

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – PRESS RELEASE # 1

January 23, 2003

EPISCOPAL FORUM OF SOUTH CAROLINA

EPISCOPALIANS IN SOUTH CAROLINA ORGANIZE FORUM FOR CHURCH UNITY

The Episcopal Forum of SC announced today its formation. Lynn Pagliaro, spokes person for the group, said that the Episcopal Forum of SC Steering Committee met on Friday, December 19, 2003 to approve this action.

The Episcopal Forum of SC is modeled after similar groups in other Episcopal Dioceses where schism is a threat.

The Episcopal Forum will be focused on fostering conversation and understanding among all Episcopalians. The Forum's goal is to preserve to the utmost a unity within the Episcopal Church of the USA (ECUSA). Our mission will be accomplished by communication through website, email, conferences, and publications.

The following statements describe the focus of this Episcopal Forum:

EPISCOPAL FORUM OF SC - WHO ARE WE?

We are Episcopalians in the Diocese of South Carolina united in our desire to remain a part of the Episcopal Church of the United States of America and the Anglican Communion, participating in support and communion with our leaders and full membership.

- Episcopalians who uphold the faith as revealed in *scripture, tradition and reason*.
- Episcopalians who oppose efforts to break our diocese away from the National Episcopal Church (ECUSA) or to divide ECUSA.
- Christians bound in love for one another, committed to worshipping together and building up God's kingdom.
- People of widespread opinions about human sexuality and how the church should respond to these issues today and who believe that these differences of opinion should not separate us from the love of God in Christ or from each other as members of Christ's body, the church.
- Episcopalians who believe that the Holy Spirit is working in the deliberations of our National Church (ECUSA) and its conferences.
- Episcopalians concerned that issues of human sexuality are being allowed to polarize the church, diverting attention from our mission to seek union with God following Jesus Christ in love and service.

EPISCOPAL FORUM OF SC - WHAT DO WE STAND FOR?

The Episcopal Forum of South Carolina includes Episcopalians from all regions of the diocese. Although we are of differing opinions about sexuality issues now creating a rift within the church, we are dedicated to remaining in full support and union with the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion.

We are mainstream Episcopalians; while embracing a wide range of theological understandings we share a *common tradition and one communion in unity with Jesus Christ* despite our differences. We oppose any attempts to separate us, our churches, or our diocese from the National Episcopal Church (ECUSA) or to divide ECUSA.

We want to share accurate information about the National Episcopal Church and its mission and ministry. We want to learn about how differing opinions and practices are dealt with in other dioceses. We want to celebrate and sustain diversity and tolerance in the Anglican Communion.

Episcopalians have weathered many controversies, staying unified in their faith as revealed in *scripture, tradition and reason*. The current situation is polarizing the diocese and diverting attention from our mission to seek union with God through following Jesus Christ in love service.

The Episcopal Forum was initiated after the special SC Diocesan Convention which was held in October 2003. At this convention resolutions were passed which could lead to separating the diocese from the National Episcopal Church (ECUSA). *The Episcopal Forum* is a vehicle to seek reconciliation within the National Church for the many Episcopalians who don't want to seek or be part of a schism. Members of *The Episcopal Forum* hold a wide range of views; however, the unity of the Episcopal Church USA within the Anglican Communion is our common goal.

Further information:

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