



Resolution 2024-A072

FAQs

Amend Article X of the Constitution of The Episcopal Church [Of the Book of Common Prayer -- Second Reading]

Among the many resolutions to be considered at the 81st General Convention of the Episcopal Church is **Resolution 2024-A072: Amend Article X of the Constitution of The Episcopal Church [Of the Book of Common Prayer -- Second Reading]**.

In the explanation of the resolution, the amendments to Article X are described as a response to “the expressed yearning for inclusive language and expansive imagery for humanity and divinity through approved trial and supplemental liturgies to the Book of Common Prayer and sanctioned for optional use throughout the Church” while “retaining the principle that the BCP is the standard and normative liturgical text for worship in this Church.”

Adopted by both the House of Bishops and the House of Deputies at the 80th General Convention, the resolution comes to the 81st General Convention for a required second reading.

Members of The Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music (SCLM) prepared the following questions and answers to help clarify both the intent and the impact of the adoption of the proposed changes.

What has changed?

The current Article X does not actually define “Book of Common Prayer.” The proposed revision adopted at the last General Convention provided such a definition:

“Sec. 1. The Book of Common Prayer is understood to be those liturgical forms and other texts authorized by the General Convention in accordance with this article and the Canons of this Church.

”The Book of Common Prayer in this Church is intended to be communal and devotional prayer enriched by our church’s cultural, geographical, and linguistic contexts. The Book of Common Prayer shall contain both public worship and private devotion.”

What has stayed the same?

The Book of Common Prayer continues to be required in all dioceses, as stated in this portion of Sec. 1 of Article X: “The Book of Common Prayer, as now established or hereafter amended by the General Convention, shall be in use in all the Dioceses of this Church.”

Most of the process for revising the Book of Common Prayer is exactly the same in the revised Article X as it is in the present Article X:

- reports to every Diocese in between the conventions
- approval by two successive General Conventions
- voting by orders

The new Article X does add an additional step: any liturgy proposed for inclusion in the Book of Common Prayer must have already been approved for Trial Use.

So will the new BCP be a book with pages, or something online?

The Book of Common Prayer will not necessarily be a book with pages. The General Convention already created a website, www.episcopalcommonprayer.org, that is the official place for all materials for the Episcopal Church.

What will happen to the 1979 Book of Common Prayer?

The 1979 Book of Common Prayer was memorialized at the 2018 General Convention. This does not change that status.

Why not revise the whole Book of Common Prayer?

The Task Force on Liturgical and Prayer Book Revision (2018 – 2021) established that there was not a consensus that the entire Book of Common Prayer needed revision, or that the Church desired such a change.

What does this mean for Enriching our Worship, the Book of Occasional Services, and other liturgical materials that are currently authorized by the Episcopal Church for use?

If the second reading of the revision to Article X passes, all liturgical materials that are currently authorized will stay authorized; they will not become part of the Book of Common Prayer unless they are approved for Trial Use, and then go through the process for approval as part of the BCP.

Is this just about marriage for same-sex couples or is it about other things, too?

There are a number of things included in the 1979 Book of Common Prayer that, in the intervening 40 years, have proven theologically or socially problematic. Some examples include portions of the Good Friday liturgy, the Collect for Independence Day, and others that the General Convention can determine.

What will be the process be for amending the Book of Common Prayer going forward?

The proposed process for revising the Book of Common Prayer takes a minimum of six years.

- At least one triennium for developing materials
- Approval at two successive General Convention for Trial Use
- Reports to the Dioceses between Conventions
- Voting by Orders

This is not a hasty process, but a *via media* process creating more agility to respond to contemporary issues and concerns while keeping the church rooted in tradition.

In order for the process to move forward, A072 must be adopted without amendment by both houses of the 81st General Convention.

To view and track Resolution A072 visis this 81st General Convention V-Binder link:

<https://www.vbinder.net/resolutions/468?house=HD&lang=en>