



# Church Divinity School of the Pacific

*The Episcopal Seminary of the West*

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September 2010

Dear Bishop:

Subject: Fall House of Bishops Meeting, SCLM Consultation on Resolution C056

I am writing as chair of the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music regarding its work on Resolution C056, Liturgies for Blessings. The resolution calls on the SCLM to collect and develop theological and liturgical resources for the blessing of same-gender relationships, through an open process with broad participation, and in consultation with the House of Bishops.

In keeping with these directives, our process includes a consultation at the fall 2010 meeting of the House of Bishops. Our goals are to:

- Update you with key information about the C056 work process and its progress
- Begin to gather information from you about the theological, liturgical, pastoral, and teaching resources you need to prepare congregations and clergy for same-gender blessings

On the morning of September 18, after reflections by two of your members, you will hear from me and from the chairs of three of the four SCLM task groups that are addressing different areas of the work. We will then invite table conversation intended to provide feedback that will help guide our next steps. During the lunch break, SCLM members and task group chairs will be available for informal conversation. Please consider joining us.

We hope that the following document will prove helpful as you prepare for this consultation. It includes the text of Resolution C056, the anticipated result, an overview of our process, and some comments about funding.

I look forward to being with you on September 18.

Grace and peace,

Ruth Meyers  
Chair, Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music

## Fall 2010 House of Bishops Meeting

### *Background Information for the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music Consultation on Resolution C056*

#### 1. Action of General Convention 2009: Resolution C056

##### **13 - Prayer Book, Liturgy and Church Music: HB**

C056

TOPIC/TITLE: Liturgy: Liturgies for Blessings

PROPOSER: Diocese of Missouri

C&C PAGE:

BB PAGE:

*Resolved*, the House of Deputies concurring, That the 76th General Convention acknowledge the changing circumstances in the United States and in other nations, as legislation authorizing or forbidding marriage, civil unions or domestic partnerships for gay and lesbian persons is passed in various civil jurisdictions that call forth a renewed pastoral response from this Church, and for an open process for the consideration of theological and liturgical resources for the blessing of same gender relationships; and be it further

*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; and be it further

*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; and be it further

*Resolved*, That bishops, particularly those in dioceses within civil jurisdictions where same-gender marriage, civil unions, or domestic partnerships are legal, may provide generous pastoral response to meet the needs of members of this Church; and be it further

*Resolved*, That this Convention honor the theological diversity of this Church in regard to matters of human sexuality; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the members of this Church be encouraged to engage in this effort.

## 2. Anticipated Result

Addition(s) to *Enriching Our Worship* series, to comprise SCLM report to 2012 General Convention of the Episcopal Church. Working draft of table of contents as follows:

### I. Theological Resources

- ◆ One or more essays that set forth the scriptural foundations and theological rationale for blessing same-sex relationships

### II. Pastoral/ Catechetical Materials

- ◆ To assist clergy preparing same-sex couples to participate in a blessing of their relationship
- ◆ To guide congregations who are considering welcoming the blessing of same-sex relationships as part of their congregational life

### III. Liturgical Resources:

- ◆ One or more rites that embody these theological principles
- ◆ Outline of a liturgy similar to Order for Celebrating the Eucharist, Order for Marriage, Order for Burial
- ◆ Special circumstances, e.g., when there are children

### IV. Canonical and Legal Considerations

### V. Bibliography

## 3. Process Overview

- Dec. 2009: Letter to diocesan bishops asking what provisions they have made for pastoral response and requesting theological and liturgical resources they are commending to their clergy (20 responses received as of September 1, 2010)
- Winter–Spring 2010: Request to diocesan chancellors for information about legal status of civil unions, domestic partnerships, and same-sex marriage
- Mar. 2010: SCLM meeting
  - ◆ Work with the Rev. Dr. Jay Johnson, theologian, to develop theological principles
  - ◆ Approve process for collecting and developing theological and liturgical resources
- Spring and Summer 2010: Create area Task Groups
  - ◆ Liturgical Resources
    - Chair: The Rev. Dr. Pat Malloy (Bethlehem, III)

- ◆ Theological Resources  
Chair: The Rev. Dr. Jay Johnson (California, VIII)
- ◆ Pastoral and Teaching Resources  
Chairs: The Rev. Cn. Thaddeus Bennett (Vermont, I)  
The Rev. Susan Russell (Los Angeles, VIII)
- Summer and Fall 2010: Create final area Task Group (chair identified, recruitment in progress)
  - ◆ Canonical and Legal Considerations  
Chair: Thomas Little, Esq. (Vermont, I)
- Summer 2010: Create avenues for electronic discussion and feedback, including blog:  
<http://liturgyandmusic.wordpress.com/>
- July 7–10, 2010: First meeting of Liturgical Resources Task Group and  
Pastoral and Teaching Resources Task Group
- Sept. 2010: First meeting of Theological Resources Task Group
- Sept. 18, 2010: Consultation at House of Bishops meeting
- Oct. 19, 2010: SCLM hearing with representatives of dioceses of Province I (Concord, NH)  
(Standing Commission on Constitution and Canons member also attending)
- Nov 29–Dec 2, 2010: All task groups meet
- Mar. 18–19, 2011: SCLM church-wide consultation on Resolution C056  
(one clergy deputy and one lay deputy from each diocese)
- Spring 2011: Meeting with liturgical scholars from the Anglican Communion
- May 31–June 2, 2011: All task groups meet
- Aug. 2011: International Anglican Liturgical Consultation meeting
- Aug. 15–18, 2011: All task groups meet
- Sept. 15, 2011: Deadline for completion of task group work
- Oct. 2011: Meeting with representatives of the Anglican Communion
- Fall 2011 through Spring 2012: Major presentation at each Provincial Synod meeting

## 4. Funding

- ◆ Estimated project expenses from July 1, 2010 through June 31, 2011: \$485,000
- ◆ Amount from Episcopal Church program budget for SCLM to respond to General Convention mandates: \$25,000
- ◆ DFMS contract with Church Divinity School of the Pacific to support this work; CDSP has received a major grant from the Arcus Foundation and is seeking additional funding