

#15 DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION, AND ACCESSIBILITY (DEIA)

Moved by: Thomas Garlick

Seconder: The Reverend Will Ferrey

A resolution to commit to diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility with both policy and education.

Resolved that the Diocese of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island will commit to diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) by:

- a. creating and implementing a Diocesan Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility Policy that is in line with best practices for DEIA;***
- b. facilitating training around the policy for clergy and lay leaders to help them understand, navigate, and implement it;***
- c. facilitating anti-bias/anti-racism training, encouraging all clergy and lay-leaders to participate.***

Commentary

This resolution is vital to the Diocese because it embodies the core Christian values of love, justice, and inclusion. By committing to diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA), the Diocese would closer align itself with Christ's teachings, ensuring that all individuals, regardless of their background, are welcomed, valued, and included. DEIA is a framework for building institutions where everyone belongs, thrives, and where systemic barriers are addressed to ensure equal opportunities for all.

The Church is called to be a place where every person is treated with dignity, and this initiative is essential for breaking down the barriers that have historically excluded people based on race, gender, socioeconomic status, ability, or any other part of their identity. This commitment reflects the unconditional love that Christ demonstrated for all, including the marginalized, oppressed, and voiceless. By embracing DEIA, the Diocese will ensure that its ministry is expansive, encompassing all members of society, and fostering a faith community that is truly representative of the Kingdom of God. This resolution also strengthens the Diocese's mission to bring people together, forming a unified community that reflects the diversity of God's creation and the inclusive nature of the Church. In this way, the Diocese can more effectively serve and reach out to the needs of every person, regardless of their background or identity.

The impact of this would be profound and transformative. The Diocese would become a more inclusive, compassionate, and supportive church environment where people from all walks of life, regardless of their race, gender, nationality, or ability, feel fully accepted and valued. By embracing DEIA, the Church would actively combat the exclusion of historically marginalized and underserved communities, offering them a space where they can thrive spiritually. The Diocese would become more representative of the diversity in our broader society, enabling it to serve as a place of healing, reconciliation, and justice for all. This would not only impact the internal dynamics of the Church but would also deepen its outreach efforts.

The Church would be better equipped to engage with diverse communities, advocate for their rights, and champion justice for those who are vulnerable and oppressed. As the Church becomes more inclusive, it would help create stronger, more connected communities where people from all backgrounds can find solidarity, shared purpose, and support. Ultimately, this initiative would foster a deeper sense of belonging and ensure that the Diocese is a living reflection of God's love and justice in the world.

A fully implemented DEIA commitment would result in a Diocese where diversity, equity, inclusivity, and accessibility are central to every aspect of church life. The Church would reflect the beautiful and varied tapestry of God's creation, with leadership, ministries, and congregational activities fully representing the diversity of the surrounding community.

Every individual, regardless of their identity, would feel a deep sense of belonging, knowing that they are valued for who they are. For marginalized or underrepresented groups, the church would serve as a haven—providing them with a voice, support, and a space where they can flourish spiritually, emotionally, and socially.

Clergy and lay leaders would be equipped with the necessary training and resources to navigate issues of bias, racism, inequality, and injustice, ensuring that all members of the community feel respected and heard. The Church would embrace its role as a prophetic witness to justice, using its voice and influence to challenge systems of oppression in the broader society, advocating for those whose voices are often silenced.

This future would be marked by a culture of mutual respect, understanding, and love, where everyone, regardless of their background, identity, or circumstance, is welcomed with open arms. In this future, the Diocese would be recognized as a beacon of inclusivity, where the Gospel is lived out through justice, love, and the pursuit of unity. It would not only be a safe and welcoming space for everyone but also a vibrant and diverse community that leads by example in the broader world, showing the power of inclusivity and unity in Christ.