



Diocese of Missouri
THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Introduction

The Anglican Covenant Task Force was appointed by the Rt. Rev. George Wayne Smith, Tenth Bishop of Missouri, in August of 2011. The task force was charged with helping the congregations of the diocese prepare to engage in thoughtful discussions on the proposed Anglican Covenant that will be brought to the General Convention of the Episcopal Church in July of 2012.

The efforts of the task force culminated in the preparation of a discussion packet that includes:

- A Basic Guide to the Anglican Covenant
- The Anglican Covenant Text
- The Anglican Covenant: A Brief Summary of Positions
- Three essays framing the Covenant: Neil Alexander, Philip Turner, Winnie Varghese
- *The Church Times* Annotated Guide to the Anglican Covenant
- Three Study Guides from: Church of England, Episcopal Church and Church of Canada
- The Rector's Ramblings-a pastoral letter to a congregation after General Convention 2009
- Internet Resources Guide
- Congregational Survey

From the very beginning of our work, our hope has been to provide the best and most charitable representations of the positions held on the Anglican Covenant so that a space for generous listening and open hearts could be created. This packet is far from exhaustive, but it is a starting place for those congregations who wish to begin to engage in thoughtful and compassionate dialog.

Respectfully Submitted,
The Anglican Task Force Members:

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1.

A BASIC GUIDE TO THE ANGLICAN COVENANT

Q: WHAT IS THE ANGLICAN COVENANT?

A: The Anglican Covenant is a document that attempts to create a mechanism for reconciling substantive disagreements between Anglican Churches worldwide.

Q: ISN'T THAT THE JOB OF THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY?

A: The Archbishop of Canterbury is the spiritual leader of the Anglican Communion, but he does not have authority over the Churches outside of England.

Q: WHAT IS THE ANGLICAN COMMUNION?

A: The Anglican Communion is a global family of Churches that find their historic roots in the Church of England. The Episcopal Church is one such Church. There are forty-four Churches and thirty-four provinces around the globe comprising 80 million Anglican Christians.

Q: WHAT UNITES THE ANGLICAN COMMUNION?

A: In addition to our common historic roots, we share a common form of worship derived from the Church of England's *Book of Common Prayer* (1662) and in a faith that draws from both Protestant and Catholic traditions. There are also regular international gatherings of primates, bishops, priests and laity.

Q: WHY WAS THE ANGLICAN COVENANT WRITTEN?

A: The Anglican Covenant is the product of a process which began in 2004. There have been disagreements about a range of matters between the Churches of the Anglican Communion, including debate about the role of women in positions of religious leadership, issues of human sexuality, and geographical integrity of the episcopate. The Windsor Report proposed a covenantal framework to discuss and resolve those disagreements.

Q: WHAT IS IN THE ANGLICAN COVENANT?

A: The Anglican Covenant has four parts:

Section 1: Articulates the Anglican emphasis on Scripture, the Catholic Creeds and historic formularies.

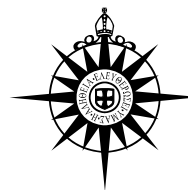
Section 2: Expresses the Churches' commitment to missional vocation, with particular reference to the *Five Marks of Mission* (adopted by the bishops at the Lambeth Conference in 1998).

Section 3: Expresses the Churches' commitment to sustaining interdependence and common life as part of its Anglican identity and witness.

Section 4: Develops the practical implications of this commitment, and provides dispute resolution procedures.

Q: WHAT COMES NEXT?

A: Each church within the Anglican Communion has been asked to respond either affirmatively or negatively to the Covenant. A vote on the Covenant is scheduled for the 2012 General Convention in Indianapolis.



Introduction to the Covenant Text

“This life is revealed, and we have seen it and testify to it, and declare to you the eternal life that was with the Father and was revealed to us – we declare to you what we have seen and heard so that you also may have communion with us; and truly our communion is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. These things we write so that our joy may be complete.” (1 John 1.2-4).

