

**STANDING COMMISSION ON LIFELONG CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AND FORMATION**

**MEMBERSHIP**

Mr. Robert C. Laird, <i>Chair</i>	Minnesota, 2012
Mr. Keane J. Akao, <i>Vice Chair</i>	Hawaii, 2012
The Rev. Valerie Bailey Fischer, <i>Secretary</i>	Massachusetts, 2012
The Rt. Rev. Marc Handley Andrus, <i>Resigned</i>	California, 2012
Ms. Hisako Miyazaki Beasley, <i>Executive Council Liaison</i>	Olympia
The Rev. Eddie Michael Blue	Maryland, 2009
Mr. Thom Chu, <i>Resigned</i>	The Episcopal Church Center
Ms. Ruth Ann Collins	The Episcopal Church Center
Ms. Sarah Eagle Heart	Central Gulf Coast, 2009
Dr. Scott Evenbeck	Indianapolis
Dr. Wayne Floyd, <i>Resigned</i>	Washington, 2012
The Rev. Thomas J. Gehlsen, <i>Resigned</i>	Iowa, 2012
Ms. Iris Harris	Washington, 2009
The Rt. Rev. Carolyn Tanner Irish, <i>Chaplain</i>	Utah, 2009
Ms. Joyce Fletcher Menard, <i>Resigned</i>	Upper Michigan, 2012
The Rt. Rev. Porter Taylor	Western NC, 2012
Dr. Fredrica Harris Thompsett	Massachusetts, 2012
The Rev. Mary Stoddard Trainor, <i>Resigned</i>	Fond Du Lac, 2012

**REPRESENTATIVES OF THE COMMISSION AT GENERAL CONVENTION:** Bishop Carolyn Tanner Irish and Deputy Dr. Scott Evenbeck are authorized to receive non-substantive amendments to this report.

**SUMMARY OF WORK**

The Standing Commission on Lifelong Christian Education and Formation convened for the first time during the 2006-2009 triennium by an act of the 75<sup>th</sup> General Convention. According to the mandate, as described in the Constitutions and Canons of The Episcopal Church, the Commission shall consist of twelve members (three bishops, three presbyters and/or deacons, and six lay persons). The Commission is mandated to develop and recommend to the General Convention comprehensive and coordinated policies for children, youth, young adults, adults and seniors for lifelong Christian formation.

The Commission met for the first time in November 2006 in Chicago, IL. The Commission also met by conference call in February 2007 and March 2008 and during meetings in June 2007, in Washington D.C.; November 2007 in the Dominican Republic; June 2008 in Salt Lake City, Utah; and October 2008 in New York City, NY.

Our Commission is mandated to address formation needs throughout the church and in the areas that often fell outside of the purview of other Commissions. As part of living into our mandate, the Commission met with several other Commissions, Committees, Agencies and Boards, whose mandates had Christian formation components. Individual members of the Commission also engaged youth and young adult ministries and Christian educators within their home dioceses and provinces to learn what resources were needed to help these ministries fulfill their formation programming. Commission members also spoke with (either in person, by phone or through electronic correspondence) the following groups: PEALI, the Standing Commissions on Ministry Development, Domestic Mission and Evangelism, Liturgy and Music, Province IX curriculum developers, chaplains at Historically Black Colleges, directors of young adult internship programs, local ministry leaders at the sites of our meetings and various Christian education experts. The Commission members gleaned information from these communities, especially in terms of the history of formation of The Episcopal Church. As part of our history gathering process, we looked at various educational and formational resources generated over the years by The Episcopal Church, particularly the 'Theology for All' web site and its resource links and the 'Call to Teach

and Learn' document, which had been foundational for Christian education programs for more than two decades. These conversations and the shared resources informed our early discussions about lifelong Christian education and formation.

These discussions expanded in November 2007 to include the Province IX curriculum writers. The Commission was invited to hold its meeting near the Province IX curriculum writers meeting in the Dominican Republic. The Commission was inspired and excited about the ministry of these writers and their project.

In addition to visiting the Province IX writer's group in the Dominican Republic, Commission members attended other CCAB meetings (particularly Ministry Development) and PEALL meetings. This additional participation helped establish collaborative relationships that will assist the Commission in fulfilling its mandate.

Our earliest collaborative relationship came from members of PEALL (Proclaiming Education for All). PEALL is a task force that was created by Executive Council in response to two unfunded 2003 General Convention Resolutions—one calling for a vision of theological education and the other for a coordinated vision of educational formation. Throughout its tenure, PEALL functioned as a broad-based task force of experienced educators who represented most aspects of education and formation. PEALL members examined the history and present practices of formation and theological education and worked for collaboration and coordination across educational institutions. PEALL recently held its last meeting and issued its final report to Executive Council. PEALL has passed on its resources and other documents to our new Commission.

