

General Convention of The Episcopal Church 2024 Archives' Research Report

Resolution No.: 2024-C018
Title: Amend Title II, Canon 3 to Retain a Printed Form of the Book of Common Prayer
Proposer: Virginia
Topic: Book of Common Prayer, Canons

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]
2015-A066 On the Topic of Constitution Article X [The Book of Common Prayer--First Reading] (Rejected)
2003-A108 On the Topic of Amending Constitution Article X [Second Reading] (Rejected)

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

2009-A100 Review and Report on Canon II.3.5 [Authorization of Book of Common Prayer]

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](#).

C018 - Amend Title II, Canon 3 to Retain a Printed Form of the Book of Common Prayer

Final Status: Not Yet Finalized

Proposed by: Virginia

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

Resolved, the House of _____ concurring,

That the General Convention amend Title II, Canon 3 as follows:

Amended text as it would appear if adopted and concurred. Scroll below the line of asterisks (***) to see the version showing all deleted and added text.**

Title II, Canon 3: Of the Standard Book of Common Prayer

Sec. 1. The copy of the Book of Common Prayer accepted by the General Convention of this Church, in the year of our Lord 1979, together with such alterations and additions approved in accordance with Article X of the Constitution, and authenticated by the signatures of the Presiding Officers and Secretaries of the two Houses of the General Convention, is hereby declared to be the Standard Book of Common Prayer of this Church.

Sec.-2. All copies of the Book of Common Prayer to be hereafter made and published shall conform to this Standard, and shall agree therewith in paging, and, as far as it is possible, in all other matters of typographical arrangement, except that the Rubrics may be printed

either in red or black, and that page numbers shall be set against the several headings in the Table of Contents. The requirement of uniformity in paging shall apply to the entire book but shall not extend to editions smaller than those known as 32mo, or to editions noted for music.

Sec. 3. The Book of Common Prayer shall be available in both printed book and electronic form.

Sec. 4. In case any typographical inaccuracy shall be found in the Standard Book of Common Prayer, its correction may be ordered by a joint Resolution of any General Convention, and notice of such corrections shall be communicated by the Custodian to the Ecclesiastical Authority of each Diocese of this Church, and to actual publishers of the Book of Common Prayer.

Sec. 5. Folio copies of the Standard Book of Common Prayer, duly authenticated, as in the case of the Standard Book, shall be sent to the Ecclesiastical Authority of each Diocese in trust for the use thereof, and for reference and appeal in questions as to the authorized formularies of this Church.

Sec.6. No print or electronic copy, translation, or edition of the Book of Common Prayer, or a part or parts thereof, shall be made, printed, published, or used as of authority in this Church, unless it contains the authorization of the Custodian of the Standard Book of Common Prayer, certifying that the Custodian or some person appointed by the Custodian has compared the said copy, translation, or edition with the said Standard Book of Common Prayer, or a certified copy thereof, and that it conforms thereto. The Custodian, or some person appointed by the Custodian, may exercise due discretion in reference to translations of the entire Standard Book or parts thereof, into other languages so that such translations reflect the idiomatic style and cultural context of those languages. And no copy, translation, or edition of the Book of Common Prayer, or a part or parts thereof, shall be made, printed, published electronically or in print, or used as of authority in this Church, or certified as aforesaid, which contains or is bound up with any alterations or additions thereto, or with any other matter, except the Holy Scriptures or the authorized Hymnal of this Church, or with material set forth in the Book of Occasional Services and The Proper for the Lesser Feasts and Fasts, as those books are authorized from time to time by the General Convention.

Sec.7.

a. Whenever the General Convention, pursuant to Article X of the Constitution, shall authorize for trial use a proposed revision of the Book of Common Prayer, or of a portion or portions thereof, the enabling Resolution shall specify the period of such trial use, the precise text thereof, and any special terms or conditions under which such trial use shall be carried out including translation.

b. It shall be the duty of the Custodian of the Standard Book of Common Prayer:

1. To arrange for the publication of such proposed revision;

2. To protect, by copyright, the authorized text of such revision, on behalf of the General Convention; which copyright shall be relinquished when such proposed revision or revisions shall have been adopted by the General Convention as an alteration of, or addition to, the Book of Common Prayer;

