

## General Convention of The Episcopal Church 2024 Archives' Research Report

**Resolution No.:** 2024-A070  
**Title:** Research Needs for the General Board of Examining Chaplains  
**Proposer:** Joint Standing Committee on Nominations  
**Topic:** Ordination Process

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### **Directly Related:** (Attached)

2022-D087 Refer a Resolution on Deleting Canon III.15 [Of the General Board of Examining Chaplains] (Referred)  
2015-A001 Reform Seminary Training and Develop Transformative Encounters  
2006-C036 Convene Task Force to Review the General Ordination Examinations (GOE)  
1997-A174 Amend Canon I.1.2 [Add Standing Commission on Ministry Development]  
1997-B006 Request a Study of the General Ordination Exam

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

2015-A041 Refer a Resolution on Canon III.15 [General Board of Examining Chaplains] (Referred)  
2009-A181 Amend Canon III.15.2(a) [General Ordination Examination]  
2009-A191 Authorize a Task Force to Revise Formation Guidelines for Ordained Ministry  
1988-A136 On the Topic of the General Ordination Examination (Rejected)  
1982-A056 Amend Canon III.7.1 [General Board of Examining Chaplains]  
1973-A054 Amend Canon III.7 [Of a General Board of Examining Chaplains]

*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](#).*

# A070 - Research needs for the General Board of Examining Chaplains

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**Final Status:** Not Yet Finalized

**Proposed by:** Joint Standing Committee on Nominations

**Has Budget Implications:** No

**Cost:**

**Amends C&C or Rules of Order:** Yes

**Requests New Interim Body:** No

**Changes Mandate Of Existing Ib:** Yes

**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

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## Resolution Text

*Resolved*, the House of \_\_\_\_\_ concurring,

That the 81st General Convention direct the Standing Committee on Structure, Governance, Constitution and Canons to research the current level of need for the General Board of Examining Chaplains and propose adjustments to its make-up and membership to better align with that need.

## Explanation

Much consternation went into presenting a full slate for the General Board of Examining Chaplains over the biennium (2022-24). The Joint Standing Committee on Nomination's mission is to nominate specified numbers of lay people, clergy, and bishops to the General Board of Examining Chaplains, in addition to seminary faculty. With the decreasing numbers of dioceses utilizing the General Ordination Exam and so many of our seminaries in flux, locating Episcopalians both qualified and willing to serve proved onerous. The Episcopal Church is not the same church it was when these numbers and expectations were deployed into the canons. Extensive effort was invested by the JSCN over a full calendar year as far as recruitment, discernment, and invitations to apply. While it was able to meet its mission, the JSCN feels it is past time to reassess the composition, membership,

need and role of the General Board of Examining Chaplains and to entertain creative options for locating qualified applicants.



**Resolution Number:** 2022-D087  
**Title:** Refer a Resolution on Deleting Canon III.15 [Of the General Board of Examining Chaplains]  
**Legislative Action Taken:** Referred  
**Final Text:**

*Resolved, That Canon III.15 is hereby deleted; and be it further*

*Resolved, That the subsequent canons in Title III be renumbered as appropriate; and be it further*

*Resolved, That bishops, commissions on ministry, and standing committees be encouraged to consider successful completion of a program of study approved by the Bishop at an accredited Episcopal seminary as *prima facie* evidence of proficiency of the subjects outlined in Canon III.8.5.g.*

**Canon 15: Of the General Board of Examining Chaplains**

**Sec. 1.** ~~There shall be a General Board of Examining Chaplains, consisting of four Bishops, six Priests with pastoral cures or in specialized ministries, six members of accredited Seminary faculties or of other educational institutions, and six Lay Persons. The members of the Board shall be elected by the House of Bishops and confirmed by the House of Deputies, one-half of the members in each of the foregoing categories being elected and confirmed at each regular meeting of the General Convention for a term of two Convention periods. They shall take office at the adjournment of the meeting of the General Convention at which their elections are confirmed, and shall serve until the adjournment of the second regular meeting thereafter. No member shall serve more than 12 years consecutively. Additionally, the Presiding Bishop, in consultation with the Chair of the Board, may appoint up to four other members for a term. The House of Bishops, at any special meeting that may be held prior to the next meeting of the General Convention, shall fill for the unexpired portion of the term any vacancy that may have arisen in the interim. The Board shall elect its own Chair and Secretary, and shall have the power to constitute committees necessary for the carrying on of its work.~~

