

R24-2 Enabling General Convention Resolution A098

Resolved, That the 118th Annual Council of the Diocese of Atlanta, joining with the 81st General Convention of The Episcopal Church (Resolution A098), to

1. Recognize and salute the efforts of the COP 28 [Conference of the Parties (COP)] to bring about the phase-out of fossil fuels in order to combat harmful climate change and its many damaging effects on vulnerable countries, communities, and people;
2. Direct representatives of The Episcopal Church to seek further steps towards the phase-out of fossil fuels in future international negotiations, including the upcoming COP 29 meetings scheduled for Baku, November 2024, as well as in implementing legislation and regulations in the United States;
3. Direct the Office of Government Relations to support public policy steps to reduce the adverse impacts of a fossil fuel phase-out on people and communities reliant on such industries for jobs, investment, and tax revenue, steps consistent with General Convention Resolution 2018-D081;
4. Join with other institutions of TEC and with other faith communities in these efforts to review in detail their use of fossil fuels, including fossil-fuel fired electricity, for transportation, heating and cooling, and other purposes as well as their financial reliance, if any, on investments in fossil fuel extraction, production, and refining; to create, by September 30, 2026, a plan for the reduction in use and eventual phase-out of their use of out fossil fuels and fossil fuel generated electricity in their operations and divestment of fossil-fuel based investments, with the target date for completion of December 31, 2034; to post their plan and periodic updates on their websites and to report this information to the Office of Creation Care in a form and at a frequency provided by that office;
5. Join with other Diocese and Congregations in the use of standard materials and guidance created by the Office of Creation Care for reporting; and
6. Whereby the Executive Council has considered a budget allocation (excluding meeting expense already in GCO budget) of \$40,000 to primarily address the development of website updates, forms development, and identify staff support the implementation of this resolution.

And be it further

Resolved, That the Diocese of Atlanta, in joining with the 81st General Convention, will encourage congregations to undertake appropriate action to divest from the use of fossil fuels and,

1. Create a Diocesan Task Force made up of one representative from each of the twelve Convocations whose purpose is to:
 - a. Assist congregations through the action step roadmap for installation of clean energy technologies;

- b. Aid with site evaluation to determine if solar is an option;
 - c. Aid with weighing the feasibility of solar options and financing;
 - d. Assist with an influence campaign for those who resist divestment from fossil-based energy based solely upon monetary measures vs carbon reduction measures; Persuasion may occur with spiritual guidance and / or establishing congregant partnerships between those with clean energy experience and those more novice in the clean technologies;
2. Fund a Diocesan Task Force to provide guidance in process and expectation management and to facilitate the network of trusted professionals contacts.

And be it further

Resolved That the Congregations of the Diocese of Atlanta be encouraged to:

1. Assess their church energy use with a Georgia Interfaith Power & Light (GIPL) energy audit;
2. Use the GIPL Power-Wise Program to apply for energy-efficiency matching grant funds;
3. Aspire to meet GIPL's ENERGY WISE checklist by December 31, 2025

Sponsor: Christine Difelicianonio, St. Thomas, Columbus, on behalf of the St.

Thomas Green Team

Explanation: The 81st General Convention of the Episcopal Church approved twelve resolutions addressing Creation Care and TEC's responsibility for environmental stewardship to neutralize the triple threat to our shared home: climate change, pollution, and biodiversity loss. In that, TEC commits to living in a spiritual relationship with God, our Earth, and with each other, it follows that each Province, Diocese, and Congregation will disavow all obstacles to these right relationships. Scientists agree that man's use of fossil fuels, including crude oil, coal, and natural gas (also known as fossil gas, fracked gas, and simply, gas) has exacted an enormous toll on humanity and the environment. According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration fossil fuel serves about 80% of our current energy needs. Fossil fuel represents the biggest dirty energy source, but in the transition to clean carbon neutral alternatives to collectively achieve carbon net zero, the looming hindrance may well be our willingness to divest from the basis for society's financial currency.

Resolution A098 encourages dioceses, congregations and other institutions of the Episcopal church to review and detail their use of fossil fuels, including fossil fuel fired electricity, use for transportation, heating and cooling, as well as a review their investments in fossil fuel extraction, production, and refining. From this review will emerge a plan to phase out of fossil fuels and fossil fuel generated electricity no later than September 30, 2026.

This proposal is for the Diocese of Atlanta form a Task Force whose primary purpose is to promote and facilitate this divestment. This Task Force representing each of the 12 Convocations would represent the current and dynamic knowledge base for alternative energy

solutions, sharing the numerous ways that churches can meaningfully reduce their carbon footprints using solar panels, energy audits, LED lights, temperature controls, the use of landscaping to cool buildings, insulation, the installation of electric charging stations, and current and emerging clean energy alternatives.

Functions would include:

1. Assist congregations to understand and navigate issues regarding nonprofits tax status and tax breaks for clean energy.
2. Connect the congregations to approved companies that would help them evaluate the feasibility of installing solar panels on church rooftops, secure approval through the diocese, and if necessary, secure funds through grants, or other fund-raising options.
3. Offer finance options. One Georgia Interfaith Power and Light (GIPL)-recognized partner distributing federally available Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) monies to Georgians, residential and non-profits alike, is Capital Good Fund (see <https://capitalgoodfund.org/bright/solar-for-all/>) This company is providing finance options for the Georgia Bright and Solar for All programs. Participation of Diocesan congregations into the program remains contingent on Diocesan approval.
4. Facilitate partnerships between Convocational churches to leverage those with experience and allow novice churches to embrace green energy solutions and the divestment from fossil fuels.