3. To certify that printed and electronic copies of such revision or revisions have been duly authorized by the General Convention, and that the printed text conforms to that approved by the General Convention.

c. During the said period of trial use and under the modifying conditions specified, only the material so authorized, and in the exact form in which it has been so authorized, shall be available as an alternative for the said Book of Common Prayer or the said portion or portions thereof; *provided, however*, that it shall be competent for the Presiding Bishop and the President of the House of Deputies, jointly, on recommendation by a resolution duly adopted at a meeting of the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music communicated to the said presiding officers in writing, to authorize variations and adjustments to, or substitutions for, or alterations in, any portion of the texts under trial, which seem desirable as a result of such trial use, and which do not change the substance of a rite.

d. In the event of the authorization of such variations, adjustments, substitutions, or alternatives, as aforesaid, it shall be the duty of the Custodian of the Standard Book of Common Prayer to notify the Ecclesiastical Authority of every Diocese, and the Convocation of the Episcopal Churches in Europe, of such action, and to give notice thereof through the media of public information.

Sec 8. The appointment of the Custodian of the Standard Book of Common Prayer shall be made by nomination of the House of Bishops and confirmed by the House of Deputies at a meeting of the General Convention. The Custodian shall hold office until the second General Convention following the General Convention at which the Custodian was nominated and confirmed. A vacancy occurring in the office of Custodian when General Convention is not meeting may be filled until the next General Convention by appointment by the Presiding Bishop upon the confirmation of the Executive Council.

Sec. 9. It shall be the duty of the Ecclesiastical Authority of any Diocese in which any unauthorized edition of the Book of Common Prayer, or any part or parts thereof, shall be published or circulated, to give public notice that the said edition is not of authority in this Church.

<Proposed amended resolution text showing exact changes being made:>

Title II, Canon 3: Of the Standard Book of Common Prayer

Sec. 1. The copy of the Book of Common Prayer accepted by the General Convention of this Church, in the year of our Lord 1979, *together with such alterations and additions approved in accordance with Article X of the Constitution*, and authenticated by the

signatures of the Presiding Officers and Secretaries of the two Houses of the General Convention, is hereby declared to be the Standard Book of Common Prayer of this Church.

Sec. 2. All copies of the Book of Common Prayer to be hereafter made and published shall conform to this Standard, and shall agree therewith in paging, and, as far as it is possible, in all other matters of typographical arrangement, except that the Rubrics may be printed either in red or black, and that page numbers shall be set against the several headings in the Table of Contents. The requirement of uniformity in paging shall apply to the entire book but shall not extend to editions smaller than those known as 32mo, or to editions noted for music.

Sec. 3. *The Book of Common Prayer shall be available in both printed book and electronic form.*

~~Sec. 3.~~ **Sec. 4.** In case any typographical inaccuracy shall be found in the Standard Book of Common Prayer, its correction may be ordered by a joint Resolution of any General Convention, and notice of such corrections shall be communicated by the Custodian to the Ecclesiastical Authority of each Diocese of this Church, and to actual publishers of the Book of Common Prayer.

~~Sec. 4.~~ **Sec. 5.** Folio copies of the Standard Book of Common Prayer, duly authenticated, as in the case of the Standard Book, shall be sent to the Ecclesiastical Authority of each Diocese in trust for the use thereof, and for reference and appeal in questions as to the authorized formularies of this Church.

~~Sec. 5.~~ **Sec. 6.** No *print or electronic* copy, translation, or edition of the Book of Common Prayer, or a part or parts thereof, shall be made, printed, published, or used as of authority in this Church, unless it contains the authorization of the Custodian of the Standard Book of Common Prayer, certifying that the Custodian or some person appointed by the Custodian has compared the said copy, translation, or edition with the said Standard Book of Common Prayer, or a certified copy thereof, and that it conforms thereto. The Custodian, or some person appointed by the Custodian, may exercise due discretion in reference to translations of the entire Standard Book or parts thereof, into other languages so that such translations reflect the idiomatic style and cultural context of those languages. And no copy, translation, or edition of the Book of Common Prayer, or a part or parts thereof, shall be made, printed, published *electronically or in print*, or used as of authority in this Church, or certified as aforesaid, which contains or is bound up with any alterations or additions thereto, or with any other matter, except the Holy Scriptures or the authorized Hymnal of this Church, or with material set forth in the Book of Occasional Services and The Proper for the Lesser Feasts and Fasts, as those books are authorized from time to time by the General Convention.

