

General Convention of The Episcopal Church 2024 Archives' Research Report

Resolution No.: 2024-A072
Title: Amend Article X of the Constitution of The Episcopal Church [Of the Book of Common Prayer -- Second Reading]
Proposer: Secretary of General Convention
Topic: Book of Common Prayer, Constitution - Second Reading, Liturgy

Directly Related: (Attached)

2022-A059 Amend Constitution Article X [Of the Book of Common Prayer-First Reading]
2022-A145 Amend Constitution Article X [Book of Common Prayer Supplementary Text--Second Reading]
2018-A068 Create a Task Force on Liturgical and Prayer Book Revision
2015-A066 On the Topic of Constitution Article X [The Book of Common Prayer--First Reading] (Rejected)

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

2003-A108 On the Topic of Amending Constitution Article X [Second Reading] (Rejected)

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](#).

A072 - Amend Article X of the Constitution of The Episcopal Church [Of the Book of Common Prayer -- Second Reading]

Final Status: Not Yet Finalized

Proposed by: Secretary of General Convention

Has Budget Implications: Yes

Cost: \$30,000.00

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

Resolved, the House of _____ concurring,

That the 80th General Convention of The Episcopal Church repeal Article X in its entirety and replace it with the following:

Article X: Of The Book of Common Prayer

Sec. 1. *The Book of Common Prayer is understood to be those liturgical forms and other texts authorized by the General Convention in accordance with this article and the Canons of this Church.*

The Book of Common Prayer in this Church is intended to be communal and devotional prayer enriched by our church's cultural, geographical, and linguistic contexts. The Book of Common Prayer shall contain both public worship and private devotion.

The Book of Common Prayer, as now established or hereafter amended by the General Convention, shall be in use in all the Dioceses of this Church.

Sec. 2. *No alteration thereof or addition thereto shall be made unless the General Convention approve the same on first reading in one regular meeting of the General Convention and, by resolve so directing, be sent by the Secretary of the General Convention to the Secretary of the Convention of every Diocese, to be made known to the Diocesan Convention at its next regular meeting, and be adopted on second reading without alteration by the General Convention at its next succeeding regular meeting by a majority of all Bishops, excluding retired Bishops not present, of the whole number of Bishops entitled to vote in the House of Bishops, and by an affirmative vote by orders in the House of Deputies in accordance with Art. I, Sec. 5 of this Constitution, except that concurrence in the affirmative by the orders shall require the affirmative vote in each order by a majority of the Dioceses entitled to representation in the House of Deputies.*

Sec. 3. *No alteration thereof or addition thereto shall be made unless it has previously been authorized for Trial Use in accordance with this Article and the Canons of this Church.*

Sec. 4. *The General Convention may at any one meeting, by a majority of the whole number of the Bishops entitled to vote in the House of Bishops, and by a majority of the Clerical and Lay Deputies of all the Dioceses entitled to representation in the House of Deputies, voting by orders as previously set forth in this Article:*

a. Amend the Table of Lessons and all Tables and Rubrics relating to the Psalms.

b. Authorize for Trial Use such alterations or additions in whole or in part to the established Book of Common Prayer as may be proposed in accord with the Canons of this Church and duly undertaken by and implemented according to the directives of the General Convention.

c. Authorize for use throughout this Church, as provided by Canon, alternative and additional liturgies to supplement those provided in the Book of Common Prayer.

Sec. 5. *Nothing in this Article shall be construed as restricting the authority of the Bishops of this Church to take such order as may be permitted by the Rubrics of the Book of Common Prayer or by the Canons of the General Convention for the use of special forms of worship.*

And be it further

Resolved, That the General Convention direct the President of the House of Deputies and the Presiding Bishop to appoint a working group of nine members to include the Custodian of The Book of Common Prayer, some members of Committee 12 of the 80th General Convention, some members of a Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music, and others as needed to review the Canons relevant to the implementation of this Article and propose revisions to the 81st General Convention. An initial framework is provided as a starting point for this work; and be it further

Resolved, That an allocation of \$30,000 be made to support the work of the working group.