The commission remained in close contact with PEALL during the entire triennium, with the goal of continuing some of PEALL's formation work. At the end of its tenure, PEALL, along with Commission members and the help of several clergy, laypersons and Christian educators, formed a writer's group that wrote the first draft of the *Lifelong Faith Formation Charter*. The *Lifelong Faith Formation Charter* followed a similar format to the *Children's Charter* and laid the groundwork for a vision for formation in The Episcopal Church. The Faith Formation Writer's Group consisted of a variety of disciplines (whose diversity included age, gender, ethnicity, church geography and congregational size). The commission wrote the final draft of the *Lifelong Faith Formation Charter* at its last meeting of the triennium.

## **RESOLUTIONS**

## **RESOLUTION A082 CHARTER FOR LIFELONG CHRISTIAN FORMATION**

- 19 ▪ To hear what the Spirit is saying to God's people, placing ourselves in the stories of our faith, thereby  
20 empowering us to proclaim the Gospel message.

21  
22 ...You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit...

23 John 15:14-16

24  
25 Through The Episcopal Church, God **INSPIRES** all people:

- 26 ▪ To experience Anglican liturgy, which draws us closer to God, helps us discern God's will and  
27 encourages us to share our faith journeys.  
28 ▪ To study scripture mindful of the context of our societies and cultures, calling us to seek truth anew while  
29 remaining fully present in the community of faith.  
30 ▪ To develop new learning experiences, equipping disciples for life in a world of secular challenges and  
31 carefully listening for the words of modern sages who embody the teachings of Christ.  
32 ▪ To prepare for a sustainable future by calling the community to become guardians of God's creation.

33  
34 ...I am giving you these commands that you may love one another... John 15:17

35  
36 Through The Episcopal Church, God **TRANSFORMS** all people:

- 37 ▪ By doing the work Jesus Christ calls us to do, living into the reality that we are all created in the image of  
38 God and carrying out God's work of reconciliation, love, forgiveness, healing, justice and peace.  
39 ▪ By striving to be a loving and witnessing community, which faithfully confronts the tensions in the  
40 church and the world as we struggle to live God's will.  
41 ▪ By seeking out diverse and expansive ways to empower prophetic action, evangelism, advocacy and  
42 collaboration in our contemporary global context.  
43 ▪ By holding all accountable to lift every voice in order to reconcile oppressed and oppressor to the love of  
44 God in Jesus Christ our Lord.  
45 ▪ Christian Faith Formation in The Episcopal Church is a lifelong journey with Christ, in Christ and to  
46 Christ.

47  
48 And be it further

49  
50 *Resolved*, That

- 51 1. We urge that each diocese to read and study the Charter for Lifelong Christian Formation and to live it  
52 out locally.
- 53 2. We urge the seminaries and other institutions concerned with formation and education and leadership in  
54 The Episcopal Church, to engage the charter as a tool to advance their support for persons in their  
55 Christian Formation.
- 56 3. We urge The Episcopal Church's Evangelism and Congregational Life Center to commit staff during this  
57 triennium to communicate, advocate and implement the charter, and report progress to the Standing  
58 Commission on Lifelong Christian Formation and Education before the 77<sup>th</sup> General Convention.

59  
60 And be it further

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62 *Resolved*, That the 76<sup>th</sup> General Convention request that the Joint Standing Committee on Program, Budget and  
63 Finance consider a budget allocation of \$30,000 for the implementation of this Resolution during the 2009-2012  
64 triennium.

#### **EXPLANATION**

**Definition:** Christian formation is the lifelong process of growing in relationship with God, self, others and all creation. In this process we are transformed into the people God wants us to be. As twenty first century Episcopalians, we still long for the inheritance common to all Christians in all times and places—to be united in Christ, who calls us in the power of the Holy Spirit to love the Lord our God with all our heart, mind, soul and

bodies; to love our neighbors as ourselves; and to make disciples, baptize and teach. In our Baptismal Covenant, The Episcopal Church has gracefully articulated the way in which we answer Christ's call. Life-long Christian Formation describes the many processes by which we live into that covenant.

