

Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music

MEMBERSHIP

Dr. Mary Abrams (Kentucky) 2003
Ms. Jill Bigwood (Connecticut) 2000
Dr. Owen Burdick (New York) 2000
The Rev. Sr. Jean Campbell (New York) 2003, *vice chair*
Dr. Carl Haywood (Southern Virginia) 2000
The Rev. Dr. John L. Hooker (Arizona) 2000
The Rev. Bruce W.B. Jenneker (Massachusetts) 2003, *chair*
The Rev. Mark MacDonald (Alaska) 2000
Mrs. Paula MacLean (Southeast Florida) 2003
The Rt. Rev. Paul V. Marshall (Bethlehem) 2003
Mr. Monte Mason (Minnesota) 2003
The Rev. Canon Leonel L. Mitchell (Northern Indiana) 2000
Ms. Phoebe Pettingell (Fond Du Lac) 2000
The Rt. Rev. Catherine Scimeca Roskam (New York) 2003
Mr. Milner Seifert (Chicago) 2003
The Rt. Rev. GERALYN WOLF (Rhode Island) 2000
The Rev. Dr. Clayton L. Morris, *Episcopal Church Center staff liaison*

Commission representatives at General Convention

Bishop Catherine Roskam and Deputy Paula MacLean are authorized to receive non-substantive amendments to this report.

SUMMARY OF THE COMMITTEE'S WORK

The Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music was created by the General Convention in Philadelphia, inspired by the work of the Standing Commission on the Structure of the Church. The task of merging liturgists and musicians into a single body dominated the work of the commission at the beginning of the triennium. Three years later, the cooperative spirit that characterizes work in the area of liturgy and music testifies to the wisdom of the decision.

It was clear from the beginning of the triennium that there were many voices in the church anxious to be heard. The Commission decided that as it considered the issues on its agenda it would be helpful to hear from as many constituencies within the Episcopal Church as possible. To accomplish this, a particular constituency was invited to meet with the Commission at each of its meetings. In Baltimore, the Commission heard from high school and college students. In Florida, the views of elders were heard. In Chicago, a variety of liturgical issues for Hispanic communities were considered. And finally, in San Francisco, Chinese, Japanese, and Korean Episcopalians told their stories. The conversations provided valuable data in the deliberations in which the commission was involved over the course of the triennium.

A major challenge for the new commission at the beginning of the triennium was the lack of funding to complete projects given to the commission. Five resolutions, approved by Convention with funding included, were delivered to the commission with their appropriations removed. Because the commission lacked the funds to engage consultants and provide for committee meetings, several of these projects remain uncompleted at the end of the triennium.

Resolution A098 directed the commission to "... respond to the needs of the Church by disseminating information about *Wonder, Love and Praise*, through the electronic and print media..." Resolution A100 called for the establishment of a task force of bishops and commission members to "...determine appropriate theological guidelines to be used in the selection of texts of hymns and spiritual songs." In the absence of funding, these projects have not been completed.

Resolution B027 directed the commission to "...prepare an additional supplement which emphasized liturgical music, hymn, and other songs by women composers and poets, both historical and contemporary." In the absence of funding for the project, the Women's Sacred Music Project, under the capable leadership of Lisa Neufeld Thomas, has undertaken to fund and accomplish the project.

Resolution A077 provided a large appropriation of money for the continued development of Supplemental Liturgical Materials. In the absence of that funding, the commission focused its energy on preparing for the future. The result of those conversations is presented in the section of this report entitled The Revision, Renewal and Enrichment of the Common Worship of the Church.

Six projects consumed the time of the commission over the past three years. The *Revised Common Lectionary* was reviewed and its use evaluated. The theological aspects of committed relationships of same-sex couples were reviewed. Possible strategies for the revision, renewal, and enrichment of the common worship of the church were explored. Three proposals for additions to the calendar were considered. The Expansive Language Committee prepared worship resources for ministry with the sick and dying. And finally, a proposal for amending Title II, Canon 2: Of Translations of the Bible, was considered.

The section of this report entitled Resolutions for Convention Action describes the results of these deliberations.

In considering the projects on its agenda, the commission was provided extraordinary assistance by *Voices at the Table* in each of its meeting locations, local, volunteer secretaries who recorded minutes of each meeting, and gracious hosts at each meeting location.

LITURGY AND MUSIC

REPORT OF RECEIPTS AND EXPENDITURES

	1998	1999	2000
Income			
Budget	33,333.00	33,333.00	33,333.00
Expenses			
Non-staff/Consultant	0	0	3,500.00
Administrative	615.28	0	8,000.00
Commission Meetings	12,515.30	42,130.37	0
Committee Meetings	<u>3,379.46</u>	<u>12,124.28</u>	<u>0</u>
Total	16,510.04	54,254.65	0

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES FOR THE NEXT TRIENNIUM

The nature of the commission’s work in the next triennium will depend on how the General Convention, meeting in Denver, decides to proceed in considering the future of the church’s liturgical resources and what it proposes to do about the blessing of same-sex relationships. The commission worked on the question of how the church will develop worship resources to meet emerging needs with interest and enthusiasm. It hopes to devote its energy in the coming years to the exploration of the possibilities for the revision, renewal, and enrichment of the common worship of the church.

RESOLUTIONS FOR CONVENTION ACTION

Resolution A063 *The Revised Common Lectionary*

- 1 *Resolved*, the House of _____ concurring, That the Lectionary of the
- 2 Book of Common Prayer be amended, adopting the readings and psalms of *The*
- 3 *Revised Common Lectionary* as the replacement for the readings and psalms cur-
- 4 rently printed in the Book of Common Prayer; and be it further
- 5 *Resolved*, That for purposes of inclusion in the Book of Common Prayer,
- 6 the Revised Common Lectionary be adapted in the following ways:
- 7 1. III Advent Year B
- 8 Add Canticle 3 or 15 as an alternative to the psalm appointed.
- 9 III Advent Year C
- 10 Add Canticle 9 as an alternative to the psalm appointed.
- 11 2. First Sunday after Christmas Day
- 12 Substitute readings from the lectionary in the Book of Common Prayer.
- 13 3. Second Sunday after Christmas
- 14 Substitute readings from the lectionary in the Book of Common Prayer
- 15 4. Ash Wednesday Substitute Psalm 103 or 103:8-14 (*Psalm 51 is used as*
- 16 *part of the liturgy for Ash Wednesday in the BCP.*)
- 17 5. II Lent Year A Omit the option of Matthew 17:1-9.
- 18 II Lent Year B Omit the option of Mark 9:2-9.
- 19 II Lent Year C Omit the option of Luke 9:28-36.

- 20 *(These RCL options are stories of the Transfiguration, which would not be*
 21 *appropriate to use in II Lent after we have celebrated the Transfiguration on last*
 22 *Epiphany.)*
- 23 6. III Lent Year C
- 24 Substitute Exodus 3:1-15 (Isaiah 55:1-9 is used at the Easter Vigil.)
- 25 7. Weekdays in Easter Week
- 26 Insert lections for Weekdays in Easter from the Book of Common Prayer.
- 27 8. Vigil of Pentecost
- 28 Insert lections from the Book of Common Prayer.
- 29 9. Trinity Sunday
- 30 Add Canticle 2 or 13 as an alternative to the psalm appointed.
- 31 10. The Annunciation
- 32 Add Canticle 3 or 15 as an alternative to the psalm appointed.
- 33 11. Holy Cross Day
- 34 Substitute lections from the lectionary in the Book of Common Prayer
- 35 12. Proper 8, Year B
- 36 Add verses 21 and 22 to the reading from Lamentations.
- 37 *(The Revised Common Lectionary begins at verse 23, which is in middle of*
 38 *a sentence and is out of context.);*
- 39 and be it further
- 40 *Resolved,* That the amendment take effect on the first day of Advent in the
 41 year 2001; and be it further
- 42 *Resolved,* That the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music make avail-
 43 able the table of readings and psalms and suggestion for its use to the congrega-
 44 tions of the Episcopal Church.

Explanation

This Lectionary, produced by the Consultation on Common Texts, composed of a wide number of church bodies, is a revision of the Common Lectionary, which was authorized for trial use by the 67th and 68th General Conventions. This revision reflects the concerns about the Common Lectionary communicated to the Consultation on Common Texts through the Standing Liturgical Commission as a result of trial use. It also reflects issues addressed by Resolution A088a of the 70th General Convention directing the Standing Liturgical Commission to study revision of the Sunday lectionary of the Book of Common Prayer. The revisions suggested in this resolution reflect concerns gathered during the trial use authorized by the 71st and 72nd General Conventions.

The Revised Common Lectionary is becoming the common lectionary among Christian denominations. Positive responses from congregations who have used the lectionary and the growing number of denominations and provinces of the Anglican Communion using the lectionary lead the commission to recommend this table of readings as the lectionary for the Book of Common Prayer.

Resolution A064 Leadership Program for Musicians Serving in Small Congregations (LPM)

1 *Resolved*, the House of _____ concurring, That the 73rd General Con-
2 vention endorses the continuation of the Leadership Program for Musicians
3 Serving Small Congregations, which provides musicians who serve small con-
4 gregations with continuing education for musical leadership in liturgy; and be it
5 further

6 *Resolved*, That the sum of \$75,000.00 be appropriated for support of this
7 program; this appropriation to be administered by the Office for Liturgy and
8 Music.

Explanation

The Leadership Program for Musicians Serving Small Congregations is committed to preparing capable and confident musical leaders, who can encourage their congregations to sing well and to take their appropriate part in liturgical worship. The program consists of six courses, ten classes in each course, offered during a two-year period. Each course emphasizes the theological, musical, and pastoral principles that inform our church music practices. Diocesan coordinators are trained annually at a week-long summer conference which is led in collaboration with members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

The effectiveness of the Leadership Program has been confirmed by participating musicians, their clergy and parishes and by bishops who have observed the positive changes in worship which result when musicians experience professional formation and growth.

To date more than 400 clergy and musicians throughout the country have participated in local two-year LPM Programs, which are self-supporting. Almost 90 dioceses have sent coordinators for training, and more than 40 dioceses are operating local training programs.

Theological Aspects of Committed Relationships of Same-Sex Couples

**REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMISSION ON LITURGY AND MUSIC
PREPARED IN RESPONSE TO RESOLUTION C003S
OF THE 72ND GENERAL CONVENTION
MEETING IN PHILADELPHIA IN 1997
FOR DISCUSSION AT THE 73RD GENERAL CONVENTION
MEETING IN DENVER IN 2000**

Resolved, That the 72nd General Convention affirms the sacredness of Christian marriage between one man and one woman with intent of life-long relationship; and be it further

Resolved, That the Convention directs the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music to continue its study of theological aspects of committed relationships of same-sex couples, and to issue a full report including recommendations of future steps for the resolution of issues related to such committed relationships no later than November 1999 for consideration at the 73rd General Convention.

MEMBERS OF THE STANDING COMMISSION ON LITURGY AND MUSIC

Dr. Mary Abrams, Diocese of Kentucky
Mrs. Jill Bigwood, Diocese of Connecticut
Dr. Owen Burdick, Diocese of New York
The Reverend Jean Campbell, Diocese of New York
Dr. Carl Haywood, Diocese of Southern Virginia
The Reverend Dr. John Hooker, Diocese of Arizona
The Reverend Bruce Jenneker, Diocese of Massachusetts
The Right Reverend Mark MacDonald, Diocese of Alaska
Mrs. Paula MacLean, Diocese of Southern Florida
The Right Reverend Paul Marshall, Diocese of Bethlehem
Mr. Monte Mason, Diocese of Minnesota
The Reverend Dr. Leonel Mitchell, Diocese of Northern Indiana
Mrs. Phoebe Pettingell, Diocese of Fond du Lac
The Right Reverend Catherine Roskam, Diocese of New York
Mr. Milner Seifert, Diocese of Chicago
The Right Reverend Geralyn Wolf, Diocese of Rhode Island

Introduction

For nearly twenty-five years now, The Episcopal Church has chosen to keep before its General Conventions the issue of the homosexuality of some its members, and the extent to which those homosexual members are fully a part of this Church. For some this has represented the threat of a compromised Christianity conformed to the prevailing culture and for others it has signaled, even if not yet offering, the hope of an authentic Christian life without the denial of what they experience as a fundamental fact of their lives. There has been passion on both sides of the issue, as well as pain. There have been studies that

have been read one way by one group and interpreted differently by the other. There has been prejudice, misinformation and a lack of Christian charity.

Many studies were called for, numerous educational programs were urged upon the Church. In some communities heroic attempts were made to engage the issue, in many others very little was done, if anything at all. And at each succeeding General Convention the issue was once more brought before the Church, as it was again in Philadelphia in 1997 when it was

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For us in The Episcopal Church the last twenty-five years have also been shaped by three other very significant experiences. The first must be the impact of The Book of Common Prayer 1979 with its rediscovery of Baptism as the heart of the life of the Christian community and the Holy Eucharist as the central act of worship for a community gathered in Christ’s name to share Christ’s life and bear witness to Christ’s love. The second is the experience of AIDS. It was a telling moment in the life of our Church when the National Episcopal AIDS Coalition distributed buttons declaring that “The Episcopal Church has AIDS.” It was telling because it was true. Soon there was not one of us who did not know someone living with AIDS, or who had died from complications associated with it. In the first 15 years of the disease that someone we knew was almost always a gay man. AIDS brought the homosexuality of our children and our siblings, of our friends and our colleagues, of our fellow parishioners and our neighbors into our conversations, our newspapers and onto our television screens. Questions of homosexuality and the will of God, AIDS as punishment, Christian compassion in the context of moral ambiguity, were the topics of our Sunday forums. In every place we learned that love is the gravity that holds the world together, and that it is by our love for one another that both we and the world know that we follow Jesus Christ.

The third experience that has radically affected the life of the Episcopal Church in the last twenty- five years is the ordination of women. Born of the same baptismal impulse and undertaken as a movement to achieve in our church life that “new creation” which St. Paul defines as its vocation: “as many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave nor free, there is no longer male or female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.” (Gal. 3:26–29) The Episcopal Church struggled (and in some communities struggles still) with the conflict inherent in this call for the full recognition, integration and celebration of women in the ordained ministry of this Church. For most the call was obvious, urgent and inevitable; and for others it represented a painful break with a cherished past. In the process our Church

has learned—sometimes successfully, and sometimes less so—to live with a majority decision and to make attempts at reconciliation which affirm the choice the church has made while accommodating those who struggle with it still. The lessons we learned—and continue to learn—about living into a new definition of ourselves, living with ambiguity, and living with the tension of radical disagreement stand us in good stead for the challenges that lie before us.

Our liturgy was calling us into a new life of community, one that has always been the vocation and blessing of the Christian way, but which we were discovering anew. At the same time an epidemic of monstrous proportions was making us talk about sex and sexuality, pain and compassion, death and how short life could be. We discovered that on both sides of this issue, heterosexual people and homosexual people were indeed living out what we had affirmed at the 65th General Convention in Minneapolis in 1976: “that homosexual persons are children of God who have a full and equal claim with all other persons upon the love, acceptance and pastoral concern and care of the Church.”

In our continuing debates over this issue—which continue to be experienced as difficult and painful on both sides—we in the Episcopal Church soon discovered what the 1998 Lambeth Conference Report on Human Sexuality describes so aptly:

“We must confess that we are not of one mind about homosexuality.

Our variety of understanding encompasses:

- Those who believe that homosexual orientation is a disorder, but that through the grace of Christ people can be changed, although not without pain and struggle;
- Those who believe that relationships between people of the same gender should not include genital expression, that this is the clear teaching of the Bible and of the Church universal, and that such activity (if unrepented of) is a barrier to the Kingdom of God;
- Those who believe that committed homosexual relationships fall short of the biblical norm, but are to be preferred to relationships that are anonymous and transient;
- Those who believe that the Church should accept and support or bless monogamous covenant relationships between homosexual people and that they may be ordained.”

(from *The Official Report of the Lambeth Conference 1998*, p. 94)

In its preparation of this report the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music was informed by two specific theological insights. The first concerns the Gospel of grace proclaimed by Paul in the letter to the Galatians:

For freedom Christ has set us free. Listen! I, Paul, am telling you that if you let yourselves be circumcised, Christ will be of no benefit to you. Once again I testify to every man who lets himself be circumcised that he is obliged to obey the entire law. You who want to be justified by the law have cut yourselves off from Christ; you have fallen from grace. For through the Spirit, by faith, we eagerly wait for the hope of

righteousness. (Gal. 5:1, 2–6)

The “hope of righteousness” comes to us as the gift of the Spirit through the practice of our faith. The ritual acts by which we claim and express our faith derive from the promise of the hope of righteousness, and as such are essential to every Christian in his or her faith development. The Commission understood that access to all of the ritual acts of faith—baptism, eucharist, ordination, blessing of life-long unions—is of crucial importance to all of the members of the Body of Christ, for we all fall short of the glory of God and we all need the “hope of righteousness.” Redemption is achieved by God’s grace and our submission to its power in our lives.

The second is an ecclesiological affirmation: that we are the Church we are talking about. The homosexuals whose life of faith we are defining are Christians with us, sharing the life of the Risen Christ with us as members of our parishes, serving on our vestries, parish and diocesan committees, and participating in the national life of our Church. Their pain at being excluded from the “hope of righteousness” weighs heavily, as does the fear of compromise that is the concern of those who oppose their inclusion. They too worship alongside us, sit with us as we meet in the councils of the Church, and share with us the bread of heaven and the cup of salvation.

Another important insight informing the Commission’s reflection and deliberation was the Principle of Subsidiarity formulated in the “Virginia Report” of the Inter-Anglican Theological and Doctrinal Commission:

The character of the Christian faith from its early days has given it a profound investment in the quality of personal, face-to-face relationships. Christians are called to embody in daily life God’s reconciliation of all things in Christ, living newly in the light of God’s justice and forgiveness. It is through the personal witness of Christians to the reality of that new life that the attractiveness of the gospel becomes apparent.... The principle of “subsidiarity” has been formulated to express this investment in the local and face-to-face. Properly used, subsidiarity means that “a central authority should have a subsidiary function, performing only those tasks which cannot be performed effectively at a more immediate or local level”. (*Oxford English Dictionary*)

Subsidiarity may properly be applied to the life of the Church in order to resist the temptation to centralism. But in the life of the Church the local level was never seen as simply autonomous. Because the work of Christ was itself a reconciliation of humanity, there is evidence from the first days of the churches of concern for the unity of the communities, both in their internal relationships and in their interrelationships. St. Paul, for example, writes of his anxiety for the continuity of preaching and teaching the authentic apostolic gospel, and for the effectiveness of the united witness of the Church to the gospel of reconciliation. Care was taken, as the Church grew, to preserve the continuity of its witness across time and its coherence and effectiveness in different places. (From *The Official Report of the Lambeth Conference 1998*, pp. 44–45)

The Commission reflected on the 1998 Lambeth Conference and its discussion of Human Sexuality, listening carefully to the bishops serving on the Commission as they recounted and interpreted their experiences of the Conference, its *Reports and its Resolutions*. The Commission finds in the Report on Human Sexuality an agreement with the positions taken by the Episcopal Church:

We also recognize that there are among us persons who experience themselves as having a homosexual orientation. Many of these are members of this Church and are seeking the pastoral care, moral direction of the Church, and God's transforming power for the living of their lives and the ordering of their relationships. We wish to assure them that they are loved by God and that all baptized, believing and faithful persons, regardless of sexual orientation are full members of the Body of Christ. We call upon the Church and all its members to work to end any discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, and to oppose homophobia. (From *The Official Report of the Lambeth Conference 1998*, p. 93)

The several essays comprising this report, brief critical reviews intended to initiate conversation and direct those engaged in them to earlier studies and other resources, are offered in the hope that our whole Church will in every place and at every level commit itself to encounters between Christians on opposing sides of this issue. In the context of those conversations characterized by loving attentiveness and respectful listening, the Commission hopes that these materials will enable dialog which is informed, open, honest, comprehensive and transforming.

SCRIPTURE

The Reverend Dr. L. William Countryman
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Current conflict among Anglicans about issues of sexual orientation arises from a variety of causes, cultural and political as well as theological, but the theological aspect of the conflict often centers on the authority and interpretation of scripture. Here, there are two principal questions to be asked. One is the question of what the Bible in fact says about sexually-based relationships between people of the same sex. The other question is how we, as Anglicans, go about understanding and determining the authority of the passages, aspects, or themes of scripture we deem relevant. This essay will begin with the latter question.