1. God has called us into communion in Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 1.9). This communion has been “revealed to us” by the Son as being the very divine life of God the Trinity. What is the life revealed to us? St John makes it clear that the communion of life in the Church participates in the communion which is the divine life itself, the life of the Trinity. This life is not a reality remote from us, but one that has been “seen” and “testified to” by the apostles and their followers: “for in the communion of the Church we share in the divine life”¹. This life of the One God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, shapes and displays itself through the very existence and ordering of the Church.
2. Our divine calling into communion is established in God’s purposes for the whole of creation (Eph 1:10; 3:9ff.). It is extended to all humankind, so that, in our sharing of God’s life as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, God might restore in us the divine image. Through time, according to the Scriptures, God has furthered this calling through covenants made with Noah, Abraham, Israel, and David. The prophet Jeremiah looked forward to a new covenant not written on tablets of stone but upon the heart (Jer 31.31-34). In God’s Son, Christ Jesus, a new covenant is given us, established in his “blood ... poured out for the many for the forgiveness of sins” (Mt 26:28), secured through his resurrection from the dead (Eph 1:19-23), and sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit poured into our hearts (Rom 5:5). Into this covenant of death to sin and of new life in Christ we are baptized, and empowered to share God’s communion in Christ with all people, to the ends of the earth and of creation.
3. We humbly recognize that this calling and gift of communion entails responsibilities for our common life before God as we seek, through grace, to be faithful in our service of God’s purposes for the world. Joined in one universal Church, which is Christ’s Body, spread throughout the earth, we serve his gospel even as we are enabled to be made one across the dividing walls of human sin and estrangement (Eph 2.12-22). The forms of this life in the Church, caught up in the mystery of divine communion, reveal to the hostile and divisive power of the world the “manifold wisdom of God” (Eph 3:9-10). Faithfulness, honesty, gentleness, humility, patience, forgiveness, and love itself, lived out in mutual deference and service (Mk 10.44-45) among the Church’s people and through its ministries, contribute to building up the body of Christ as it grows to maturity (Eph 4.1-16; Col 3.8-17).
4. In the providence of God, which holds sway even over our divisions caused by sin, various families of churches have grown up within the universal Church in the course of history. Among these families is the Anglican Communion, which provides a particular charism and identity among the many followers and servants of Jesus. We recognise the wonder, beauty and challenge of maintaining communion in this family of churches, and the need for mutual commitment and discipline as a witness to God’s promise in a world and time of instability, conflict, and fragmentation. Therefore, we covenant together as churches of this Anglican Communion to be faithful to God’s promises through the historic faith we confess, our common worship, our participation in God’s mission, and the way we live together.
5. To covenant together is not intended to change the character of this Anglican expression of Christian faith. Rather, we recognise the importance of renewing in a solemn way our commitment to one another, and to the common understanding of faith and order we have received, so that the bonds of affection which hold us together may be re-affirmed and intensified. We do this in order to reflect, in our relations with one another, God’s own faithfulness and promises towards us in Christ (2 Cor 1.20-22).

¹ *The Church of the Triune God*, The Cyprus Statement of the International Commission for Anglican Orthodox Theological Dialogue, 2007, paragraph 1,2.

6. We are a people who live, learn, and pray by and with the Scriptures as God's Word. We seek to adore God in thanks and praise and to make intercession for the needs of people everywhere through common prayer, united across many cultures and languages. We are privileged to share in the mission of the apostles to bring the gospel of Christ to all nations and peoples, not only in words but also in deeds of compassion and justice that witness to God's character and the triumph of Christ over sin and death. We give ourselves as servants of a greater unity among the divided Christians of the world. May the Lord help us to "preach not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake" (2 Cor. 4.5).
7. Our faith embodies a coherent testimony to what we have received from God's Word and the Church's long-standing witness. Our life together reflects the blessings of God (even as it exposes our failures in faith, hope and love) in growing our Communion into a truly global family. The mission we pursue aims at serving the great promises of God in Christ that embrace the peoples and the world God so loves. This mission is carried out in shared responsibility and stewardship of resources, and in interdependence among ourselves and with the wider Church.
8. Our prayer is that God will redeem our struggles and weakness, renew and enrich our common life and use the Anglican Communion to witness effectively in all the world, working with all people of good will, to the new life and hope found in Christ Jesus.

The Anglican Communion Covenant

Preamble

We, as Churches of the Anglican Communion, under the Lordship of Jesus Christ, solemnly covenant together in these following affirmations and commitments. As people of God, drawn from "every nation, tribe, people and language" (Rev 7.9), we do this in order to proclaim more effectively in our different contexts the grace of God revealed in the gospel, to offer God's love in responding to the needs of the world, to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, and together with all God's people to attain the full stature of Christ (Eph 4.3,13).

Section One: Our Inheritance of Faith

1.1 Each Church affirms:

(1.1.1) its communion in the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church, worshipping the one true God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

(1.1.2) the catholic and apostolic faith uniquely revealed in the Holy Scriptures and set forth in the catholic creeds, which faith the Church is called upon to proclaim afresh in each generation². The historic formularies of the Church of England³, forged in the context of the European Reformation and acknowledged and appropriated in various ways in the Anglican Communion, bear authentic witness to this faith.

² Cf. The Preface to the Declaration of Assent, Canon C15 of the Church of England.

³ The Thirty-nine Articles of Religion, the 1662 Book of Common Prayer, and the Ordering of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons

(1.1.3) the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as containing all things necessary for salvation and as being the rule and ultimate standard of faith⁴.

(1.1.4) the Apostles' Creed, as the baptismal symbol; and the Nicene Creed, as the sufficient statement of the Christian faith⁵.

(1.1.5) the two sacraments ordained by Christ himself – Baptism and the Supper of the Lord – ministered with the unfailing use of Christ's words of institution, and of the elements ordained by him⁶.

(1.1.6) the historic episcopate, locally adapted in the methods of its administration to the varying needs of the nations and peoples called of God into the unity of his Church⁷.

(1.1.7) the shared patterns of our common prayer and liturgy which form, sustain and nourish our worship of God and our faith and life together.

(1.1.8) its participation in the apostolic mission of the whole people of God, and that this mission is shared with other Churches and traditions beyond this Covenant.

1.2 In living out this inheritance of faith together in varying contexts, each Church, reliant on the Holy Spirit, commits itself:

(1.2.1) to teach and act in continuity and consonance with Scripture and the catholic and apostolic faith, order and tradition, as received by the Churches of the Anglican Communion, mindful of the common councils of the Communion and our ecumenical agreements.

(1.2.2) to uphold and proclaim a pattern of Christian theological and moral reasoning and discipline that is rooted in and answerable to the teaching of Holy Scripture and the catholic tradition.