By this definition, life-long Christian formation encompasses a broad set of activities, supported by a rich array of communities and institutions, serving people from cradle to grave. Without attempting to circumscribe the action of the Holy Spirit—who is always at work renewing the minds of Christian people—we acknowledge some common characteristics of formation ministries. *Formation is unceasing*—serving the individual's emerging understanding of identity, community, authority and purpose in Christ throughout their lives. *Formation is dynamic*—encompassing learning, action and reflection. *Formation is formal and informal*—informing, forming and transforming both the individual and the community. *Formation is hospitable*—welcoming the “**new self, which is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of its creator.**” (Col 3:10)

**Problem:** As an institution, we have not entirely welcomed our Lord's generous invitation to grow in knowledge and love of him. Our behavior does not always reflect our heart's desire. For example, we have inadequately resourced our allocation of time, talent and treasures; we have failed to clearly articulate a vision and support for life-long Christian formation; and we have insufficiently supported Christian formation in our daily lives and work places. As a church, our people suffer from a widespread lack of knowledge of the traditions that form the foundation of The Episcopal Church. And moreover, in our post-Christian culture, Christian formation has been given significantly less priority than our other community activities. We have also experienced a failure to address the formation needs of an aging church membership. We need to address and remedy culturally exclusive teaching practices and the lack of attention to the formation needs of non-English speakers. We also need to continue our ever-growing response to stewardship of creation that merits our attention and resources.

**Vision for a transformed church:** We affirm that life-long Christian formation is foundational to the success of any church, and in the case of our own, is an integral part of the process by which we will rebuild The Episcopal Church. Our congregations will grow in numbers and health when they are supported by leaders—of all orders of ministry—who know their identity in Christ and are able to access their tradition for the purposes of proclaiming and living out the Gospel.

By prioritizing the Christian formation ministries of The Episcopal Church, we choose to invest in a language and practice—rooted in scripture, tradition and reason—that has the capacity to unify us in fulfilling the Great Commandment. We can make use of this common language to inform, support and reinforce healthy relationships in families and congregations. With it we can continually develop and renew those processes, programs and rites of passage that develop Christian ministers at all ages and stages. Through it we can hold each other accountable to grow in love, knowledge and depth of insight.

**History/How we preceded:** Early in 2007 PEALL recognized a need to be more intentional about bringing lifelong Christian formation to the attention of The Episcopal Church and encouraged a group of Diocesan Christian educators to draft a *Case for a Proposed Charter for Lifelong Christian Formation* to complement the Children's Charter. After receiving their case statement, which spoke about writing a new charter in 2012, PEALL and SCLCEF agreed not to wait for 2012 and called for a Charter Writing Team immediately to draft a document for presentation to the 2009 General Convention. With PEALL's support a Writing Group of educators, formation experts and others from a variety of disciplines (whose diversity included age, gender, ethnicity, church geography and congregational size) developed a draft *Charter for Lifelong Christian Formation*. The Writing Group submitted a draft charter to this Standing Commission that now advances Resolutions pertaining to a Charter for Lifelong Christian Formation.

**RESOLUTION A083 DIRECTIVE FOR DIOCESES TO FORMULATE A STRATEGY FOR LIFELONG CHRISTIAN FORMATION IN THE NEXT TRIENNIAL**

- 1 Most importantly, formation is so crucial to our life as disciples that we must be more and more intentional about  
2 it. This Resolution calls upon dioceses not only to share their wisdom and aspirations, but also mandates that  
3 every diocese must have a purposeful plan for Christian Formation that is appropriate to their context.  
4
- 5 *Resolved*, the House of \_\_\_\_\_ concurring, That the 76th General Convention direct all dioceses to formulate a  
6 strategy for Lifelong Christian Formation in the next triennium; and be it further  
7
- 8 *Resolved*, That such strategies include, but not be limited to, the following areas of the mandate. Strategies should  
9 encompass and be suitable for all persons (e.g. various ages, languages and abilities). These strategies should be  
10 responsive to diocesan and societal contexts and accurately depict the current education and formation status.  
11 Because formation is not limited to a cognitive experience (classroom), formation should be holistic (encompasses  
12 learning, action and reflection); and be it further  
13
- 14 *Resolved*, That the Congregational Life Center design an instrument and system of collection that will document  
15 currently available and successful programs, activities and resources. In addition, such an endeavor will seek to  
16 gather the aspirations for diocesan future programs/activities concerning Christian formation; and be it further  
17
- 18 *Resolved*, That the information and data collected be forwarded to the SCLEF by January 31, 2011.

**EXPLANATION**

The importance of this Resolution stems from our work over the past triennium, as well as the work from PEALL. We embarked on a charge that calls us to implement “coordinated policies for children, youth, young adults, adults and seniors for lifelong Christian formation.”