How do Anglicans understand the authority of scripture? The Articles of Religion speak of the "sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures for salvation" and list the books to be considered canonical, allotting secondary status to the Old Testament apocrypha (Art. VI). They assert the unity of Old Testament and New, but also limit the applicability of the Torah (Art. VII). They describe the Bible's authority as a matter of setting limits to what anyone can be required to believe rather than as constituting a complete outline of belief

(Art. VI). This reflects the persistent refusal of Anglicanism, unlike most other churches in the sixteenth century, to define itself narrowly in theological terms.

This is not to say that Reformation Anglicans had no principles. Quite the contrary, they had beliefs they were willing to die for. They were, however, less optimistic than most of their Protestant co-religionists that one could find in the Bible a detailed system of Christian faith. The English Puritans, like the Reformed churches of the continent, wanted to strip away everything that they did not find specifically commanded in the Bible. Anglicans like George Herbert criticized the results as naked (“The British Church,” ll. 19–24). The mainstream Anglican response was to take the Bible not as a blueprint but as a factor limiting church claims.

This minimalist understanding of scriptural authority left room in Anglicanism for tradition to play a role in determining our common life. The Bible sets limits on what is required, but does not give a complete account of the life or worship of the church. Much has to be filled in, and for that purpose godly tradition continues to be important.

Anglicanism has also had a role for reason, but it functions somewhat differently from tradition. As Richard Hooker pointed out, we have no access to the Bible at all without the use of reason (Laws ii, c.7, s. 3). Every Biblical text becomes useful to us only insofar as someone uses reason to read, translate, and interpret it. All these processes introduce elements from outside the text itself—elements that relate the passage to knowledge of ancient languages, to history, culture, and systems of Christian theology, and to the larger world in which we are endeavoring to live as faithful people.

Scripture cannot settle questions for Anglicans in isolation from reason; rather, it comes to life for us in an ongoing dialogue with reason and faith. This reality has to be borne in mind when we turn to the texts often proposed as pertinent to the present conflicts. Older writers on the subject tended to appeal to the story of Sodom and Gomorra (Gen. 19) as evidence that the Bible condemns same-sex sexual activity. Over the last few decades, however, this argument has generally been discarded, since other Biblical references to the story never make such a connection.

There are also two verses in Leviticus (18:22; 20:13) that forbid some type of sexual activity between men (possibly anal intercourse). A question arises here as to the basis for the prohibition. Some hold it was to prevent cruel abuse of prisoners of war, others to prevent non-procreative use of semen, others to exclude non-Israelite religious rites. The text itself, insofar as it specifies a reason, treats the matter as a violation of ancient Israel’s purity code—a code that New Testament writers treat as no longer binding on gentile (and perhaps even Jewish) Christians (cf. Acts 15; Rom. 14–15).

Some have argued that the second creation narrative contains a positive command (Gen. 2:24) that all human beings are to marry heterosexually. The passage, however, can equally well be read simply as an etiological story, telling how the institution of marriage came into being.

There are three passages in the New Testament that are sometimes considered relevant. Two are occurrences, in what are technically called “vice lists,” of the Greek term *arsenokoites*, sometimes loosely translated “homosexual” (1 Cor. 6:9; 1 Tim. 1:10). Some connect this term with the verses from Leviticus mentioned above and see it as reconfirming their validity for later Christians. The term is rare, however, and there is no evidence to show what it actually meant to speakers of Greek in the first century.

Finally, Paul, in Rom. 1:18–32, describes same-sex sexual intercourse between men (and possibly between women) as unclean and disgraceful. According to the most careful reading of the Greek text, Paul does not specifically identify it as sinful; and nowhere is there evidence to show what it actually meant to speakers of Greek in the first century.

Do these biblical passages help us in evaluating the claim, made by modern Christians of same-gender sexual orientation, that God can and does bless their lives in and through their life partnerships? Do the biblical passages in question even speak to such a claim? It is not clear that they do; at best, they are open to varying interpretations. In any case, how do we as Anglicans, with our relatively minimalist tradition about biblical authority, deal with them? Our tradition reminds us that “whatsoever is not read (in scripture) nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of Faith, or to be thought requisite or necessary to salvation” (Art. VI). It would seem that the Bible, taken as a whole, is not definitive enough to demand a negative judgment on the present subject.

Scripture: Bibliography

Bicknell, E. J. *A Theological Introduction to the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England*. 3rd ed. Revised by H. J. Carpenter. London: Longmans, 1955.

This work’s discussion of scripture is significant both for its clarity and moderation and also because it antedates the current conflicts over gender and sexuality.

Borsch, Frederick Houk, editor. *Anglicanism and the Bible*. Wilton, CT: Morehouse Barlow, 1984.

This collection of essays traces some of the historical breadth of our tradition in dealing with the scriptures.

_____, editor. *The Bible’s Authority in Today’s Church*. Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 1993.

This collection comes out of the House of Bishops; the new (1999) printing includes a foreword by Presiding Bishop Griswold.

Countryman, L. Wm. *Biblical Authority or Biblical Tyranny? Scripture and the Christian Pilgrimage*. 2nd ed. Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1994.

The present author’s effort to set forth the Anglican tradition in ecumenical language for today.

_____. *Dirt, Greed, and Sex: Sexual Ethics in the New Testament and Their Implications for Today*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988.

This is detailed examination of biblical passages dealing with sexual ethics generally. In the matter of same-sex life partnerships, it finds no prohibition in the Christian scriptures, read as a whole.

Ferlo, Roger. *Opening the Bible*. The New Church’s Teaching Series. Boston: Cowley Publications, 1997.

An introduction to the Bible’s role for faith for general parish audiences.

Johnston, Michael. *Engaging the Word*. The New Church’s Teaching Series. Boston: Cowley Publications, 1998.

A kind of “second course” after the book by Ferlo on interpretation and use of the Bible.

Muddiman, John. *The Bible, Fountain and Well of Truth*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983.
A clear and concise treatment of biblical issues, written from an Anglo-Catholic perspective.

Stott, John, and others. *The Anglican Communion and Scripture: Papers from the First International Consultation of the Evangelical Fellowship in Anglican Communion, Canterbury, UK, June 1993*. Carlisle, Cumbria: Regnum, 1996.

The papers in this collection are written from Anglican Evangelical perspectives. A few refer specifically to the issue of sexuality.

TRADITION¹

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To understand the workings of tradition, it is important to note some of the different senses of the word “tradition” itself.

In popular usage, “tradition” means, roughly, “what people back there in the past used to say.” The word is mostly employed in a deprecatory manner, on the ground that what people used to say is invariably wrong by comparison with what “we” say. This usage is a fruit of the age of Enlightenment, which employed “tradition” as a label for the sub-rational, particularistic heteronomous obscurantism of the priest-infested Dark—or Middle—ages. Over against tradition it set the emancipatory light of “reason,” which was taken to be an endowment that is (α) identical in each human individual (and therefore universal), and (β) autonomous, i.e., setting its own “law” for itself (and therefore not subject to any external authority, least of all that of tradition).

In fact the English word “tradition” (Latin *traditio*) connotes by its derivation an action of handing on or giving over. The Greek noun it renders is *παραδοσις*, which, like the verb from which it derives, denotes precisely a process of transmission.² Thus Paul asserts that he has “handed over” (*παρεδωκα*), and his Corinthian converts “have received,” the gospel by which they are saved (1 Cor. 15:1–3); and the Letter of Jude speaks of “the belief once for all handed over (*παραδοθειση*) to the saints” (Jude 3). In its most basic sense, therefore, the word “tradition” refers not to a thing that is there to be examined, but to a process or activity of some sort.

“Tradition” fairly early required a second derivative sense. Taken in this way it referred to that which is handed over or handed down, i.e., the content of what is delivered.³ This content was variously called “the belief” (*πιστις*) or “the Gospel” (*ευαγγελιον*), or “the proclamation” (*κηρυγμα*), and even “the deposit” (*παραθηκη*); and 2 Thessalonians—which belongs to the “school” of Paul if not to the Apostle himself—seems to use the word *παραδοσις* in this way, exhorting its readers to “hold to the traditions which you were taught by us” (2 Thess. 2:15). There was a “thing,” then, an inheritance of some sort from the first age of the church, that Christians have understood themselves to receive and transmit⁴ in their turn, both in preaching and, above all, in baptismal catechesis. The content of this inheritance was gradually defined through the emergence of a NT canon and summaries of baptismal catechesis (which later took the form of creeds), and by the end of the 2nd century it was regularly spoken of as “tradition.”⁵ I seem to have included, then,

the essential or central elements both of Christian belief and of Christian praxis (“faith and morals”).

As such, tradition—or better, “traditioning”—necessarily has its vehicles. By this is meant things (buildings, e.g., or books), or reiterated patterns of action, that carry and convey its content or some aspect of it. The use and interpretation of these vehicles of tradition constitute the act of “traditioning.” The primary vehicle of Christian tradition is the Scriptures (the “norm” of tradition), together with the classic baptismal creeds, which were understood to summarize and pass on, in the condensed form of a catechetical syllabus, the message that was the essential burden of the Scriptures. Other central vehicles are the liturgies—of baptism, eucharist, and office with their several offspring (Wednesday-night prayer meetings, recitation of the Angelus, e.g.)—in which the scriptural and credal message is illustrated, read, expounded or enacted, whether in word or in action (prayer, sacrament). In Anglican circles, the Book of Common Prayer (itself an excellent example of a central vehicle of tradition) governs the public use of the Scriptures and creeds and sets them in a context of prayer and praise that relates worshippers to God in ways that reflect Christian life and calling in Christ as those have been experienced, entered into and understood over the centuries.

Further vehicles of tradition are the art-forms that clothe us—architecture, posture and gesture, music, rhetoric, the furnishing and decoration of liturgical spaces, icons, statues of saints, rosaries, and the like. As public vehicles of traditioning, all of these are aspects of what we call “tradition;” and this is not less the case because there are different liturgical, rhetorical, musical and architectural traditions within the Christian movement, just as there are differing theological “schools” and emphases that articulate, develop and embroider the focal message of Scriptures and creeds and thus “tradition” it.

Thus in Christian usage “tradition” refers at once to an action of handing on, to the content of what is handed on, and to the more or less institutionalized vehicles (masses and Sunday-school classes) by whose means this handing-on is (presumably) effected. The word “tradition,” then, denotes the church as a living system of communication in and through which people are brought into and live out a certain relationship to God in Christ through the Spirit. (cf. Gal 4:6). In the last resort it is that relationship itself which is “traditioned,” and not merely the beliefs or ideals or precepts that are proper to it.

Further it is important to see that traditioning is at work in the ordinary, daily business of teaching, attesting, and interpreting the Gospel, by action as well as word. Tradition is not merely a body of teaching or practice that people appeal to in moments of controversy, even though it is mostly in moments of controversy that people objectify it and begin to talk about it. In the church—and indeed in almost any community of which one can think—traditioning is like breathing: boringly normal and scarcely ever noticed.

It is therefore a necessary part of wisdom to recall that tradition never stands still. The reason for this is that all traditioning takes the form of a continuing process of interpretation through which the “meaning” of sacred texts, icons, institutions, and ritual actions is intimated or explicated. Hence in conveying the truth of the Gospel, tradition has, in different times, places and circumstances, different—and sometimes conflicting—incarnations. It clothes itself, in short, in varying patterns of thought, belief and behavior. These varying patterns themselves, through their interaction, generate critical reflection and reappropriation.

tion.⁶ “Tradition” thus refers to a broad, diversified and, above all, moving stream of human communicative activity which, like the Mississippi River, encompasses a variety of currents, vortices, shallows, and fecund backwaters—all of which, however, derive from the interactions of the river’s central drift and flow with the varying shape of its immediate environment.

It is a mistake to suppose that only the church has (or is) a *παραδοσις* that defines and sustains an identity in the sense of an individual and communal way of being and acting. It makes perfect sense to speak, in exactly the same complex sense of the term, of the “tradition” of Marxist thought, or of Confucian cultures, or of American legal theory, or of the academic “world.” Indeed it now seems plain, if ironic, that what the Enlightenment called “reason” was and is, from the point of view of its content, a “traditioned” way of seeing and understanding things. Similarly, what is called “experience,” considered as an answer to the question what “I” see in, and make of, something, is also a social and historical product of traditioning: people learn how to identify and understand things, and they “experience” in accord with what they learn. Tradition is the mode in which any way of life or of thought or both—as embodied in the beliefs and practices of human groups of some sort—is continued through time; and one belongs to a group insofar as one is significantly formed by its tradition and participates in its “traditioning.”

It may be wrong, therefore, to think, as Anglicans have been taught, that, in the church, Scripture, Reason, and Tradition are three independent “sources” or “authorities,” with regard to which the church attempts to achieve a nice balance—not too much of any one of the three but a generous pinch of each of them.⁷

Scripture is indeed a “source,” a set of books that can be consulted and interpreted.

Reason, however, does not lie about in the manner of a “source.” It acts rather in the capacity of a lens through which Scripture is understood—the lens of what counts as “common sense,” of “what everyone knows,” of “what ‘makes sense’” (which of course differs, to varying extents, from one society or culture to another).

In somewhat the same way, tradition is not a “thing” alongside and independent of Scripture (a good Protestant point). Tradition is the cumulative “common sense” of the community whose life and common mind represent an interpretation as well as a vehicle of the scriptural message.⁸ To consult tradition is to render this “common sense,” in its varying forms, a conscious object of inquiry: (a) to review, for one purpose or another, regarding one issue or another, the ways in which the meaning and implications of the new life in Christ have been understood, explained, and transmitted in previous generations; (b) to see how these fit with the Scriptures and above all with the Gospel that is the Scripture’s central message; and thus (c) to elicit the “sense” of this tradition in the light of the circumstances or events or conditions that have made people wonder whether the church’s common sense makes as much sense as it ought to.

The distinction, then, between tradition and reason—a distinction that not surprisingly grew up in the 17th century—is a distinction between the common sense of the Christian movement and the common sense of a (modern) Western tradition that, in principle if not invariably in practice, stands aloof from any religious faith or commitment. These two “common senses” sometimes conflict—just as Islamic and Confucian tradition sometimes conflict with both of them and with each other. At the same time they influence each other,

as one might expect, since large numbers of people belong both to the stream of Christian tradition and to the stream of tradition called “reason.”

The process of traditioning is therefore always a continuing process of interpretation: that is, Christian tradition is never a dead thing, but a living process of the appropriation of human life and calling in Christ, and therefore a process of faithful learning, to which relative novelty is no more alien than is rifling the past for its insights. There is always much more in the river of tradition than the perceived need of any single generation, with its peculiar obsessions, its designer blinkers, and its glowing buzzwords, can utilize; and its manifold currents, eddies and backwaters show how it questions itself over and again—and also how what looks irrelevant today may be of the liveliest importance tomorrow. (Most radical movements in the church are spawned by “recoveries” of elements in the tradition that had been obscured or deliberately forgotten as a result of its last, or next-to-last, updating.)

EXPERIENCE

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Historically, in the effort to order in ways pleasing to God human sexual behavior, including sexual relations between persons, experience has taken precedence over the first of the three legs of the classical Anglican epistemological tripod—Scripture, Tradition, and Reason. Today most Anglicans would still agree with the Bible in rejecting incest, rape, adultery, or intercourse with animals. But most would not agree with the Bible in its view that semen or menstrual blood are ritually unclean. Nor would most concur with the Bible’s condemnation of or opposition to intercourse during menstruation, celibacy, marriage with non-Israelites, naming sexual organs, nudity, masturbation, or birth control. At the same time, most would oppose practices the Bible permits, including prostitution, polygamy, levirate marriage, sex with slaves, concubinage, treatment of women as property, and the marriage of girls at 11–13 years of age. Furthermore, most would go along with the Hebrew Scriptures in permitting divorce, and thereby would disagree with Jesus in his prohibition of it. Thus, following what we would contend to be Christian sexual morality, most would agree with only four of the sexual mores mentioned in the Bible, and we would disagree with sixteen of them (Wink, 1999). That is because Anglican sexual morality has been shaped and reshaped above all by people’s experience of what in practice works to make them fully alive and the supposition that, as Irenaeus wrote, *Gloria Dei vivens homo*—“The Glory of God is a human being fully alive.”

Experience has also taken precedence historically over the second of the three legs of the classical Anglican epistemological tripod—Tradition. Because all traditions pursue internal “goods” whose richness and depth forever prevent their full and final definition, those who bear the traditions are always engaged in a pursuit of rather than in a final attainment of those goods, and if in a pursuit, then in an argument as well. Thus, the church’s Tradition is “partially constituted by an argument” to be rehashed, and the Tradition to be revised, again and again (MacIntyre). Tradition is not just a stone tablet to be admired, but a “a not-yet-completed narrative” shaped and reshaped by experience of the ambiguity and

complexity of daily life as people seek to determine what will work practically (Lindbeck, 1984).

Traditions are of two kinds. Tradita, the content of a tradition which is conserved, can be distinguished from traditio, the time-honored way in which the community goes about adapting or adjusting its tradita when experiential data from the surrounding world so outstrip the ability of the tradita to absorb it that the tradita loses credibility and people suffer cognitive dissonance between it and a proposed, differing, compelling tradita. (Schreier, 1985; Lindbeck, 1984; Bass, 1994). Experience, rationally reflected upon, teaches us that “the Church never apprehends the truth.... The more the church learns of God, the more it is aware of the incomprehensible mystery of God’s being.... The more the church knows, the more it is aware that a great unknown lies ahead” (Ramsey, 1956).

Throughout its tradition the church has never embraced a single, developed, monolithic view of marriage or its practices. Reflecting different understandings of the sexual relations experienced in them, marriage liturgies have varied widely. They have varied geographically: of marriage Martin Luther quoted the proverb, “Many lands, many customs.” And they have varied historically: whereas Augustine called marriage not a mere “joining,” but a sacramentum (a mystery, a solemn obligation), Cranmer later saw it, not as a sacrament, but as “a holy estate, instituted of God himself”(Stevenson, 1987).

Because liturgical rites are “the primal means for Christians to cope with reality ... any theology of marriage must arise from reflected experience, mediated through liturgy” (Stevenson, 1983:213). Historically, the marriage rites “were not the work of theologians or canonists, but of anonymous and long-dead pastors whose apt invocations in the context of marriage survived to accompany and interpret and partially transform the old, inherited ways of doing things.... Liturgy is always a moment of decision, when the theorizing has to end and the ideal has to yield to the practical: something has to be said and something has to be done. These documents witness to what nameless believers have found to say about marriage in the concrete, about the life and relationship that is opening up before this couple, and about the sacramentum ... not an ideal, but a given reality” (Stevenson, 1992: 261). The priority of experience is evidenced by the fact that in all marriage rites the prayers pass directly from anamnesis to intercession without any epiclesis invoking the Holy Spirit on the grounds that the nuptial blessing is a blessing on a marriage in which the Spirit is already present through the consent offered each other by the partners (Stevenson, 1987: 232).

Differing understandings of the experience of marriage existed even at the beginning of our history. In 950 bce, the author of Genesis 2 defined the purpose of the relationship between Adam and Eve as the alleviation of loneliness, not procreation of children. The Ancient Near Eastern understandings of fertility, marriage, and passion, depicted in the Bible, were re-framed by Israel in terms of a relationship between God and Israel. Hosea more than any other worked out the imagery of the marriage of God and Israel, and with him we see the focus of marriage shift from fertility to fidelity (Hos. 4:2; 6:6). Later the use of the term covenant, which was perhaps only implicit in Hosea, was made explicit in Malachi (2:14). Then in the second century bce the Book of Tobit (7:12ff.) introduces the idea that God actually joins the couple through a divine blessing on them.

In 30 ce, Jesus spoke of marriage in terms, not of procreation or child-rearing, but of permanence and fidelity. What Israel understood about its relationship with God was reinterpreted by the church in terms of its relationship between Jesus, referred to as a bridegroom, and Christian believers, or between Christ and the church (Mt. 9:15/Mk. 2:19/Lk. 5:34; Rev. 19:6ff). The New Testament reflects a conventional Jewish liturgical practice of which, interestingly, our own seems to be the reverse—that of women accompanying the groom in procession to the home of the bride (Mt. 25:1–13). At a wedding in Cana of Galilee, before the groom pronounced the Seven Blessings traditional in Judaism (for creation, the creation of humankind, Zion, the barren one, the couple, with reference to the Garden of Eden, the joy of the couple, and the qualities of married life, with reference to the marriage feast), Jesus blessed the new wine, a sign of the eschatological and ecclesiological importance of marriage as one of the founding relationships of the new covenant (John 2:1–11).