(1.2.3) to witness, in this reasoning, to the renewal of humanity and the whole created order through the death and resurrection of Christ, and to reflect the holiness that in consequence God gives to, and requires from, his people.

(1.2.4) to hear, read, mark, learn and inwardly digest the Scriptures in our different contexts, informed by the attentive and communal reading of - and costly witness to - the Scriptures by all the faithful, by the teaching of bishops and synods, and by the results of rigorous study by lay and ordained scholars.

(1.2.5) to ensure that biblical texts are received, read and interpreted faithfully, respectfully, comprehensively and coherently, with the expectation that Scripture continues to illuminate and transform the Church and its members, and through them, individuals, cultures and societies.

(1.2.6) to encourage and be open to prophetic and faithful leadership in ministry and mission so as to enable God's people to respond in courageous witness to the power of the gospel in the world.

⁴ The Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral of 1886/1888

⁵ The Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral of 1886/1888

⁶ cf. The Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral 1886/1888, The Preface to the Declaration of Assent, Canon C15 of the Church of England.

⁷ cf. The Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral 1886/1888

(1.2.7) to seek in all things to uphold the solemn obligation to nurture and sustain eucharistic communion, in accordance with existing canonical disciplines, as we strive under God for the fuller realisation of the communion of all Christians.

(1.2.8) to pursue a common pilgrimage with the whole Body of Christ continually to discern the fullness of truth into which the Spirit leads us, that peoples from all nations may be set free to receive new and abundant life in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Section Two: The Life We Share with Others: Our Anglican Vocation

2.1 Each Church affirms:

(2.1.1) communion as a gift of God given so that God's people from east and west, north and south, may together declare the glory of the Lord and be both a sign of God's reign in the Holy Spirit and the first fruits in the world of God's redemption in Christ.

(2.1.2) its gratitude for God's gracious providence extended to us down through the ages: our origins in the Church of the apostles; the ancient common traditions; the rich history of the Church in Britain and Ireland reshaped by the Reformation, and our growth into a global communion through the expanding missionary work of the Church; our ongoing refashioning by the Holy Spirit through the gifts and sacrificial witness of Anglicans from around the world; and our summons into a more fully developed communion life.

(2.1.3) in humility our call to constant repentance: for our failures in exercising patience and charity and in recognizing Christ in one another; our misuse of God's gracious gifts; our failure to heed God's call to serve; and our exploitation one of another.

(2.1.4) the imperative of God's mission into which the Communion is called, a vocation and blessing in which each Church is joined with others in Christ in the work of establishing God's reign. As the Communion continues to develop into a worldwide family of interdependent churches, we embrace challenges and opportunities for mission at local, regional, and international levels. In this, we cherish our mission heritage as offering Anglicans distinctive opportunities for mission collaboration.

(2.1.5) that our common mission is a mission shared with other Churches and traditions beyond this Covenant. We embrace opportunities for the discovery of the life of the whole gospel, and for reconciliation and shared mission with the Church throughout the world. We affirm the ecumenical vocation of Anglicanism to the full visible unity of the Church in accordance with Christ's prayer that "all may be one". It is with all the saints in every place and time that we will comprehend the fuller dimensions of Christ's redemptive and immeasurable love.

2.2 In recognition of these affirmations, each Church, reliant on the Holy Spirit, commits itself:

(2.2.1) to answer God's call to undertake evangelisation and to share in the healing and reconciling mission "for our blessed but broken, hurting and fallen world"⁸, and, with mutual accountability, to share our God-given spiritual and material resources in this task.

(2.2.2) to undertake in this mission, which is the mission of God in Christ⁹:

⁸ IASCOME Report, ACC-13

⁹ The five Marks of Mission are set out in the MISSIO Report of 1999, building on work at ACC-6 and ACC-8.

- (2.2.2.a) “to proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom of God” and to bring all to repentance and faith;
- (2.2.2.b) “to teach, baptize and nurture new believers”, making disciples of all nations (Mt 28.19) through the quickening power of the Holy Spirit¹⁰ and drawing them into the one Body of Christ whose faith, calling and hope are one in the Lord (Eph 4.4-6);
- (2.2.2.c) “to respond to human need by loving service”, disclosing God’s reign through humble ministry to those most needy (Mk 10.42-45; Mt 18.4; 25.31-45);
- (2.2.2.d) “to seek to transform unjust structures of society” as the Church stands vigilantly with Christ proclaiming both judgment and salvation to the nations of the world¹¹, and manifesting through our actions on behalf of God’s righteousness the Spirit’s transfiguring power¹²;
- (2.2.2.e) “to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and to sustain and renew the life of the earth” as essential aspects of our mission in communion¹³.

(2.2.3) to engage in this mission with humility and an openness to our own ongoing conversion in the face of our unfaithfulness and failures in witness.

(2.2.4) to revive and renew structures for mission which will awaken and challenge the whole people of God to work, pray and give for the spread of the gospel.

(2.2.5) to order its mission in the joyful and reverent worship of God, thankful that in our eucharistic communion “Christ is the source and goal of the unity of the Church and of the renewal of human community”¹⁴.

Section Three: Our Unity and Common Life

3.1 Each Church affirms:

(3.1.1) that by our participation in Baptism and Eucharist, we are incorporated into the one body of the Church of Jesus Christ, and called by Christ to pursue all things that make for peace and build up our common life.