Explanation

General Convention Resolution 2018-A068 directed the Task Force on Liturgical and Prayer Book Revision to propose to the 80th General Convention revisions to the Constitution and Canons “to enable The Episcopal Church to be adaptive in its engagement of future generations of Episcopalians, multiplying, connecting, and disseminating new liturgies for mission, attending to prayer book revision in other provinces of the Anglican Communion.”

The proposed draft revision of Article X reorganizes the text for clarity of language and structure; incorporates the text of Resolution 2018-A063, passed on first reading and pending for second reading; and responds to the expressed yearning for inclusive language and expansive imagery for humanity and divinity through approved trial and supplemental liturgies to the Book of Common Prayer and sanctioned for optional use throughout the Church.

The opening statement of Article X is not changed, retaining the principle that the BCP is the standard and normative liturgical text for worship in this Church. A second sentence is added to express the understanding that all liturgies that General Convention authorizes following the protocol of Section 2 are part of the Book of Common Prayer. The remainder of the section, setting forth the method of adoption, becomes Section 2. The amendments attempt to shift the Church’s awareness that contemporary and future methods of publication may not be restricted to the form of a book. What General Convention adopts as a prayer book is not a form of publication (a book) but rather the content, i.e., the text of the liturgies.



Resolution Number: 2022-A059
Title: Amend Constitution Article X [Of the Book of Common Prayer-First Reading]
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred as Substituted and Amended
Final Text:

Resolved, That the 80th General Convention of The Episcopal Church repeal Article X in its entirety and replace it with the following:

Sec. 1. The Book of Common Prayer is understood to be those liturgical forms and other texts authorized by the General Convention in accordance with this article and the Canons of this Church.

The Book of Common Prayer in this Church is intended to be communal and devotional prayer enriched by our church's cultural, geographical, and linguistic contexts. The Book of Common Prayer shall contain both public worship and private devotion.

The Book of Common Prayer, as now established or hereafter amended by the General Convention, shall be in use in all the Dioceses of this Church.

Sec. 2. No alteration thereof or addition thereto shall be made unless the General Convention approve the same on first reading in one regular meeting of the General Convention and, by resolve so directing, be sent by the Secretary of the General Convention to the Secretary of the Convention of every Diocese, to be made known to the Diocesan Convention at its next regular meeting, and be adopted on second reading without alteration by the General Convention at its next succeeding regular meeting by a majority of all Bishops, excluding retired Bishops not present, of the whole number of Bishops entitled to vote in the House of Bishops, and by an affirmative vote by orders in the House of Deputies in accordance with Art. I, Sec. 5 of this Constitution, except that concurrence in the affirmative by the orders shall require the affirmative vote in each order by a majority of the Dioceses entitled to representation in the House of Deputies.

Sec. 3. No alteration thereof or addition thereto shall be made unless it has previously been authorized for Trial Use in accordance with this Article and the Canons of this Church.

Sec. 4. The General Convention may at any one meeting, by a majority of the whole number of the Bishops entitled to vote in the House of Bishops, and by a majority of the Clerical and Lay Deputies of all the Dioceses entitled to representation in the House of Deputies, voting by orders as previously set forth in this Article:

- a. Amend the Table of Lessons and all Tables and Rubrics relating to the Psalms.**
- b. Authorize for Trial Use such alterations or additions in whole or in part to the established Book of Common Prayer as may be proposed in accord with the Canons of this Church and duly undertaken by and implemented according to the directives of the General Convention.**
- c. Authorize for use throughout this Church, as provided by Canon, alternative and additional liturgies to supplement those provided in the Book of Common Prayer.**

Sec. 5. Nothing in this Article shall be construed as restricting the authority of the Bishops of this Church to take such order as may be permitted by the Rubrics of the Book of Common Prayer or by the Canons of the General Convention for the use of special forms of worship. And be it further

Resolved, That the General Convention direct the President of the House of Deputies and the Presiding Bishop to appoint a working group of nine members to include the Custodian

of The Book of Common Prayer, some members of Committee 12 of the 80th General Convention, some members of a Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music, and others as needed to review the Canons relevant to the implementation of this Article and propose revisions to the 81st General Convention. An initial framework is provided as a starting point for this work; and be it further

Resolved, That an allocation of \$30,000 be made to support the work of the working group.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Baltimore, 2022* (New York: General Convention, 2023), pp. 921-922.