Paul, too, understood marriage eschatologically and ecclesologically, contending that in anticipation of a wedding yet to come Christians now are betrothed to Christ (2 Cor. 11:2). In 56 ce, the Apostle, condemned, not homosexual persons, but homosexual acts by heterosexual, not homosexual, persons, as being contrary to what they are “by nature” (Rom. 1:26–27). Actually, because empirically in many dimensions of our own experience, he does “not understand (his) own actions,” he is reluctant to presume to know or judge the experiences of others (Romans 7:15ff.). He is content to leave judgment to God (Rom. 12:19).

Further twists and turns mark the patristic and medieval periods. It was Basilus Binder who pointed out the great variety of local marriage rites in the Middle Ages, and Korbinian Ritzer who, in his study of the marriage rite in the first millennium, showed that the Gregorian Sacramentary only barely concealed differences from one region to the next (Stevenson, 1987: 27). Over sixty manuscripts exist which indicate that the ancient and medieval church celebrated the same-sex equivalent of its heterosexual marriage ceremony—at least if read by homosexual individuals for whom “it is relatively easy to recognize and absorb ideas about a ceremony of same-sex union, because they have a place to locate the information.” (Boswell).

The Reformation occasioned yet more re-thinking. Thomas Cranmer (who nearly lost his job for being married before the break with Rome in 1534) held to a completely reformed marriage rite in pre-medieval guise. He spoke of the “solemnization of matrimony,” not a sacrament. His Prayer Book rite was to take place in two parts, the first in the nave, for the contract, and the second in the sanctuary, leading into the Eucharist. In his rite the ring was to be placed on the book, but it was not to be blessed until it was placed on the left hand of the bride: the priest was no longer to have a sacramental role, but instead was to witness the exchange of vows and give the blessing, in no sense “joining” the couple. The centrality of consent—both as an answer to a question asked by a priest and as a vow made by both partners—was kept, but the blessing was downgraded to the form of an intercession.

Re-thinking and change have continued into our own period. While in the medieval and Reformation rites women had to promise to obey their husbands, in the 1928 American prayer book that requirement disappeared and the woman was asked if she wanted to marry the man before that same question is asked of the man—a way of introducing the equality

of the sexes. In the 1960s, Vatican II upheld the Tridentine principle of permitting local variation in the marriage liturgy and ended the practice of prohibiting marriages in Lent and “mixed marriages.” In 1969, French Roman Catholics published a rite in which the woman and man recited parts of their vows together and, in the nuptial blessing, prayers were offered for both partners without differentiating their gender roles in a way which would be in keeping with modern French society (Stevenson, 1987: 152). Throughout the tradition there has been no concurrence whether to call the service a “veiling” or a “solemnizing” or a “blessing” or a “celebration.” We are similarly confused today.

The same kind of ongoing shaping and reshaping of our tradition is reflected in our Anglican liturgical tradition. In 1571, Article XXV of the Thirty-Nine Articles holds that matrimony—like confirmation, penance, orders, and extreme unction—is not a sacrament like baptism and the Supper of the Lord, but is only one of the “commonly called sacraments” which “are not to be counted for Sacraments of the gospel, being such as have grown partly of the corrupt following of the apostles, partly are states of life allowed in the Scriptures; but yet have not like nature of Sacraments of baptism, and the Lord’s Supper, for that they have not any visible sign or ceremony ordained of God.” In the opening address to the rite in the Book of Common Prayer of 1549, marriage is said to have three purposes: 1) procreation of children; 2) prevention of fornication; and 3) provision for mutual society, help, and comfort. In addition, in the Prayer Book of 1662, marriage is defined as “an honorable estate instituted by God ... signifying unto us the mystical union that is betwixt Christ and his Church.” But the American Prayer Book of 1789 is adopted without mention of the three purposes of marriage.

Finally, experience has also taken precedence historically over the third of the three legs of the classical Anglican epistemological tripod—Reason. It is from experience that Reason learns what works in praxis. In the face of the postmodern quandary over the unworkability of *theoria* (theoretical or speculative knowledge), *poiesis* (the knowing involved in the mastery of a craft), and *techne* (applied theoretical knowledge), or blind custom and tradition to effect change, reasoned rational reflection on the experience of life itself is valued as workable because it is consistent with the very nature of human thinking processes in which “we never really move from theory to practice even when it seems we do. Theory is always embedded in practice” (Browning, 1991).

The term “experience,” like “experiment,” derives from a Latin root, *peri*, meaning “to try” or “to test.” “Praxis” derives from a Greek root connoting the kind of knowledge of human experience good politicians and effective leaders need as they “try” or “test” what will work in order to make possible “shared and workable decisions.” Decisions, of course, effect change and transformation, and in the end the purpose of “praxis” born of “experience” is to create constructive changes which arise from and in turn advance the experience of a community with its traditions. In the words of the 1968 Lambeth Conference, to maintain its unity the church must “refuse to insulate itself against the testing of history and the free action of reason.”

The debate in which the Episcopal Church finds itself is over the epistemological question, Can we ever know the truth or is agnosticism our fate? Everywhere the old epistemological categories of the Enlightenment Rationalism have given way, and the search for a new postmodern order has been undertaken, but in no area more than in our understanding

of sexual relations. In his *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male* (1948) and *Sexual Behavior in the Human Female* (1953), Kinsey conflated the local with the universal, and the particular with the general, on the assumption that, when it comes to a species, even our human one, “one size fits all.” But in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (1962), Kuhn argued just the opposite in contending that even the most persuasively verified claims in the most mathematically developed and technical of the sciences were dependent upon the historically specific practice of particular people in distinctive human communities. If the Episcopal Church has been divided over lesbian and gay Episcopalians, the split is fundamentally over epistemological differences between so-called “Kinseyites” and “Kuhnians.”

Increasing numbers in the Episcopal Church—informed by Reason which tells them that some, as they experience their own embodied lives, are heterosexual, and others homosexual, “according to nature”—see that ours is an institutionally heterocentrist church supporting a systematically heterosexist society in which those deemed to be heterosexual are benefited in terms of economic and social capital at the expense of those regarded as homosexual. The extreme to which a gay man or lesbian woman can be disadvantaged is epitomized by highly-publicized case of Matthew Shepherd, the young Episcopalian who was murdered in Wyoming in 1998 simply because he was gay. The most important moral action which the church can take in order to liberate itself and its society from its institutional prejudice is to extend to homosexual couples the same sacrament of marriage it proffers heterosexual couples and to ordain persons in such marriages and who are otherwise qualified to be ordained. (Jung and Smith).

Based on their experience, more and more Episcopalians are thus coming to join in argument with the tradition about the practices of marriage even while concretely practicing the tradition in divergent ways. Many gay men and lesbian women have endeavored to practice heterosexual marriage, found it practically unworkable, rejected it as hypocritical in their cases in favor of a homosexual variation of it which does work for them, and have thereby begun to reshape the tradition. Thereby more and more homosexual couples are experiencing, if not fully and finally, at least partially and proleptically, the goods pursued in marriage—mutual joy, help and comfort given one another in prosperity or adversity, the procreation of children. Based on the rubric (BCP 13) providing that on occasions “for which no service or prayer has been provided in this Book, the bishop may set forth such forms as are fitting to the occasion,” increasing numbers of bishops are permitting clergy and congregations to use rites for the marriages of homosexual couples and, in some cases, are themselves providing a rite which can or must be used.

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UNDERSTANDINGS OF HOMOSEXUALITY: A REVIEW

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As with most human behavior, sexual orientation and response in humans more complex than in other animals. Male and female sexual response in animals can, for example, be switched off and on by the injection of hormones (Money, 1988). In humans, however, biological, psycho-social, and historical-cultural factors appear to mutually inform sexual orientation and identity. This would be expected given the evolutionary development of the human brain from that of reptiles and other animals.

The human brain may be conceived as triune (MacLean, 1970, 1978; Ashbrook, 1988). At the core of the brain, reaching just above the brain stem, is the oldest region of the brain. This level of the brain is the source of instinctual behavior and hence has been called the reptilian brain. Surrounding the reptilian brain is the midregion of the brain, what may be called the paleomammalian brain or simply the old mammalian brain. This region of the brain is most closely associated with what is called the limbic system. Developed further in the forehead, the mammalian brain includes the cortex. Together this region of the brain is the source of human emotions and memory. Finally, surrounding the mammalian brain is the neocortex, what may be called the neomammalian brain or simply the new brain. Consisting of two hemispheres, in this region of the brain is found activities most distinctively associated with humans, namely the development of ideas. As these three regions of the brain interact and mutually condition human response, human sexual response and orientation may be most adequately understood to be both involuntary (as

apart from the will and human choice) and voluntary (as a matter of will and human choice).

In the last ten years biological research on homosexuality has correlated homosexual orientation with genetic differences and differences in brain structure (Baily and Pillard, 1991; Hamer, et al., 1993; LeVay, 1991). Other studies have focused on the psycho-social factors that correlate with homosexuality (Green, 1987) and on the historical-cultural factors that shape homosexual identification (Greenberg, 1998).

The multi-dimensional factors that correlate with homosexuality have not prevented some theorists from offering single-cause explanations. Classical psychoanalytical theories have understood homosexuality as a matter of arrested or inverted development resulting from an intra-psychic, childhood trauma in relationship to parents (Socarides, 1988). Learning and behavior theories have argued that homosexuality is more broadly a maladaptive response to the social environment (Green, 1987). The recent biological studies have likewise been extrapolated into causal theories (Isay, 1989).

In identifying correlations, biological studies have not provided an account of the developmental processes or causal links between genetics, brain structure, and homosexuality. While psychoanalytical theories and learning theories offer accounts of the process of the development of homosexuality, these processes have not been verified in the study of the actual development of homosexual orientation in the general population (Bell, et al., 1981). Altogether, contemporary studies of homosexuality reflect John Money's conclusion that sexual orientation may be helpfully thought of as analogous to left-handedness. There is a genetic-biological basis for sexual orientation, which is shaped and formed in interaction with psycho-social and historical-cultural factors (Money, 1987, 1988; Coleman, 1995).

While the origin and process of development of homosexual orientation and identity are not clear, studies have documented that homosexual orientation is relatively fixed or given. While sexual behavior may be changed, sexual orientation does not (Coleman, 1978). Recent studies further refuted the understanding of homosexuality as a mental illness (Gonsiorek, 1991). The beginning of this change from a pathological understanding of homosexuality is reflected in the decision in 1973 of the American Psychiatric Association to declassify homosexuality in their diagnostic manual as intrinsically a mental disorder. Given classical psychoanalytic theory, psychoanalysts have more uniformly viewed homosexuality as pathological. Some psychoanalysts continue to do so (Society of Medical Psychoanalysts, 1988; Socarides, 1988); other psychoanalysts, however, now understand homosexuality as non-pathological (Friedman, 1988; Isay, 1989).

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ECCLESIOLOGY—THE NATURE OF ANGLICAN DECISION-MAKING

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Where, the midst of all this change and division, is the church? The ecclesia? Where can we discern the Body of Christ? It is hard to answer. The church—though it may be wedded to persisting, essential forms, traditions and actions—is always, to some extent, a divine mystery. Augustine warned that it often is where we do not think it is, and it often is not where we are quite sure it is.

Our question may be particularly hard to answer now. Our culture is pluriform. Our churches are divided—between denominations and within denominations. And people seem to inhabit separate realms of discourse.

It is important to remember that the presence of Christ pervades all, and the Creator-Spirit touches everyone. Yet Christians see this universal presence made tangible, accessible in the history of Israel and above all in the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ. The gospel of Christ forms the church; the church lives under and by the gospel.

The gospel—centering in the cross and resurrection—is a freeing, dignifying, unifying act of God. It declares that God loves and judges all, and that all live under the sign of forgiveness—although not all know it. The church, serving the gospel, witnesses to God’s gracious affirmation of humanity. Its life is to exhibit an “alternative reality.” It is a community in which the divisions of human life are transcended (“In Christ there is neither. . .”) and which demonstrates the intention of the Creator—an intention flawed by sin. A British theologian once said, “The church recognizes no boundaries except those it exists to overcome” (John Oman).

Yet the actual, historical church is part of the fragmented, tormented 21st century human scene. It provides no point of escape—it cannot if it represents the Crucified. But where and how does it exhibit its unique identity? An answer should not limit. Christ is present wherever a cup of cold water is given in his name. But the church comes into visibility as it gathers for Word and Sacraments (“the epiphany of the church”). Here, by a few modest words and actions, it renews itself in its own life in Christ, and it stands, in the midst of the trauma of our time, as a sign of the Age to Come.

The Anglican way of identifying the ecclesia is not to develop an authoritative confession of doctrine, nor a detailed form of polity, but to point to some basic elements of the common life—F. D. Maurice call them “signs”—classically identified as scriptures, creeds, sacraments and order. These “signs” form and sustain the church as they are used in a fabric of liturgy, the Book of Common Prayer.

But scriptures, creeds, sacraments and orders must be interpreted, and the church is a community of interpreters. We cannot see the elemental signs except through the spectacles of our interpretations. The interpretations are many, and some of them are in conflict with one another—though they claim loyalty to the Christian message as it is received in the Anglican tradition. Persons of faith tend to locate their interpretations in a scheme of reality that is bound into divine truth itself, and hence difficult to bring under question. Instead of using the gospel to revitalize our interpretations, our doctrines and ideologies, we too often let our intellectual and cultural constructions capture the gospel.

Without choosing it, we live in a time of particularly sharp division and non-stop change. Division and change are a challenge to the individual’s interior life, but also to the collective life. When the foundations are shaken, values, habits of conduct and ways of thought that had long been taken for granted must be reconsidered.

Some of the challenges before society and the churches today fall in areas of sexual identity and gender roles. These matters are deeply bound into our perception of ourselves, our confidence in dependable social order, and into our fundamental sense of reality. They lie so close to our understanding of who we are that proposals for change or for the recogni-

tion of alternative ways of conduct can seem threatening. It may be hard to credit the good faith of those who differ from us.

The new is not always right against the old, nor the old against the new. But when the new arises in the midst of the old, the church must look freshly at its ultimate sanctions, and it must discriminate. Its task is not to adjust its message and conduct to new claims—to trim its sails to the winds of change. Rather, new situations ask (they require) the church to repossess, indeed, at times to reconceive its own gospel. Can the church, in creative fidelity, change while remaining itself? It is not that suddenly we are put out ahead of gospel and required in the light of new insight to revise it. Rather, it is always ahead of us, and we are—in the light of unprecedented circumstances—slowly catching up with it.

When history generates newness and the church must respond, not all Christians will respond the same way, and not all who take the same direction will move at the same pace.

Modern day interpreters, when they look at their sources for guidance in faith and life, must take into account a great deal that is not part of the worlds of the Bible or the creed-making church. Anglican discourse is active and wide-ranging. But the appeal of Anglicans in matters of thought and conduct is quite focused. No interpretation of the basic ecclesial “signs” is accorded the finality that belongs to the “signs” themselves. It may be important to determine that with respect to many urgent issues of today, the basic Anglican sources (which are at the same time the basic Christian sources) say nothing whatever. If we think they have clear implications for today, such conclusions derive from our interpretations, and not from the “signs” themselves. As loyal Anglicans, we may cherish our interpretations and represent them strongly, while at the same time we must remain open to new truth and coexist in charity with those who, consulting the same sources in the same spirit of honest inquiry, have come to different conclusions.

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BARUK ATTAH, ADONAI BLESSING

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"Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel," the opening words of the Song of Zechariah, is typical of the blessings found in both the Old Testament and in Jewish practice. It is in the form called *berakah* in which God is blessed, usually for some particular gift. In the *Benedictus* it is because, "he has come to his people and set them free." We find this same usage in *The Book of Common Prayer*, for example, in the *General Thanksgiving*:

We bless thee for our creation, preservation,
and all the blessings of this life;
but above all for thine inestimable love
in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ,
for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory. (BCP 58)

In the familiar Jewish blessings of bread and wine, it is concrete material objects for which God is blessed:

Blessed are you, Lord our God, King of the universe, who bring forth bread
from the earth.

and

Blessed are you, Lord our God, King of the universe, who created the fruit
of the vine.

God is blessed for the gifts, and the gifts are then said to be “blessed.” An equivalent alternative formula thanks God for the gift. The second paragraph of the Jewish Table blessing (*birkat-ha-mazon*) begins, “We thank you, Lord our God, who has given us this good land,” and concludes, “Blessed are you, Lord our God, for the land and for the food.” The New Testament accounts of the institution narrative at the Last Supper seem to use “bless” and “give thanks” interchangeably, Mark and Matthew saying that Jesus blessed the bread, and Luke and Paul (1 Cor. 11) saying he gave thanks.

Sometimes the blessing is directed toward a person, as in Numbers 6:24, “The Lord bless you and keep you,” or less often toward an object to be used by people, as in Exodus 23:25, “I (the Lord) will bless your bread and water.”

Blessing, then is first of all to give praise and thanks to God for someone or something. Secondly it is thereby to invoke God’s favor upon those for whom the thanks are offered, either in general or in some particular enterprise, such as getting married, going on a journey, or exercising a ministry. The Western liturgical tradition has tended to use *bless* as a transitive verb with a person or thing as its object, rather than to bless God for it.

The blessing of things is rooted in the doctrine of creation, specifically that, “God saw everything that he had made, and it was very good” (Genesis 1:31), and that, “Everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected provided it is received with thanksgiving; for it is sanctified by God’s word and by prayer” (1 Tim. 4:4–5). To bless an object is to recognize it as part of God’s creation and to affirm its use to the glory of God. It does not imply that the creation is profane and needs to be somehow altered or purified in order to be fit for sacred use. Although the consecration of the eucharist is a complex special case, the blessing of things is usually directed toward the people who use the things, not toward the things themselves.

In liturgical use we bless both people and things. We bless the congregation at the end of services, sick people, penitents, those entering ministries, newborn babies, the eucharistic elements, baptismal water, chrism, oil for the sick, wedding rings, palms, ashes, organs, churches, books, houses, bells, crosses. . .the list could go on. In each case we ask God to pour grace and favor upon the person, either in general, or in some particular circumstance, for example, “The Lord be in your heart and upon your lips that you may truly and humbly confess your sins...” (BCP 447) or “Bless the ministry of these persons and give them grace...” (BOS 135) or “Bless all who live here with the gift of your love...” (BOS 155) Liturgical blessings are reserved to priests or (in some cases) bishops, but apart from the liturgy, others give blessings: parents bless their children, and those who eat bless their food.

Liturgically we distinguish between “pronouncing blessings,” which is limited to priests and bishops and praying for them, which anyone may do, e.g., “The almighty and merciful Lord, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, bless us and keep us,” (BCP 135) which is said by the officiant at the end of Compline. The difference, presumably, has to do with the official authorization of the priest to pronounce blessings in the name of God and the Church, although it would be difficult to argue that there is a difference in effect, for it is hard to see how it is not the “prayer of the Church” which God has promised to answer which is invoked in both cases.

Historically the nuptial blessing in the Roman Rite was a blessing of the bride as she entered her new status, but in Northern European use it came to be a blessing of both parties. (See Kenneth Stevenson, *Nuptial Blessing*) The blessing is not the same thing as the covenant of marriage, which the couple themselves enter. It is the blessing of the Church on those entering in, and is therefore comparable to other blessings of people entering a new state.

Almost any person or thing, or any human activity can be and has been the subject of blessing. Solemn prayers are offered for armies setting off to war, and baseball players coming up to bat sign themselves with the cross. The Church formally blesses fishing fleets and fox hunts (even though many Christians consider fox hunting immoral). The blessing does not always mean that the Church favors the activity (such as fighting a war), but that it asks God's care and protection for those engaging in it, and assures them of God's love and the Church's continuing prayers.

Blessing, then, is about God's loving relationship with human beings, the goodness of creation, especially of the gifts which God has given us to use and enjoy, and the offering of "ourselves, our souls and bodies" back to God in thanksgiving, remembering that all we are and have comes from God, and dedicating it to God's honor and glory, so that its use becomes a means of communion with God.

CATECHESIS AND SAME-SEX BLESSINGS—A REVIEW

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Catechesis is the process by which people are instructed in the Christian faith and are assisted in reflecting on their life in light of their faith in order to mature as Christians, become authentic disciples of Jesus Christ, and live the Gospel. It is an intentional life-long process of formation, education, and instruction within the context of a community of faith. As Christians within the Anglican/Episcopal tradition, our catechetical ethos is necessarily based on three interrelated sources of authority: scripture, reason, and tradition, as well as our common worship according to *The Book of Common Prayer*.

