General Convention 2012

General Convention **Resolution 2012-A049**:

- Commends the same-sex blessing resources for study and use
- Authorizes the liturgy of blessing for provisional use, under the direction of a bishop exercising ecclesiastical authority
- Allows bishops, especially where civil jurisdictions offer legal recognition of same-sex relationships, to provide generous pastoral response to members of the Church, including adaptation of the liturgy
- Calls for protection for anyone who either supports or opposes this action of General Convention
- Tasks the Commission to further develop the theological resources, with specific attention to scripture and systematic theology, and including diverse theological perspectives
- Charges the Commission develop an open process to review the materials, inviting responses from throughout the Church and the Anglican Communion, and from ecumenical partners, and report back to the 78th General Convention [in 2015]

General Convention **Resolution 2012-A050** authorizes the appointment and funding of a task force to identify and explore biblical, theological, historical, liturgical, and canonical dimensions of marriage. Legal, social, and cultural changes regarding marriage are ongoing. During its work on Resolution 2009-C056, the Commission was often asked: What is a blessing? What is a marriage? What is the difference for the Church? General Convention called for such study several times over the last 80 years, yet little action was taken. The task group is to report back to the 78th General Convention [in 2015].

Resources

The Blessings Project online archive:
www.episcopalarchives.org/SCLM/

The Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music blog:
www.liturgyandmusic.wordpress.com

The St. Paul's, Fayetteville, website, for info and a video about their decision to bless same-sex relationships:
www.stpaulsfay.org

Introducing

I Will Bless You, and You Will Be a Blessing: Resources for the Witnessing and Blessing of a Lifelong Covenant in a Same-Sex Relationship

as Related to General Convention Resolutions 2009-C056 and 2012-A049

August 2012

THE BLESSINGS PROJECT

The Episcopal Church
Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music

General Convention 2009 Charge to the Commission

General Convention **Resolution 2009-C056** charged the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music with two tasks regarding the blessing of same-sex relationships:

> *Resolved,* That the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music, in consultation with the House of Bishops, **collect and develop theological and liturgical resources**, and report to the 77th General Convention [in 2012]

> *Resolved,* That the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music, **in consultation with the House of Bishops**, devise an **open process** for the conduct of its work **inviting participation** from provinces, dioceses, congregations, and individuals who are engaged in such theological work, and **inviting theological reflection from throughout the Anglican Communion**

Managing the Work

The Commission organized four Task Groups to collect and develop resources related to blessing same-sex relationships:

- Theological Resources
- Liturgical Resources
- Pastoral and Teaching Resources
- Canonical and Legal Considerations

These Task Groups were staffed with representatives from around the Episcopal Church. In forming them, the Commission was mindful of the many diversities of the Episcopal Church, including age, sex, race/ethnicity, geography, and sexual orientation. It sought the wisdom of lay persons, parish clergy, and theologians. Information about the Commission and the C056 Task Groups is available on the website of the Executive Offices of the General Convention (www.generalconvention.org).

Collecting Resources

The Task Groups collected materials related to the blessing of same-sex relationships from across the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion. The Archives of the Episcopal Church created a digital archive of project materials (www.episcopalarchives.org/SCLM/).

Consulting the Church

To meet its charge to create an open process with widespread participation, the Commission conducted consultations including:

- Presentations at meetings of the House of Bishops in September 2010 and March and September 2011
- A hearing in New Hampshire on October 19, 2010, at which representatives of all 7 dioceses of Province I (New England) testified about their experience with same-sex blessings and marriages
- A web-based Churchwide survey regarding pastoral and teaching materials, available from October 2010 through January 6, 2011, yielding 1131 responses from 111 dioceses
- A Churchwide consultation, held from March 18–19, 2011, and attended by 195 deputies from 98 dioceses
- A web-based review of first drafts in July 2011 by 133 lay and ordained people from all 9 provinces of The Episcopal Church
- A presentation and discussion at the August 2011 meeting of the International Anglican Liturgical Consultation

Presenting the Resources: Table of Contents for *I Will Bless You, and You Will Be a Blessing*