

General Convention of The Episcopal Church 2022 Archives' Research Report

Resolution No.: 2022-A056
Title: Communion Across Difference
Proposer: Task Force on Communion Across Difference
Topic: Marriage

Directly Related: (Attached)

2018-A227 Create a Task Force on Communion Across Difference
2009-C014 Refer a Resolution to Study the Theology and History of Marriage (Referred)

Indirectly Related: (Available in the [Acts of Convention](#) database, searchable by resolution number)

2015-A037 Appoint an Expanded Task Force on the Study of Marriage
2012-A050 Create a Task Force on the Study of Marriage
1997-C003 Affirm Traditional Marriage and Request Study of Same-Sex Relationships

In preparing this report, the Archives researched the resolutions in the Acts of Convention database for the period 1973 through 2018, selecting “direct” resolutions that have a substantive bearing on the proposed legislation. The “direct” resolutions are attached and “indirect” resolutions are available in the Acts of Convention database. Committee members who require other research assistance should contact the Archives through the [Research Request Form](#) or call 800-525-9329.

A056 - Communion Across Difference

Final Status: Not Yet Finalized

Proposed by: Task Force on Communion Across Difference

Requests New Interim Body: Yes

Amends C&C or Rules of Order: No

Has Budget Implications: Yes

Cost: 75.000,00 €

HiA: HD

Legislative Committee Currently Assigned: 13 - Committees & Commissions

Completion Status: Incomplete

Latest House Action: N/A

Supporting Documents: No

Resolution Text

Resolved, the House of _____ concurring,

That the 80th General Convention directs the Presiding Bishop and President of the House of Deputies to appoint a second Task Force on Communion Across Difference to continue the work started but limited by the COVID-19 pandemic, consisting of not more than 12 people, who represent the cultural, generational, racial, ethnic and theological diversity in the Church, including especially members from dioceses outside the United States; and be it further

Resolved, That half of the members appointed hold that marriage is a “covenant between a man and a woman” (BCP, 422), half hold that marriage is a “covenant between two people” in the presence of God (Resolution 2018-A085), and that all of those appointed seek a pathway toward mutual flourishing in The Episcopal Church; and be it further

Resolved, That the Task Force will seek to build on the Blue Book report of the previous triennium, continuing to seek a lasting path forward for mutual flourishing consistent with this Church’s polity and the 2015 “Communion across Difference” statement of the House of Bishops, affirming (1) the clear decision of General Convention that Christian marriage is a covenant open to two people of the same sex or of the opposite sex, (2) General Convention’s firm commitment to make provision for all couples asking to be married in this Church to have access to authorized liturgies; and also affirming (3) the indispensable place that the minority who hold to this Church’s historic teaching on marriage have in our common life, whose witness our Church needs; and be it further

Resolved, That the Task Force develop and publicize further tools for engaging the members of this Church in the substance of the Task Force on Communion Across

Difference Blue Book Report to this Convention, including but not limited to videos documenting experiences across this Church that demonstrate positive examples of communion across difference, and materials that broaden the conversation beyond matters of human sexuality and marriage; and be it further

Resolved, That the Task Force consult widely with members of this Church who represent its diversity of cultural background, age, race, gender, gender identity, and sexual orientation, particularly its members in countries other than the United States; and also with representatives from the Anglican Communion, our full-communion ecumenical partners, and those churches with whom we carry on ecumenical dialogues; and be it further

Resolved, That the 80th General Convention commends to dioceses, parishes, and churchwide staff the Conversation Tool created by the Task Force on Communion Across Difference included in the Supplemental Materials section of their Blue Book report to this Convention; and be it further

Resolved, That the Task Force report and make recommendations to the 81th General Convention, ending its term at that time except by further action of General Convention; and be it further

Resolved, That the General Convention request the Joint Standing Committee on Program, Budget and Finance to consider a budget allocation of \$75,000 for the implementation of this resolution.

Explanation

The 79th General Convention directed the Presiding Bishop and the President of the House of Deputies to appoint jointly a Task Force on Communion across Difference, consisting of not more than 14 people, who represented the diversity in this Church including members from countries other than the United States, half of whom held that marriage is a “covenant between a man and a woman” (BCP, 422), half of whom held that marriage is a “covenant between two people” (Resolution 2018-A085), in the presence of God, and all of whom sought a pathway toward mutual flourishing in The Episcopal Church. Our Task Force reported and made recommendations to the 80th General Convention, and our enabling resolution specified that our Task Force would continue only at the request of the next General Convention.