The task of adult catechesis is to create environments and processes that invite Christian people to journey together—exploring, studying, reflecting, and acting in and toward faith. Catechesis is about hearing and telling our stories; articulating fundamental questions about what it means to be human and in relationship with God and with each other; listening deeply to each other and making connections; and discerning our mission in the world. Catechesis is essentially dialogical and centered within a community of faith. It is about sharing human hopes and fears within the context of care and compassion. It is a journey toward faith and wholeness.

For many people, speaking about human sexuality from a religious perspective brings with it feelings of guilt and sinfulness. Although it is possible to discover in history the reasons why these negative and erroneous impressions about sexuality were taught, it is more important within the context of Christian catechesis to facilitate the development of a Christian spirituality of human sexuality based on the assumptions of health and wholeness. Our sexuality is sacred because it finds its source in God's love. Its power provides the possibility of the most profound relationship between people. Through the Incarnation

all human beings share in the capacity to live within the communion of God's love. One of the goals of genuine catechesis—throughout the human lifecycle—is to assist people to integrate their sexuality into their personal life, and to give a Christian meaning to this integration.

If our Christian catechesis is aimed at the support of whole persons, we will need to encourage people to become aware of their sexuality as a gift from God, and uphold the spiritual, psychological, and physical intimacy between couples, whether those involved are of the same sex or different sexes. In so doing, we will have to face personal wounds due to misunderstandings of sexuality, as well as prejudices against people within our faith communities. We will need to encourage all couples in covenanted relationships to live their commitment faithfully and form a family responsibly.

Most adults living in our society today, from many different social contexts, struggle with issues relating to family life, work, school, or church. They experience anxiety over their own future, their children's future, and the future of the world. They are challenged through health crises, employment issues, and housing costs. If we as a church are not compelled to listen to each other, to support healthy relationships, to build community, to clarify problems, and to work toward a just world, then where in our society will this vision be sustained? If we are not committed to assisting others in making connections between their experiences and hopes, and the stories, traditions, values, and rituals of our faith community, then where will people find meaning and spiritual refreshment?

The Gospel empowers us to reflect, and to discern, and to act. Catechesis involves human beings in communities of faith engaged in the process of interpreting our most profound concerns, continuously reframing difficult questions, and risking to see the meaning of the Christian life in new ways. It is an invitation to live a more fully Christian life.

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**A REFLECTION ON THE FOREGOING ARTICLES:
THE VIRTUES OF IGNORANCE, HUMILITY,
AND REVERENCE FOR MYSTERY**

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The reader of these articles and the literature that they cite will have noted that the authors, Episcopalians, all of whom are devoted disciples of Jesus Christ, think very differently. For the most part, they have studied the scriptures in their context and grappled with the tradition of the Church, yet they have arrived at very different points of view on homosexuality and the blessing of same-sex unions. This state of things is not surprising, however. It is certainly not established that all homosexual acts and desires have a single cause. To further complicate the matter, there is no unanimously held view of same-sex unions in the gay community, and the same variety exists in the opinions of those opposed to or hesitant about blessing such unions. In addition, evidence can be brought forward from the social and biological sciences in support of several positions on these subjects. Finally, people holding various points of view not unnaturally organize politically around their positions, and the amassing and solidifying of political power tends to frustrate the search for truth.

Among the choices facing the Church is the possibility of allowing the political process to dominate, ending the issue without settling it, by taking an up-or-down vote. Far from establishing truth, such an attempt at closure would deny that which most characterizes the state of theological knowledge at this point: ignorance.

It might be more comfortable to describe this state as partial knowledge, but it is healthier to call it ignorance. The fact that there is no single way to assemble the theological evidence, and that there is considerable disagreement about what the sciences have to tell us, argues for an acknowledgment yet again that “our knowledge is imperfect.” Rather than choosing between competing truth-claims, we seem better poised to say that while numbers of us may perhaps believe ourselves to observe from a distance several aspects of the truth, the best description of our overall state is ignorance.

To admit that we are not ready, theologically or scientifically, to say a defining word about the life of homosexuals in the church betokens the much broader disagreement, in practice, among very faithful people regarding sexual mores in general. It appears that, in practice, many otherwise committed Christians believe that engaging in sex outside of marriage is not wrong for them, but the existence of this majority practice, mistaken or not, has not been thoroughly acknowledged and addressed by the Church. This fact reminds us that there has not been a serious and thorough-going attempt among us at a theological anthropology—a Christian definition of the human person—for far too long. Given the state of our knowledge, such an enterprise would be itself tentative and unsatisfying, but it is an essential undertaking nonetheless.

The easy path in the face of ignorance is to deny it, and aggressively to assert certainty where there may be at best one way of assembling the evidence that seems most compelling to us. It is easy to deny that those who threaten or seem to oppress us have any evidence on their side or that they operate from a position of personal and intellectual integrity. It is necessary for our spiritual health that we refrain from such denial.

The more difficult path is to admit that among issues that some see as justice and fulfillment, and that others see as sin and distortion of humanity, we do not know everything. The questions about human sexuality (biologically or theologically) extend far beyond the question of the activities of a relatively small percentage of the human population, and it is important that all the questions be addressed in an integrated way.

Can the Church take the corporate stand of admitting its ignorance and respecting at the same time those among Christ’s followers who hold disparate points of view? After all, no one is suggesting that those holding the other opinion cannot be baptized or receive Holy Communion. Can we allow our ignorance and disagreement to be transcended by our undenied unity in Jesus Christ?

Humility has been defined as the ability to be taught by each person one encounters. This definition may not say all there is to say about humility, but it is certainly an important part of any explanation of what it means to be humble. When people disagree with us, we tend to see them as opponents or dismiss them as ideologues. Humble people with active awareness of their ignorance are free to learn from those who are different or who think differently, and humbly to relate to them on a new level, that of mystery.

We are fearfully and wonderfully made as a species. In addition, each human being is an immensely complex product of many influences, from the biological to the spiritual.

Proceeding from this truth, we encounter each human being with the reverence due mystery, and encounter each practicing Christian as God's work in progress. Even when we reprove what we believe to be error on the part of a brother or sister, this reverence for mystery mandates a gentleness with each other that is probably the best testimony we can give to the Truth who took our flesh. Perhaps we do well to understand the command to "speak the truth in love" by addressing and hearing each person we engage with the reverence appropriate to the complexity of creation and the unique path of personal formation incarnate in that individual.

In this context of reverence—and humility—it seems best not to take absolutist positions on a national level about what cannot be known with great certainty. Whatever are the historical facts about a Council of Jerusalem, we see in Acts 15 some in the early Church being asked to accept those with whom they could not agree about holiness of life, while those for whom the way was being paved were charged not to outrage the sensibilities of other communities in the Church. Local fellowships worked out their ways of life accordingly. This approach could have been belittled as "compromise" only by those who could see no ambiguity in the situation. This is a fact often hidden from us because the view of St. Paul, that Gentile converts need not be circumcised or keep most of the rest of code of purity, triumphed completely and is now what we think is normal and normative. It is hard to remember that for Jewish Christians, like other Jews of their time, the concept of a law being "merely" one of ritual behavior was offensive and absurd. We seldom appreciate the extent to which St. James was taking a great risk in reconciling the Jewish and Gentile factions in the nascent Church.

The point here is not the content of James' injunction, which concerned things no longer even discussed for the most part, although it did touch on sexual matters at one point. Rather, it is that although each side worried about whether the other's stand on the issue of purity would weaken the Christian message, their fears were not realized. Points of view that really did threaten the Christian faith, what we now call "ancient heresies," were ultimately rejected, and the Gospel continued to spread.

When we simply cannot agree that one view compels the allegiance all faithful people, as is the case today, the reverently ignorant thing to do is either to abstain altogether from making a decision, or else to allow dioceses to find their own way in the matter, and only much later, if ever, come to some general agreement. The fact that people's lives, not merely their ideas, are to some extent at issue here suggests providing for local resolution rather than doing nothing. In the diocese, it is the task of the bishop, as chief teacher and pastor, to know the state of understanding of matters of sexuality among local clergy and people, and to teach and to foster discussion accordingly. Such an approach also allows broader participation in discussion by those whom any decision would affect. All of this is a primary instance of the Anglican principle of "subsidiarity," our preference for doing on the provincial or international level only what cannot be done at the fundamental level of the diocese. On this basis the charitable recommendation of the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music commends itself to the Church. The principal alternative seems to

be schism, which many an ancient Christian believed to be a state far worse than heresy or ignorance.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE RESOLUTION OF ISSUES

Resolution A065 Resolution on Issues Related to Committed Same-Sex Relationships

1 *Resolved*, the House of ____ concurring, That the 73rd General Convention
2 urge congregations, dioceses and every other church group and organization
3 to facilitate genuine and respectful encounter between heterosexual and homo-
4 sexual parishioners, recognizing that they live different life-styles, hold differ-
5 ent opinions but share one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and using the materials
6 in the Response to C003s Report to enable a dialog that is comprehensive and
7 transforming; and be it further

8 *Resolved*, That each Diocese, under the spiritual and pastoral direction of its
9 bishop, shall determine the resolution of issues related to same-sex relationships,
10 including the blessing of such relationships, and the ordination of homosexual
11 Christians.

Explanation

The 65th General Convention of this church, meeting in 1976 in Minneapolis affirmed “that homosexual persons are children of God who have a full and equal claim with all other persons upon the love, acceptance, and pastoral concern and care of the church.” The Baptismal Covenant establishes us all as members of Christ and of one another, incorporating and transcending our differences, calling us to seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving our neighbors as we love ourselves, respecting the dignity of every human being. Because the continuing debate within the church on questions of human sexuality has led to a variety of responses on the part of dioceses and congregations, dialog and pastoral action in dioceses leading toward the resolution of these differences is essential.

THE REVISION, RENEWAL, AND ENRICHMENT OF THE COMMON WORSHIP OF THE CHURCH

Prepared in response to Resolution C021s of the 72nd General Convention meeting in Philadelphia in 1997 for discussion at the 73rd General Convention meeting in Denver in 2000

Resolution C021s of the 72nd General Convention Of the Renewal and Enrichment of the Common Worship of this Church

Resolved, That the 72nd General Convention direct the Standing Liturgical Commission and the Standing Commission on Constitution and Canons to submit to the 73rd General Convention for first reading an amendment to the Constitution of this church to add to Article X an authorization for preparation and use of additional liturgical materials, and be it further

Resolved, That the Standing Liturgical Commission be directed to prepare a plan for liturgical Revision and Enrichment of the common worship of this church to be presented to the 73rd General Convention, and be it further

Resolved, That this plan include forms of worship reflective of our multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, multi-lingual and multi-generational church while providing rites and structures that ensure the unity of Common Prayer, and be it further

Resolved, That any new or revised rites when authorized be available for distribution in a variety of forms, including multi-media and electronic options, and be it further

Resolved, That the Standing Liturgical Commission be directed to prepare for publication and use alternative liturgical materials to be presented to the 74th General Convention, and be it further

Resolved, That the Standing Liturgical Commission present the necessary budget required for this process of liturgical Revision and Enrichment to the 73rd General Convention.

Brief history of the 1979 revision process

There was never anything by the wit of man (sic) so well devised, or so sure established, which in continuance of time hath not been corrupted: as among other things, it may plainly appear by the common prayers of the church, commonly called Divine Service...

Preface to the first Book of Common Prayer

Since, in the human condition, and with the passage of time, corruption of things Divine is to be expected, the need for the ongoing revision and reordering of our Common Prayer has been evident from the beginning, not only due to the creaturely nature of worship, but due to the dynamic nature of cultures as well. For in order to present the unchanging truths and realities of the Divine life in worship, the church must of necessity use those ever-changing agencies found in the human cultures in which it incarnates, employing outward and visible human means and structures, passing and mutable, to reveal inner, invisible and unchanging Divine realities, eternal and holy. In this way the church imitates the Incarnation of the Word, at all times and in all places, giving birth to Christ in every culture, from generation to generation.

However, a sudden and drastic revision of our Common Prayer has often proven traumatic to the People of God: it is therefore desirable conscientiously to attend to the gradual and ongoing revision and reordering of our worship.

The rise of the liturgical movement in the Roman Church in Europe

In the early years of this century there was a flourishing of biblical theology, patristics, and ecumenism in Europe. After World War I this renewal led to the rise of a liturgical movement in Germany, France, Belgium, Austria, and Holland. This movement gathered its energy from the growing awareness of the anthropological, sociological, psychological, and pastoral dimensions of worship. Increased lay participation in worship and ministry was a driving force in the movement.

The Anglican Communion

The involvement of the Anglican Communion in the liturgical movement did not really take place until the 1930s. The 1928 revision of the Book of Common Prayer did

not reflect the work of the liturgical movement. Hippolytus, an important text for future liturgical development, was only identified in 1916. The text was published nearly twenty years later by Burton Scott Easton (General Seminary) in 1933 and by Dom Gregory Dix (England) in 1934

Some of the early pioneers were Father A. G. Hebert in England, Dean William Palmer Ladd and Walter Lowrie in the United States. Their early work included the development of “parish communions”, the restoration of public baptisms, and the full and active participation of the congregation, especially in the parts of the rites formerly reserved to choirs and clergy.

Many of the recent discoveries of liturgical scholarship were included in The Oxford American Prayer Book Commentary written by Massey Shepherd, Jr. (1950). The 1958 Lambeth Conference recognized that the time for Prayer Book revision had arrived and set forth guidelines which were more fully developed by the Anglican Congress of 1963.

The Episcopal Church in the United States

The General Convention of 1928 approved the establishment of a Standing Liturgical Commission. Included in its charge was the task of preparing for the revision of the American Prayer Book. In 1949 the church celebrated the 400th anniversary of the 1549 Book of Common Prayer, and under the vital influence of Associated Parishes for Liturgy and Mission the Episcopal Church entered the liturgical movement. The Standing Liturgical Commission was reconstituted and required to educate the church towards Prayer Book revision. In 1950 the first in the series of *Prayer Book Studies* was published.

The religious communities, especially the Society of St. John the Evangelist, pioneered the restoration of the rites of Holy Week, The Triduum and the Easter Season. The liturgical witness of monasteries and convents has had a lasting impact on the Episcopal Church, first in giving these rites to Episcopalians, but also in facilitating the entry of many clergy and parishes into the liturgical movement.

In 1964 The General Convention charged the Standing Liturgical Commission to present to the 1967 Convention concrete proposals for revision. *The Liturgy of the Lord's Supper* was presented and approved for trial use. The principle of trial use included gathering and examining responses to the content and form of the rites. *Services for Trial Use* was authorized by the Convention of 1970, additional rites being authorized in 1973. These, including the revised rites of initiation, the eucharistic rites, the daily office, and a revised Psalter, were published as *Authorized Services 1973*. In 1975 additional texts were made available to the church in small booklets containing alternative texts for certain rites, including revisions of the rites for baptism, confirmation and marriage.

From 1964 the process of revision included the work of several drafting committees, gathering responses and suggestions from several hundred consultants appointed in various dioceses and from the church abroad. Some of the drafting committees included ecumenical participation, and many of the consultants were drawn from other denominations. The Rev. Leo Malania served as coordinator for Prayer Book revision and Captain Howard Galley as assistant.

The 1928 book was not used uniformly in the same way. A wide range of interpretation in the style and ceremonial it called for and permitted was understood and applied. The tradition of the 1928 Book was in fact a diversity of application of a common use in the

worship of the church. The 1979 revision continued and expanded this tradition, explicitly offering a range of choices, calling for local liturgical decisions which would enable the liturgy truly to be spoken and sung in the voice of the worshipping community.

The full report of the Commission, known as the *Draft Proposed Book of Common Prayer* was approved, with some amendments, in 1976 when it became the *Proposed Book of Common Prayer* which was approved in 1979 and became the *Standard Book*.

It is important to note—even if only briefly in summary—some of the gains achieved by the 1979 revision. It participated in a major shift in the liturgical self-understanding of the church that took place as a result of the rediscovery of the roots of Christian worship:

- balancing a personal with a corporate piety; reclaiming the vision of the church; (baptismal concerns, ecclesiological concerns, soteriological concerns)
- complementing a penitential spirituality with one grounded in baptism
- a penitential piety with one confident of forgiveness;
- an emphasis on contrition with an emphasis on celebration; from “I am not worthy,” to “made worthy to stand before you;” the primacy of place given to the “Alleluia.” (soteriological concerns)
- balancing “humble access” with “no more a stranger or a guest, but like a child at home;” (eucharistic/ecclesiological concerns)
- complementing “Take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for thee, and feed on him in thy heart by faith with thanksgiving,” with “The Gifts of God for the People of God;” (eucharistic/ecclesiological concerns)
- balancing a priestly prerogative or duty with the identity of an assembly at prayer; (theology of priest and people/priest among the people concerns; priesthood of all believers)
- developing a series of discrete observances into a cycle of celebration with a central focus and a ritual climax; (concerns of the liturgical year; structures of liturgy and structures of redemption: Paschal Mystery and Baptism as the central features of the entire church year)
- complementing the worship of God in God’s transcendent otherliness as “Almighty God” with encountering God as the One whom Jesus called “Father.” (Even though this reclaiming of a personal relationship with God came before our recognition of the extent of sexism in the language of worship, the shift in the preferred form of address from a remote form to a familiar one remains significant.)
- from taking Tudor English for granted to a turn to primacy in worship for contemporary English. (vernacular concerns)

This list is not complete, nor is it offered as the final word on the 1979 revision. It stands here as a reminder of its contribution to the Common Worship of this church, without denying the tasks it left undone or diminishing the challenges which still lie before us.

As a result of the 1979 revision our church moved beyond the polarizing divisions of high/low, evangelical/catholic, charismatic churchmanship to the broad possibilities the new Book offered. It is important to note that for some this shift to what was intended to be a more centrist, inclusive way represented losses too costly to bear.

The future work of revision, renewal, and enrichment must begin with the acknowledgement of the disruption and division that accompanied the achievement of the 1979 Book of Common Prayer. For some Episcopalians this experience left them feeling so disenfranchised and alienated that they were eventually compelled to choose various forms of separation from ECUSA.

The 1979 Book of Common Prayer has shaped a church for whom the Eucharist is the principal service of worship, their identity of the gathered people as the Body of Christ its primary self-description, and the Paschal Mystery the central metaphor of the faith it shares in Jesus Christ.

Assumptions

The overarching assumption behind the Commission's proposal is that the Revision, Renewal, and Enrichment of our Common Worship consist of four phases:

- a data collecting phase involving as many Episcopalians as possible from as many aspects of our life as possible, leading to the formulation of the scope of the revision (to be completed in time for the 74th General Convention, 2003)
- a writing and composing phase during which liturgical materials are revised, created, tested, interpreted, etc., in preparation for a first reading in 2009
- work in preparation for the second reading in 2012
- ongoing liturgical catechesis to support the revision, renewal, and enrichment of the Common Worship of this church.

At every stage of this work the Commission will facilitate the involvement and participation of

- Parishes
- Dioceses
- Provinces
- Church organizations
- Other Commissions
- Episcopal Seminaries, especially Departments of Liturgical Studies
- Other Provinces of the Anglican Communion
- Ecumenical partners

The following is a list of assumptions to guide our thinking as we begin to develop a plan for the process of Revision and Enrichment of our Common Worship:

- That the Common Worship of this church will continue in faithful adherence to the historic rites of the ancient church as they have been interpreted by our tradition, faithful to the pattern, heritage, and spirit of Anglican worship.
- That we will capitalize on what we learned from the 1979 revision.
- That recognition, integration, and celebration of the rich cultural diversity of our church will shape the intentions, planning, and execution of the revision process as well as the nature of the "product(s)".
- That the planning process will include significant attempts at involving a large portion of the church on national, diocesan, and local level(s) in identifying the goals of the revision process, its manner of its execution, and the nature of its "product(s)".