(3.1.2) its resolve to live in a Communion of Churches. Each Church, with its bishops in synod, orders and regulates its own affairs and its local responsibility for mission through its own system of government and law and is therefore described as living “in communion with autonomy and accountability”¹⁵. Trusting in the Holy Spirit, who calls and enables us to dwell in a shared life of common worship and prayer for one another, in mutual affection, commitment and service, we seek to affirm our common life through those Instruments of Communion by which our Churches are enabled to be conformed together to the mind of Christ. Churches of the Anglican Communion are bound together “not by a central legislative and executive authority, but by mutual loyalty sustained through the common counsel of the bishops in conference”¹⁶ and of the other instruments of Communion.

(3.1.3) the central role of bishops as guardians and teachers of faith, as leaders in mission, and as a visible sign of unity, representing the universal Church to the local, and the local

¹⁰ *Church as Communion* n26

¹¹ WCC 1954 Evanston, *Christ the Hope of the World*

¹² Moscow Statement, 43

¹³ IARCCUM, *Growing Together in Unity and Mission*, 118

¹⁴ Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry, WCC,

¹⁵ A Letter from Alexandria, the Primates, March 2009

¹⁶ Lambeth Conference 1930

Church to the universal and the local Churches to one another. This ministry is exercised personally, collegially and within and for the eucharistic community. We receive and maintain the historic threefold ministry of bishops, priests and deacons, ordained for service in the Church of God, as they call all the baptised into the mission of Christ.

(3.1.4) the importance of instruments in the Anglican Communion to assist in the discernment, articulation and exercise of our shared faith and common life and mission. The life of communion includes an ongoing engagement with the diverse expressions of apostolic authority, from synods and episcopal councils to local witness, in a way which continually interprets and articulates the common faith of the Church's members (*consensus fidelium*). In addition to the many and varied links which sustain our life together, we acknowledge four particular Instruments at the level of the Anglican Communion which express this co-operative service in the life of communion.

- I. We accord the Archbishop of Canterbury, as the bishop of the See of Canterbury with which Anglicans have historically been in communion, a primacy of honour and respect among the college of bishops in the Anglican Communion as first among equals (*primus inter pares*). As a focus and means of unity, the Archbishop gathers and works with the Lambeth Conference and Primates' Meeting, and presides in the Anglican Consultative Council.
- II. The Lambeth Conference expresses episcopal collegiality worldwide, and brings together the bishops for common worship, counsel, consultation and encouragement in their ministry of guarding the faith and unity of the Communion and equipping the saints for the work of ministry (Eph 4.12) and mission.
- III. The Anglican Consultative Council is comprised of lay, clerical and episcopal representatives from our Churches¹⁷. It facilitates the co-operative work of the Churches of the Anglican Communion, co-ordinates aspects of international Anglican ecumenical and mission work, calls the Churches into mutual responsibility and interdependence, and advises on developing provincial structures¹⁸.
- IV. The Primates' Meeting is convened by the Archbishop of Canterbury for mutual support, prayer and counsel. The authority that primates bring to the meeting arises from their own positions as the senior bishops of their Provinces, and the fact that they are in conversation with their own Houses of Bishops and located within their own synodical structures¹⁹. In the Primates' Meeting, the Primates and Moderators are called to work as representatives of their Provinces in collaboration with one another in mission and in doctrinal, moral and pastoral matters that have Communion-wide implications.

It is the responsibility of each Instrument to consult with, respond to, and support each other Instrument and the Churches of the Communion²⁰. Each Instrument may initiate and commend a process of discernment and a direction for the Communion and its Churches.

3.2 Acknowledging our interdependent life, each Church, reliant on the Holy Spirit, commits itself:

(3.2.1) to have regard for the common good of the Communion in the exercise of its autonomy, to support the work of the Instruments of Communion with the spiritual and

¹⁷ Constitution of the ACC, Article 3 and Schedule

¹⁸ cf. the Objects of the ACC are set out in Article 2 of its Constitution.

¹⁹ Report of the Windsor Continuation Group, 69.

²⁰ cf IATDC, Communion, Conflict and Hope, paragraph 113.

material resources available to it, and to receive their work with a readiness to undertake reflection upon their counsels, and to endeavour to accommodate their recommendations.

(3.2.2) to respect the constitutional autonomy of all of the Churches of the Anglican Communion, while upholding our mutual responsibility and interdependence in the Body of Christ²¹, and the responsibility of each to the Communion as a whole²².

(3.2.3) to spend time with openness and patience in matters of theological debate and reflection, to listen, pray and study with one another in order to discern the will of God. Such prayer, study and debate is an essential feature of the life of the Church as it seeks to be led by the Spirit into all truth and to proclaim the gospel afresh in each generation. Some issues, which are perceived as controversial or new when they arise, may well evoke a deeper understanding of the implications of God's revelation to us; others may prove to be distractions or even obstacles to the faith. All such matters therefore need to be tested by shared discernment in the life of the Church.

(3.2.4) to seek a shared mind with other Churches, through the Communion's councils, about matters of common concern, in a way consistent with the Scriptures, the common standards of faith, and the canon laws of our churches. Each Church will undertake wide consultation with the other Churches of the Anglican Communion and with the Instruments and Commissions of the Communion.

(3.2.5) to act with diligence, care and caution in respect of any action which may provoke controversy, which by its intensity, substance or extent could threaten the unity of the Communion and the effectiveness or credibility of its mission.

