

Letter to the Episcopal Church from the Presiding Bishop and President of the House of Deputies

Statute of Limitations Suspension for Clergy Sexual Misconduct Begins January 1, 2019

Episcopal Church Office of Public Affairs
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Advent 2018

Dear People of God in the Episcopal Church:

Nearly a year ago, we [issued a call](#) for the church to examine its history and come to a fuller understanding of how we have handled or mishandled cases of sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse through the years. In particular, we asked to hear voices from the wider church at General Convention so that deputies and bishops might consider both how to atone for the church's past and shape a more just future. As followers of Jesus of Nazareth, as children of God with all people, we could do no less, and we must do more. In July, General Convention considered [26 resolutions and one memorial](#) addressing issues the #MeToo movement has brought to light, many of them developed by the House of Deputies Special Committee on Sexual Harassment and Exploitation. One of these resolutions, [Resolution D034](#), suspends for three years the canon (church law) that places a time limit on initiating proceedings in cases of clergy sexual misconduct against adults. There is no time limit on reporting clergy sexual misconduct against children and youth under age 21.

As a result of this resolution, from January 1, 2019 until December 31, 2021, those who wish to bring a case of sexual misconduct against a member of the clergy will be able to do so, regardless of how long ago the alleged misconduct occurred. Allegations of misconduct can be made to the intake officer in the diocese where the alleged misconduct occurred, or, if the allegation is against a bishop, to the [Office of Pastoral Development](#). You can learn how to reach the intake officer in a diocese by checking its website or calling the bishop's office.

We hope that this temporary suspension of the statute of limitations will be one way for the church to come to terms with cases of sexual misconduct in our collective past. Between now and General Convention in 2021, laypeople, clergy and bishops appointed to several task forces created by the 2018 General Convention will be working on other ways of addressing these issues, including a process to help the church engage in truth-telling,

confession, and reconciliation regarding our history of gender-based discrimination, harassment and violence.

We are grateful to the many deputies, bishops and other volunteers across the church whose careful work before, during, and after General Convention is helping our church move closer to the day when, having repented of our sins and amended our common life, we may be restored in love, grace and trust with each other through our Savior Jesus Christ.

Faithfully,

The Most Rev. Michael B. Curry
Presiding Bishop and Primate

The Rev. Gay Clark Jennings
President, House of Deputies