

October 2018 Report from the Province III Task Force -responding to the Opioid Pandemic

In February 2018, **twenty** Task Force members gathered from across Province III at the Claggett Center to continue work on recovery resource sharing, education of congregations, advocacy and liturgical resource sharing. We completed the following document to share broadly throughout our communities: [**A Compassionate Response: A Statement in Opioids**](#). This statement focuses on how as faith communities we can provide belonging, community connection, listening, prayer, comfort, care, worship opportunities, and other resources for those facing the disease of addiction. The 2018 Diocesan convention presented and passed a resolution entitled [**Offer Caring, Practical Response to the Opioid Crisis in Our Communities**](#). This resolution offers a pathway to educate, support, and offer assistance to those within our communities who are most affected by the opioid crisis.

In September 2018, the task force hosted: [**"A series of important conversations with experts on the opioid pandemic."**](#) People participated both in person and through the Zoom technology at Claggett. **Thirty** people attended in person, which included five paying participants. **Three** people joined the conversations by Zoom. The video recordings will be edited and made available for wider use in November 2018.

In 2019, the task force hopes to organize two or three educational site visits, where interested people can see recovery models, witness to recovery ministry in action, and talk with experts in harm reduction, faith community support, and compassionate response work. Karl Colder, Task Force co-chair, is working on materials to train people across the Episcopal Church as first responders in the face of problematic opioid use. Members Jan Brown and Amanda Kotval continue working with The Episcopal Church on legislation at the denominational level. Karl, Barbara Ambrose, Amanda Kotval, and Jan Brown will be meeting on October 24th for a "Proposed Planning Document for Response to Opioid Crisis and Topics Related to Addiction and Recovery in the Diocese of Virginia," which can be used as a blueprint within Province III.