**Sec. 2.**

~~(a) The General Board of Examining Chaplains, with professional assistance, shall prepare at least annually a General Ordination Examination covering the subject matter set forth in Canon III.8.5.g, and shall conduct, administer, and evaluate it in respect to those Candidates for Holy Orders who have been identified to the Board by their several Bishops.~~

~~(b) Whenever a Candidate has not demonstrated proficiency in any one or more of the canonical areas covered by the General Ordination Examination, the General Board of Examining Chaplains shall recommend to the Commission on Ministry, and through the Commission to the Board of Examining Chaplains, if one exists, of the Diocese to which the Candidate belongs, how the proficiencies might be attained.~~

**Sec. 3.** ~~The General Board of Examining Chaplains may prepare, in each Convention period, guidelines based upon the subjects contained in Canon III.8.5.g, which guidelines shall be available to all persons concerned.~~

**Sec. 4.** ~~The General Board of Examining Chaplains shall promptly report, in writing, to the Candidate, to the Candidate's Bishop and to the Dean of the Seminary the Candidate is attending, the results of all examinations held by them, together with the examinations~~

themselves, whether satisfactory or unsatisfactory, making separate reports upon each person examined. The Bishop shall transmit these reports to the Standing Committee and to the Commission. Notwithstanding the results of the examinations, in no case shall the Standing Committee recommend a Candidate for Ordination under Canon III.8 until the Standing Committee has received from the Commission on Ministry a certificate to the effect that the Candidate has demonstrated a proficiency in all subjects required by Canon III.8.5.g and h.

The report of the Board shall be made in the following form:

To \_\_\_\_\_ (Candidate), the Right Reverend \_\_\_\_\_, Bishop of \_\_\_\_\_ (or in the absence of the Bishop the Standing Committee of) \_\_\_\_\_: (Place) \_\_\_\_\_ (Date) \_\_\_\_\_

To the Dean of (Place) \_\_\_\_\_: (Date) \_\_\_\_\_

We, having been assigned as examiners of A.B., hereby testify that we have examined A.B. upon the subject matter prescribed in Canon III.8. Sensible of our responsibility, we give our judgment as follows: (Here specify the proficiency of A.B. in the subject matter appointed, or any deficiency therein, as made apparent by the examination.

(Signed) \_\_\_\_\_

Sec. 5. The General Board of Examining Chaplains shall make a report concerning its work to each regular meeting of the General Convention, and in years between meetings of the General Convention shall make a report to the House of Bishops.

**Citation:** General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Baltimore, 2022* (New York: General Convention, 2023), pp. 742-743.



**Resolution Number:** 2015-A001  
**Title:** Reform Seminary Training and Develop Transformative Encounters  
**Legislative Action Taken:** Concurred as Amended  
**Final Text:**

*Resolved, That the 78th General Convention urge Episcopal seminaries and the General Board of Examining Chaplains to work collectively in creating, nurturing, and developing a culture of collaboration among them that results in: new structures; new curricula; new degrees beyond the traditional MDiv; partnerships and practices on the academic, departmental, and inter-seminary levels; alternative assessment instruments to provide tangible, measurable evidence that seminary trained leaders (lay and ordained) have the spiritual formation, skill sets, and intellectual aptitude to engage the world and to transform and lead The Episcopal Church, looking beyond competency in the academic areas defined by canon; standards of accountability, reporting, and mutual ministry reviews at all levels; and Episcopal seminaries' reportage of their progress to Executive Council and to each succeeding General Convention; and be it further*

