

General Convention of The Episcopal Church 2024 Archives' Research Report

Resolution No.: 2024-A047
Title: Amend Title I
Proposer: Standing Commission on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations
Topic: Constitution, Ecumenism

Directly Related: (Attached)

2022-A146 Amend Constitution Articles VI and VIII [Regarding Full Communion--Second Reading]
2018-A089 Amend Constitution Articles VI and VIII [Regarding Full Communion--First Reading]

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

2022-A116 Amend Canon III.10.2 [Of Reception of Clergy from other Churches]
2018-A225 Encourage Ecumenical Partnerships for Beloved Community
1997-A022 Encourage Every Diocese to Form Partnerships With Other Faith Groups

In preparing this report, the Archives researched the resolutions in the Acts of Convention database for the period 1973 through 2022, 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](#).

A047 - Amend Title I

Final Status: Not Yet Finalized

Proposed by: Standing Commission on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations

Has Budget Implications: No

Cost:

Amends C&C or Rules of Order: Yes

Requests New Interim Body: No

Changes Mandate Of Existing Ib: No

Directs Dfms Staff: No

Directs Dioceses: No

Directs Executive Council: No

HiA: No House Assigned

Legislative Committee Currently Assigned: No Committee Assigned

Completion Status: Incomplete

Latest House Action: N/A

Supporting Documents: No

Resolution Text

That the 81st General Convention amend Title I of the Canons by adding the following Canon 21.

Canon 21: Of Local Ecumenical Partnerships

Sec 1. Local Ecumenical Partnerships (LEPs) are ministries that may be formed between Episcopal dioceses and their parallels in other Christian denominations in order to provide shared pastoral leadership.

Sec. 2 LEPs may be formed with denominations:

- a. Who are in a full communion relationship with this church, or***
- b. Whose apostolicity, ordained ministers and sacraments have been formally recognized by action of General Convention, or***
- c. Who are member judicatories of Churches Uniting in Christ (CUIC) or its successor organization(s).***

Sec. 3. LEPs may encompass congregations, chaplaincies, missions, or other ecclesial bodies.;

Sec. 4. *LEPs are governed by formal, written agreements between the Ecclesiastical Authority of an Episcopal diocese and the equivalent authorities of other Christian Denominations as qualified in this canon. Such agreements should include provisions for, but are not limited to:*

- a. The process for calling ordained leadership*
- b. The terms of ordained leadership, including but not limited to:
 - 1. Method of paying compensation, insurance, and other benefits.*
 - 2. Process for revocation of license and/or employment;*
 - 3. Handling of Ecclesiastical Discipline**
- c. The parameters of ecclesial function regarding worship, governance, sacraments, etc.*
- d. A time frame and process for regular review of the agreement*

Sec. 5. *A LEP may be served by clergy ordained in and in good standing of any denomination who are part of the formal agreement and approved of by the Ecclesiastical Authority.*

Sec. 6. *Ordained ministers of denominations who are not in full communion with this church are authorized to exercise ministry only within the LEP, and do not retain any credentials within this Church after leaving its ministry.*

Explanation

Many dioceses throughout the Episcopal Church already contain combined ministries with other Christian denominations. The Church of England calls these “Local Ecumenical Partnerships” and shares them with various Christian denominations. In the Episcopal Church’s context, this is increasingly becoming a missional reality in rural communities and college chaplaincies. The Constitutions and Canons of the Episcopal Church have no explicit provision for these combined ministries to operate with ordained leadership other than Episcopal ministers or those in formal full-communion agreements. The Standing Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Relations believes this canon and a relevant change to Article VIII of the Constitution (also submitted to the 81st General Convention) would make that provision and lay out the limited circumstances under which such partnerships could be formed. The canon also makes clear that this only applies to denominations whom the Episcopal Church has affirmed their “apostolicity, ordained ministers and sacraments” by act of general convention or membership in organizations chartered to do so and that ordained ministers of these denominations are credentialed only within the bounds of the ministry of the Limited Ecumenical Partnership.



Resolution Number: 2022-A146
Title: Amend Constitution Articles VI and VIII [Regarding Full Communion--Second Reading]
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred
Final Text:

Resolved, That the 80th General Convention amend Articles VI and VIII to read as follows:
ARTICLE VI

Sec. 1. The House of Bishops may establish a Mission in any area not included within the boundaries of any Diocese of this Church or of any Church in *full* communion with this Church, and elect or appoint a Bishop therefor.