(3.2.6) in situations of conflict, to participate in mediated conversations, which involve face to face meetings, agreed parameters and a willingness to see such processes through.

(3.2.7) to have in mind that our bonds of affection and the love of Christ compel us always to uphold the highest degree of communion possible.

Section Four: Our Covenanted Life Together

4 Each Church affirms the following principles and procedures, and, reliant on the Holy Spirit, commits itself to their implementation.

4.1 Adoption of the Covenant

(4.1.1) Each Church adopting this Covenant affirms that it enters into the Covenant as a commitment to relationship in submission to God. Each Church freely offers this commitment to other Churches in order to live more fully into the ecclesial communion and interdependence which is foundational to the Churches of the Anglican Communion. The Anglican Communion is a fellowship, within the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, of national or regional Churches, in which each recognises in the others the bonds of a common loyalty to Christ expressed through a common faith and order, a shared inheritance in worship, life and mission, and a readiness to live in an interdependent life.

(4.1.2) In adopting the Covenant for itself, each Church recognises in the preceding sections a statement of faith, mission and interdependence of life which is consistent with its own life and with the doctrine and practice of the Christian faith as it has received them. It recognises these elements as foundational for the life of the Anglican Communion and therefore for the relationships among the covenanting Churches.

²¹ Toronto Congress 1963, and the Ten Principles of Partnership.

²² cf. the Schedule to the Dar es Salaam Communiqué of the Primates' Meeting, February 2007

(4.1.3) Such mutual commitment does not represent submission to any external ecclesiastical jurisdiction. Nothing in this Covenant of itself shall be deemed to alter any provision of the Constitution and Canons of any Church of the Communion, or to limit its autonomy of governance. The Covenant does not grant to any one Church or any agency of the Communion control or direction over any Church of the Anglican Communion.

(4.1.4) Every Church of the Anglican Communion, as recognised in accordance with the Constitution of the Anglican Consultative Council, is invited to enter into this Covenant according to its own constitutional procedures.

(4.1.5) The Instruments of Communion may invite other Churches to adopt the Covenant using the same procedures as set out by the Anglican Consultative Council for the amendment of its schedule of membership. Adoption of this Covenant does not confer any right of recognition by, or membership of, the Instruments of Communion, which shall be decided by those Instruments themselves.

(4.1.6) This Covenant becomes active for a Church when that Church adopts the Covenant through the procedures of its own Constitution and Canons.

4.2 The Maintenance of the Covenant and Dispute Resolution

(4.2.1) The Covenant operates to express the common commitments and mutual accountability which hold each Church in the relationship of communion one with another. Recognition of, and fidelity to, this Covenant, enable mutual recognition and communion. Participation in the Covenant implies a recognition by each Church of those elements which must be maintained in its own life and for which it is accountable to the Churches with which it is in Communion in order to sustain the relationship expressed in this Covenant.

(4.2.2) The Standing Committee of the Anglican Communion, responsible to the Anglican Consultative Council and the Primates' Meeting, shall monitor the functioning of the Covenant in the life of the Anglican Communion on behalf of the Instruments. In this regard, the Standing Committee shall be supported by such other committees or commissions as may be mandated to assist in carrying out this function and to advise it on questions relating to the Covenant.

(4.2.3) When questions arise relating to the meaning of the Covenant, or about the compatibility of an action by a covenanting Church with the Covenant, it is the duty of each covenanting Church to seek to live out the commitments of Section 3.2. Such questions may be raised by a Church itself, another covenanting Church or the Instruments of Communion.

(4.2.4) Where a shared mind has not been reached the matter shall be referred to the Standing Committee. The Standing Committee shall make every effort to facilitate agreement, and may take advice from such bodies as it deems appropriate to determine a view on the nature of the matter at question and those relational consequences which may result. Where appropriate, the Standing Committee shall refer the question to both the Anglican Consultative Council and the Primates' Meeting for advice.

(4.2.5) The Standing Committee may request a Church to defer a controversial action. If a Church declines to defer such action, the Standing Committee may recommend to any Instrument of Communion relational consequences which may specify a provisional limitation of participation in, or suspension from, that Instrument until the completion of the process set out below.

(4.2.6) On the basis of advice received from the Anglican Consultative Council and the Primates' Meeting, the Standing Committee may make a declaration that an action or decision is or would be "incompatible with the Covenant".

(4.2.7) On the basis of the advice received, the Standing Committee shall make recommendations as to relational consequences which flow from an action incompatible with the Covenant. These recommendations may be addressed to the Churches of the Anglican Communion or to the Instruments of the Communion and address the extent to which the decision of any covenanting Church impairs or limits the communion between that Church and the other Churches of the Communion, and the practical consequences of such impairment or limitation. Each Church or each Instrument shall determine whether or not to accept such recommendations.

(4.2.8) Participation in the decision making of the Standing Committee or of the Instruments of Communion in respect to section 4.2 shall be limited to those members of the Instruments of Communion who are representatives of those churches who have adopted the Covenant, or who are still in the process of adoption.

(4.2.9) Each Church undertakes to put into place such mechanisms, agencies or institutions, consistent with its own Constitution and Canons, as can undertake to oversee the maintenance of the affirmations and commitments of the Covenant in the life of that Church, and to relate to the Instruments of Communion on matters pertinent to the Covenant.

