

Province II Synod

Proposed Resolution submitted by Yvonne O'Neal

Resolution 2022-5

Submission of Resolution to the 80th General Convention

Designation of Break The Silence Sunday

Be it resolved, That The International Atlantic Province – the Second Province of The Episcopal Church – submit the following resolution to the 80th General Convention of the Episcopal Church meeting in 2022:

Be it resolved, the House of _____ concurring, That this 80th General Convention of The Episcopal Church designate as Break The Silence Sunday the Sunday closest to November 25, which is the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women; and be it further

Resolved, That the common objective is to halt the epidemic of violence against women and to affirm as Christians that violence has no place within our families, our Church, and our communities; and be it further

Resolved, That The Episcopal Church encourage the education of its clergy and laity on how to support survivors of rape and sexual violence, including trauma-informed care, and advocate on behalf of those not yet ready to speak openly so that the voices of survivors do not speak alone; and be it further

Resolved, That we add our voices and prayers with those around the world seeking the elimination of gender-based violence.

Explanation

Churches throughout Anglican Communion, including The Episcopal Church, take part in the 16 Days Campaign against gender-based violence, which runs annually from November 25 (International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women) to December 10 (International Human Rights Day). The 16 Days period includes other significant dates, like International Human Rights Defenders Day (November 29), World Aids Day (December 1) and the anniversary of the Montreal Massacre (December 6). We think it appropriate to celebrate Break The Silence Sunday during this period.

Break The Silence Sunday began at the Diocese of Polynesia, in the Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia with a Diocesan Synod resolution in 2013, "That within the Diocese of Polynesia there be zero tolerance on violence against women and children within our homes, our schools, our communities and the church." In 2019, the United Church of Christ passed its resolution to observe Break The Silence Sunday on the fourth Sunday in April, as April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month.

Break The Silence Sunday is a resource for churches to actively support survivors of sexual violence, particularly in the context of worship. The goal is three-fold: to help congregations learn about the reality and scope of the problem of sexual violence; to create communities where survivors can share their stories and be received with hope and love; and for

congregations to commit themselves to prayerfully consider ways in which they can support survivors, be advocates for change in their communities, and around the world.

Building on the work of 1994-A049 – Encouraging Ministries That Respond to Violence Against Women, and other resolutions, as well as the Liturgy of Listening at GC79, we can embrace Break The Silence Sunday, and join with other people of faith around the world to take action to end the incessant violence.

Statistics from RAINN ([Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network](#))

- Every 68 seconds another American is sexually assaulted.
- 1 out of every 6 American women has been the victim of an attempted or completed rape in her lifetime (14.8% completed, 2.8% attempted).
- About 3% of American men — or 1 in 33 — have experienced an attempted or completed rape in their lifetime.
- From 2009–2013, Child Protective Services agencies substantiated, or found strong evidence to indicate that, 63,000 children a year were victims of sexual abuse.
- A majority of child victims are 12–17. Of victims under the age of 18, 34% of victims of sexual assault and rape are under age 12, and 66% of victims of sexual assault and rape are age 12–17.
- 9 out of 10 victims of rape are female.
- The majority of sexual assaults occur at or near the victim's home.
- 48% of victims were sleeping or performing another activity at home when the crime occurred.
- 29% were traveling to and from work or school, or traveling to shop or run errands
- 12% were working
- 7% were attending school
- 5% were doing an unknown or other activity