

# The Episcopal Women's Caucus

## What We Stand For

The Episcopal Women's Caucus has a vision: *a church that honors and rejoices in the ministries of all women. We know that such a church will honor and rejoice in the ministries of all people.*

We work to realize this vision by: *empowering women and men to challenge oppressive structures in the global community, nation, and church; modeling non-hierarchical ways—shared leadership and decision-making, womanist/feminist/mujerista theology and spirituality;*

*giving visibility and respect to women's perspectives and actions in the work and struggle for justice, peace and the integrity of creation; enabling the church to free itself from racism, sexism, clericalism, heterosexism, ableism, age-ism, and from teachings and practices that sustain and reinforce power inequities*

—Mission Statement, adopted by the EWC Board 6/93 (and edited 10/96), based on the World Council of Churches' statement for the Ecumenical Decade of Churches in Solidarity with Women (1988-98).

All persons—male and female, lay and ordained—who subscribe to this statement are invited to join in the ministry and mission of the Episcopal Women's Caucus.

## What We Do

- Embrace and strive to make real the Gospel vision for humanity, earth and church
- Challenge the way the church worships, looks at Scripture, lives theology, educates clergy and laity
- Stimulate the healthy spiritual growth and faith development of adults and children
- Educate and advocate for the full equality and participation of women of color and gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgendered persons in church and society
- Assist the church to dismantle systems of marginalization, exploitation and abuse of women and minorities
- Affirm and promote the theological, liturgical and scholarly contributions of womanists/mujeristas/feminists
- Raise visibility of women and minorities in liturgy, Bible study, leadership, religious education, media and publications
- Work with networks and coalitions:
  - ABIL (Asian, Black, Indigenous and Latino)
  - Episcopal Church Women
  - The Anglican Women's Network
  - Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice
  - Feminist movements ecumenically and across the Anglican Communion
  - Council for Women's Ministries
  - The Consultation, a lobbying coalition for General Convention including Integrity (advocacy for gay/lesbian/transgender/bisexual issues), Union of Black Episcopalians, and the Episcopal Peace Fellowship

## Our Story

The Episcopal Women's Caucus was formed on October 30, 1971, during a meeting of professional lay women and deacons. Notified that the House of Bishops had created yet another study committee on the ordination of women, without having taken action on its previous studies, the women informed the Presiding Bishop of their refusal to cooperate further and constituted themselves the EWC.

Regional organizing conferences were held in 1972, and EWC chapters were created in many parts of the country. Following the ordinations in Philadelphia and Washington in 1974 and 1975, a special conference was called to develop strategies for the 1976 General Convention. These strategies contributed to the action of the 1976 Convention making the ordination canon equally applicable to women and men.

The Caucus, committed to advancing the role and status of women in the church, continues today as the feminist\* voice in the Episcopal Church, theologically, spiritually, and politically.

**Issues for today include:** challenging the church to face its historical complicity in the interlocking, systemic causes of sexual exploitation, oppression and violence; equal pay for work of equal value in the church and in the world; increased appointment or election of women to leadership roles, including the episcopate; support for the use and ongoing refinement of liturgical and biblical

\*A feminist is anyone who believes that God created males and females equally human.



materials that expand our vision of God and include all of God's people; inclusion of women and minorities in the church Calendar and Sunday lections; and encouraging familiarity and fluency with new forms of technology which will assist our causes.

**The EWC logo reflects our mission:**  
*in addition to their familiar spiritual meanings, the water and wheat raise up the important, daily work of women throughout the world—hauling water, and growing and preparing food; the equal sign stands for equality, justice, inclusion; the dove, for peace and empowerment.*