4.3 Withdrawing from the Covenant

(4.3.1) Any covenanting Church may decide to withdraw from the Covenant. Although such withdrawal does not imply an automatic withdrawal from the Instruments of Communion or a repudiation of its Anglican character, it may raise a question relating to the meaning of the Covenant, and of compatibility with the principles incorporated within it, and trigger the provisions set out in section 4.2 above.

4.4 The Covenant Text and its amendment

(4.4.1) The Covenant consists of the text set out in this document in the Preamble, Sections One to Four and the Declaration. The Introduction to the Covenant Text, which shall always be annexed to the Covenant text, is not part of the Covenant, but shall be accorded authority in understanding the purpose of the Covenant.

(4.4.2) Any covenanting Church or Instrument of Communion may submit a proposal to amend the Covenant to the Instruments of Communion through the Standing Committee. The Standing Committee shall send the proposal to the Anglican Consultative Council, the Primates' Meeting, the covenanting Churches and any other body as it may consider appropriate for advice. The Standing Committee shall make a recommendation on the proposal in the light of advice offered, and submit the proposal with any revisions to the covenanting Churches. The amendment is operative when ratified by three quarters of such Churches. The Standing Committee shall adopt a procedure for promulgation of the amendment.

Our Declaration

With joy and with firm resolve, we declare our Churches to be partakers in this Anglican Communion Covenant, offering ourselves for fruitful service and binding ourselves more closely in the truth and love of Christ, to whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit be glory for ever. Amen.

“Now may the God of Peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, make you complete in everything good so that you may do his will, working among us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.” (Hebrews 13.20, 21)

3.

Three essays framing the Covenant from Rt. Rev. Neil Alexander, Philip Turner, and Winnie Varghese*

Bishop Neil Alexander delivered “Patterns of Anglican Ecclesiology: Does the Anglican Covenant Fit?” at the March 2011 meeting of the House of Bishops. It is available at: http://www.collegeforbishops.org/assets/1145/covenant_ecclesiology_by_n_alexander.pdf

The Rev. Dr. Philip Turner published “The Anglican Covenant: What’s it all About?” at: <http://www.anglicancommunioninstitute.com/2011/05/the-covenant-what-is-it-all-about/>

The Chicago Consultation published *The Genius of Anglicanism: Perspectives on the Proposed Anglican Covenant – Essays and Study Questions*. It is an assortment of essays that critique the Covenant.

The Rev. Winnie Varghese's essay is found in Chapter 8, page 53.

http://www.chicagoconsultation.org/site/1/docs/Genius_of_Anglicanism_final.pdf

4.

The Church Times devoted an entire issue (March 18, 2011) to pros and cons regarding the Covenant at:

http://www.churchtimes.co.uk/uploads/documents/Anglican%20Covenant_18%20March.pdf

5.

Three Study Guides from the Church of England, Episcopal Church, and Church of Canada

- The Inter-Anglican Standing Committee on Unity, Faith and Order of the **Anglican Communion Office** issued a study guide on February 2011. Some deem it unduly biased in favor of the Covenant.
Guide:
http://www.anglicancommunion.org/commission/covenant/study_materials/docs/The%20Anglican%20Communion%20Covenant%20Study%20Guide.pdf
Q&A:
http://www.anglicancommunion.org/commission/covenant/study_materials/docs/The%20Anglican%20Communion%20Covenant%20-%20Questions%20and%20Answers.pdf
- **The Episcopal Church's** D020 Task Force of Executive Council published June 2010 Study Guide to the proposed Anglican Covenant, which is fairly neutral in tone, at: http://noanglican covenant.org/docs/study_guide.pdf
- **The Anglican Church of Canada** issued a study guide for use by its dioceses and parishes. The guide seems more objective than some others and provides specific suggestions for how groups can study the Covenant. Available online at: <http://www.anglican.ca/about/files/2011/06/acwg-study-guide.pdf>

6.

from "The Rector's Ramblings"
St. Matthew's Missive
August 2009 issue

Holy Struggles

Dear Friends:

One thing about the Church is that it is never boring! Exhilarating at times, controversial at times and frustrating at times, but it is never boring. As you know, General Convention just concluded in Anaheim. Many resolutions were put forward and voted upon ranging from a mandatory lay employee health plan, immigration policy, the national church budget, communications and mission strategy, reiterating support of and commitment to the Anglican Communion, and development of liturgical rites for the blessing of same-sex unions. In all, the delegates and Bishops considered twenty-seven pages of resolutions.

To read the newspapers one would think the only two issues debated and voted upon were the resolutions addressing, in some way, the issue of the place of gay and lesbian Christians in ministry and the blessing of same-sex unions, but there was so much more done in addressing the issues facing God's people. However, as these two issues are the ones most people have questions and concerns about, they are the ones I will address in this column.

The Church has always struggled with difficult issues. Always. And it is no different in our age and time. As a life-long Episcopalian, I can tell you that I have never known the Church at a time when there wasn't conflict, disagreement and theological turmoil. From the Civil Rights movement to Prayer Book revision, from women's ordination to our investment or divestment in South Africa during the Apartheid years, from the Vietnam War to the blessing of same sex unions, faithful, deeply compassionate, and deeply prayerful people have struggled with these issues and looking at everything, have come to different conclusions.