ARTICLE VIII

No person shall be ordered Priest or Deacon to minister in this Church until the person shall have been examined by the Bishop and two Priests and shall have exhibited such testimonials and other requisites as the Canons in that case provided may direct. No person shall be ordained and consecrated Bishop, or ordered Priest or Deacon to minister in this Church, unless at the time, in the presence of the ordaining Bishop or Bishops, the person shall subscribe and make the following declaration:

I do believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, and to contain all things necessary to salvation; and I do solemnly engage to conform to the Doctrine, Discipline, and Worship of the Episcopal Church.

Provided, however, that any person consecrated a Bishop to minister in any Diocese of an autonomous Church or Province of a Church in *full* communion with this Church may, instead of the foregoing declaration, make the promises of Conformity required by the Church in which the Bishop is to minister.

If any Bishop ordains a Priest or Deacon to minister elsewhere than in this Church, or confers ordination as Priest or Deacon upon a Christian minister who has not received Episcopal Ordination, the Bishop shall do so only in accordance with such provisions as shall be set forth in the Canons of this Church.

No person ordained by a foreign Bishop, or by a Bishop not in *full* communion with this Church, shall be permitted to officiate as a Minister of this Church until the person shall have complied with the Canon or Canons in that case provided and also shall have subscribed the aforesaid declaration.

A Bishop may permit an ordained minister in good standing in a church with which this Church is in full communion as specified by the Canons who has made the foregoing declaration, or a minister ordained in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America or its predecessor bodies who has made the promise of conformity required by that Church in place of the foregoing declaration to officiate on a temporary basis as an ordained minister of this church. No minister of such a Church ordained by other than a Bishop, apart from any such ministers designated as part of the Covenant or Instrument by which full communion was established, shall be eligible to officiate under this Article.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Baltimore, 2022* (New York: General Convention, 2023), pp. 501-502.



Resolution Number: 2018-A089
Title: Amend Constitution Articles VI and VIII [Regarding Full Communion--First Reading]
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred
Final Text:

Resolved, That the 79th General Convention amend Articles VI and VIII to read as follows:

ARTICLE VI

Sec. 1. The House of Bishops may establish a Mission in any area not included within the boundaries of any Diocese of this Church or of any Church in *full* communion with this Church, and elect or appoint a Bishop therefore.

ARTICLE VIII

No person shall be ordered Priest or Deacon to minister in this Church until the person shall have been examined by the Bishop and two Priests and shall have exhibited such testimonials and other requisites as the Canons in that case provided may direct. No person shall be ordained and consecrated Bishop, or ordered Priest or Deacon to minister in this Church, unless at the time, in the presence of the ordaining Bishop or Bishops, the person shall subscribe and make the following declaration:

I do believe the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, and to contain all things necessary to salvation; and I do solemnly engage to conform to the Doctrine, Discipline, and Worship of the Episcopal Church.

Provided, however, that any person consecrated a Bishop to minister in any Diocese of an autonomous Church or Province of a Church in *full* communion with this Church may, instead of the foregoing declaration, make the promises of Conformity required by the Church in which the Bishop is to minister.

If any Bishop ordains a Priest or Deacon to minister elsewhere than in this Church, or confers ordination as Priest or Deacon upon a Christian minister who has not received Episcopal Ordination, the Bishop shall do so only in accordance with such provisions as shall be set forth in the Canons of this Church.

No person ordained by a foreign Bishop, or by a Bishop not in *full* communion with this Church, shall be permitted to officiate as a Minister of this Church until the person shall have complied with the Canon or Canons in that case provided and also shall have subscribed the aforesaid declaration.

A Bishop may permit an ordained minister in good standing in a church with which this Church is in full communion as specified by the Canons who has made the foregoing declaration, or a minister ordained in the Evangelical

Lutheran Church in America or its predecessor bodies who has made the promise of conformity required by that Church in place of the foregoing declaration to officiate on a temporary basis as an ordained minister of this church. No minister of such a Church ordained by other than a Bishop, apart from any such ministers designated as part of the Covenant or Instrument by which full communion was established, shall be eligible to officiate under this Article.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Austin, 2018* (New York: General Convention, 2018), pp. 355-356.