

General Convention of The Episcopal Church 2024 Archives' Research Report

Resolution No.: 2024-A094
Title: Communion Across Difference
Proposer: Task Force on Communion Across Difference
Topic: LGBTQ, Marriage

Directly Related: (Attached)

2022-A056 Appoint a Task Force on Communion Across Difference
2018-A227 Create a Task Force on Communion Across Difference
2018-B012 Authorize Trial Liturgies for Same-Sex Marriage
2015-A300 Express Mind of the House on the Marriage Resolutions

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 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](#).

A094 - Communion Across Difference

Final Status: Not Yet Finalized

Proposed by: Task Force on Communion Across Difference

Has Budget Implications: Yes

Cost: \$75,000.00

Amends C&C or Rules of Order: No

Requests New Interim Body: Yes

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 81st General Convention directs the Presiding Bishop and President of the House of Deputies to appoint a third Task Force on Communion Across Difference 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 reports of the previous two triennia, 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 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 Task Force report and make recommendations to the 82nd 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

In light of the serious constraints placed upon the first Task Force on Communion across Difference by the Coronavirus pandemic, the 80th General Convention directed the Presiding Bishop and the President of the House of Deputies to appoint a second iteration of that task force to continue its important work. In its explanation for its proposed resolution seeking another triennium in which to work, the original task force reported that “[m]embers 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.” That observation proved to be correct. With the benefit of two in-person gatherings the Task Force on Communion across Difference was able to make remarkable headway on the issues implicated in its mandate – and its members were able to build collegial and respectful relationships of trust and goodwill with each other.

Nevertheless, the shortened time frame available for committee work between the 80th and 81st General Conventions presented a constraint of its own. The liturgical and canonical concerns raised by this task force are unlikely to be permanently resolved by a single General Convention. The principles for a sustainable path forward that have been articulated in our Blue Book Report to this Convention will need to be fleshed out and applied to new situations. Additionally, and perhaps most importantly, the work of building relationships across difference remains crucial, and it requires more time and the contributions of more voices. The members of the second Task Force on Communion Across Difference believe that this crucial work calls for a task force to have a full triennium in which to work and pray together in person, collaborate with other interim bodies, consult with Anglicans from around the world, and reflect on all that unites us – without papering over or discounting the reality of our differences.



Resolution Number: 2022-A056
Title: Appoint a Task Force on Communion Across Difference
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred
Final Text:

Resolved, 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-communication 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.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Baltimore, 2022* (New York: General Convention, 2023), pp. 778-779.



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: 2018-B012
Title: Authorize Trial Liturgies for Same-Sex Marriage
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred as Amended
Final Text:

Resolved, That the 79th General Convention authorize for continued trial use, in accordance with Article X of the Constitution and Canon II.3.6, “The Witnessing and Blessing of a Marriage” and “The Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage 2” (as appended to the report of the Task Force for the Study of Marriage to the 79th General Convention); and be it further

Resolved, That the 79th General Convention authorize for trial use, in accordance with Article X of the Constitution and Canon II.3.6, “The Blessing of a Civil Marriage 2” and “An Order for Marriage 2” (as appended to the report of the Task Force for the Study of Marriage to the 79th General Convention), beginning the first Sunday of Advent, 2018; and be it further

Resolved, That the period of trial use for these liturgies shall extend until the completion of the next comprehensive revision of the Book of Common Prayer; and be it further

Resolved, That the SCLM monitor the use of these rites as part of their work of revising the Book of Common Prayer; and be it further

Resolved, That the material prepared by the TFSM with regard to paragraph one of “Concerning the Service” of Marriage, the proper prefaces for Marriage and the Catechism be referred to the SCLM for serious consideration as they engage in the process of revision of the Book of Common Prayer; and be it further

Resolved, That all of this material be authorized for publication as part of Liturgical Resources 2 (as appended to the report of the TFSM) and be made available electronically in English, Spanish, French, and Haitian Creole at no cost by the first Sunday of Advent, 2018; and be it further

Resolved, That under the canonical direction of the Rector or Member of the Clergy in charge and where permitted to do so by civil law, provision will be made for all couples desiring to use these marriage liturgies in their local congregation or worshipping community, provided that nothing in this Resolve narrows the authority of the Rector or Priest-in-Charge (Canon III.9.6(a)); and be it further