- That this process will issue in more than a book: a compendium of resources for our Common Worship, a standard and symbol of our unity, a program and resources for liturgical catechesis to develop and support the Common Worship of this church, a set of tools that enable us to take advantage of computer and electronic potential.
- That the process will issue in the production and approval of a Book of Common Prayer: What the shape of the “Book” will be needs to be determined especially in terms of computer technology, but the end product will be a book of some kind and configuration.
- That the process of the revision, renewal, and enrichment of the common worship of this church will be based on the essential and fundamental connection between baptism, eucharist, and ministry; further, the relationship between liturgy and mission should be recognized as organic and brought to liturgical expression as such. In the liturgy, participants do not prepare to engage themselves in mission once the liturgy is concluded, rather in the liturgical action itself they enact their lives as they would be if they were lived in the power and scope of the gospel. In this connection the relationship between liturgy, mission, and stewardship becomes clear and should also be brought to liturgical expression in the same way.
- That specific work on the 1979 text, both substantive and editorial, will be included, e.g., addressing expansive language concerns.
- That the process of revision will be careful to discern and separate what is ethnically English from what is fundamentally Episcopalian/Anglican in our Anglican Identity. Much of the debate about Anglican Identity becomes problematic for the minorities in our church if it is perceived to be a concern to emulate an English (in the sense of “exclusively white, upper-middle class”) way of life rather than about patterns of belonging that bind a worldwide communion in a life of Common Worship, witness, and service.
- That missiological and evangelical imperatives will shape the Common Worship of this church, encouraging and allowing the greatest diversity in development, style, and practice in order to welcome and include all whom God draws into our life.
- That a parallel pattern of reflection and authorization will be involved in the process of revision and beyond it. Sometimes reflection and/or authorization will begin at the local and move to the national or global level, sometimes from the global to the local.
- That music is an intrinsic element of the liturgical experience and is to be included in the process from the very beginning. That musical elements of the process of renewal and enrichment of our Common Worship will be developed simultaneously, in an integrated way and be published in a form that integrates text and song. The question of the significance and purpose of authorized hymnody will need to be considered.
- That the process of facilitating the discovery of a community’s song is critical in the process of renewing and enriching its worship. This complex and chal-

lenging process is not achieved by the provision of hymnals and supplements alone. The development of a renewed and enriched Common Worship in this church requires engagement in this process of discovery and the facilitation of it with programs and resources. Service music that is accessible, varied, and engaging must underscore the primary importance of the congregational music that is proper to the Eucharist. Aesthetic quality, diversity, and theological integrity together are to serve as criteria for musical composition and selection.

- That thanksgiving for and stewardship of creation will feature more prominently in the Common Worship of this church.
- That the process of Revision and Enrichment of our Common Worship will not be one project but many projects. Respect for the many languages that are used in our Common Worship and the desire to integrate and celebrate the diversity they represent require that resources for Worship be developed simultaneously in the different languages—as directed by the General Convention or by the Commission’s own initiative, in ways and at a pace appropriate to the language and its culture.
- That, pending approval by the General Convention, the Revised Common Lectionary will be used.
- That the continuing work of the Expansive Language Committee will be considered as part of the plan.
- That the language used in the Common Worship of this church be evocative, rich in imagery, worthy of a people’s Common Prayer, and able to inspire prayer that is authentic.
- That the other liturgical resources—Lesser Feasts and Fasts, Book of Occasional Services, etc.—be included in the plan.
- That the question of one or two Rites (one in contemporary English and the other in traditional language) needs to be addressed.
- That a program of liturgical catechesis will be considered an essential aspect of the process of revision and renewal.
- That educational and catechetical resources will be developed and used during the period of the revision.
- That a program of education and training will support the continuing development of our Common Worship after the new book is completed, authorized, and in use.
- That the revision will take account of trends and developments in the Anglican Communion and the wider church and will use the services of consultants from the ecumenical community.
- That our liturgical ties with the wider church—both official and informal—will be nurtured by the revision and its “product(s)”.

- That the Constitutional and Canonical issues involved in the various aspects and stages of Prayer Book revision will be resolved in consultation with the Commission on Constitution and Canons.

SCOPE AND STRUCTURE

SCOPE

To include in all the languages the church uses:

The Calendar

The Daily Office

The Great Litany

The Collects

Proper Liturgies for Special Days

Holy Baptism

The Holy Eucharist

The Pastoral Offices

Confirmation

A Form of Commitment to Christian Service

Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage

Thanksgiving for the Birth or Adoption of a Child

Reconciliation of a Penitent

Ministration to the Sick

Ministration at the Time of Death

Burial of the Dead

Episcopal Services

Ordination of a Bishop

Ordination of a Priest

Ordination of a Deacon

Litany for Ordinations

Celebration of a New Ministry

Consecration of a Church or Chapel

The Psalter

Prayers and Thanksgivings

An Outline of the Faith, or Catechism

Historical Documents of the Church

Tables for finding the Date of Easter and other Holy Days

The Lectionary

Sunday Eucharistic Lectionary

Weekday Eucharistic Lectionary

Daily Office Lectionary

Lesser Feasts and Fasts (and related resources)

The Book of Occasional Services

Enriching our Worship

Musical resources

The Hymnal 1982

Lift Every Voice
Wonder, Love, and Praise
Songs of Celebration, etc.

Expansive Language

Integrating the work of the Expansive Language Committee

Planning the continuing work of the Committee

Sacramental integrity: of the whole book with inter-relatedness of baptism, eucharist, and ministry as the core activity of Common Worship: especially the theology and ecclesiology of Baptism and Eucharist in relation to the theology and ecclesiology of ordination and ministry.

The Daily Office and the Cathedral Office

daily prayer that is occasional, corporate and public (and choral)

daily prayer that is regular, corporate, and public

daily prayer that is regular and private

Collects

Educational resources

Lesser Feasts and Fasts

Format

Collects

Lectionary

Biographies

Additional resources—prayers, litanies, blessings, writings by or about the person being commemorated

Educational resources

Book of Occasional Services

Format

What is “occasional”? What is the rationale for Table of Contents

What is the relation of BOS to BCP

Providing materials for the Catechumenate—what should they include, where should they reside (BCP or BOS?)

Educational resources

Enriching Our Worship

What is the function of Enriching our Worship in the continuing process of Revision, Renewal, and Enrichment of our Common Worship?

Structure

How will the Book of Common Prayer be structured?

Will it follow the Cranmerian ideal of a single book containing all the resources for Common Worship between the bindings of one book?

What does the potential of the electronic media hold?

How will those possibilities (and the actualities they will have become in 12 years) shape the materials to be used for the renewed and enriched Common Worship of this church?

Will the structure be the same for all languages?

What will constitute the uniformity in our diversity?

Will there be a series of books?

What will they be? Each separate? Or grouped in some series?

Daily Prayer

for individuals?

for communities that worship daily?

for parishes that worship occasionally?

Rites of Christian Initiation

Catechumenate

Baptism

Confirmation

The Holy Eucharist

Proper Liturgies for Special Days

Pastoral Offices

all together? in series? in separate bindings by rite?

Episcopal Services

all together? in series? in separate bindings by rite?

Catechism

What will be the relationship among electronic resources and any books that are printed? Bilingual or multi-lingual publications in parallel format?

Methodology

The following functions will have to be provided

- Data gathering and interpretation in the different communities and languages engaged in the Common Worship of this church
- Sensitive and thoughtful support of the diverse and multi-cultural nature of the process
- Drafting and revising (recruiting, developing, maintaining, drafting committees, consultants, etc.)
- Developing educational and catechetical materials to support the enrichment of our Common Worship - during the revision process and beyond
- Coordination, maintenance, and support
- Testing the texts and rites; collating and interpreting responses and suggestions
- Editorial
- Theological consistency, sacramental integrity
- Relating to the Anglican Communion and the wider church

We will need to develop a culturally sensitive model for defining needs in the context of our diversity, conceiving the end product in relation to a series of goals, drafting, and editing texts, developing resources (both educational and liturgical), supporting and coordinating the entire process while the regular life of the church (with its needs and demands) continues apace. This project will make significant demands on people, time and funds.

Funding

The process of revision and enrichment will be an expensive project requiring the services of some full-time professionals (at least two were appointed to support the 1979 revision), several consultants as well as many volunteers working sometimes alone and sometimes in drafting committees. Several hundred people were involved in the many years of work that resulted in the 1979 Book.

Funding of salaries, meetings, communication and consultant services will have to be estimated.

The funding of the process of revision and renewal should be a separate line item in the Budget. The process should not be—and should certainly not be seen to be—in competition with the on-going program life of the church.

The decision to fund the process of the renewal and enrichment of our Common Worship will be a critical one, as indeed will be the amount of funding allocated to the project. This work will be hard work demanding significant financial backing. While a host of faithful people will volunteer countless hours, it will still be a very expensive project.

BEYOND THE PROVISION OF A BOOK

Towards the Renewal and Enrichment of Our Common Worship

If this is genuinely to be a process of revision and enrichment, then we are concerned with more than the provision of texts but with developing and supporting the whole experience of the Common Worship of the church. This will require the creation of educational programs and materials to increase liturgical understanding and improve liturgical skills. These resources must be produced alongside the drafting process and be shaped by the worship it hopes to enable. The provision of these resources of training and catechesis will continue to be essential after the book is authorized.

What shape will this take? Some ideas include diverse training opportunities in multiple settings, creative use of print and electronic media, a program comparable to the Leadership Program for Musicians in Small Congregations, etc. There will be significant costs attached to such a program.

To achieve a renewed and enriched Common Worship is not a task that can be achieved by a deadline. It is the vocation and aspiration of a living church. The timetable we propose will launch a new way for the church to be faithful to its responsibility for its Common Worship. Each language group will work at its own pace. Its work will be influenced by and in turn influence the work of other groups.

Local traditions will be established and then taken on by others until they become widely used. Diocesan and national groupings will initiate experiments that local groups will test and evaluate.

What the Commission envisions as fulfilling Resolution C021s is the ongoing enrichment of the Common Worship of this church: expressed in the faithful and transfiguring worship it offers, enabled by the creation of the rites that are the vehicles for its prayers, and supported by educational programs and resources that shape, inform, develop, and nurture its liturgical spirituality.

Resolution A066 Of the Revision, Renewal and Enrichment of the Common Worship of this Church

1 *Resolved*, the House of _____ concurring, That the 73rd General Con-
 2 vention direct the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music to prepare and pres-
 3 ent to the 74th General Convention a plan for liturgical Revision, Renewal, and
 4 Enrichment of the Common Worship of this Church based on a thoroughgoing
 5 process of data-collection involving parishes, dioceses, provinces, and the orga-
 6 nizations of this church; and be it further

7 *Resolved*, That this plan include forms of worship reflective of our
 8 multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, multi-lingual, and multi-generational church while
 9 providing rites and structures that ensure the unity of Common Prayer; and be it
 10 further

11 *Resolved*, That any new or revised rites when authorized be available for
 12 distribution in a variety of forms, including multi-media and electronic options;
 13 and be it further

14 *Resolved*, That the Standing Liturgical Commission be directed to prepare
 15 for publication and use alternative liturgical materials to be presented to the 74th
 16 General Convention; and be it further

17 *Resolved*, That the sum of \$750,000.00 be appropriated for support of this
 18 program; this appropriation to be administered by the Office for Liturgy and
 19 Music.

Resolution A067 Inclusions in the Calendar of the Church Year

1 *Resolved*, the House of _____ concurring, That the General Conven-
 2 tion propose additional commemorations for inclusion in the Calendar of the
 3 Church Year and authorize trial use thereof for the triennium 2000 —2003, as
 4 follows

5 August 13—Florence Nightingale, Nurse, Social Reformer, 1910

6 June 12—Enmegahbowh, Priest and Missionary, 1902

7 October 11—Philip the Deacon

Resolution A068 Authorization of Trial Use of Commemorations

1 *Resolved*, the House of _____ concurring, That this 73rd General Con-
 2 vention authorize, for trial use until the General Convention of 2003, the com-
 3 memorations proposed by this Convention, with the following propers:

4 ***August 13***

5 **Florence Nightingale**

6 *Nurse, Social Reformer, 1910*

7 I. *A Rite I version of the collect will be provided.*

8 II. Life-giving God, you alone have power over life and death, over health
 9 and sickness, Give power, wisdom, and gentleness to those who follow the lead
 10 of Florence Nightingale, that they, bearing with them your presence, may not
 11 only heal but bless, and shine as lanterns of hope in the darkest hours of pain and
 12 fear; through Jesus Christ, the healer of body and soul, who lives and reigns with
 13 you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. *Amen.*

14 Psalm - 73:23-29
15 Lesson – Isaiah 58:6-11
16 Gospel - Matthew 25:31-46
17 Preface of a Saint

18 Post Communion Prayer

19 God of eternal compassion, you fill our lives with your plenteousness and
20 gladden our hearts with the new wine of your kingdom. Grant us so to behold
21 your Son in every friend and stranger, that we may minister to him as he first
22 ministered to us; for his sake, who is Lord now and for ever. *Amen.*

23 **June 12**

24 **Enmegahbowh**

25 *Priest and Missionary, 1902*

26 I. Almighty God, thou didst lead thy pilgrim people of old with fire and
27 cloud; grant that the ministers of thy church, following the example of blessed
28 Enmegahbowh, may stand before thy holy people, leading them with fiery zeal
29 and gentle humility. This we ask through Jesus, the Christ, who liveth and
30 reigneth with thee in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God now and forever.
31 *Amen.*

32 II. Almighty God, you led your pilgrim people of old with fire and cloud;
33 grant that the ministers of your church, following the example of blessed Enmega-
34 hbowh, may stand before your holy people, leading them with fiery zeal and
35 gentle humility. This we ask through Jesus, the Christ, who lives and reigns with
36 you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God now and forever. *Amen.*

37 Psalm - 129

38 Lesson - Isaiah 52:7-10

39 Lesson - 1 Peter 5:1-4

40 Gospel - Luke 6:17-23

41 Preface

42 **October 11**

43 **Philip the Deacon**

44 I. *A Rite I version of the collect will be provided.*

45 II. Holy God, your Spirit guided Philip the Deacon to show how ancient
46 prophecies are fulfilled in Jesus, the Messiah: open our minds to understand the
47 Scriptures and deepen our faith in Christ; who is alive and reigns with you and
48 the Holy Spirit one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

49 Psalm - 67

50 Lesson - Isaiah 53:7-11

51 Lesson - Acts 8:26-40

52 Gospel - Matthew 28:18-20

53 Preface

**SUPPLEMENTAL LITURGICAL MATERIALS: ENRICHING OUR WORSHIP II:
MINISTRY WITH THE SICK AND DYING AND BURIAL OF A CHILD**
INTRODUCTION

The 72nd General Convention directed the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music to “develop supplemental liturgical materials for the Pastoral Offices of the Book of Common Prayer and to present those materials to the 73rd General Convention” (Resolution D086). The SCLM assigned this task to the Expansive Language Committee, chaired by Phoebe Pettingell.

At each Convention from 1985 through 1997, the General Convention has authorized the development and use of supplemental liturgical materials for the Holy Eucharist and Morning and Evening Prayer. The primary purpose of these materials has been to provide texts using inclusive and expansive language, that is, language which expands the images used to speak of and to God, and language in which all worshipers find themselves, and their religious experience of God as revealed in Christ, more completely reflected. These principles continue to inform the work of the Expansive Language Committee.

Mindful of the charge of the 72nd General Convention to consider “forms of worship reflective of our multicultural, multiethnic, multilingual and multigenerational Church while providing rites and structures that ensure the unity of Common Prayer” (C021s), the committee began its work by reviewing all the pastoral offices in the 1979 Book of Common Prayer. Under the guidance of the SCLM, the committee then focused its efforts on developing supplemental materials for Ministry with the Sick and Dying and for Burial of a Child.

In drafting these rites, the committee drew upon a wide range of sources: Scripture; contemporary prayerbooks of other churches of the Anglican Communion, including Canada, New Zealand, Australia, Scotland, Ireland, and South Africa; traditional materials from Orthodox and medieval western sources; and hymnody of different American cultures. Rather than borrowing directly from these sources, in most cases the committee has adapted material in order to craft prayers that will resonate with contemporary English-speaking Americans, including those who are not familiar with traditional liturgical language. A number of prayers have been newly written. Some texts from the 1979 BCP have been included; a few of these have been revised in order to update the language.

In addition to addressing concerns about inclusive and expansive language, the drafting committee was mindful of several other considerations:

- A number of parishes administer unction at the Sunday Eucharist, and healing services have become part of the life of many congregations. By using the structure of the Holy Eucharist as the basis of both A Public Service of Healing and Ministry in a Home or Health-Care Facility, Ministry with the Sick and Dying sets the Church’s ministry of healing in the context of the Church’s principal act of worship on the Lord’s Day.
- Both the 1928 and the 1979 Prayer Books moved away from an understanding of illness as divine punishment. These rites continue this development and proclaim the saving message of Jesus Christ.

- For Ministry in a Home or Health-care Facility and Ministration at the Time of Death, the committee has drafted texts with simple responses which can be used without everyone in the room having a Prayer Book.
- Advances in medical care since the 1979 rites were developed have resulted in situations where decisions are made about whether to continue the use of life-sustaining care. To respond to this pastorally, the committee developed “A Form of Prayer when Life-Sustaining Treatment is Withheld or Discontinued,” based upon rites first prepared in the Diocese of Washington. In addition, these new materials provide pastoral direction on the need for Christians to prepare advance directives for health care.
- A broad range of collects, many of them newly written, address a number of different pastoral situations, including a more extensive selection of prayers for use by those who are sick and prayers for use by children. Prayers for those with specific illnesses are not included in order that the rites not imply that particular illnesses are of more concern to the Church.
- The 1979 Prayer Book eliminated a separate office for the Burial of a Child (which had been introduced in the 1928 BCP). Pastoral experience since 1979 has indicated the desirability of a rite which responds to the particular dynamics of the death of a child.

To assist the committee in its work, a first draft of the new materials was circulated to a number of consultants, including professors of liturgy and pastoral theology at seminaries of the Episcopal Church, laity and clergy with extensive experience in pastoral care, and representatives of other Christian traditions. Responses from these consultants were taken into account as the committee refined the new materials.

Resolution A069 Additions to Supplemental Liturgical Materials

- 1 *Resolved*, the House of _____ concurring, That this 73rd General Con-
- 2 vention authorize the additions to Supplemental Liturgical Materials for use
- 3 during the next triennium; such use always under the direction of the diocesan
- 4 bishop or ecclesiastical authority; and be it further
- 5 *Resolved*, that the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music is directed
- 6 to publish these materials under separate cover, bearing the title *Enriching Our*
- 7 *Worship II: Ministry with the Sick and Dying and Burial of a Child*; and be it
- 8 further
- 9 *Resolved*, That future printings of *Enriching our Worship; Supplemental*
- 10 *Liturgical Materials* prepared by the Standing Liturgical Commission, 1997 be
- 11 titled *Enriching our Worship I: The Daily Office, Great Litany and Eucharist*

MINISTRY WITH THE SICK AND DYING

Introduction

In ministry with the sick and dying, the Church acts in the grace of God for the health and salvation of its members. This ministry is based on Jesus’ constant witness of concern and care for the sick. It is also shaped by the Epistle of James’ direction to the sick to call for the elders of the Church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of Jesus

Christ (James 5:14). James expects these actions to have three effects: the prayer of faith will save the sick, the Lord will raise them up, and their sins will be forgiven.

We may draw two conclusions from our knowledge of early Christian ministry with the sick, as illustrated in Holy Scripture: first, Christians were to call on the senior members of their own community for prayer for healing; second, the ministry those leaders offered was an extension of the Church's basic act of worship: the proclamation of the Word and the offering of bread and wine each Sunday.

Sacramental healing is traditionally called "unction," defined by the Prayer Book as "the rite of anointing the sick with oil, or the laying on of hands, by which God's grace is given for healing of spirit, mind, and body" (BCP p. 861). In *Ministry with the Sick and Dying*, healing is offered for any who feel the need for specific healing of spirit, mind, or body. While all Christians stand between the fullness of the baptismal gift of grace and the final consummation of that grace, and thus all are in need of healing, the sacrament is usually offered in response to some particular need or concern. The sacrament is particularly appropriate at times of discovery of illness, a turning point in an illness, a particular procedure, or a time of great distress.

Traditionally, the oil used to anoint the sick is pure olive oil, blessed by a priest or bishop. Unlike the chrism used for baptismal anointing, no fragrance is added to oil for the sick (some fragrances can be allergens or aggravate an illness).

Prayer is also an important dimension of *Ministry with the Sick and Dying*. Some Christians, including some of the Church's great theologians and saints (such as John of the Cross, Julian of Norwich, and John Donne), have found illness to be a catalyst and stimulus for prayer. But many sick people find their prayer hampered by illness. The support of others in prayer becomes even more important in these times.

