

## **Resolution #1 – Foster Care Advocacy in Maine**

### **Resolution Title: Foster Care Advocacy in Maine**

- 1 RESOLVED that the Episcopal Diocese of Maine (EDOM) acknowledges and laments the  
2 suffering that leads children into foster care and the brokenness of the systems meant to protect  
3 them; and be it further
- 4 RESOLVED that from the First Sunday of Advent 2025 through Christ the King Sunday 2026,  
5 all diocesan event organizers will be encouraged to include a specific prayer for children in foster  
6 care—either as a petition within the Prayers of the People or as a standalone prayer offered  
7 during meetings and gatherings; and be it further
- 8 RESOLVED that every parish and worshiping community in the Diocese of Maine be invited  
9 and encouraged to prayerfully discern how it may serve and care for children in foster care and  
10 for those offering that care in its own context—through prayer, volunteerism, mentorship, foster  
11 or kinship care support, partnership with local agencies, or legislative advocacy.

## **Brief Explanation:**

The State of Maine has some of the highest reported rates of child abuse and neglect in the United States, and most children enter foster care as a result of neglect, trauma, and abuse.

In general, Maine continues to face a critical child welfare crisis, with some of the highest rates of child maltreatment and foster care placement in the nation. In fiscal year 2023, the state reported a child maltreatment rate of 15.0 per 1,000 children, nearly double the national average of 7.4–8.1 per 1,000 (Children’s Bureau, 2024). Even more concerning, the repeat maltreatment rate—the percentage of children who experience a second confirmed incident of abuse within a year—stood at 19.6%, significantly higher than the national standard of 9.7%. These figures highlight both the intensity and persistence of risk for children in Maine.

As of September 30, 2023, there were 2,497 children in foster care in Maine, representing a rate of 4.14 per 1,000 children, which is approximately 75% higher than the national entry rate of 2.4 per 1,000 (The Maine Monitor, 2024). Among these children, 768 were waiting to be adopted, and 140 of them were legally free—having had parental rights fully terminated (Children’s Bureau, 2024). Although federal adoption statistics for 2023 are not yet finalized, state reports indicate that approximately 500 children were adopted from foster care in Maine during 2024, showing some improvement in achieving permanency (Maine Morning Star, 2025). These figures underscore the urgent need for continued support, advocacy, and spiritual care for the vulnerable children and families in Maine’s foster care system and for those helping youth through the foster care system.

In our Holy Scriptures, throughout both the Old and New Testament, God has a particular favor and care for orphans, and commands God’s people to the same care: (Exodus 22:22, Deuteronomy 10:18, Deuteronomy 14:29, Deuteronomy 16:11, Deuteronomy 24:17, Deuteronomy 24:19, Psalm 10:14, Psalm 68:5, Psalm 82:3, Isaiah 1:17, Jeremiah 22:3, Jeremiah 49:11, Zechariah 7:10, Matthew 18:5, Matthew 25:40, Mark 10:14, Luke 14:13-14, Acts 20:35, 1 Timothy 5:3-8, James 1:27)

Our Lord Jesus Christ welcomed children, blessed them, and taught us that in caring for the least among us, we serve Christ Himself.

Resolutions of this nature can often have good sentiment but lack a clear plan of action or measurable goals. The purpose of this resolution is not to create “requirements” for any parish or worshiping community, but rather the purpose of it is to say clearly as a church that “child abuse and neglect is a particular Maine problem.” And to ask as our diocese: as faithful followers of Christ in Maine, how shall we respond in our individual and communal lives? The resolution is intended to be both one of action and of prayer care for the most vulnerable in Maine.

A few suggestions for local parishes to respond to this resolution are to partner or promote “A Family for ME” which is a partnership between the Department of Health and Human Services and Spurwink Services, with the focus of raising awareness of the urgent need and finding Maine families who are willing and able to parent children in foster care. Another could be to host conversations about opening parishioners’ homes to foster care or adoption. Another suggestion is to support Big Brothers, Big Sisters Youth Mentorship Program in Maine. Or perhaps working with Camp Bishopswood to provide scholarships for campers; or to buy suitcases or luggage for children in care so they don’t have to transport their belongings in trash bags. Local parish care could be as simple and vital as the support of a family doing foster care with meals and prayer.

**Supporting website links:** <https://cwoutcomes.acf.hhs.gov/cwdatasite/byState/maine/>

[https://tableaupublic.acf.gov/views/afcars\\_dashboard\\_main\\_page/mainpage?%3Aembed=y&%3AisGuestRedirectFromVizportal=y](https://tableaupublic.acf.gov/views/afcars_dashboard_main_page/mainpage?%3Aembed=y&%3AisGuestRedirectFromVizportal=y)

**Submitting individual or organization:** The Vestry of The Episcopal Church of Saint Mary (Falmouth)

**Contact person:** Rev. Matthew Simpson, Deacon

**Email address:** [deaconmatthew@smary.org](mailto:deaconmatthew@smary.org)

**Phone number:** 540-429-9172

## **Submission Questionnaire**

Do you have an individual or organization co-sponsoring this resolution? Yes

Co-sponsoring individual or organization: Rev. Matthew Simpson, Deacon

Co-sponsor contact person: Matthew Simpson

Email address for co-sponsor: deaconmatthew@smmary.org

Phone number for co-sponsor: 540-429-9172

Does this resolution have any budgetary impacts to the Episcopal Diocese of Maine (EDOM) Annual Budget? No

Apart from financial impact to the diocese, would implementing this resolution have any financial impact to our congregations? No

Does the action proposed by this resolution fall under the charge of an established diocesan committee, commission, council, or ministry? Yes

Please name the committee: Public Policy

Have you communicated your proposed resolution to that group? Yes

Please tell us whom you have consulted within the applicable governing group: John Hennessy

Does the group support this resolution: Yes

Who will be responsible to present and address questions regarding the resolution at town halls and at the convention? Matthew Simpson

Email address: deaconmatthew@smmary.org

Phone number: 540-429-9172

Assuming passage, who is responsible for completing the action being resolved by this resolution? 1) The Diocesan Staff and governing bodies in ensuring at every Diocesan Gathering of Clergy and/or lay leaders that they be encouraged to offer prayer either in the Prayers of the People or in committee meetings a prayer for children in foster care and for those caring for foster care children.

2) Each parish would be responsible for their own discernment seeking guidance from the Holy Spirit on how to respond to this particular need and tragedy in Maine as the Church in our time.

If the resolution is adopted, how long do you plan on the action(s) being in effect? One liturgical year: Advent 1 2025 (11/30/2025) to Christ the King Sunday 2026 (11/22/2026).

Reporting on an adopted resolution's progress is required at the 2026 Convention. Who will be responsible for performing this task? Deacon Matthew Simpson

If you have documents that support your resolution, please attach them here: NA