

The Proposed Anglican Covenant:  
2. Exploring the Proposed Covenant

The purpose of this session is to examine the contents of the proposed covenant and to identify potential opportunities and challenges that follow from the way the proposed covenant describes the exercise of church unity and communion in the Anglican Communion.

- Outline of the proposed covenant
  - Introduction: communion as gift, given to us in Christ and grounded in the life of the trinitarian life of God, intended to enable us to live out a form of faithfulness characterized by “honesty, gentleness, humility, patience, forgiveness, and love” in mutual service to one another and to the world.
  - Preamble: the purpose of the covenant to proclaim the gospel more effectively, to offer God’s love in service to the world, to maintain the Spirit of unity and the bond of peace, and to grow towards the full stature of Christ
  - Our Inheritance of Faith
    - 1. affirmations of communion:
      - a. participation in the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic faith
      - b. revelation of the true faith in the scriptures and the creeds
      - c. importance of baptism and Eucharist in the life of the church
      - d. importance of the historic episcopate, “locally adapted”
      - e. shared pattern of common prayer and worship
      - f. participation of all the people of God in the apostolic mission of the church
    - 2. commitments that follow from the above affirmations:
      - a. teach and act in continuity and consonance with the scriptures and the faith
      - b. witness to the renewal of humanity and the whole created order
      - c. ensure the scriptures are read, studied, and interpreted faithfully
      - d. encourage and be open to prophetic leadership in ministry and mission
      - e. uphold the obligation to nurture eucharistic fellowship
      - f. pursue common pilgrimage with the whole church
  - The Life We Share With Others: Our Anglican Vocation
    - 1. affirmations of communion:
      - a. communion as God’s gift enabling us to proclaim the gospel in word and deed
      - b. our experience of communion involves on-going transformation in the Spirit
      - c. our need for repentance of our inability to receive the gift of communion
      - d. the imperative of God’s mission (local, national, international)
      - e. our mission is one that is shared with other churches and traditions
    - 2. commitments that follow from the above affirmations:
      - a. to pursue evangelism and mission, and to share resources in this task
      - b. to proclaim the gospel, nurture the faithful, respond to need, steward creation
      - c. to engage this mission in humility and openness to on-going conversion
      - d. to encourage all members of the church to pursue mission and ministry
      - e. to order our mission within our (eucharistic) worship of God

- Our Unity and Common Life
  1. affirmations of communion:
    - a. through baptism and the eucharist, we are incorporated into Christ's body
    - b. we are a "communion of churches," both independent and interdependent
    - c. the bishop as an agent of communion (link between the local and universal)
    - d. the instruments of communion: ABC, Lambeth, ACC, Primates
  2. commitments that follow from the above affirmations:
    - a. exercise independence in light of interdependence
    - b. spend time in openness and patience in matters of disagreement
    - c. seek relative unanimity about matters of common concern
    - d. exercise discretion regarding actions that may invite controversy
    - e. observe mediation and direct consultation in matters of controversy
    - f. maintain commitment to the highest level of communion possible
- Our Covenanted Life Together
  1. adoption of the covenant
    - a. purpose of the covenant to enable us to live more fully into communion
    - b. adoption of the covenant does not delimit independence of each church
    - c. each church invited to adopt the covenant through their legislative process
    - d. adoption of the covenant does not confer recognition by instruments of unity
    - e. the covenant becomes active for each church when adopted by each church
  2. maintenance of the covenant and dispute resolution
    - a. participation in the covenant presumes maintaining the commitments therein
    - b. Standing Committee of the Communion to monitor the covenant's enactment
    - c. Standing Committee to collaborate with ACC and Primate's Meeting
    - d. the Standing Committee may recommend "relational consequences" for actions
    - e. recommendations of the Standing Committee received (or not) by each church
    - f. each church encouraged to develop protocols to monitor enacting the covenant
  3. withdrawing from the covenant need not imply withdrawing from the Communion
  4. amendments may be proposed to the Standing Committee of the Communion
- Questions for Discussion
  - How does participation in the Anglican Communion inform your participation in the faith and practice of the church? In other words, what does it mean to be "Anglican," and how does this influence the way you think about the Christian life?
  - How well does the proposed covenant bear witness to the understanding and enactment of communion as it has been received and practiced in the Anglican tradition?
  - Which sections of the proposed covenant are potentially the most helpful for pursuing our common life (and why)? Which sections are potentially challenging or problematic (and why)?
  - How do you anticipate the adoption and enactment (or the rejection) of the proposed covenant would affect the mission and ministries of the Episcopal Church, the Diocese of Kansas, and your community of faith?