These new rites for *Ministry with the Sick and Dying* include public services of healing, the incorporation of sacramental healing in the context of a regular Sunday or weekday celebration of the Eucharist, and individual ministrations in a home or health-care facility. In addition, the suggested passages of scripture are appropriate for use by a sick person, and a number of prayers are included specifically for use by a sick person.

ORDER OF SERVICE

Ministry with the Sick and Dying may include some or all of the following actions by the minister and people. For both a Public Service of Healing and Ministry in a Home or Health-care Facility, the order of service follows that of the Sunday Eucharist. When prayer for healing precedes the liturgy of the table ("The Holy Communion," BCP pp. 333, 361), it is more evident that participation in communion is the climax of the service.

GATHER IN THE NAME OF GOD

The gathering may take the form of a greeting such as "Peace be to this house (place) and all who dwell in it." Suggestions are provided below for a public service of healing.

PROCLAIM AND RESPOND TO THE WORD

One or more passages of scripture may be read. When ministering to individuals, the minister may comment briefly on the reading. A public service of healing ordinarily includes a homily or other form of response, such as song, talk, dance, instrumental music,

other art forms, silence. When Eucharist is to be celebrated (not administered from reserved sacrament), a reading from the Gospel is always included.

PRAY FOR THE WORLD AND THE CHURCH, PARTICULARLY FOR GOD’S HEALING GRACE

Prayer may be offered for individual(s) in need of healing and for the needs of the world and the Church. Laying on of hands (and anointing) is included as part of the Church’s work of intercession, and the subsequent administration of communion is then focused on participation in the Sacrament of Christ’s Body and Blood, which is the primary sacrament of healing. A confession of sin and absolution may be included prior to the laying on of hands. If communion is not included, the Lord’s Prayer follows the laying on of hands.

EXCHANGE THE PEACE

All present may greet one another in the name of Christ.

PARTICIPATE IN THE SACRAMENT OF CHRIST’S BODY AND BLOOD

The Eucharist is the primary sacrament of healing to all who seek it. A public service of healing may include celebration of the Eucharist, beginning with the offertory, or may conclude after the exchange of the Peace. When communion is taken by a Lay Eucharistic Minister (“Lay Eucharistic Visitor”) or an ordained minister to those who, by reason of illness or infirmity, are unable to participate in the Church’s eucharistic assembly, those who are ill or infirm are enabled to experience their relation to the community and join their personal faith and witness to that of their community. Sometimes, especially in situations of lengthy confinement, the Eucharist may be celebrated in the home or health-care facility; such on-site celebration of the Holy Eucharist for shut-in and seriously disabled persons may be an occasion of great joy and consolation.

Ministry with the Sick and Dying may conclude with a blessing. A public service of healing concludes with (a blessing and) a dismissal.

When unction is administered in the context of the Sunday Eucharist or a regular weekday Eucharist, the portion of “A Public Service of Healing” entitled “Laying on of Hands and Anointing” may be used. It is recommended that this take place immediately before the exchange of the Peace, so that it may be evident that participation in communion is the climax of the service.

MINISTERS OF THE RITES

Ministry with the Sick and Dying is under the direction of the Rector or other member of the clergy in charge of the local congregation.

Ordinarily, a priest or bishop presides at A Public Service of Healing. In the absence of a priest or bishop, a deacon or a lay reader may lead a service that includes the following:

*Gather in the Name of God
Proclaim and Respond to the Word
Pray for the World and the Church
Laying on of Hands and Anointing.*

When a deacon or lay reader leads A Public Service of Healing, the liturgy concludes with the exchange of the Peace or with a dismissal.

At A Public Service of Healing, lay persons should read the lessons which precede the Gospel and may lead the Litany for Healing. A deacon should read the Gospel, may lead the Litany for Healing, and should perform the customary functions of diaconal assistance at the Lord's Table (BCP p. 354). In the absence of a deacon, an assisting priest may perform the diaconal functions.

Oil for anointing must be blessed by a priest or bishop.

Under the direction of the Rector or other member of the clergy in charge of the local congregation, lay persons with a gift of healing may administer or assist in administering the laying on of hands and anointing.

Ministry in a Home or Health-Care Facility may be administered by an ordained or lay minister. If communion from the reserved sacrament is to be administered by a lay person, the guidelines for Lay Eucharistic Ministers are to be followed.

In case of serious illness, the member of clergy in charge of the congregation is to be notified immediately (BCP 1979, p. 453).

The Church's Teaching on Preparation for Death and Dying

Leaders of congregations have a responsibility to encourage their people to execute, review, and update advance directives for health care in the event that they might become unable to make and/or communicate decisions about their health care. Advance directives include both appointment of an agent to make health-care decisions (e.g., "durable power of attorney for health care") and a direction as to the care to be received in the limited circumstance of being terminally ill with death imminent (e.g., "living will"). Ordained and lay leaders should encourage their people to develop such written advance directives in accordance with the requirements of their civil jurisdiction.

Traditionally, The Book of Common Prayer has taught (BCP 1979, p. 445) that the member of the clergy in charge of the congregation is to instruct the people of the duty of Christian parents to make prudent provision for the well-being of their families, especially for the nurture and custody of minor children; and of all people, while they are in health, to make wills with the aid of duly licensed legal counsel. Such instruments should provide for the disposal of temporal goods, and, if possible, provide bequests for religious and charitable uses.

A PUBLIC SERVICE OF HEALING

This service is suitable for use in a congregation or other church setting. It may also be adapted as needed for use in a variety of settings, e.g., hospital, nursing home, or other health-care facility.

When unction is administered in the context of the Sunday Eucharist or a regular weekday Eucharist, the portion of this service entitled "Laying on of Hands and Anointing" is used. It is recommended that this take place immediately before the exchange of the Peace.

GATHER IN THE NAME OF GOD

The service may begin as appointed for a celebration of the Holy Eucharist, or with the Penitential Order, or with the following greeting

Minister The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.

People And also with you.

Minister Let us pray.

After a period of silence, the Minister then says one of the following Collects, or some other appropriate Collect

Loving God, the comfort of all who sorrow, the strength of all who suffer: accept our prayers, and to those who seek healing (especially *N.* and *N.*, and all whom we name in our hearts), grant the power of your grace, that the weak may be strengthened, sickness turned to health, the dying made whole, and sorrow turned into joy; through Jesus Christ our Savior. *Amen.*

or this

God our healer, whose mercy is like a refining fire: by the loving kindness of Jesus, heal us and those for whom we pray; that being renewed by you, we may witness your wholeness to our broken world, through Jesus Christ, in the power of the Spirit. *Amen.*

or this

Gracious God, we commend to your loving care all who suffer, especially those who come (here) seeking your healing grace (for themselves or others). Give them patience and hope in their distress; strengthen and uphold them in mind and body; and grant, by your intervention, that all your people may be made whole according to your desire; through Jesus Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit. *Amen.*

PROCLAIM AND RESPOND TO THE WORD

One or two Lessons are read before the Gospel.

Between the Lessons, and before the Gospel, a Psalm, hymn, or anthem may be sung or said.

The readings may be selected from the following list, or from “A Public Service of Healing” in The Book of Occasional Services, or from the Proper of the Day.

From the Old Testament

Job 7:1-4 (“human beings have a hard service on earth”)

Isaiah 35 (“eyes shall be opened... ears unstopped... the lame shall leap...”)

Isaiah 38:1-6 (the healing of Hezekiah); see also 2 Kings 20:1-7

Isaiah 49:14-16 (“I will not forget you”)

Isaiah 53:4-6 (“By his bruises we are healed”)

Ezekiel 36:26-28 (a new heart and a new spirit)

Ezekiel 37:12-14 (“I am going to open your graves”)

Psalms 13; 23; 30; 71; 86:1-7; 103:1-3; 126; 145:14-22; 147:1-7

From the New Testament

- Acts 3: 1 -10 (in the name of Jesus Christ...walk)
- 2 Corinthians 1:3-5 (God comforts us)
- James 5:14-16 (is anyone among you sick?)
- 1 Peter 2:21-24 (By his wounds you have been healed)
- 1 John 5:13-15 (... you have eternal life)

THE GOSPEL

- Matthew 5:2-10 (Beatitudes); see also Luke 6:20-23
- Matthew 8:5-10, 13 (healing centurion's servant); see also Luke 7:1-10
- Matthew 8:14-17 (healing Peter's mother-in-law); see also Mark 1:29-34; Luke 4:38-41
- Matthew 9:2-8 ("your sins are forgiven"); see also Mark 2:1-12; Luke 5:17-26
- Matthew 11:28-30 ("come to me all who are weary")
- Mark 6:7, 12-13 (the disciples anointed many who were sick)
- Mark 14:32-36 ("not what I want, but what you want")
- Luke 4:22-28 ("do here also in your hometown the things you did at Capernaum")
- Luke 8:41-56 (healing Jairus' daughter and woman with a hemorrhage); see also Matthew 9:18-26; Mark 5:21-43
- Luke 13:10-13 (healing of woman crippled for eighteen years)
- John 5:2-9 ("take up your bed and walk")
- John 6:47-51 ("I am the Bread of Life")
- John 21:18-19 ("when you are old...")
- Response to the Word

A homily or other form of response, such as song, talk, dance, instrumental music, other art forms, silence, may follow the Gospel.

PRAY FOR THE WORLD AND THE CHURCH, PARTICULARLY FOR GOD'S HEALING GRACE

One of the following litanies may be used.

A Litany for Healing

The Deacon or other leader introduces the Litany with these or similar words

Let us name before God those for whom we offer our prayers.

The people offer names either silently or aloud.

The Leader continues (any of the bracketed petitions may be omitted)

Let us offer our prayers for God's healing, saying, "Hear and have mercy" (or "Answer our prayer" or "Have mercy").

Holy God, source of health and salvation,
Here and after each petition, the people respond
Hear and have mercy

or

Answer our prayer

or

Have mercy.

Holy and Mighty, wellspring of abundant life,

Holy Immortal One, protector of the faithful,

Holy Trinity, the source of all wholeness,

(Blessed Jesus, your Holy Name is medicine for healing and a promise of eternal life,)

(Jesus, descendant of David, you healed all who came to you in faith,)

(Jesus, child of Mary, you embraced the world with your love,)

(Jesus, divine physician, you sent your disciples to preach the Gospel and heal in your name,)

(Jesus our true mother, you feed us the milk of your compassion,)

(Jesus, Son of God, you take away our sin and make us whole,)

(Jesus, eternal Christ, your promised Spirit renews our hearts and minds,)

Grant your grace to heal those who are sick, we pray to you, O God,

Give courage and faith to all who are disabled through injury or illness, we pray to you, O God,

Comfort, relieve, and heal all sick children, we pray to you, O God,

Give courage to all who await surgery, we pray to you, O God,

Support and encourage those who live with chronic illness, we pray to you, O God,

Strengthen those who endure continual pain, and give them hope, we pray to you, O God,

Grant the refreshment of peaceful sleep to all who suffer, we pray to you, O God,

Befriend all who are anxious, lonely, despondent, or afraid, we pray to you, O God,

Restore those with mental illness to clarity of mind and hopefulness of heart, we pray to you, O God,

Give rest to the weary, and hold the dying in your loving arms, we pray to you, O God,

Help us to prepare for death with confident expectation and hope of Easter joy, we pray to you, O God,

Give your wisdom and compassion to health-care workers, that they may minister to the sick and dying with knowledge, skill, and kindness, we pray to you, O God,

Uphold those who keep watch with the sick, we pray to you, O God,

Guide those who search for the causes and cures of sickness and disease, we pray to you, O God,

Jesus, Lamb of God,

Jesus, bearer of our sins,

Jesus, redeemer of the world,

If the Lord's Prayer is not to be used elsewhere, it follows here.

The following Collect may be added

Compassionate God: You so loved the world that you sent us Jesus to bear our infirmities and afflictions. Through acts of healing, he revealed you as the true source of health and salvation. For the sake of your Christ who suffered and died for us, conquered death,

and now reigns with you in glory, hear the cry of your people. Have mercy on us, make us whole, and bring us at last into the fullness of your eternal life. *Amen.*

(INCLUDE “LITANY OF HEALING” WITH CONCLUDING COLLECTS, BOS pp. 167-9)

Confession of Sin

A Confession of Sin may follow, if it has not been said at the beginning of the service.

(INCLUDE CONFESSION OF SIN AND ABSOLUTION FROM BCP AND Enriching Our Worship IN PARALLEL COLUMNS)

Confession of Need

Instead of or in addition to the Confession of Sin, the following confession of need may be used.

The minister introduces the prayer with these or similar words

Let us confess our need for God’s healing grace.

Silence

Minister and People

Compassionate God,

we confess our weaknesses and our need for your strengthening touch.

We confess that some illnesses stem from our own fault,
while others are beyond our control.

We turn to you, source of life,
and ask in the name of our Savior Jesus Christ
for the gifts of true healing and life in you. *Amen.*

Minister

May the God of love visit you in your times of trial and weakness, and raise you to newness of life, through Jesus Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit. *Amen.*

Laying on of Hands and Anointing

If oil for the anointing of the sick is to be blessed, the priest or bishop says:

(Blessed are you, O God, source of life and health. In Jesus you became flesh and came to know the depth of human suffering. You sent the disciples to heal those who were sick. Sanctify this oil that all who are anointed with it may be healed, strengthened, and renewed, by the power of your Holy Spirit. *Amen.*)

(INCLUDE PRAYER FOR BLESSING OIL FOR ANOINTING OF THE SICK, BCP P. 455, HERE AS AN ALTERNATIVE)

The minister may introduce the laying on of hands (and anointing) with these or similar words:

Holy Scripture teaches us that Jesus healed many who were sick as a sign of the reign of God come near, and sent the disciples to continue this work of healing through prayer in his name, that the afflicted might be raised up and their sins forgiven, bringing them to eternal salvation. By laying hands upon the sick (and anointing them), the disciples witnessed to the marvelous power and presence of God. Pray that as we follow their example, we may experience Christ's unfailing love.

or this

The ministry of Jesus invites us to new life in God and with each other. In the laying on of hands (and anointing) we proclaim the Good News that God desires us to be healthy and one in the body of Christ. You are invited to offer yourself, whatever your sickness of spirit, mind, or body, and ask for healing and wholeness in the Name of the holy and undivided Trinity.

The minister may invite each person to be anointed to give her or his name and any particular request for prayer: The minister then lays hands upon the sick person (and anoints the person), prays silently, then prays aloud using one of the following forms or similar words

N., I lay my hands upon you (and anoint you). Receive Christ's gift of healing (especially for ___). May the power of the Savior who suffered for you wash over you, that you may be raised up in peace and inward strength. Amen.

or this

N., I (anoint you and) lay my hands upon you in the name of God the holy and undivided Trinity. May Christ be present with you to comfort you, to guard and protect you, and to keep you in everlasting life. Amen.

or this

N., I lay my hands upon you (and anoint you) in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, praying that our Savior Jesus Christ will sustain you, drive away sickness of body and mind and spirit, and give you that victory of life and peace which will enable you to serve and rejoice in God both now and evermore. Amen.

or this

N., I lay my hands upon you (and anoint you) in the name of our Savior Jesus Christ, praying you will be strengthened and filled with God's grace, that you may know the healing power of the Spirit. Amen.

The minister may add, in these or similar words:

As you are outwardly anointed with this holy oil, so may our loving God give you the inward anointing of the Holy Spirit. Of God's bounty, may your suffering be relieved, and your spirit, mind, and body restored to grace and peace. May all of us in the frailty of our flesh know God's healing and resurrecting power. *Amen.*

If communion is not to follow, the Lord's Prayer is said.

The Laying on of Hands (and Anointing) may conclude with one or more of the following collects

May the God who goes before you through desert places by night and by day be your companion and guide; may your journey be with the saints; may the Holy Spirit be your strength, and Christ your clothing of light, in whose name we pray. *Amen.*

or this

May God who is a strong tower to all, to whom all things in heaven and on earth bow and obey, be now and evermore your defense, and help you to know that the name given to us for health and salvation is the Name of our Redeemer, Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

or this

Generous God, we give you thanks for your beloved Jesus Christ, in whom you have shared the beauty and pain of human life. Look with compassion upon all for whom we pray, and strengthen us to be your instruments of healing in the world, by the power of the Holy Spirit. *Amen.*

or this

Thank you, Holy One of Blessing, for the good work of healing already begun in your servant(s) *N.* Grant that she/he/they may wait upon you with an expectant heart and rise up in joy at your call; in Christ's name we pray. *Amen.*

The following may be added

God of all mercy: help us who minister with the sick and dying to remember that though we may appear healthy, we, too, suffer from the universal human condition in a fallen world. Flesh withers, and we must all die to the life we know. Therefore, O God our help, teach us to be aware of our own infirmities, the better to make others understand they are not alone in their illness. Restore us all in the love of the holy and undivided Trinity which is our true health and salvation. *Amen.*

EXCHANGE THE PEACE

Either here or elsewhere in the service, all present may greet one another in the name of Christ.

If the Eucharist is not to be celebrated, the service may conclude with the Exchange of the Peace or with a (Blessing and) Dismissal.

PARTICIPATE IN THE SACRAMENT OF CHRIST'S BODY AND BLOOD

The service continues with the Offertory (BCP p. 361). Texts from Enriching Our Worship (pp. 57-71) may be used for the eucharistic prayer, fraction anthem, postcommunion prayer, and blessing. The following may be used for the postcommunion prayer.

Faithful God
in the wonder of your wisdom and love
you fed your people in the wilderness with the bread of angels,
and you sent Jesus to be the bread of life.
We thank you for feeding us with this bread.

May it strengthen us
that by the power of the Holy Spirit
we may embody your desire
and be renewed for your service
through Jesus Christ our Savior. *Amen.*

Or the postcommunion prayer on p. 399 of the BCP may be used.

If a blessing is desired before the dismissal, the following may be used

May the God of peace sanctify you entirely, and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. *Amen.* (I Thess. 5:23)

or this

May the One who creates and restores everything that is,
the One who is Mary's child and child of God,
the One who is the Holy Spirit,
May this Holy One bring you compassion and peace,
and bless your lives with joy. *Amen.*

or this

May the God of hope fill us with every joy in believing.
May the peace of Christ abound in our hearts.
May we be enriched by the gifts of the Holy Spirit, now and for ever. *Amen.*

HYMNS APPROPRIATE FOR MINISTRY WITH THE SICK

The Hymnal 1982

S 190-197	Song of Zechariah (Canticle 4)
S 196-200	Nunc dimittis (Canticle 5)
S217	Second Song of Isaiah (Canticle 10)
287	For all the saints
333	Now the silence
334	Lord, dismiss us with thy blessing
335	I am the bread of life
383, 384	Fairest Lord Jesus
439	What wondrous love is this
453	As Jacob was weary
469, 470	There's a wideness in God's mercy
482	Lord of all hopefulness
487	Come, my Way, my Truth, my Life
490	I want to walk as a child of the light
517	How lovely is thy dwelling place (Ps. 84 – Brother James' Air)

552, 553	Fight the good fight
560	Remember your servants, Lord
593	Lord, make us servants
602	Jesu, Jesu, fill us with your love
645, 646	The King of love my shepherd is
662	Abide with me
663	The Lord my God my shepherd is
676	There is a balm in Gilead
682	O God, our help in ages past
683, 684	O for a closer walk with God
707	Take my life and let it be
711	Seek ye first
712	Dona nobis pacem
714	Shalom my friends

Wonder, Love, and Praise

727, st. 1	As panting deer
740	Wade in the water
749	The tree of life my soul has seen
753, 754	When from bondage we are summoned
755	The steadfast love of the Lord
756	Lead me, guide me
764	Taste and see
765	O blessed spirit
770	O God of gentle strength
772	O Christ, the healer
773	Heal me, hands of Jesus
774	From miles around the sick ones came
775	Give thanks for the light
776	No saint on earth lives life to self alone
787	We are marching in the light of God
800	Precious Lord, take my hand
801	God be with you 'til we meet again
804	Steal away
805	I want Jesus to walk with me
810	Eagle's wings
812	I the Lord of sea and sky
813	Way, way, way
820	The eyes of all
826	Stay with me
827	O Lord, hear my prayer
881, 882	First Song of Isaiah

Lutheran Book of Worship

474	Children of the heav'nly Father
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From other sources

Make me a channel of your peace

The eyes of all

Set me as a seal

Jesus loves me

Root, Geo. F. Jewels/Little Children

Softly and tenderly

MINISTRY IN A HOME OR HEALTH-CARE FACILITY

The many different situations in which this rite may be administered call for careful preparation. What are the particular needs and circumstances of the individual(s) being visited? How long can the sick person focus and be engaged in ritual action? Where is this individual in the course of illness and treatment? Will care-givers be present? Will family and/or friends be present? It is appropriate to consider such matters when deciding which portions of the service to include and selecting collects and readings.