Resolution Number: 2022-A145
Title: Amend Constitution Article X [Book of Common Prayer
Supplementary Text--Second Reading]
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred
Final Text:

Resolved, That the 80th General Convention of The Episcopal Church amend Article X of the Constitution of the Episcopal Church as follows:

ARTICLE X

The Book of Common Prayer, as now established or hereafter amended by the authority of this Church, shall be in use in all the Dioceses of this Church. No alteration thereof or addition thereto shall be made unless the same shall be first proposed in one regular meeting of the General Convention and by a resolve thereof be sent within six months to the Secretary of the Convention of every Diocese, to be made known to the Diocesan Convention at its next meeting, and be adopted by the General Convention at its next succeeding regular meeting by a majority of all Bishops, excluding retired Bishops not present, of the whole number of Bishops entitled to vote in the House of Bishops, and by a vote by orders in the House of Deputies in accordance with Article I, Sec. 5, except that concurrence by the orders shall require the affirmative vote in each order by a majority of the Dioceses entitled to representation in the House of Deputies.

But notwithstanding anything herein above contained, the General Convention may at any one meeting, by a majority of the whole number of the Bishops entitled to vote in the House of Bishops, and by a majority of the Clerical and Lay Deputies of all the Dioceses entitled to representation in the House of Deputies, voting by orders as previously set forth in this Article:

(a) Amend the Table of Lessons and all Tables and Rubrics relating to the Psalms.

(b) Authorize for trial use throughout this Church, as an alternative at any time or times to the established Book of Common Prayer or to any section or Office thereof, a proposed revision of the whole Book or of any portion thereof, duly undertaken by the General Convention.

(c) Authorize for use throughout this Church, as provided by Canon, alternative and additional liturgies to supplement those provided in the Book of Common Prayer.

And provided that nothing in this Article shall be construed as restricting the authority of the Bishops of this Church to take such order as may be permitted by the Rubrics of the Book of Common Prayer or by the Canons of the General Convention for the use of special forms of worship.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Baltimore, 2022* (New York: General Convention, 2023), pp. 534-535.



Resolution Number: 2018-A068
Title: Create a Task Force on Liturgical and Prayer Book Revision
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred as Substituted
Final Text:

Resolved, That the 79th General Convention, pursuant to Article X of the Constitution, authorize the ongoing work of liturgical and Prayer Book revision for the future of God's mission through the Episcopal branch of the Jesus movement. And, that it do so upon the core theological work of loving, liberating, life-giving reconciliation and creation care; and be it further

Resolved, That our methodology be one of a dynamic process for discerning common worship, engaging all the baptized, while practicing accountability to The Episcopal Church; and be it further

Resolved, That the 79th General Convention create a Task Force on Liturgical and Prayer Book Revision (TFLPBR), the membership of which will be jointly appointed by the Presiding Bishop and the President of the House of Deputies, and will report to the appropriate legislative committee(s) of the 80th General Convention, ensuring that diverse voices of our church are active participants in this liturgical revision by constituting a group with leaders who represent the expertise, gender, age, theology, regional, and ethnic diversity of the church, to include, 10 laity, 10 priests or deacons, and 10 Bishops; and be it further

Resolved, That this Convention memorialize the 1979 Book of Common Prayer as a Prayer Book of the church preserving the psalter, liturgies, The Lambeth Quadrilateral, Historic Documents, and Trinitarian Formularies ensuring its continued use; and be it further

Resolved, That this church continue to engage the deep Baptismal and Eucharistic theology and practice of the 1979 Prayer Book; and be it further

Resolved, That bishops engage worshiping communities in experimentation and the creation of alternative texts to offer to the wider church, and that each diocese be urged to create a liturgical commission to collect, reflect, teach and share these resources with the TFLPBR; and be it further

