishop Mariann and the Standing Committee showed exceptional leadership in rising above a situation that all too easily could have devolved into a publicly tense and legally adversarial relationship. While a parish's departure from the Church is inherently regrettable, such a deterioration would have caused even greater harm to the Body of Christ. Such adversarial departures take place at a great financial cost and serve to deepen existing entrenched divisions. Because the outcome here is so rare in the Church, it is important that the Diocese as a whole via this resolution of convention formally and concretely lift up, affirm, and praise both the substance and form of this separation. If such separations are to happen, then we hope such a resolution will encourage leaders here and elsewhere to follow in these footsteps.