In liturgical tradition, the presiding minister often washes hands ceremonially during the preparation of the altar/table. When visiting the sick at home or in a health-care facility, it takes on an added hygienic importance. It is always appropriate to wash hands before and after a visit.

What special plans are needed for administration of the sacrament? Will a communion spoon be needed? Is the patient in protective isolation which requires sterilization of the eucharistic element?

In ministry with the sick, one or more parts of the following rite are used, as appropriate to the situation. When two or more parts are used together, they are used in the order indicated. The Lord's Prayer is always included.

GATHER IN THE NAME OF GOD

The Minister begins the service with the following or some other greeting

Peace be to this house (place) and all who dwell in it.

or this

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.

The Minister may continue with a collect, beginning with

The Lord be with you.

People And also with you.

Minister Let us pray.

After a period of silence, the Minister then says one of the following Collects, or some other appropriate Collect

Loving God, the comfort of all who sorrow, the strength of all who suffer: accept our prayers, and to those who seek healing, especially *N.* (and *N.*), grant the power of your grace, that the weak may be strengthened, sickness turned to health, the dying made whole, and sorrow turned into joy; through Jesus Christ our Savior. *Amen.*

or this

Gracious God, we commend to your loving care all who suffer, especially *N.* (and *N.*). Give *him/her/them* patience and hope in distress; strengthen and uphold *him/her/them* in mind and body; and grant, by your intervention, that all your people may be made whole according to your desire; through Jesus Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit. *Amen.*

or this

O God of peace, you have taught us that in returning and rest we shall be saved, in quietness and confidence shall be our strength. By the might of your Spirit lift us, we pray, to your presence, where may be still and know that you are God; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

PROCLAIM AND RESPOND TO THE WORD

One or more of the following passages of scripture may be read.

From the Old Testament

Job 7:1-4 (“human beings have a hard service on earth”)
 Isaiah 35 (“eyes shall be opened... ears unstopped... the lame shall leap...”)
 Isaiah 38:1-5 (the healing of Hezekiah); see also 2 Kings 20:1-7
 Isaiah 49:14-16 (“I will not forget you”)
 Isaiah 53:4-6 (“By his bruises we are healed”)
 Ezekiel 36:26-28 (a new heart and a new spirit)
 Ezekiel 37:12-14 (“I am going to open your graves”)
Psalms 13; 23; 30; 71; 86:1-7; 103:1-3; 126; 145:14-22; 147:1-7

From the New Testament

Acts 3: 1 -10 (in the name of Jesus Christ...walk)
 2 Cor. 1:3-5 (God comforts us)
 James 5:14-16 (is anyone among you sick?)
 1 Thess. 5:23-24 (“may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound”)
 1 Peter 2:21-24 (By his wounds you have been healed)
 I John 5:13-15 (... you have eternal life)

The Gospel

Matthew 5:2-10 (Beatitudes); see also Luke 6:20-23
 Matthew 8:5-10, 13 (healing centurion’s servant); see also Luke 7:1-10
 Matthew 8:14-17 (healing Peter’s mother-in-law); see also Mark 1:29-34;
 Luke 4:38-41
 Matthew 9:2-8 (“your sins are forgiven”); see also Mark 2:1-12; Luke 5:17-26
 Matthew 11:28-30 (“come to me all who are weary”)
 Mark 6:7, 12-13 (the disciples anointed many who were sick)
 Mark 14:32-36 (“not what I want, but what you want”)
 Luke 4:22-28 (“do here also in your hometown the things you did at Capernaum”)

LITURGY AND MUSIC

Luke 8:41-56 (healing Jairus' daughter and woman with a hemorrhage); see also Matthew 9:18-26; Mark 5:21-43

Luke 13:10-13 (healing of woman crippled for eighteen years)

John 5:2-9 ("take up your bed and walk")

John 6:47-51 ("I am the Bread of Life")

John 21:18-19 ("when you are old...")

The minister may comment briefly on the reading.

PRAY FOR THE WORLD AND THE CHURCH, PARTICULARLY FOR GOD'S HEALING GRACE

One or more of the "Prayers for Those Who Are Sick" or "Additional Prayers" may be used here.

The following general confession of sin and absolution may be said

(INCLUDE CONFESSION OF SIN AND ABSOLUTION FROM BCP AND
Enriching Our Worship IN PARALLEL COLUMNS)

CONFESSION OF NEED

Instead of or in addition to the Confession of Sin, the following confession of need may be used

The minister introduces the prayer with these or similar words

Let us confess our need for God's healing grace.

Silence

Minister and People

Compassionate God,

we confess our weaknesses and our need for your strengthening touch.

We confess that some illnesses stem from our own fault,
while others are beyond our control.

We turn to you, source of life,

and ask in the name of our Savior Jesus Christ

for the gifts of true healing and life in you. *Amen.*

Minister

May the God of love visit you in your times of trial and weakness, and raise you to newness of life, through Jesus Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit. *Amen.*

LAYING ON OF HANDS AND ANOINTING

Laying on of hands and anointing may be administered by a lay or ordained minister. If the person is to be anointed, the oil must have been previously blessed by a priest or bishop.

The minister may introduce the laying on of hands (and anointing) with the following or similar words; this is most appropriate when visitors are present for the rite or a person has not been previously anointed.

Holy Scripture teaches us that Jesus healed many who were sick as a sign of the reign of God come near, and sent the disciples to continue this work of healing through prayer in his name, that the afflicted might be raised up and their sins forgiven, bringing them to eternal salvation. By laying hands upon the sick (and anointing them), the disciples witnessed to the marvelous power and presence of God. Pray that as we follow their example, we may experience Christ's unfailing love.

The minister may invite each person to be anointed to give her or his name and any particular request for prayer. The minister then lays hands upon the sick person (and anoints the person), prays silently, then prays aloud using one of the following forms or similar words.

N., I lay my hands upon you (and anoint you). Receive Christ's gift of healing (especially for ____). May the power of the Savior who suffered for you wash over you, that you may be raised up in peace and inward strength. *Amen.*

or this

N., I (anoint you and) lay my hands upon you in the name of God the holy and undivided Trinity. May Christ be present with you to comfort you, to guard and protect you, and to keep you in everlasting life. *Amen.*

or this

N., I lay my hands upon you (and anoint you) in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, praying that our Savior Jesus Christ will sustain you, drive away sickness of body and mind and spirit, and give you that victory of life and peace which will enable you to serve and rejoice in God both now and evermore. *Amen.*

or this

N., I lay my hands upon you (and anoint you) in the name of our Savior Jesus Christ, praying you will be strengthened and filled with God's grace, that you may know the healing power of the Spirit. *Amen.*

The minister may add, in these or similar words:

As you are outwardly anointed with this holy oil, so may our loving God give you the inward anointing of the Holy Spirit. Of God's bounty, may your suffering be relieved, and your spirit, mind, and body restored to grace and peace. May all of us in the frailty of our flesh know God's healing and resurrecting power. *Amen.*

If communion is not to follow, the Lord's Prayer is said.

The Laying on of Hands (and Anointing) may conclude with one or more of the following collects

May the God who goes before you through desert places by night and by day be your companion and guide; may your journey be with the saints; may the Holy Spirit be your strength, and Christ your clothing of light, in whose name we pray. *Amen.*

or this

May God who is a strong tower to all, to whom all things in heaven and on earth bow and obey, be now and evermore your defense and help you to know that the name given to

LITURGY AND MUSIC

us for health and salvation is the Name of our Redeemer, Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

or this

Generous God, we give you thanks for your beloved Jesus Christ, in whom you have shared the beauty and pain of human life. Look with compassion upon all for whom we pray, and strengthen us to be your instruments of healing in the world, by the power of the Holy Spirit. *Amen.*

or this (especially appropriate during a time of recovery)

Thank you, Holy One of Blessing, for the good work of healing already begun in your servant *N.* Grant that she/he may wait upon you with an expectant heart and rise up in joy at your call; in Christ's name we pray. *Amen.*

or this (especially appropriate for one who is dying)

Hear the prayers of your child who desires to enter into your rest; grant that she/he may bear the pains of *her/his* body with fortitude, rest secure in your everlasting arms, and at last feast with your saints in light. *Amen.*

EXCHANGE THE PEACE

Either here or elsewhere in the service, all present may greet one another in the name of Christ.

PARTICIPATE IN THE SACRAMENT OF CHRIST'S BODY AND BLOOD

If the Eucharist is to be celebrated, the Priest or Bishop begins with the Offertory.

If Communion is to be administered from the reserved Sacrament, the service continues with the Lord's Prayer, the minister first saying

Let us pray in the words our Savior Christ has taught us.

(PRINT BOTH VERSIONS IN PARALLEL COLUMNS)

The minister may say the following Invitation

The Gifts of God for the People of God.

and may add

Take them in remembrance that Christ died for you, and feed on him in your heart(s) by faith, with thanksgiving.

The Sacrament is administered with the following or other words

The Body (Blood) of our Lord Jesus Christ keep you in everlasting life. (*Amen.*)

If the person cannot receive either the consecrated Bread or the Wine, it is suitable to administer the sacrament in one kind only.

One of the usual postcommunion prayers is then said, or the following

(PRINT PRAYER FROM BCP P. 399/ 457)

or this

Faithful God
 in the wonder of your wisdom and love
 you fed your people in the wilderness with the bread of angels,
 and you sent Jesus to be the bread of life.
 We thank you for feeding us with this bread.
 May it strengthen us
 that by the power of the Holy Spirit
 we may embody your desire
 and be renewed for your service
 through Jesus Christ our Savior. *Amen.*

If a person desires Communion but is unable to eat and drink the Bread and Wine, by reason of extreme sickness or disability, the minister should assure that person that all benefits of Communion are received through an act of spiritual communion even if the Sacrament is not received with the mouth. The minister (and/or the individual who is ill) may pray, using these or similar words

God of infinite mercy,
 we thank you for Jesus our true Mother,
 who feeds us with himself.
 Though *N.* (I) cannot consume these gifts of bread and wine,
we (I) thank you that *he/she* has (I have) received the sacrament of Christ's presence,
 the forgiveness of sins, and all other benefits of Christ's passion.
 Grant that we may continue for ever in the Risen Life of our Savior,
 who with you and the Holy Spirit,
 lives and reigns, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

or this

Faithful God,
 in the wonder of your wisdom and love
 you fed your people in the wilderness with the bread of angels,
 and you sent Jesus to be the bread of life.
 Though *N.* (I) cannot consume these gifts of bread and wine,
we (I) thank you that *he/she* has (I have) received the sacrament of Christ's presence,
 the forgiveness of sins, and all other benefits of Christ's passion.
 By the power of the Holy Spirit,
 may we (I) embody your desire
 and be renewed for your service.
 through Jesus Christ our Savior. *Amen.*

The service concludes with a blessing and/or with a dismissal. One of the following may be used.

May the God of peace sanctify you entirely, and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. *Amen.* (I Thess. 5:23)

or this

LITURGY AND MUSIC

After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace who has called you to eternal glory in Christ, will restore, support, strengthen, and establish you. To God be power for ever and ever. *Amen.* (I Peter 5:10)

or this

May the God of hope fill you with every joy in believing.

May the peace of Christ abound in your heart.

May you be enriched by the gifts of the Holy Spirit, now and for ever. *Amen.*

Let us bless the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

(INCLUDE *Book of Occasional Services* MATERIAL FOR LAY EUCHARISTIC VISITORS, pp. 226-30 — “Concerning the Service” and “Guidelines” as well as liturgy)

PRAYERS FOR THOSE WHO ARE SICK

Any of the following prayers may be adapted as needed.

For health of body and soul

(from BCP p. 460)

For a child

Heavenly Father, watch with us over your child *N.*, and hear our yearning that she/he may be restored to health; through Jesus Christ our Redeemer. *Amen.*

or this

Gentle Jesus, stay beside your child *N.* through this *day/night*. Take away *her/his* pain. Keep *her/him* safe. Help *her/him* in *her/his* fear. Make *her/his* body strong again and *her/his* heart glad. Thank you for your love which surrounds *her/him* always. *Amen.*

or this

Jesus, our Redeemer, Good Shepherd of the sheep, you gather the lambs and carry them in your arms: We entrust our child *N.* to your loving care. Relieve *her/his* pain, restore in *her/him* your gifts of joy and strength, and raise *her/him* up to a life in your service. Hear us, we pray, for your dear Name’s sake. *Amen.*

For a visit with someone who is sick

Gentle Jesus, though we are not worthy to have you come under our roof, you are God’s word of healing to us. Be with us now, that we may know your presence in one another and rise up in joy to greet you. Grant this for your love’s sake. *Amen.*

For release

Blessed Jesus, Living Water, Following Rock: Uphold your child *N.* by your strong arm; loose the fetters of sickness, break *her/his* yoke of pain, and from this land of affliction, lead *her/him* home. *Amen.*

For people with diseases for which there is no cure

Loving God, your heart overflows with compassion for your whole creation. Pour out your Spirit on all persons living with illness for which we have no cure, as well as their families and loved ones. Help them to know that you claim them as your own, deliver them from fear and pain, and send your archangel Raphael to minister to their needs, for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Savior. *Amen.*

For those who are unconscious

Merciful God, in your love and wisdom you know the needs and fears of your people before we can name them. Grant that *N.* and we who watch with *her/him* may be enabled to surrender all *her/his* cares to you, as you care for *her/him*. Give *her/him* peace of mind and unshakable trust in you, through Jesus Christ our Redeemer. *Amen.*

For the dying

Blessed Jesus, in your last agony you commended your spirit to your Father. We seek your mercy for *N.*, and all who are dying. May death become for them, as it was for you, a birth to everlasting life. Receive those whom we commend to you with the blessed assurance that whether we wake or sleep, we remain with you, one God, for ever. *Amen.*

For those who mourn

Merciful God, whose Son Jesus wept at the death of Lazarus: look with compassion on all who are bound by sorrow and pain through the death of (*N.*) a loved one. Comfort them, grant them the conviction that all things work together for good to those who love you, and help them to find sure trust and confidence in your resurrection power, through Jesus Christ our deliverer. *Amen.*

For a poor prognosis

In your tender mercies O God, remember, *N.* who (expects/has just received) a grave diagnosis. Help *her/him* to trust in your goodness and believe that after a time of trial she/he shall be established on the firm foundation of your deliverance. *Amen.*

In the evening

“Keep watch dear Lord...” (BCP p. 124)

For a person who is sick

God of all comfort, our very present help in trouble: be near to *N.* for whom our prayers are offered. Look on *her/him* with the eyes of your mercy; comfort *her/him* with a sense of your presence; preserve *her/him* from the enemy; and give *her/him* patience in *her/his* affliction. Restore *her/him* to health, and lead *her/him* to your eternal glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

For protection

Christ, light of light, brightness indescribable, the Wisdom, power and glory of God, the Word made flesh: you overcame the forces of Satan, redeemed the world, then ascended again to the Father. Grant *N.*, we pray, in this tarnished world, the shining of your splendor. Send your Archangel Michael to defend *her/him*, to guard *her/his* going out and coming in, and to bring *her/him* safely to your presence, where you reign in the one holy and undivided Trinity, to ages of ages. *Amen.*

For one suffering from mental distress

Blessed Jesus, in the comfort of your love, we lay before you the memories that haunt *N.*, the anxieties that perplex *her/him*, the despair that frightens *her/him*, and *her/his* frustration at *her/his* inability to think clearly. Help *her/him* to discover your forgiveness in *her/his* memories and know your peace in *her/his* distress. Touch *her/him*, O Lord, and fill *her/him* with your light and your hope. *Amen.*

For recovery from sickness

God, the strength of the weak and the comfort of those who suffer: Hear our prayers and grant *N.* the power of your grace, that *her/his* sickness may be turned into health, and our sorrow into joy; for Jesus Christ's sake. *Amen.*

or this

Spirit of all healing, visit your child *N.*; in your power, renew health within *her/him* and raise *her/him* up in joy, according to your loving-kindness, for which we give thanks and praise, through Jesus Christ our Savior. *Amen.*

For strength and confidence

Gracious God, only source of life and health: Help, comfort, and relieve (*N.*), and give your power of healing to those who minister to *her/his* needs; that *her/his* weakness may be turned to strength and confidence in your loving care; for the sake of Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

For the sleepless

Holy and Blessed One, shine on *N.*, who lies sleepless. Illumine *her/his spirit* and give *her/him* rest in you, so that *she/he* may recognize you as the true God who brings us out of darkness into our eternal light. *Amen.*

For rest

O God our refuge and strength: in this place of unrelenting light and noise, enfold *N.* in your holy darkness and silence, that *she/he* may rest secure under the shadow of your wings. *Amen.*

For the sanctification of illness

(from BCP p. 460)

Before an operation

Loving God, we pray that you will comfort *N.* in *her/his* suffering, lend skill to the hands of *her/his* healers, and bless the means used for *her/his* cure. Give *her/him* such confidence in the power of your grace, that even when *she/he* is afraid, *she/he* may put *her/his* whole trust in you; through our Savior Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

For an extended course of treatment

Strengthen your servant *N.*, O God, to go where *she/he* has to go and bear what *she/he* has to bear; that, accepting your healing gifts at the hands of surgeons, nurses, and technicians, *she/he* may be restored to wholeness with a thankful heart; through Jesus Christ our Savior. *Amen.*

For survivors of abuse and violence

Holy One, you do not distance yourself from the pain of your people, but in Jesus bear that pain with us and bless all who suffer at others' hands. Hallow our flesh and all creation;

with your cleansing love bring healing and strength to *N.*; and by your justice, lift *her/him* up, that in the body you have given *her/him, she/he* may again rejoice. In Jesus' name we pray. *Amen.*

In times of personal distress

Lord Christ, you came into the world as one of us, and suffered as we do. As we go through the trials of life, help us to realize that you are with us at all times and in all things; that we have no secrets from you; and that your loving grace enfolds us for eternity. In the security of your embrace we pray. *Amen.*

Thanksgiving for recovery

God, your loving kindness never fails, and your mercies are new every morning. We thank you for giving *N.* relief from pain and hope of health renewed. Continue the good work begun in *her/him*; that increasing daily in wholeness and strength, *she/he* may rejoice in your goodness and so order *her/his* life always to think and do that which pleases you, through Jesus Christ our Redeemer. *Amen.*

For those who fear losing hope

Loving God, inspire by your Holy Spirit those who are afraid of losing hope, especially *N.* for whom we now pray. Give *her/him* a fresh vision of your love, that *she/he* may find again what *she/he* fears *she/he* has lost. Grant *her/him* your powerful deliverance, through the One who makes all things new, Jesus Christ our Redeemer. *Amen.*

For those who are developmentally disabled

Giver of all grace, we pray your peace, which passes all understanding, for those who are developmentally disabled. Grant that they may always be sustained in love, their gifts honored, and their difficulties understood, that none may add to their troubles. We ask this in the name of the one who comforted those who were troubled in mind, Jesus our Savior. *Amen.*

PRAYERS FOR USE BY A SICK PERSON

Any of the following prayers may be adapted as needed.

prayers from BCP p. 461

For Trust in God

In Pain

For Sleep

In the Morning

In the evening

(INCLUDE "Keep watch dear Lord..." (BCP p. 124))

A child's prayer

Jesus, our Redeemer, Good Shepherd of the sheep, you carry the lambs in your arms. I place myself in your loving care. Stop my pain, give me help and strength, and raise me

up to a life of joy. Hear me, I pray, for your dear Name's sake. *Amen.*

or this

Gentle Jesus, stay beside me through this day (night). Take away my pain. Keep me safe. Help me in my fear. Make my body strong again and my heart glad. Thank you for your love which surrounds me always. *Amen.*

For a sick person

God of all comfort, our very present help in trouble, be near to me. Look on me with the eyes of your mercy; comfort me with a sense of your presence; preserve me from the enemy; and give me patience in my affliction. Restore me to health, and lead me to your eternal glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

For protection

Christ, light of light, brightness indescribable, the Wisdom, power and glory of God, the Word made flesh: you overcame the forces of Satan, redeemed the world, then ascended again to the Father. Grant me, I pray, in this tarnished world, the shining of your splendor. Send your Archangel Michael to defend me, to guard my going out and coming in, and to bring me safely to your presence, where you reign in the one holy and undivided Trinity, to ages of ages. *Amen.*