Resolved, That the TFLPBR in consultation with the Standing Commission on Structure, Governance, Constitution and Canons is directed to propose to the 80th General Convention revisions to the Constitution and Canons to enable The Episcopal Church to be adaptive in its engagement of future generations of Episcopalians, multiplying, connecting, and disseminating new liturgies for mission, attending to prayer book revision in other provinces of the Anglican Communion; and be it further

Resolved, That liturgical and Prayer Book revision will continue in faithful adherence to the historic rites of the Church Universal as they have been received and interpreted within the Anglican tradition of 1979 Book of Common Prayer, mindful of our existing ecumenical commitments, while also providing space for, encouraging the submission of, and facilitating the perfection of rites that will arise from the continual movement of the Holy Spirit among us and growing insights of our Church; and be it further

Resolved, That such revision utilize the riches of Holy Scripture and our Church's liturgical, cultural, racial, generational, linguistic, gender, physical ability, class and ethnic diversity in order to share common worship; and be it further

Resolved, That our liturgical revision utilize inclusive and expansive language and imagery for humanity and divinity; and be it further

Resolved, That our liturgical revision shall incorporate and express understanding, appreciation, and care of God's creation; and be it further

Resolved, That our liturgical revision take into consideration the use of emerging technologies which provide access to a broad range of liturgical resources; and be it further

Resolved, That the SCLM create a professional dynamic equivalence translation of the Book of Common Prayer 1979 and the Enriching Our Worship Series in Spanish, French, and Haitian Creole; and that the SCLM diversify the publication formats of new resources, liturgies and rites to include online publishing; and be it further

Resolved, That this church ensure that, at each step of the revision process, all materials be professionally translated into English, Spanish, French, and Haitian Creole, following the principles of dynamic equivalence and that no new rites or liturgical resources be approved by this church until such translations are secured; and be it further

Resolved, That the TFLPBR shall report to the 80th General Convention; and be it further

Resolved, That there being \$201,000 in the proposed budget for the translation of liturgical materials, that the Executive Council be encouraged to identify additional funds in the amount of \$200,000 to begin this liturgical revision.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Austin, 2018* (New York: General Convention, 2018), pp. 480-481.



Resolution Number: 2015-A066
Title: On the Topic of Constitution Article X [The Book of
Common Prayer]
Legislative Action Taken: Rejected
Text of Resolution:

Resolved, the House of Deputies concurring, That Article X of the Constitution is hereby amended to read as follows:

The Book of Common Prayer, as now established or hereafter amended by the authority of this Church, shall be in use in all the Dioceses of this Church. No alteration thereof or addition thereto shall be made unless the same shall be first proposed in one regular meeting of the General Convention and by a resolve thereof be sent within six months to the Secretary of the Convention of every Diocese, to be made known to the Diocesan Convention at its next meeting, and be adopted by the General Convention at its next succeeding regular meeting by a majority of all Bishops, excluding retired Bishops not present, of the whole number of Bishops entitled to vote in the House of Bishops, and by a vote by orders in the House of Deputies in accordance with Article I, Sec. 5, except that concurrence by the orders shall require the affirmative vote in each order by a majority of the Dioceses entitled to representation in the House of Deputies.

But notwithstanding anything herein above contained, the General Convention may at any one meeting, by a majority of the whole number of the Bishops entitled to vote in the House of Bishops, and by a majority of the Clerical and Lay Deputies of all the Dioceses entitled to representation in the House of Deputies, voting by orders as previously set forth in this Article:

- (a) Amend the Table of Lessons and all Tables and Rubrics relating to the Psalms.
- (b) Authorize for trial use throughout this Church, as an alternative at any time or times to the established Book of Common Prayer or to any section or Office thereof, a proposed revision of the whole Book or of any portion thereof, duly undertaken by the General Convention.
- (c) *Provide for use of other forms for the renewal and enrichment of the common worship of this Church, as an alternative at any time or times to any section or Office of the established Book of Common Prayer for such periods of time and upon such terms and conditions as the General Convention may provide, under the direction and subject to the permission of the bishop exercising ecclesiastical authority.*

And Provided, that nothing in this Article shall be construed as restricting the authority of the Bishops of this Church to take such order as may be permitted by the Rubrics of the Book of Common Prayer or by the Canons of the General Convention for the use of special forms of worship.