As we prepare for a new decade, it is appropriate to survey and coordinate the church’s resources. The called for survey will enable greater collaboration between dioceses, seminaries, diocesan schools, The Episcopal Church Center, camps, conference centers and educational programs. In this age of reduced financial resources, it is urgent that we exercise good stewardship and not duplicate our formational efforts. In addition, as The Episcopal Church Center decentralizes and seeks to be more responsive to the whole church, it is necessary to discern the needs and hopes of those involved in formation in all places.

Moreover, the church flourishes when we share our experiences and resources. Such a survey will enable us to do more programs, projects and activities together—more effectively. We can better live out the axiom that ‘we should only do apart what we cannot do together.’ The final report from PEALL clearly states, “One consequence of this lack of effective networks is that Christian education leaders have developed identical parallel programs and replicated the same trainings, wasting both talent and resources. The need is critical for a commonly networked system with a common commitment to mission, a system that improves access to resources for all congregations. Currently there is a proliferation of resources and local networks, but these are not yet equally distributed nor equally accessible or available or even known about.”

The members and congregations of The Episcopal Church are active in mission and outreach in their communities as well as in the wider society and world. Our call to attention to Christian formation recognizes the role of outreach and mission. Rather than viewing formation as related only to education (especially in a formal interpretation), the PEALL report helps us understand that experiences—grounded in mission—are formational for persons of all ages. How can we hold up these experiences—be they on a Habitat build or working in a soup kitchen—as essential to our formation? This survey of diocesan policies, practices and resources will include attention to these formational contexts for persons of all ages and thereby broaden our definition of formation.

**RESOLUTION A084 CONTINUED DEVELOPMENT OF PROVINCE IX CURRICULUM PROJECT**

The Province IX curriculum project is a grassroots effort by curriculum writers under the auspices of the Evangelism and Congregational Life Center of The Episcopal Church Center. When completed, this project will provide a cradle-to-grave process of formation that will address the challenges unique to Province IX. The Commission found this facet of the work to be of critical importance for ensuring cultural sensitivity in a church that is beginning to wrestle with its multi-cultural and multi-racial realities. The creation of formation and educational materials within the linguistic, idiomatic, cultural and racial contexts in which they will be used became a goal and an ideal for the Commission, which we raise up for The Episcopal Church at large.

- 1 *Resolved*, the House of \_\_\_\_\_ concurring, That the 76<sup>th</sup> General Convention commend Province IX for their  
2 creative and collaborative work in creating curricula for use in their province that is created from the grassroots  
3 and speaks in the language and idioms of the people that will use those curricula; and be it further  
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- 5 *Resolved*, That the Evangelism and Congregational Life Center of The Episcopal Church Center be directed to  
6 complete the Province IX curriculum project, continuing the face-to-face process of development that has begun  
7 creating these resources, and that this process be further developed as a model for the creation of formation and  
8 educational materials that are to be used in non-Anglo contexts; and be it further  
9
- 10 *Resolved*, That the 76<sup>th</sup> General Convention request that the Joint Standing Committee on Program, Budget and  
11 Finance consider a budget allocation of \$120,000 for the implementation of this Resolution during the 2009-2012  
12 triennium.

**EXPLANATION**

During its November 2007 meeting in the Dominican Republic, the Commission participated in a joint meeting session with PEALL, where the two bodies received a presentation by a group of curriculum writers from Province IX who, under the auspices of the Evangelism and Congregational Life Center of The Episcopal Church Center, were creating a curriculum addressing the fundamentals of Episcopal formation for infants, young children, adolescents and adults. These lesson plans were developed using a process that empowered individuals fluent in the language, idioms and cultural needs of the churches of Province IX to create materials for that province, and provided an opportunity for the creation of formation materials that addressed those needs directly.

**RESOLUTION A085 COMMENDATION FOR THE WORK OF PROCLAIMING EDUCATION FOR ALL**

- 1 *Resolved*, the House of \_\_\_\_\_ concurring, That 76th General Convention commends the work of Proclaiming  
2 Education for All (PEALL) and express its gratitude to PEALL members for their efforts to begin the work of  
3 providing comprehensive Christian education and formation to all levels of The Episcopal Church.

**EXPLANATION**

Created in 2003 by Executive Council in response to an act of General Convention, PEALL was given the task to:

- Develop a comprehensive vision and strategy to strengthen Lifelong Christian Education and Formation throughout The Episcopal Church and equip people of all ages to experience, to tell about and to invite others into the Good News of the Gospel;
- Integrate Christian Formation into every area of the church's mission and ministry, recognizing that learning occurs in multiple ways throughout the entire life cycle;
- Identify and communicate resources and models that support the gifts and needs of a church of great diversity and that promote outcomes recommended by the 20/20 Strategy Group;
- Encourage conversation and collaboration among the many entities in the church that address specific aspects of Christian education and formation for mission and ministry; and
- Provide international and ecumenical links for Christian education.

