

Endorsement Policy
All Souls Episcopal Parish
September 8, 2014

Strengthened by our common devotion, we strive for the reconciliation of a broken world through our daily practices, our mutual ministry, and our struggles for justice.

- All Souls Episcopal Parish Vision Statement

Purpose: Acts of mercy, compassion and justice are essential to the Christian life. All Souls Episcopal Parish's Outreach Ministry calls us to be the Gospel in action in the world by providing opportunities for individual and collective participation in a wealth of projects and programs that address pressing needs in our local community, the nation, and the world. Frequently, All Souls Episcopal Parish is asked to sponsor or endorse specific events, legislative actions or stances on issues. This policy outlines the process for reviewing and approving these requests.

Process: An "Endorsement Subcommittee" made up of 3 members of the Outreach Ministry Leadership Team serves as the designated body that reviews all endorsement requests. All requests will be reviewed according to the steps outlined below. The Endorsement Subcommittee will present its recommendation to endorse or not endorse at the monthly meeting of the Outreach Ministry Leadership Team for a decision. Where recommendations to endorse are urgent because of special circumstances, the recommendation to endorse or not endorse may be made via an e-mail vote of the Outreach Ministry Leadership Team. Only recommendations by the Outreach Ministry to endorse will proceed to the Vestry for approval. The Vestry, which is an elected body, will vote on whether to approve or not to approve the Outreach Ministry's recommendation.

Preparing an Endorsement Recommendation: When preparing the recommendation for the Outreach Ministry Leadership Team, the Endorsement Subcommittee will:

- Research the issue, including consulting with members of All Souls who may have deeper knowledge of the issue.
- Research the organization(s) involved in making the request.
- Answer the questions:
 - How does the Gospel speak to the issue?
 - What has been the Episcopal Church's position or tradition in relation to the issue?
 - How will the endorsement be leveraged? What will it be used for?
 - What is All Souls capacity to respond?
- Prepare a written recommendation that addresses these questions and includes a justification for the recommendation to endorse or not endorse.
 - Recommendation to endorse: The reviewed endorsement request speaks directly to the Gospel, is not inconsistent with the Episcopal Church's position or tradition on the issue, the endorsement may provide assistance to members of the community who are working on this issue, and will require a response from All Souls that is within our capacity to meet.

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- Recommendation not to endorse: The reviewed endorsement request does not meet one or more of the required criteria.
- If the Outreach Leadership Team approves a recommendation to endorse, the recommendation and supporting materials will be given to the Senior Warden at least one week before the Vestry meets.

Approving Endorsement Recommendations: The decision of whether or not to endorse will be made by the Vestry. Endorsement decisions should be transparent and grounded in scripture, the Episcopal tradition and reason. Endorsement decisions should be based on: 1) How the Gospel speaks to the issue; 2) What the Episcopal Church's position or tradition has been in relation to the issue; and 3) Reason, which answers the questions, what special situation or circumstances call All Souls Episcopal parish to respond to the issue, and what is the capacity of the parish to respond at this time? Where recommendations to endorse are urgent because of special circumstances and approval is needed prior to the next regular Vestry meeting, the recommendation to endorse may request that Vestry approval be granted via an e-mail vote of the Vestry.

Notification: Once the recommendation has been voted on by the Vestry, the Senior Warden will notify the Endorsement Subcommittee and the Chair of the Outreach Ministry of the Vestry's decision.

Individual Actions: This policy does not preclude All Souls members from taking action as individuals on issues of concern (e.g., signing petitions, writing letters to legislators, and participating in events and activities not officially endorsed by All Souls).