

THE GENERAL CONVENTION - JULY 8, 2012

THE LIVING CHURCH



Dr. Carl Johengen, lay deputy from the Diocese of Rochester, testifies about Resolution A049, which would authorize trial use of same-sex blessings in the Episcopal Church. The Prayer Book, Liturgy, and Church Music Committee heard testimony from more than 30 people at its July 7 hearing. At times theological, personal, and passionate, the testimony ran for almost two hours and drew

a capacity crowd. The Rt. Rev. George Wayne Smith, episcopal co-chair of the committee, praised the care that different sides took with each other. "There was a sense of mutual respect; I'm grateful for that. I hope that we can move forward with that same understanding, that we are all of us part of one body, and that we're all a part of life in Christ Jesus."

Matt Townsend photo

An Option for the Presiding Bishop

By Lauren Anderson

The House of Deputies voted to eliminate the canon requiring a newly elected presiding bishop to resign from the bishop's previous jurisdiction before assuming the office.

Since the 1947 General Convention, presiding bishops have been required to resign from their jurisdictions in order to fulfill the responsibilities of the office. This model, Resolution B013 said, is "a manifestation of the 20th Century corporate church."

Proponents of the resolution said that it is an important part of the conversation about restructuring. While the resolution does not require a presiding bishop to remain in the diocesan jurisdiction, it allows for that option.

"By creating some flexibility

there is a possibility of imagining the role of the presiding bishop in a new way," said the Rev. Gay Jennings of Ohio.

This resolution will influence the conversation throughout the next triennium regarding the election of a new presiding bishop in 2015, Jennings said.

The Rev. Peter Strimer of the Diocese of Olympia spoke against the resolution, saying it does not give a diocese any say in the bishop's decision.

The Very Rev. Ellis Clifton of the Diocese of Michigan also opposed the resolution, saying there was not a clear enough vision of future structural changes to adopt the resolution.

"I have a feeling that we are in agreement that we want something different, but it seems like everyone is bringing something differ-

ent to the table," Clifton said. "Is it possible for us to get a picture of what we are seeking? I don't want to step out in faith. I want to see a vision."

Translation Kerfuffle

The House of Deputies is considering the authorization of new translations of the Bible, including the English Standard Version with the Apocrypha, for use in lectionary readings.

While discussing a proposed resolution to add the Contemporary English Version (1995) and The Contemporary English Version Global (2005) to the list of authorized translations, the English Standard Version was proposed as an additional translation option.

"The English Standard Version is a wonderfully popular version.

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We're trying to be relevant. We're trying to be current. We're trying to become more and more in touch with the world around us. This version is," said the Ven. David Collum of the Diocese of Albany.

Others opposed the amendment, saying it is not within the purview of the House of Deputies to make a decision about authorizing biblical translations.

"I think for us as a body to micro-manage the work of the theologians of the Episcopal Church is not our job," said Denise Crenshaw of the Diocese of Michigan.

Deputies voted in favor of the amendment to add the ESV translation to the resolution, but later reopened the discussion when the validity of the translation was called into question by a deputy who found a verse from the ESV that used the word *homosexuality*. The house ultimately decided to reconsider the amendment as its first order of business on Sunday.



Matt Townsend photo

The Steel Band Orchestra from St. Augustine's Church, Brooklyn, at worship July 7.

Decision Near on Communion

By Joe Thoma

General Convention's Evangelism Committee's support is waning for Resolution C040, which would allow Episcopal congregations to "invite all, regardless of age, denomination, or baptism to the altar for Holy Communion." The resolution would eliminate Canon 1.17.7, which says "no unbaptized person shall be eligible to receive Holy Communion in this Church."

At the committee's July 7 morning meeting, the informal consensus was to eliminate the resolution and to amend Resolution C029, which calls for a special commission to conduct "a study of the theology underlying access to Holy Baptism and Holy Communion" and recommend to the 78th General Convention any amendment to Canon 1.17.7 it believes is needed.

The committee meets again the morning of July 9, when it is scheduled to vote on the matter.

C040 "undermines our whole baptismal theology of the 1979 Prayer Book, said the Rt. Rev. Duncan Gray III of Mississippi, episcopal co-chair of the committee. Through the resolution, "The baptismal covenant, which defines our identity, suddenly becomes optional for our identity."

Alexis Longo, a lay deputy from New Jersey, said she and her father began attending church together at his parish in 2009, before she had been baptized. She said that the experience of taking Communion was "more than hospitality," and drew her into the Church and regular attendance.

"I felt welcome, but until I took Communion, I didn't have that experience of tears running down my cheeks from the joy of knowing Christ," she said.

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