

General Convention of The Episcopal Church 2022 Archives' Research Report

Resolution No.: 2022-C028
Title: All Are Welcome at the Table
Proposer: Northern California
Topic: Eucharist

Directly Related: (Attached)

2015-C010 On the Topic of Inviting All to Holy Communion (Rejected)
2015-C023 On the Topic of Amending Canon 1.17.7 [Respecting the Laity] (Rejected)
2012-C029 Reaffirm Baptism Before Holy Communion
1979-A043 Adopt a Standard for Non-Episcopalians Receiving Holy Communion

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

None

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.

C028 - All Are Welcome at the Table

Final Status: Not Yet Finalized

Proposed by: Northern California

Requests New Interim Body: No

Amends C&C or Rules of Order: Yes

Has Budget Implications: No

Cost:

HiA: HB

Legislative Committee Currently Assigned: 12 - Prayer Book, Liturgy & Music

Completion Status: Incomplete

Latest House Action: N/A

Supporting Documents: No

Resolution Text

Resolved, the House of _____ concurring,

That the 80th General Convention of The Episcopal Church, that this 111th Convention of the Diocese of Northern California adopts the following resolution and hereby directs the Secretary of this Convention to forward this resolution to the Secretary of General Convention of The Episcopal Church as a duly authorized resolution from this Diocese; and be it further

Resolved, That the Diocese of Northern California requests that 80th General Convention repeal CANON I.17.7 of the Constitution and Canons of The Episcopal Church (2018 Revision, page 88), which states: "No unbaptized person shall be eligible to receive Holy Communion in this Church."

Explanation

Repealing this Canon will remove the Episcopal Church's barrier that excludes unbaptized persons from being able to receive a Holy Meal. Please consider:

- The Episcopal Church is known for welcoming all to attend services.
- According to the Gospels, during the last supper Jesus made no mention of the requirement for recipients of bread and wine, taken in remembrance of Him, to be baptized.
- It is uncomfortable to visualize Jesus turning anybody away who desires to remember Him.

- The Holy Eucharist described in the Catechism section of the Book of Common Prayer (1979) makes no mention of baptism being a prerequisite for receiving communion (page 859).
- Baptism is a vital part of being a Christian, but not, according to the Gospels, a prerequisite for partaking in the Holy Meal.
- The Episcopal Church has removed many barriers that were not consistent with the teachings of Jesus.
- This removes the presumed requirement for the person delivering the Holy Meal to assure the recipient has been baptized.
- This could help grow congregations by reducing the number of visitors who do not return because they felt excluded during communion.



Resolution Number: 2015-C010
Title: On the Topic of Inviting All to Holy Communion
Legislative Action Taken: Rejected
Text of Resolution:

Resolved, the House of Deputies concurring, That the 78th General Convention of the Episcopal Church expresses awareness of growing favor within the Episcopal Church for a practice commonly called “Open Table,” that all persons, baptized and unbaptized, may be invited to receive Holy Communion, and

Expresses awareness that some communities within the Episcopal Church have already been experimenting with the practice of Open Table on an unofficial basis, and that it has not been unknown in the history of the Church for changes in local practice occasionally to precede and inform changes in wider-Church doctrine; and

Expresses awareness of the complexity of changing the canons for authorizing the practice of Open Table on an official church-wide basis, recognizing that there are significant liturgical, theological, relational, and other factors deserving of our careful and ongoing discernment; and be it further

Resolved, That the 78th General Convention calls for the formation of a task force, the members of which shall be jointly appointed by the Presiding Bishop and President of the House of Deputies, to study and facilitate church-wide dialogue concerning the practice of Open Table in consultation with the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music, the Standing Commission on Constitution and Canons, the Standing Commission on Interreligious and Ecumenical Relations, and the Theology Committee in the House of Bishops, and to report its findings and recommendations to the 79th General Convention of the Episcopal Church; and be it further

Resolved, That the Joint Standing Committee on Program, Budget, and Finance consider a budget allocation of \$10,000 per year of the 2015-2018 triennium for the implementation of this Resolution.



Resolution Number: 2015-C023
Title: On the Topic of Amending Canon 1.17.7 [Respecting the Laity]
Legislative Action Taken: Rejected
Text of Resolution:

Resolved, the House of Deputies concurring, That the following section of Title I is hereby amended to read as follows:

Canon I.17.7. No unbaptized person shall be eligible to receive Holy Communion in this Church, *except as provided as follows:*

- (a) The unbaptized person must be receiving communion with the intent of beginning or strengthening a relationship with Christ and eventually being baptized, and the clergy in charge of the congregation in which the person is receiving shall provide counsel as needed.*
- (b) Congregations inviting the unbaptized to receive communion must do so as a part of an evangelistic plan to welcome all people to Christ's table and to strengthen them in their relationship with Christ and the Church.*



Resolution Number: 2012-C029
Title: Reaffirm Baptism Before Holy Communion
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred as Substituted and Amended
Final Text:

Resolved, That The Episcopal Church reaffirms that baptism is the ancient and normative entry point to receiving Holy Communion and that our Lord Jesus Christ calls us to go into the world and baptize all peoples.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Indianapolis, 2012* (New York: General Convention, 2012), pp. 728-729.



Resolution Number: 1979-A043
Title: Adopt a Standard for Non-Episcopalians Receiving Holy Communion
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred As Amended
Final Text:

Resolved, That the following standard be adopted for those of other Churches who on occasion desire to receive the Holy Communion in the Episcopal Church:

- a. They shall have been baptized with water in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and shall have previously been admitted to the Holy Communion within the Church to which they belong.
- b. They shall examine their lives, repent of their sins, and be in love and charity with all people, as this Church in its catechism (*PBCP, p. 860*). says is required of all those who come to the Eucharist.
- c. They shall approach the Holy Communion as an expression of the Real Presence of Jesus Christ whose sacrifice once upon the cross was sufficient for all mankind.
- d. They shall find in this Communion the means to strengthen their life within the Christian family "through the forgiveness of (their) sins, the strengthening of (their) union with Christ and one another, and the foretaste of the heavenly banquet...." (*PBCP, p. 859-60*)
- e. Their own consciences must always be respected as must the right of their own Church membership to determine the sacramental discipline of those who, by their own choice, make that their spiritual home; and be it further

Resolved, That the "Commentary on Eucharistic Sharing," which has been recommended by the Standing Commission on Ecumenical Relations and is appended to this official Report to the 66th Convention, be hereby commended as a pastoral context for the interpretation of these standards.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Denver, 1979* (New York: General Convention, 1980), p. C-51.