The Task Force did its best despite the limitations imposed by the Covid-19 epidemic to accomplish this work, the fruit of which is contained in its Blue Book Report to this Convention. Of particular note is the working definition of “mutual flourishing” developed by the Task Force and a “conversation tool” to assist members of this Church in engaging that definition and the conversation more broadly. The Task Force also articulated a helpful theological framework for engaging communion across difference, recognizing the many challenges and tensions present in that work. While we believe we have done significant theological and relational work on what it means to walk together as disciples of Jesus on the Way of Love, we have only begun a process that cries out for further exploration. We believe that reconciliation and “mutual flourishing” should continue to be our goal, by God’s

grace, but that the truth-telling, transformation, and relationship building that are necessary on the way to that goal do not come quickly or easily.

Members of the current Task Force believe that building the kind of relationships needed to take this work further were severely hampered by the Covid-19 pandemic and our inability to meet face to face. We propose that to do this work well, funding for at least two face-to-face gatherings over the next triennium will be necessary, and ideally three. Our suggestion to appoint not more than 12 members is meant to make multiple face-to-face meetings financially possible, but a larger membership with a larger budget would also be welcome.



Resolution Number: 2018-A227
Title: Create a Task Force on Communion Across Difference
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred as Amended
Final Text:

Resolved, That the 79th General Convention direct the Presiding Bishop and the President of the House of Deputies to appoint jointly a Task Force on Communion across Difference, consisting of not more than 14 people, who represent the diversity in this Church including members from countries other than the United States; and be it further

Resolved, That half of the members appointed hold that marriage is a “covenant between a man and a woman” (BCP, 422), half of whom hold that marriage is a “covenant between two people” (Resolution 2018-A085), in the presence of God , and that all of those appointed seek a pathway toward mutual flourishing in The Episcopal Church; and be it further

Resolved, That the Task Force seek a lasting path forward for mutual flourishing consistent with this Church’s polity and the 2015 “Communion across Difference” statement of the House of Bishops affirming (1) the clear decision of General Convention that Christian marriage is a covenant between two people, of the same sex or of the opposite sex, (2) General Convention’s firm commitment to make provision for all couples asking to be married in this Church to have access to authorized liturgies; and also affirming (3) the indispensable place that the minority who hold to this Church’s historic teaching on marriage have in our common life, whose witness the Church needs; and be it further

Resolved, That the Task Force consult widely with members of this Church who represent its diversity of cultural background, age, race, gender, gender identity, and sexual orientation, particularly its members in countries other than the United States, and also with representatives reflecting the diversity of views and voices of the Anglican Communion, our full-communication ecumenical partners, and those churches with whom we carry on ecumenical dialogues; and be it further

Resolved, That the Task Force report and make recommendations to the 80th General Convention, ending its term at that time except by further action of General Convention; and be it further

Resolved, That the General Convention request the Joint Standing Committee on Program, Budget and Finance to consider a budget allocation of \$75,000 for the implementation of this resolution.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Austin, 2018* (New York: General Convention, 2018), pp. 1037-1038.



Resolution Number: 2009-C014
Title: Refer a Resolution to Study the Theology and History of Marriage
Legislative Action Taken: Referred
Final Text:

Resolved, That the 76th General Convention respectfully request that the Presiding Bishop and President of the House of Deputies jointly appoint a task force of not more than twelve (12) persons, consisting of theologians, pastors and educators, to identify and explore key theological and historical dimensions of marriage; and be it further

Resolved, That the Task Force work with Executive Council staff, and other experts as consultants and coordinators; and be it further

Resolved, That the Task Force engage with the issues raised by changing social norms and legal structures in American and other societies; and be it further

Resolved, That it consult with married couples, lesbian and gay couples living in commitment – or, where laws permit, in civil marriage – and single adults; and be it further

Resolved, That in these discussions it consider perspectives from a variety of cultures; and be it further

Resolved, That it consult with our partners both in and beyond the Anglican Communion; and be it further

Resolved, That it deeply engage with the rich resources of moral theology in our Anglican tradition; and be it further

Resolved, That it develop and design tools for theological reflection and norms for theological discussion at a local level; and be it further

Resolved, That the Joint Standing Committee on Program, Budget and Finance consider an allocation of \$30,000.00 during the next triennium; and be it further

Resolved, That the Task Force report back to the 77th General Convention with annual reports to the Executive Council.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Anaheim, 2009* (New York: General Convention, 2009), pp. 808-809.