*Resolved, That Diocesan Councils and Commissions on Ministry, in collaboration with their Bishop, encourage and support diverse ways for ordained clergy to make a living inside and outside the Church; and be it further*

*Resolved, That the Executive Council study the issue of clergy compensation; and be it further*

*Resolved, That the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society develop a network to help Episcopal congregations, including clergy, vestry, organist, musical, lay, and other liturgical leaders, to become skilled in creating, nurturing, and developing spaces and moments for spiritual encounters that transform lives and unjust structures; and to have partnerships and practices with other congregations to become excellent stewards of spiritual, financial, real estate, and community resources; and to report their progress and learning annually to their Diocesan Convention/Council and Bishop.*

**Citation:** General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Salt Lake City, 2015* (New York: General Convention, 2015), pp. 456-457.



**Resolution Number:** 2006-C036  
**Title:** Convene Task Force to Review the General Ordination Examinations (GOE)  
**Legislative Action Taken:** Concurred as Amended  
**Final Text:**

*Resolved, That the 75th General Convention request the Standing Commission on Ministry Development (SCMD), in consultation with the Presiding Bishop, to convene a task force to review the purpose of the General Ordination Examinations (GOE), including how the examinations are constructed, administered, evaluated, and scored, with attention to cultural bias and diverse ministry contexts. This task force will also seek to determine whether the examinations and the examination process meet the needs of the church today; and be it further*

*Resolved, That this task force solicit information from the General Board of Examining Chaplains (GBEC), the seminaries, diocesan Commissions on Ministry (COMs), diocesan ordination programs, and the House of Bishops, among other appropriate entities; and be it further*

*Resolved, That this task force report its findings to the Standing Commission on Ministry Development which will report to the 76th General Convention.*

**Citation:** General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Columbus, 2006* (New York: General Convention, 2007), pp. 512-513.



**Resolution Number:** 1997-A174  
**Title:** Amend Canon I.1.2 [Add Standing Commission on Ministry Development]  
**Legislative Action Taken:** Concurred As Substituted and Amended  
**Final Text:**

*Resolved, That Canon I.1.2(n) is hereby amended by the addition of the following:  
(6) A Standing Commission on Ministry Development consisting of 24 members. Nine members shall be appointed on the nomination of the nine Provincial Presidents, one nomination from each Province. The remaining 15 shall include 3 bishops, 4 priests and/or deacons, provided that two shall be deacons, and 8 lay persons.*

*It shall be the duty of the Commission:*

*(a) to recommend policies and strategies to the General Convention for the development, affirmation and exercise of the ministry of all the baptized;*

*(b) to encourage and facilitate networks of individuals, institutions and agencies engaged in education, training, deployment and formation for ministry by all four orders;*

*(c) to study the needs and trends of theological education for all four orders with this Church, including issues of recruitment, training, deployment, evaluation and continuing education; to make recommendation to the several seminaries, the Executive Council and the General Convention; and to aid the General Board of Examining Chaplains in the exercise of its function;*

*(d) To discharge such other duties as may [sic] be assigned by the General Convention.*

**This Resolution shall be effective from the date of adoption.**

**Citation:** General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Philadelphia, 1997* (New York: General Convention, 1998), p. 244.



**Resolution Number:** 1997-B006  
**Title:** Request a Study of the General Ordination Exam  
**Legislative Action Taken:** Concurred as Substituted  
**Final Text:**

*Resolved, That the General Board of Examining Chaplains, with information resources such as bishops, seminary deans, Commissions on Ministry, and any other sources it may deem necessary, study and evaluate the timing, function, and purpose of the General Ordination Exams. The General Board of Examining Chaplains shall report its study and evaluation, along with any recommendations and/or canonical changes, to the 73rd General Convention.*

**Citation:** General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Philadelphia, 1997* (New York: General Convention, 1998), p. 272.