I am more and more coming to the conclusion that perhaps where we wind up on any issue is far less important than the fact that we struggle with it, because in struggling with it we are saying the issue is important and worthy of our time, effort and angst. Perhaps it is not the conclusion we come to that is holy, but the struggle itself that is holy.

There are some individuals that believe that the issues of homosexuality and the place of gay and lesbian Christians in ministry is a black and white issue. There are some that believe that the Bible is very clear in what it considers to be the appropriate expression of

the gift of our sexuality. And there are many, many that do not see these issues as black and white but as very gray.

I know that I struggle deeply with both sides of the arguments for and against homosexual persons exercising their God-given calling in all areas of ministry as well as whether unions of our gay and lesbian brothers and sisters in Christ should be blessed. When I say that I struggle, I don't mean I go through an interesting theological mental exercise. I mean I have a gut-wrenching, soul-tearing struggle. I find truth on both sides of the aisle and argument.

I have been told that being in the middle on these issues is a cowardly position, that it was the middle position that has kept the status quo for decades and allowed slavery and injustice to go on longer than it ever should have. There is certainly truth to this argument. For too long the default position on any really difficult issue has been to ask for more time to examine it, a kind of death by committee reaction.

And yet, the Church has always taken time, sometimes far too much and sometimes far too little, to wrestle with the problems facing it. The divinity of Christ was not settled until almost 400 years after his death. The Reformation went on, and on, and on, from Luther and Henry VIII, through Edward, Mary and Elizabeth, through the Oxford Movement and the Wesley brothers, to today. There are some scholars that believe that what we are experiencing in the Church now is nothing less dramatic and tumultuous as The Reformation, which started in the 1500's.

There are some who believe the issue of being a homosexual is, in itself, an appropriate reason to deny someone access to the ordination process. Resolution DO25 of the 2009 General Convention addressed this issue by reaffirming the Constitution and Canons, as first voted on in 1994. The Canons of the Episcopal Church do not allow someone being kept from the discernment process simply on the grounds of sexual orientation. No one is guaranteed ordination. Ordination to any of the orders of ministry occurs in the process of discernment by the individual and community. There are deeply faithful individuals that believe scripture has spoken authoritatively on this issue and others that believe it has not.

And yet, scripture has also shown that God uses whom God wants to for prophetic ministry and to witness to the Gospel. God has always used those on the margins, those least likely to be heard or seen as unworthy to do his work. How do we reconcile the reading of scripture that speaks to the issue of homosexuality (and, quite frankly, there isn't that much on the subject) and the fact that God chose Moses, who was a murderer; David, who was an adulterer and a murderer; Jacob, who was a scoundrel if ever there was one, as well as a mass murderer; Mary, who was a pregnant, unwed, teenage mother; Matthew, who was a despised tax-collector who sold-out his own people; Mary Magdalene, who was demon possessed, and according to some accounts, a prostitute? Can these issues even be reconciled? I don't know.

And yet, I serve with homosexual clergy every day. Some of the gay clergy I work with are the best priests I know. They love Jesus and God's people and witness to the Gospel with integrity and compassion.

How do I reconcile the understanding of sexuality in first century Palestine, which was rudimentary, with our 21st century understanding of sexuality?

And yet, there are Christians dying in Muslim countries as a result of some of the decisions that the General Convention of the Episcopal Church has made concerning issues of sexuality. We live in an increasingly small world and decisions that used to affect just us now have global consequences. We belong to something much larger than ourselves and are accountable to more than just ourselves. Whereas our actions have not been the cause of the persecution in these countries, they certainly have been a contributing factor. How do we reconcile the needs of these two different populations and cultures? Can we?

How can we reconcile our understanding throughout history that marriage is between a man and a woman, and a human being's need for deep relationship? That relationship is a paramount need as seen in the incarnation itself. Even God had a need and desire to be in a close relationship; so much so that he walked among us. Can or should we deny another's need for intimacy and connection based on their sexual orientation?

And yet, I know homosexual couples that have stayed together longer and been more faithful to their commitment to one another than many heterosexual couples. How can we have rituals to bless everything from battleships to our pets, but not be able to bless the union of two people committed to making the best life they can with one another?

I have no answers to these questions that I put before you. There are serious competing claims that are made on both sides. Too often the charge is made that if one leans toward the blessings of same-sex couples and believing that the ordained ministry is, by virtue of baptism, open to all to pursue it, then one is not "orthodox" and believes a watered-down version of the Gospel.

On the other hand, if one believes that the Bible does not and cannot condone anything other than a heterosexual relationship, one is considered a biblical fundamentalist and homophobic. These are over simplification of the issues and individuals involved, and are an unfair representation of positions taken. When we engage in these reductionistic arguments we do not come any closer to understanding or respecting those who believe differently.

There is a third way, however. It is to recognize that there is truth and there are good people on both sides. It is to recognize that the issues facing us are indeed difficult and not necessarily clear-cut. It is to listen deeply to the other and ask that one be given the same Christian charity and consideration to be listened to. It is only in listening to one another that we can come to anything resembling reconciliation. And we must be able to disagree with one another and to still see Christ in each other.

How we may think or feel about these issues has nothing to do with our salvation. These issues aren't salvific in any way, but they are difficult and challenging and, sometimes, heart-breaking.

