

**GENERAL CONVENTION OF THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH 2018
ARCHIVES' RESEARCH REPORT**

RESOLUTION NO.: 2018-A017
TITLE: Creation Liturgies in Prayer Book Revision
PROPOSER: Advisory Council on the Stewardship of Creation
TOPIC: Liturgy

Directly Related: (Attached)

2015-A058 Authorize Liturgical Materials Honoring God in Creation
2015-C015 Refer a Resolution to Amend the Baptismal Covenant (Referred)
2012-A053 Refer a Resolution on Liturgical Materials Honoring God in Creation (Referred)

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

None

Supplemental Documents: (Linked)

(*Blue Book*) Report to General Convention, [Advisory Council on the Stewardship of Creation](#), see pages 589-590.

In preparing this report, the Archives researched the resolutions in the Acts of Convention database for the period 1976 through 2015, 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 at 800-525-9329 before Convention or at Convention in the General Convention Secretariat.

A017 Creation Liturgies in Prayer Book Revision

Proposer	Advisory Council on the Stewardship of Creation
Topic	Liturgy
Endorsed by	Andrus, The Rt. Rev. Marc
Sponsored by	
Page numbers	Blue Book: p. N/A; Constitution & Canons: p. N/A
HiA / Leg. Cttee	HD / 13 - Committee to Receive the Report of Resolution A169
Current Status	Resolution Filed
Version	Original (as filed)
Review Status	Not yet reviewed

RESOLUTION TEXT

- 1 *Resolved*, the House of _____ concurring, That the 79th General Convention affirm the central Anglican tenet of *lex orandi, lex credendi* (“the law of praying is the law of believing,” or, more conversationally, “praying shapes believing”); and be it further
- 2 *Resolved*, That the Prayer Book is a primary way Episcopalians are formed through *lex orandi, lex credendi*; and be it further
- 3 *Resolved*, That, in light of the catastrophic failure of humanity to live into its role as stewards of God’s good creation and our inherent call to reconcile with all God’s creation, the General Convention directs future Prayer Book revision to include creation-focused liturgies which recognize mourning and lamentation, joy and celebration, and repentance and reconciliation; and be it further
- 4 *Resolved*, That this understanding, appreciation and care of God’s good creation be explicitly incorporated in the Baptism, Eucharist, Confirmation and Ordination liturgies.

EXPLANATION

No explanation.



Resolution Number: 2015-A058
Title: Authorize Liturgical Materials Honoring God in Creation
Legislative Action Taken: Concurred as Amended
Text of Resolution:

Resolved, That the 78th General Convention authorize Liturgical Materials Honoring God in Creation, found in Supplemental Materials: Appendices of the Report of the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music pp. 231-266, for use in The Episcopal Church; and that the materials be made freely available, with the following revisions:

Supplemental Materials pp. 233-234:

Introduction

When we see the great abundance, diversity, and intricacy of God’s creatures, we are awestruck by life on our planet. We are amazed by the God who has created all that is.

Some people take this to mean that there is no role for God in the evolution of life on our planet, but they miss the point that It is through God’s love and humility that the processes of nature operate, bringing growth and adaptive change. God’s love grants creation the freedom to make and remake. Scripture is clear that divine mercy is over all God’s works. The material world is not something to be simply disregarded and destroyed as unimportant to God, whose love is unwavering.

Just as we do not read Scripture literally, so we must resist reading nature literally, but instead search for the big themes and the evolving stories, exploring a deeper and more sweeping narrative. It is in Jesus Christ that we see God’s humility most particularly and gain insight into what theologian John Haught has called the “extravagant generosity” of God. In the ancient hymn of Philippians 2 we gaze at Christ, who did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself to take the form of a servant, not simply on behalf of humankind, but on behalf of the whole cosmos which is redeemed in him.

Just as we are called to consider the lost and the least among our human brothers and sisters, so we may say that we are called to consider the dignity of all God’s creatures: Science currently is working on several fronts to discover more about kinship. There are both genetic/hereditary and ecological relationships among earth’s creatures. We share much of our DNA with plants and animals we do not usually consider as having much in common with us, and the air we breathe requires the healthy function of organisms far less complex than we are. For many people honoring the dignity of every creature involves thinking about threatened species of birds and mammals and large fish, environmentalism’s poster children, but for those who study life on earth, whether professional biologists or backyard naturalists, it means considering the insects and the plankton, the mushrooms and molds, the plants that bring us joy and the ones we call weeds, the algae and the bacteria, and even those species that bring humans disease, such as mosquitoes and viruses.