~~Sec. 6.~~ **Sec. 7.**

a. Whenever the General Convention, pursuant to Article X of the Constitution, shall authorize for trial use a proposed revision of the Book of Common Prayer, or of a portion or portions thereof, the enabling Resolution shall specify the period of such trial use, the

precise text thereof, and any special terms or conditions under which such trial use shall be carried out including translation.

b. It shall be the duty of the Custodian of the Standard Book of Common Prayer:

1. To arrange for the publication of such proposed revision;
2. To protect, by copyright, the authorized text of such revision, on behalf of the General Convention; which copyright shall be relinquished when such proposed revision or revisions shall have been adopted by the General Convention as an alteration of, or addition to, the Book of Common Prayer;
3. To certify that printed *and electronic* copies of such revision or revisions have been duly authorized by the General Convention, and that the printed text conforms to that approved by the General Convention.

c. During the said period of trial use and under the modifying conditions specified, only the material so authorized, and in the exact form in which it has been so authorized, shall be available as an alternative for the said Book of Common Prayer or the said portion or portions thereof; *provided, however,* that it shall be competent for the Presiding Bishop and the President of the House of Deputies, jointly, on recommendation by a resolution duly adopted at a meeting of the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music communicated to the said presiding officers in writing, to authorize variations and adjustments to, or substitutions for, or alterations in, any portion of the texts under trial, which seem desirable as a result of such trial use, and which do not change the substance of a rite.

d. In the event of the authorization of such variations, adjustments, substitutions, or alternatives, as aforesaid, it shall be the duty of the Custodian of the Standard Book of Common Prayer to notify the Ecclesiastical Authority of every Diocese, and the Convocation of the Episcopal Churches in Europe, of such action, and to give notice thereof through the media of public information.

Sec.7. Sec. 8. The appointment of the Custodian of the Standard Book of Common Prayer shall be made by nomination of the House of Bishops and confirmed by the House of Deputies at a meeting of the General Convention. The Custodian shall hold office until the second General Convention following the General Convention at which the Custodian was nominated and confirmed. A vacancy occurring in the office of Custodian when General Convention is not meeting may be filled until the next General Convention by appointment by the Presiding Bishop upon the confirmation of the Executive Council.

Sec.8. Sec. 9. It shall be the duty of the Ecclesiastical Authority of any Diocese in which any unauthorized edition of the Book of Common Prayer, or any part or parts thereof, shall be published or circulated, to give public notice that the said edition is not of authority in this Church.

Explanation

The General Convention of 2022 adopted Resolution 2022-A059 approving (on the first of two required readings) a replacement for the current Title X of the Constitution of the Protestant Episcopal Church (“Of the Book of Common Prayer”). If that revision is adopted on second reading at the General Convention of 2024, the Book of Common Prayer will be redefined as “those liturgical forms and other texts authorized by the General Convention in accordance with this article and the Canons of this Church;” it will no longer be understood as the contents of a single book.

This change, if approved on second reading, will create the need for changes in Title II, Canon 3 (Of the Standard Book of Common Prayer), which provides for the publication of a book and currently makes no mention to texts that exist only in electronic form. The purpose of this proposal is to: (1) bring electronic texts under the supervision of the Custodian of the Book of Common Prayer; (2) make it clear that alterations and additions adopted by General Convention in accordance with Article X of the Constitution become part of the Standard Book of Common Prayer, to which all copies of the prayer book should conform; and (3) provide for the continued availability of the Book of Common Prayer in printed book form.



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: 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.



Resolution Number: 2003-A108
Title: On the Topic of Amending Constitution Article X [Second Reading]
Legislative Action Taken: Rejected
Text of Resolution:

Resolved, the House of Deputies concurring, That Article X of the Constitution be amended to include the following sentence at the end of the second paragraph:

Provide for use of other forms for the renewal and enrichment of the common worship of this church for such periods of time and upon such terms and conditions as the General Convention may provide; and be it further

Resolved, That this resolution 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.