



Episcopal, Anglican groups join effort to stop violence against women

O God, by your Holy Spirit you anointed Jesus Christ to open the eyes of the blind and give voice to those who are silent: Inspire us, by the power of that same Spirit, to see and recognize gender violence in its myriad forms, and to speak boldly and effectively for its eradication, that, in your reign at hand, all women and men, and girls and boys, may blossom abundantly and rejoice to see your glory, in Jesus' name, Amen.

—The Rev. Jeanne Person
General Theological Seminary

For the first time in recent history, three Episcopal women's groups have come together to ask the church to participate in 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence. In 2010, the 16 days begin on November 25, International Day against Violence Against Women, and end on December 10, International Human Rights Day.

These three groups — the Episcopal Church Women (ECW), the Episcopal Women's Caucus (EWC) and Anglican Women's Empowerment (AWE) — have partnered to develop an Episcopal Church campaign of activism and awareness to coincide with the international campaign established by the Center for Women's Global Leadership at Rutgers University (<http://16dayscwg.rutgers.edu>).

Since 1991, more than 2,000 organizations have participated in the campaign. The focus includes raising awareness about gender-based violence as a human rights issue, strengthening local work around violence against women, providing a forum in which organizers can develop and share new strategies, and help create tools to pressure governments to implement promises made to eliminate violence against women.



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“We recognize that these 16 days, for Episcopalians, begin on Thanksgiving and run during the beginning of Advent,” says a release from the three groups. “Our hope is that churches and individuals will include some of these issues in their time of preparation. This can include special services, prayers, litanies, speakers or films on the subject, articles written for parish or diocesan newsletters or special services, to name a few.”

A blog has been created for posting of ideas, stories, or reports at www.episcopal16days.wordpress.com. A compilation of prayers, stories and litanies can also be found on the blog space as a resource for individuals or parishes.

“The readings from the Revised Common Lectionary for the first two Sundays in Advent can help focus our thoughts on both preparing for the coming of Christ, and for raising our awareness of violence, not only against women, but against all,” says the release. “We hear from Isaiah on the first Sunday about turning our spears into plowshares and making war no more. In the Psalm from week two we hear that God will defend the needy among the people and shall rescue the poor and crush the oppressor. As we hear and study these two scriptures, it is easy to include the violence against women in our thoughts of those things that can be remedied when Christ comes.

“Together in solidarity, the three groups lift up this issue, and hope in some way we can help raise awareness of this worldwide problem, and help continue to address Millennium Development Goal number three (promote gender equality and empower women).”

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EWC

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