Resolved, That in dioceses where the bishop exercising ecclesiastical authority (or, where applicable, ecclesiastical supervision) holds a theological position that does not embrace marriage for same-sex couples, and there is a desire to use such rites by same-sex couples in a congregation or worshipping community, the bishop exercising ecclesiastical authority (or ecclesiastical supervision) shall invite, as necessary, another bishop of this Church to provide pastoral support to the couple, the Member of the Clergy involved and the congregation or worshipping community in order to fulfill the intention of this resolution that all couples have convenient and reasonable local congregational access to these rites; and be it further

Resolved, That the provision of Canon I.18.7 applies by extension to these liturgies, namely, “It shall be within the discretion of any Member of the Clergy of this Church to decline to solemnize or bless any marriage”; and be it further

Resolved, That the provisions of Canon I.19.3 regarding marriage after divorce apply equally to these liturgies; and be it further

Resolved, That bishops exercising ecclesiastical authority, or where appropriate ecclesiastical supervision, who hold a theological position that does not embrace marriage for same sex

couples, shall in the case of remarriage after divorce, invite another bishop of this Church to oversee the consent process and to receive any report of such Marriages, as provided in Canon I.19.3(c); and be it further

Resolved, That bishops continue the work of leading the Church in comprehensive engagement with these materials and continue to provide generous pastoral response to meet the needs of members of this Church; and be it further

Resolved, That this Church continue to honor theological diversity in regard to matters of human sexuality; and be it further

Resolved, That the 79th General Convention request the Joint Standing Committee on Program, Budget, and Finance to consider a budget allocation of \$100,000 for the implementation of this resolution; and be it further

Resolved, That the 79th General Convention direct the Secretary of General Convention and the Custodian of the Standard Book of Common Prayer, in consultation with the outgoing Chair of the Task Force on the Study of Marriage and the Chairs of the Legislative Committees to whom this legislation is referred, to finalize and arrange with Church Publishing for the publication (in English, Spanish, French, and Haitian Creole) of the material contained in “Liturgical Resources 2” as approved by the 79th General Convention; the General Convention Office to make these materials available electronically at no cost no later than the first Sunday of Advent 2018.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Austin, 2018* (New York: General Convention, 2018), pp. 659-660.



Resolution Number: 2015-A300
Title: Express Mind of the House on the Marriage Resolutions
Legislative Action Taken: Adopted
Final Text:

We the House of Bishops of The Episcopal Church wish to express our love and appreciation to our colleagues who identify as Communion Partners and those bishops who have affinity with the Communion Partners’ position as stated in their “Communion Partners Salt Lake City Statement.” Our time together in Salt Lake City, in conversation and in prayer, has demonstrated how profoundly the love of God in Jesus binds us together and empowers us for service to God’s mission. As we have waited upon the leading of the Holy Spirit in our deliberations, we have been reminded that the House of Bishops is richly gifted with many voices and perspectives on matters of theological, liturgical, and pastoral significance. This has been shown in our discernment with respect to doctrinal matters relative to Christian marriage. We thank God for the rich variety of voices in our House, in our dioceses, in The Episcopal Church, and in the Anglican Communion, that reflect the wideness of God’s mercy and presence in the Church and in the world.

We give particular thanks for the steadfast witness of our colleagues in the Communion Partners. We value and rely on their commitment to The Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion. We recognize that theirs is a minority voice in the House of Bishops in our deliberations with respect to Christian marriage; and we affirm that they are an indispensable part of who we are as the House of Bishops of the Episcopal Church. Our church needs their witness. Further, we appreciate that each of us will return to dioceses where there will be a variety of responses to Resolutions A054 and A036. The equanimity, generosity, and graciousness with which the Communion Partners have shared their views on Christian marriage and remain in relationship is a model for us and for the lay and ordained leaders in our dioceses to follow. We thank God that in the fullness of the Holy Trinity we can and must remain together as the Body of Christ in our dioceses, in the Episcopal Church, and in our relationships with sisters and brothers in Christ in the Anglican Communion. The bonds created in baptism are indeed indissoluble and we pray that we have the confidence to rely upon the Holy Spirit who will continue to hold us all together as partners in communion through the love of God in Jesus.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Salt Lake City, 2015* (New York: General Convention, 2015), pp. 378-379.