And so, I continue to struggle; struggle with the competing rights, responsibilities and claims made by each side; struggle with the pain of those gay and lesbian Christians I know and love, and the pain of persecuted Christians who I don't know personally, but know in my heart are as much my brothers and sisters in Christ as those I see everyday; and struggle with the pain and division that these issues have caused the body of Christ and the Church that I love.

As each day goes by I become more convinced that it is the struggle itself that is holy. It is my hope that you will continue to struggle along side me.

Your sister and servant in Christ,
Doris+

The Rev. Doris Westfall, Rector
St. Matthew's Episcopal Church, Warson Woods

7.

Resources on the Anglican Covenant

(links current as of October 23, 2011)

OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS

Final text of the Anglican Covenant, issued by the Anglican Communion Office, is at <http://www.anglicancommunion.org/commission/covenant/final/text.cfm>.

The February 15, 2011, report of TEC's Standing Commission on Constitution and Canons at http://www.episcopalchurch.org/documents/SCCC_Report_2-15-11.pdf states: "... the SCCC is of the view that adoption of the current draft Anglican Covenant has the potential to change the constitutional and canonical framework of TEC, particularly with respect to the autonomy of our Church, and the constitutional authority of our General Convention, bishops and dioceses."

STUDY GUIDES

The Inter-Anglican Standing Committee on Unity, Faith and Order of the Anglican Communion Office issued a study guide on February 2011. Some deem it unduly biased in favor of the Covenant.

- Guide: <http://www.anglicancommunion.org/acns/news.cfm/2011/2/17/ACNS4796>
- Q&A: http://www.anglicancommunion.org/commission/covenant/study_materials/q&a.cfm

The Anglican Church of Canada issued a study guide for use by its dioceses and parishes at <http://www.anglican.ca/about/files/2011/06/acwg-study-guide.pdf>. The guide seems more objective than some others and provides specific suggestions for how groups can study the Covenant.

The Episcopal Church's D020 Task Force of Executive Council published a June 2010 Study Guide to the proposed Anglican Covenant (http://noanglican covenant.org/docs/study_guide.pdf), which is fairly neutral in tone. It is less structured than the Canadian study guide.

The Diocese of Oxford (Church of England) issued a 2-page "Introduction to the Anglican Covenant" as a resource for parish discussions at <http://www.oxford.anglican.org/documents/Introduction%20to%20the%20Anglican%20Covenant%20Debate%204%2005%2011.pdf> and "What Will the Anglican Covenant Do to the Church" (archived at <http://thinkinganglicans.org.uk/uploads/GenSynLeaflet2010Nov.html>) in June 2011.

COMMENTARY

Bishop Neil Alexander delivered "Patterns of Anglican Ecclesiology: Does the Anglican Covenant Fit?" at the March 2011 meeting of the House of Bishops. It is available at http://www.collegeforbishops.org/assets/1145/covenant_ecclesiology_by_n_alexander.pdf.

The *Church Times* devoted an entire issue (March 18, 2011) to pros and cons regarding the Covenant at

http://www.churchtimes.co.uk/uploads/documents/Anglican%20Covenant_18%20March.pdf.

The “No Anglican Covenant Coalition” (<http://noanglican covenant.org/>) has no intention of being “middle of the road,” as one can tell by the name. However, their “Resources” page (<http://noanglican covenant.org/resources.html>) is a truly comprehensive gathering of just about everything significant that has been published for or against the Covenant. It includes official documents from various churches in the Communion and a vast assortment of commentaries by individuals and groups.

COMMENTARY: PRO-COVENANT

The Rev. Dr. Philip Turner published “The Anglican Covenant: What’s it all About?” at <http://www.anglicanunioninstitute.com/2011/05/the-covenant-what-is-it-all-about/>.

The Living Church published a series of eighteen essays in support of the Anglican Covenant. The introductory announcement (<http://www.livingchurch.org/news/news-updates/2011/2/25/our-unity-in-christ>) includes links to each essay.

COMMENTARY: ANTI-COVENANT

The No Anglican Covenant Coalition’s two-page “Short Introduction to the Anglican Covenant” (<http://noanglican covenant.org/docs/short-intro-letter-2p.pdf>) is a succinct summary of the background/genesis of the Covenant, noting the “political” forces that have been at work and articulating large, “structural” reasons for rejecting the Covenant.

The Chicago Consultation published *The Genius of Anglicanism: Perspectives on the Proposed Anglican Covenant – Essays and Study Questions* at http://www.chicagoconsultation.org/site/1/docs/Genius_of_Anglicanism_final.pdf. It is an assortment of essays that critique the Covenant.

Bishop Joe Doss wrote “The Anglican Constitution – Brought to Light and Applied to the International Crisis in Anglican Polity through Comparison with Modalities of Interpretation in International Constitutional Law” at <http://episcopalmajority.blogspot.com/2006/10/anglican-constitution-rt-rev-joe.html> in October 2006.

8.

Congregational Survey: Anglican Covenant

1. Would you like your congregation to have a conversation or adult forum regarding the Anglican Covenant that will be voted on by General Convention next summer?

2. What services or materials would you find helpful in facilitating such a conversation or would you like to have available to the parish?

3. If you are planning on discussing the covenant, would you like one of the members of the Anglican Task Force to help you prepare or help facilitate the parish discussion?

Parish Name:

Contact information:

Name:

Phone number:

E-mail:

If you questions or would like assistance, please contact the Rev. Doris Westfall at 314-966-8909 or by email at dcwestfall@sbcglobal.net.