



Resolution Number: 2018-A086
Title: Authorize Marriage Rites and Added Provisions for Same-Sex Couples
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred as Amended
Final Text:

Resolved, That the 79th General Convention authorize “The Witnessing and Blessing of a Lifelong Covenant” (as appended to the report of the Task Force on the Study of Marriage), authorized for use by the 78th General Convention, to be added to the “Enriching Our Worship” series, for use in jurisdictions of the Episcopal Church in which 1) the couple desiring marriage are of the same sex; and 2) the civil jurisdiction in which the marriage would occur does not allow marriage of same-sex persons; and be it further

Resolved, That this rite is to be used under the direction of a bishop exercising ecclesiastical authority (or ecclesiastical supervision); and be it further

Resolved, That it shall be within the discretion of any Member of the Clergy of this Church to decline to officiate at any rite of blessing defined herein; and be it further

Resolved, That no member of the Clergy shall officiate at any rite of blessing defined herein for a couple in which one or both seeking the blessing have been previously married, except as provided under Canon I.19; and be it further

Resolved, That under the canonical direction of the Rector or Member of the Clergy in charge and where permitted to do so by civil law, provision will be made for all couples desiring to use this liturgy in their local congregation or worshipping community, provided that nothing in this Resolve narrows the authority of the Rector or Priest-in-Charge (Canon III.9.6(a)); and be it further

Resolved, That in dioceses where the bishop exercising ecclesiastical authority (or, where applicable, ecclesiastical supervision) holds a theological position that does not embrace the blessing of the relationship of same-sex couples, and there is a desire to use such rites by same-sex couples in a congregation or worshipping community, the bishop exercising ecclesiastical authority (or ecclesiastical supervision) shall invite, as necessary, another bishop of this Church to provide pastoral support to the couple, the Member of the Clergy involved and the congregation or worshipping community in order to fulfill the intention of this resolution that all couples have convenient and reasonable local congregational access to this rite; and be it further

Resolved, That bishops exercising ecclesiastical authority, or where appropriate ecclesiastical supervision, who hold a theological position that does not embrace the blessing of the relationship of same-sex couples, shall in the case of blessing after divorce, invite another bishop of this Church to oversee the consent process and to receive any report of such Blessings, as provided in Canon I.19.3(c); and be it further

Resolved, That this Church continue to honor the theological diversity of this Church in regard to matters of human sexuality, and that no bishop, priest, deacon or lay person shall be coerced or penalized in any manner as a result of his or her conscientious objection to or support for this rite; and be it further

Resolved, That the 79th General Convention direct the Secretary of General Convention and the Custodian of the Standard Book of Common Prayer, in consultation with the outgoing Chair of the Task Force on the Study of Marriage and the Chairs of the Legislative

Committees to whom this legislation is referred, to finalize and arrange with Church Publishing for the publication (in English, Spanish, French, and Haitian Creole of the material contained in “Enriching Our Worship” as approved by the 79th General Convention; the General Convention Office to make these materials available electronically at no cost no later than the first Sunday of Advent 2018; and be it further

Resolved, That the 79th General Convention refer “The Blessing of a Lifelong Relationship” (as appended to the report of the Task Force on the Study of Marriage) to the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music and the Standing Commission on Structure, Governance, Constitution and Canons for further review and recommendations including a comprehensive study of the legal implications and other ecclesial options.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Austin, 2018* (New York: General Convention, 2018), pp. 1134-1135.