PEALL produced these major work documents: (1) "Legacies, Lessons and Lifelines: The Past, Present and Future of Theological Education"; (2) "Christian Education and Christian Formation in The Episcopal Church";

(3) “Timeline of The Episcopal Church in the Context of World Events” (1960 to present ); and (4) A narrative with the time line (1492 to present), which was a supporting document for (5) A case for the development of a “Charter for Lifelong Christian Formation”. PEALL also produced a Christian Education and Formation Glossary to provide for a common understanding of the terms used when speaking of Christian education. A summary of its other work was presented to Executive Council in 2008. PEALL’s mandate ends at the close of this triennium. The Standing Commission on Lifelong Christian Education and Formation will continue and expand on much of the work done by this task force.

**RESOLUTION A086 CONTINUED DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF THE THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION FOR ALL [TEFORALL] WEB SITE, INTERNET AND ELECTRONIC RESOURCES**

- 1 *Resolved*, the House of \_\_\_\_\_ concurring, That the 76th General Convention commends the Council of Seminary  
2 Deans and the Office of Ministry Development for the creation of the Theological Education for All Internet  
3 Resource; and be it further  
4  
5 *Resolved*, That the General Convention urges the Presiding Bishop and Chief Operating Officer to allocate  
6 Episcopal Church Center staff resources to the continued development and maintenance of that web site; and be  
7 it further  
8  
9 *Resolved*, That the 76th General Convention request that the Joint Standing Committee on Program, Budget and  
10 Finance consider a budget allocation of \$15,000 for the implementation of this Resolution during the 2009-2012  
11 triennium.

**EXPLANATION**

The Theological Education for All (TEforALL) web site was initiated by the Council of Seminary Deans and is maintained by the Office of Ministry Development as the premier clearinghouse for resources and information regarding the breadth of theological education in The Episcopal Church. Today, resources from PEALL that address the history and future of educational formation for all age groups are also included on this web site. This Resolution provides funding for the ongoing design and maintenance of this valuable resource for providing significant value for the church’s investment.

**THE STANDING COMMISSION FOR LIFE-LONG CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AND FORMATION’S VISION FOR THE FUTURE**

The SCLCEF was established by an act of the 2006 General Convention and mandated to develop and recommend to the General Convention comprehensive and coordinated policies for children, youth, adults and seniors for lifelong Christian formation. (Title 1, Canon I.1.2.n.14)

The Commission's priorities for the next triennium are reflected in our plan for our next steps, which include:

- Future work for SCLCEF on behalf of PEALL;
- Meeting between SCMD and SCLCEF;
- NACED survey review. Due to extensive nature of the survey we would like more time to consider its implications;
- Survey of Eurocentric parishes with multicultural/ethnic services; and
- Unfinished business.

As a brand new Standing Commission with a very large mandate, we have only begun our work. In the next triennium our primary continuing goal is to support the work we have initiated on lifelong Christian formation and track the progress of formational activities in dioceses and other arenas. In accord with our central mandate we also wish to explore available resources for ongoing formation with the growing population of seniors in the church, as well as to encourage development of creative resources, including those that address spirituality and care of the elderly.

At this point five other concerns have been identified: (1) formational resources that encourage energetic commitment to addressing a sustainable environment; (2) learning about and strengthening formational resources located in military Episcopal Chaplaincies, as well as chaplaincies in colleges, universities and hospitals; (3) discovering appropriate ways for this twenty-first century church to revive and renew catechetical processes; (4) increasing awareness of the importance of experiential learning for youth and young adult ministries; and (5) supporting intentional living and articulation of the significance of ministries in daily life.

We recognize that these are large areas of concern that will call upon us to be more focused on particular outcomes and to cooperate with other CCABs and leading proponents of Christian education and formation. Yet, as a young and enthusiastic Standing Commission, we look forward to striving to be faithful to our mandate and of service to the wider Episcopal church.

**RESOLUTION A087 BUDGET APPROPRIATION FOR THE STANDING COMMISSION ON LIFE LONG CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AND FORMATION**

- 1 *Resolved*, the House of \_\_\_\_\_ concurring, That the 76th General Convention request that the Joint Standing Committee on Program, Budget and Finance consider a budget allocation from the Canonical budget of the General Convention of \$78,400 for the meeting expenses of the Standing Commission on Ministry Development during the 2009-2012 triennium.