

The Episcopal Diocese of Rhode Island

Guidelines for Addressing Same-Sex* Blessings in the Diocese of Rhode Island **(The word “sex” here is used in compliance with Resolution A049 of the 2012 General Convention.)*

Appendix of Resources

Premarital and marital issues of same-sex couples are much like those of heterosexual couples. In addition to the pastoral care given to the spiritual, psychological, and emotional issues, the legalities are frequently more complex and may be less automatic in the legal union – whether domestic partnership, civil union, or marriage - of a same-sex couple.

Because the laws governing the legal union of same-sex couples still vary widely state-to-state, same-sex couple should carefully follow-up on legal issues, to ensure they understand and have any related needed documents related to such rights, for example, related to parenting and children, caring for each other when hospitalized, or survivorship. Clergy should suggest that and same-sex couples should seek legal advice regarding these issues. Giving advice or a set of recommendations here would not be appropriate because the issues can vary so significantly.

Several resources exist which can help, and we provide the reference for a few key resources here.

Liturgical Resources: I Will Bless You and You Will Be A Blessing, 2012, authored by the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music, Church Publishing Corp. This comprehensive resource was developed as part of the 2012 General Convention vote. (As noted in the guidelines the liturgy is a free download; this resource must be purchased.)

Pastoral Resources for Province One Episcopal Clergy Ministering to Same-Gender Couples. 2008, authored by The Task Force on Counseling of Same Gender Couples, Province of New England. Available from www.episcopalarchives.org, accessed 2/25/12. While this resource was published prior to the 2012 General Convention vote, it includes several helpful resources.

GLAD (Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders), *Marriage and Civil Union Guide for Rhode Island Same Sex Couples*, available on the GLAD webpage, accessed 2/25/12, <https://www.glad.org/rights/rhodeisland>. This PDF and others are available on the GLAD webpage, with a primary focus on legal issues.

The Human Rights Campaign webpage, www.hrc.org, has a variety of resources related to marriage, parenting, health and aging, and religion and faith, along with other topics.