



TEC Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music
Addressing General Convention Resolution C056, *Liturgies for Blessing*

Task Group on Pastoral and Teaching Resources
Executive Summary

The Task Group on Pastoral Counseling and Teaching Materials is charged with addressing the needs of the church in providing:

- teaching materials and resources to help congregations in a discernment process regarding the blessing of same-gender relationships, and
- excellent pastoral counseling resources for same-gender couples who come to the church for a blessing;

We framed our work in response to the charge in Resolution C056 to “devise an open process ... inviting participation from provinces, dioceses, congregations, and individuals.” In October 2010 we created a SurveyMonkey instrument and invited the church to help us with these tasks. Between then and January 6, 2011 we received 1131 responses from 111 dioceses and all 9 Provinces. The Task Group was split into two sub-groups to study the data, summarize it and make preliminary recommendations about “next steps.”

Teaching Materials: Approximately 23% of the respondents stated that the blessing of same-gender relationships already occur in their congregations. Among those responders who said that their congregations bless same-gender couples, 55% confirmed that their congregations engaged in an educational and/or discernment process before the blessing of same-gender relationships began. Our report notes the kinds of material many congregations have used and a significant list of desired resources.

Recognizing the broad diversity of experience and perspective on the blessing of same-gender relationships within the Episcopal Church we suggest a variety of resources—including tools for dioceses and congregations to explore why the church would bless same-gender relationships as well as a road-map for discernment for those exploring how to provide blessings for the same-gender couples in their congregations. In addition, we plan to provide resources that will support the work of the Theological and Liturgical Task Groups.

Pastoral Counseling: 32% of respondents said that their preparation of same gender couples was different than opposite gender couples, and 43% of those responding stated the need for additional resources. Our report notes the need for specific materials, the differences in preparing same-gender couples than opposite-gender couples and some recommended resources.

We plan to further review these resources and adapt the best resources for the Episcopal Church. We also believe that our work will help strengthen preparation for all couples.

Finally, our report includes an outline for the final Blue Book Report. We anticipate having a number of addendums that will not be part of the formal report, but will be samples of resources for pastoral counseling and congregational discernment and learning.