Each creature’s uniqueness is neither individual nor fixed. Living things develop their characteristics in their contexts in relationship to other creatures, other members of their population, and other species in their community. As the resources in their habitats change, and pressures from their fellow creatures shift, living things change. Death and even extinction of populations and species are a natural part of this process of change. But that reality does not mean that humans should accelerate extinction through our activities.

Our understanding of God as One, yet three persons, is a divine picture of diversity in community. Each person of the Trinity, Father, Son, and Spirit, gives to and receives from the others, in a community of exchange we call love. What is true of God may then be seen to be true of the community of life which God has loved into being and sustains through love. While each creature has its dignity, in life and in death, in struggle and in beauty, all creatures in their diversity, including human beings, are held in community with one another.

There is no doubt that human beings have changed the earth's cycles, surface, and creatures by our activities. We have managed and bred for our use and enjoyment some plants and animals, and destroyed the habitats of others. We have extracted minerals, fossil fuels, and soils; and have been careless with our use of extracted water. We have preserved some biomes for their scenic beauty, but ignored the ecological services provided by others. We have trawled the bottom of the seas and used them as a trash repository. A growing and increasingly urban population's hunger for food, clothing, shelter, and fuel is taking its toll, despite ongoing efforts to slow the loss of traditional rural wisdom about conservation and creation care. Human migration has fostered the spread of invasive species that displace native species, just as human migrants have often displaced indigenous peoples.

We may disagree about what is the greatest threat to human survival on the planet. Should the scarcity of water for drinking and sanitation be our biggest concern, or the challenge to feed a hungry world in an ecologically sustainable way? And which of our excesses put the whole planet in the greatest peril? Is it climate change or the loss of biodiversity that poses the greatest threat to the resilience of life on earth?

All these issues are interrelated. In agriculture, to take an example from our managed environment, resilience in the face of climate change will depend on better stewardship of water and increased preservation of the diversity of seed stock available for developing improved crops, while those engaged in agriculture continue to assess their contribution to greenhouse gases, polluted waste water, and soil erosion, and how all these negative impacts on the environment can be decreased.

There have been and will continue to be unintended consequences for our environment due to our choices and behaviors, but study and prayer can help us to become more conscious of the human impact on our planet. As we consider the risen and ascended Christ drawing all things to their perfection in himself, indeed drawing the cosmos into the heart of God in that process the Eastern Church calls "deification," we find reason for hope and an impetus for the renewing and reconciling of our relationships within the creation of which we are a part.

Supplemental Materials, p. 251:

The Rogation Days are traditionally observed on the Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday before Ascension Day. They may, however, be observed on other days, depending on local conditions and the convenience of the congregation. In the late medieval church, the observance consisted of an outdoor procession that culminated in a special celebration of the Eucharist. Prayers might be offered for the city and the neighborhood, for all who labor, for the fruitfulness of the land and waters; and for deliverance in time of war, disaster, or epidemic disease. The Church of England and the colonial Anglican Church in North America retained the idea of rogation processions, but it was not until the 1928 Book of Common Prayer that American prayer books contained lessons and collects for these days. The term from which this observance is drawn is the Latin *rogare*, meaning "to ask."

and be it further

Resolved, That the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music consider these liturgical materials for inclusion in a revised edition of the Book of Occasional Services.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Salt Lake City, 2015* (New York: General Convention, 2015), pp. 725-727.



Resolution Number: 2015-C015
Title: Refer a Resolution to Amend the Baptismal Covenant
Legislative Action Taken: Referred
Final Text:

Resolved, That the 78th General Convention authorize the trial addition to the Baptismal Covenant of a sixth question concerning our responsibility as baptized Christians to care for God's creation; and be it further

Resolved, That the additional question and response be worded as follows:

"Will you cherish the wondrous works of God, and protect the beauty and integrity of all creation?

I will, with God's help." ; and be it further

Resolved, That use of this additional question and response be authorized for trial use as part of the Baptismal Covenant for the triennium 2016-2018.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Salt Lake City, 2015* (New York: General Convention, 2015), p. 841.



Resolution Number: 2012-A053
Title: Refer a Resolution on Liturgical Materials Honoring God in Creation
Legislative Action Taken: Referred
Final Text:

Resolved, That the 77th General Convention authorize Liturgical Materials Honoring God in Creation, found in the Blue Book report of the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music, for use in The Episcopal Church; and be it further
Resolved, That the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music consider these liturgical materials for inclusion in a revised edition of The Book of Occasional Services.

Citation: General Convention, *Journal of the General Convention of...The Episcopal Church, Indianapolis, 2012* (New York: General Convention, 2012), p. 721.