For one suffering from mental distress

Blessed Jesus, in the comfort of your love, I lay before you the memories that haunt me, the anxieties that perplex me, the despair that frightens me, and my frustration at my inability to think clearly. Help me to discover your forgiveness in my memories and know your peace in my distress. Touch me, O Lord, and fill me with your light and your hope. *Amen.*

For recovery from sickness

God, the strength of the weak and the comfort of those who suffer: Hear my prayers and grant me the power of your grace, that my sickness may be turned into health, and my sorrow into joy; for Jesus Christ's sake. *Amen.*

or this

Spirit of all healing, visit me, your child; in your power, renew health within me and raise me up in joy, according to your loving-kindness, for which I give thanks and praise, through Jesus Christ our Savior. *Amen.*

For strength and confidence

Gracious God, only source of life and health: Help, comfort, and relieve me, and give your power of healing to those who minister to my needs; that my weakness may be turned to strength and confidence in your loving care; for the sake of Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

For the sleepless

Holy and Blessed One: shine on me as I lie sleepless. Illumine my spirit and give me rest in you, so that I may recognize you as the true God who brings us out of darkness into our eternal light. *Amen.*

For rest

O God my refuge and strength: in this place of unrelenting light and noise, enfold me in your holy darkness and silence, that I may rest secure under the shadow of your wings. *Amen.*

For sanctification of illness

Sanctify, O Holy One, my sickness, that awareness of weakness may add strength to my faith and determination to my repentance; and grant that I may be made whole, according to your will; through Jesus Christ our Savior. *Amen.*

Before an operation

Loving God, I pray that you will comfort me in my suffering, lend skill to the hands of my healers, and bless the means used for my cure. Give me such confidence in the power of your grace, that even when I am afraid, I may put my whole trust in you; through our Savior Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

or this

Keep me, Holy One, as the apple of your eye. Though I fear anesthesia, help me rest myself in your watchful care, and awake in the firm hope of your healing. *Amen.*

For an extended course of treatment

Strengthen me, O God, to go where I have to go and bear what I have to bear; that, accepting your healing gifts at the hands of surgeons, nurses, and technicians, I may be restored to wholeness with a thankful heart; through Jesus Christ our Savior. *Amen.*

For survivors of abuse and violence

Holy One, you do not distance yourself from the pain of your people, but in Jesus bear that pain with us and bless all who suffer at others' hands. Hallow my flesh and all creation; with your cleansing love bring me healing and strength; and by your justice, lift me up, that in the body you have given me, I may again rejoice. In Jesus' name I pray. *Amen.*

In times of personal distress

Lord Christ, you came into the world as one of us, and suffered as we do. As I go through the trials of life, help me to realize that you are with me at all times and in all things; that I have no secrets from you; and that your loving grace enfolds me for eternity. In the security of your embrace I pray. *Amen.*

Thanksgiving for recovery

God, your loving kindness never fails and your mercies are new every morning. I thank you for giving me relief from pain and hope of health renewed. Continue the good work begun in me; that increasing daily in wholeness and strength, I may rejoice in your goodness and so order my life always to think and do that which pleases you, through Jesus Christ our Redeemer. *Amen.*

For one who fears losing hope

Loving God, by your Holy Spirit inspire me, as I fear losing hope. Give me a fresh vision of your love, that I may find again what I fear I have lost. Grant me your powerful deliverance, through the One who makes all things new, Jesus Christ our Redeemer. *Amen.*

For those who are developmentally disabled

Giver of all grace, we pray your peace, which passes all understanding, for us who are developmentally disabled. Grant that we may always be sustained in love, our gifts honored, and our difficulties understood, that none may add to our troubles. We ask this in the name of the one who comforted those who were troubled in mind, Jesus our Savior. *Amen.*

In thanksgiving

Thank you, Holy and Mighty One, for the many gifts of your love, even for the painful gift of fear which reminds me that only you are God. Into the mystery of your love I entrust myself. Dress me in the armor of your light and keep me safe, through Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

or this

In the midst of illness, God, I pause to give you thanks: for the glory of creation, which reveals in many forms your matchless beauty; for the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus our Savior; for your gift of my life and the presence of the Holy Spirit; for loved ones who care for me; and for the companionship of the Church. I thank you, blessed Trinity, holy God, for the gifts which sustain me in my time of need. *Amen.*

In pain

As Jesus cried out on the cross, I cry out to you in pain, O God my Creator. Do not forsake me. Grant me relief from this suffering and preserve me in peace, through Jesus Christ my Savior, in the power of the Holy Spirit. *Amen.*

In loss of memory

Holy One, you have engraved me on the palms of your hands, and know me from my mother's womb. Through the changes of illness, keep me safe. Since I am sealed as Christ's own, help me to trust that who I am will never be lost to you. *Amen.*

In confinement

My Creator, you rolled out the heavens and spread the sky like a tent: bless to me the small confinement of this room, the long days, disturbances of night, immobility of body, and unease of soul, that this place of exile may become my holy ground, and Jesus my deliverer. *Amen.*

For serenity

Merciful Jesus, you are my guide, the joy of my heart, the author of my hope, and the object of my love. I come seeking refreshment and peace. Show me your mercy, relieve my fears and anxieties, and grant me a quiet mind and an expectant heart, that by the assurance of your presence I may learn to abide in you, who is my Lord and my God. *Amen.*

or this

Jesus, let your mighty calmness lift me above my fears and frustrations. By your deep patience, give me tranquility and stillness of soul in you. Make me in this, and in all, more and more like you. *Amen.*

A prayer of thanksgiving for caregivers (from Mechtilde of Magdeburg)

Merciful God, I thank you that since I have no strength to care for myself, you serve me through the hands and hearts of others. Bless these people that they may continue to serve you and please you all their days. *Amen.*

A prayer of comfort in God (from Julian of Norwich)

God, you are my help and comfort; you shelter and surround me in love so tender that I may know your presence with me, now and always. *Amen.*

In desolation

O God, why have you abandoned me? Though you have hidden your face from me, still from this dread and empty place, I cry to you, who have promised me that underneath are your everlasting arms. *Amen.*

After the loss of a pregnancy

Holy God, I confess I have not had strength to hold, bear, and nurture the new life you have sent. Lift me up from my shame. Fill my grieving heart. Renew my hope. Receive the child I return to you into the arms of your mercy, for which I also yearn. *Amen.*

or this

O God, who gathered Rachel's tears over her lost children, hear now my sorrow and distress at the death of my expected child; in the darkness of loss, stretch out to me the strength of your arm and renewed assurance of your love; through your own suffering and risen Child Jesus. *Amen.*

For diagnosis of terminal illness

O God, only you number my days. Help me to look bravely at the end of my life in this world, while trusting in my life in the next. Journey with me toward my unexplored horizon where Jesus my Savior has gone before. *Amen.*

For difficult treatment choices

Jesus, at Gethsemane you toiled with terrifying choices. Be with me now as I struggle with a fearful choice of treatments which promise much discomfort and offer no guarantee of long-term good. Help me know that you will bless my choice to me, and, good Savior, be my companion on the way. *Amen.*

In addition to the psalms listed above, the following may be helpful in times of distress:

Psalms: 22, 25:15-21, 38, 46, 69:31-38, 88, 116, 121, 130

From Enriching Our Worship: Canticle F, A Song of Lamentation; Canticle I, A Song of Jonah; Canticle Q, A Song of Christ's Goodness; Canticle R, A Song of True Motherhood.

ADDITIONAL PRAYERS

Any of the following prayers may be adapted as needed.

For care-givers and others in support of the sick

Lover of souls, we bless your Holy Name for all who are called to mediate your grace to those who are sick or infirm. Sustain them by your Holy Spirit, that they may bring your

loving-kindness to those in pain, fear, and confusion; that in bearing one another's burdens they may follow the example of our Savior Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

or this

Compassionate God, support and strengthen all those who reach out in love, concern, and prayer for the sick and distressed. In their acts of compassion, may they know that they are your instruments. In their concerns and fears may they know your peace. In their prayer may they know your steadfast love. May they not grow weary or faint-hearted, for your mercy's sake. *Amen.*

For companion(s) to those who are chronically ill

O God, surround *N. (and N.)* with your compassion as *she/he/they* live(s) with *N.* in sickness. Help *N. (and N.)* to accept the limits of what *she/he/they* can do, that feelings of helplessness and frustration (and anger) may be transformed into serene acceptance and joyful hope in you. Let *her/him/them* remember the grief and love of Jesus over the afflictions of his friends, knowing that God too weeps. Bring *her/him/them* gladness and strengthened love in *her/his/their* service, through Christ our companion. *Amen.*

At the limits of our power to help

O Lord, we are at the limits of our power to help. For what we have left undone, forgive us. For what you have helped us to do, we thank you. For what must be done by others, lend your strength. Now shelter us in your peace which passes our understanding. *Amen.*

For those who are sick and those who minister to them

Gracious God, source of life and health: Jesus came to our disordered world to make your people whole. Send your Spirit on those who are sick and all who minister to them; that when the sick enter your peace, they may offer thanks to your Great Name; through Jesus Christ our Savior. *Amen.*

For health care providers

Give your blessing, gracious God, to those whom you have called to the study and practice of the arts of healing, and the prevention of disease and pain. Give them the wisdom of your Holy Spirit, that through their work the health of our community may be advanced and your creation glorified; through your Son Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

For Emergency Workers

God our strong deliverer: when those charged with the urgent mediation of your healing power feel overwhelmed by the numbers of the suffering, uphold them in their fatigue and banish their despair. Let them see with your eyes, so they may know all their patients as precious. Give comfort, and renew their energy and compassion, for the sake of Jesus in whom is our life and our hope. *Amen.*

or this

Divine Physician, hear our prayers for those in emergency medicine. By your healing power, grant them quick minds and skillful hands. Strengthen them in times of trauma. In quiet times, give them rest and assurance of the value of their work. Keep them ever prepared for the work you have called them to do, for your mercy's sake. *Amen.*

For relatives of an organ donor

Blessed Jesus, who said “unless a grain of wheat falls to the earth and dies, it shall not live,” help us to release *N.* to everlasting life, and *N.*’s body to give new life to others you also love, as you have given your body that we might have life abundant, for which we give great thanks. *Amen.*

Ministration at the Time of Death

When a person is near death, the member of the clergy in charge of the congregation should be notified, so that the ministrations of the Church may be provided. A person approaching death may be offered an opportunity for the Reconciliation of a Penitent.

The rite which follows may be shortened or extended as seems appropriate, and the prayers may be adapted as needed.

The minister greets those present in these or similar words

In the name of God, the holy and undivided Trinity. *Amen.*

or this

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. *Amen.*

The minister continues

Let us pray.

Gracious God, lover of souls, look on *N.*, lying in great weakness, and comfort *him/her* with the promise of everlasting life, given in the resurrection of your Son Jesus Christ our Savior. *Amen.*

or this

Christ our Redeemer, deliver *N.* from all evil and the power of death, that *he/she* may rest with all your saints in the eternal habitations; where with the Father and the Holy Spirit you live and reign, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

or this – for a sudden death

O God our strength in need, our help in trouble: stand with us in our distress, support us in our shock, bless us in our questioning, and do not leave us comfortless, but raise us up with Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

or this – for a death by violence

O God our Vindicator, come speedily to our help. Receive the soul of *N.*, your child, into the arms of your mercy, and deliver *his/her* assailant to justice, that your holy Law may be served, and your peace renewed, through Jesus our Savior. *Amen.*

or this – for the death of a very young child

God our Creator, you called into being this fragile life, which had seemed to us so full of promise: give to *N.*, whom we commit to your care, abundant life in your presence, and to us who grieve for hopes destroyed, courage to bear our loss; through Jesus Christ our Savior. *Amen.*

or this – for the death of a child

LITURGY AND MUSIC

God, as Mary stood at the foot of the cross, we come before you with broken hearts and tearful eyes. Keep us mindful that you know our pain, and free us to see your resurrection power already at work in *N.*'s life. In your time, raise us from our grief as you are raising *N.* to eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Savior. *Amen.*

One of the following or some other Psalm may be said

Psalm 23; 61:1-5; 121; 130; 139:1-17 (PRINT TEXTS HERE)

LITANY AT THE TIME OF DEATH

The minister invites those gathered into prayer, using these or similar words

Let us offer our prayers for *N.*, saying, "We commend *N.* to you."

Holy God, Creator of heaven and earth,

Here and after every petition, the people respond

We commend *N.* to you.

Holy and Mighty, Redeemer of the world,
Holy Immortal One, Sanctifier of the faithful,
Holy, blessed and glorious Trinity, one God,
By your Holy Incarnation,
By your Cross and Passion,
By your precious death and burial,
By your glorious Resurrection and Ascension,
By the coming of the Holy Spirit,
For deliverance from all evil, all sin, and all tribulation,
For deliverance from eternal death,
For forgiveness of all sins,
For a place of refreshment at your heavenly banquet,
For joy and gladness with your saints in light,
Jesus, Lamb of God:
Jesus, bearer of our sins:
Jesus, redeemer of the world:

or this

(PRINT TEXT FROM BCP PP. 462-4)

The service continues with the Lord's Prayer. The minister may begin the prayer with these or similar words

Let us pray in the words our Savior Christ has taught us

(PRINT BOTH FORMS IN PARALLEL COLUMNS)

LAYING ON OF HANDS (AND ANOINTING)

Laying on of hands (and anointing) may be administered, using these or similar words

N., I lay my hands upon you (and anoint you) in the name of our Savior Jesus

Christ. *Amen.*

HOLY COMMUNION

Communion from the reserved Sacrament may be administered with the following or other words

The Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ keep you in everlasting life.
(*Amen.*)

If the person cannot receive either the consecrated Bread or the Wine, it is suitable to administer the sacrament in one kind only.

If the person is unable to eat and drink the Bread and Wine, the minister may pray, using these or similar words

God of infinite mercy,
we thank you for Jesus our true Mother,
who feeds us with himself.

Though *N.* cannot consume these gifts of bread and wine,
we thank you that *he/she* has received the sacrament of Christ's presence,
the forgiveness of sins, and all other benefits of Christ's passion.

Grant that we may continue for ever in the Risen Life of our Savior,
who with you and the Holy Spirit,
lives and reigns, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

or this

Faithful God,
in the wonder of your wisdom and love
you fed your people in the wilderness with the bread of angels,
and you sent Jesus to be the bread of life.

Though *N.* cannot consume these gifts of bread and wine,
we thank you that *he/she* has received the sacrament of Christ's presence,
the forgiveness of sins, and all other benefits of Christ's passion.

By the power of the Holy Spirit,
may we embody your desire
and be renewed for your service
through Jesus Christ our Savior. *Amen.*

CONCLUDING COLLECTS

The minister may pray

(PRINT CONCLUDING COLLECT FOR GOOD FRIDAY, BCP P. 282)

or this

God of mercy, look kindly on *N.* as death comes near. Release *him/her*, and set *him/her* free by your grace to enter into the company of the saints in light. Be with us as we watch and wait, and keep us in the assurance of your love, through Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

COMMENDATION AT THE TIME OF DEATH

The minister may introduce the commendation in these or similar words

Let us commend our *brother/sister N.* to the mercy of God, our Maker and Redeemer.

The minister continues

Savior this soul is yours, sealed by your name, redeemed by your love: now released by the saints on earth to the glad companionship of the saints above, into your arms of mercy, into the blessed country of light.

May *his/her* soul and the souls of all who have died through your mercy rest in peace. *Amen.*

or this

N., our companion in faith and *brother/sister* in Christ, we entrust you to God.

Go forth from this world:

in the love of God who created you;

in the mercy of Jesus Christ who died for you;

in the power of the Holy Spirit who strengthens you,

at one with all the faithful, living and departed.

May you rest in peace and rise in the glory of your eternal home, where grief and misery are banished, and light and joy abide. *Amen.*

or this

Depart, O Christian soul... (PRINT TEXT FROM BCP p. 464)

or this

Merciful Savior, we commend to you our *brother/sister N.* Acknowledge, we pray, a sheep of your own fold, a lamb of your own flock, a sinner of your own redeeming. Receive *him/her* into the arms of your mercy, into the blessed rest of everlasting peace, and into the glorious company of the saints in light.

May *his/her* soul, and the souls of all the departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. *Amen.*

ADDITIONAL PRAYERS

(BCP texts to be included:)

Monday in Holy Week, BCP p. 220

Tuesday in Easter Week, BCP p. 223

In the Evening, #63, BCP p. 833

Gracious God, you sent Jesus into the world to bear our infirmities and endure our suffering: Look with compassion on *N.* Support *him/her* with your grace, comfort *him/her* with your protection, and give *him/her* victory over evil, sin, and death. Since (in baptism) you have given *N.* a share in the passion of Christ, fulfill in *him/her* also the hope and expectation promised in the resurrec-

tion, through Christ, who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

For release

Blessed Jesus, Living Water, Following Rock: Uphold your child *N.* by your strong arm; loose the fetters of sickness, break *her/his* yoke of pain, and from this land of affliction, lead *her/him* home. *Amen.*

or this

God of life, you sent Jesus our Redeemer to your people so that we might be led triumphant through death's overwhelming flood into your radiant presence. In the waters of baptism, *N.* was marked as your own for ever. Hold *him/her* now with mighty hand and outstretched arm as *he/she* crosses from death to life. Sustain *him/her* with a sure and certain hope of the resurrection, and bring *him/her* into eternal glory. *Amen.*

For those who mourn

Merciful God, whose Son Jesus wept at the death of Lazarus: look with compassion on all who are bound by sorrow and pain through the death of *N.*, a loved one. Comfort them, grant them the conviction that all things work together for good to those who love you, and help them to find sure trust and confidence in your resurrection power, through Jesus Christ our deliverer. *Amen.*

A LITANY ANTICIPATING HEAVEN

This litany is also appropriate for use when the body is removed from the home or other place of death.

The minister invites the people to pray in these or similar words

Let us pray with confidence, anticipating heaven, and let the people respond, "Lead your child home."

The minister continues

To the gates of Paradise

Here and after each petition the people respond

Lead your child home.

To your mercy-seat

To the kingdom of heaven

To your true sanctuary

To the multitude of the blessed

To the welcome-table

To the nuptial chamber

To the New Jerusalem

To eternal bliss

To the company of the saints

To the Supper of the Lamb

To the garden of delight

To the throne of majesty
To the lights of glory
To the Canaan-ground
To the highest heights
To the crown of glory
To the land of rest
To Jordan's other shore
To the Holy City, the Bride
To the safe harbor
To the fount of life
To the pearly gates
To the ladder of angels
To the land of milk and honey
To the clouds of glory
To the refreshing stream
To the reward of the righteous
To the dwelling-place of God

Additional Psalms 71, 130

A FORM OF PRAYER WHEN LIFE-SUSTAINING TREATMENT IS WITHHELD OR DISCONTINUED

This rite is appropriate when family, friends, and/or care-givers gather for prayer to mark a transition from life-sustaining to palliative care. It may also be used when extraordinary measures are to be withheld or discontinued.

The service is appropriate for situations in which death is expected to follow not long after withdrawal of treatment. When death is expected immediately after withdrawal of treatment, traditional rites at time of death might be preferred.

The service may be abbreviated or lengthened as needed.

The minister may begin the service with the following sentence

The Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of the water of life, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes. (Revelation 7:17)

The minister continues

Let us pray.

O God our Creator and Sustainer, receive our prayers for *N*. We thank you for the love and companionship we have shared with *him/her*. Give us grace now to accept the limits of human healing as we commend *N*. to your merciful care. Strengthen us, we pray, in this time of trial and help us to continue to serve and care for one another, through Jesus Christ our Savior. *Amen.*

in a time of difficult decision

Lord of all wisdom and source of all life, we come before you as we struggle with decisions about life and death that rightly belong to you alone. We know that we have erred in our judgment in the past and will do so again in the future. We confess that we act with uncertainty now. Give us your help, and guide us, merciful God, in your loving concern for *N.* who lies in grave illness; through Jesus Christ our Redeemer. *Amen.*

One or more of the following passages of scripture may be read.

From the Old Testament

Isaiah 49:14-16a

Isaiah 65: 17-20

Psalms 23; 103

From the New Testament

Romans 6:3-4, 8-11

Romans 8:35, 38-39

1 Corinthians 15:51-58

The Gospel

John 14:1-3

One or both of the following litanies may be prayed.

A Litany for the Withdrawal of Life-sustaining Treatment: Form 1

The Minister introduces the litany with these or similar words

Let us pray to God, the helper and lover of souls, saying “Holy One, help us!”

That we may know your near presence with us, blessed God:

Here and after every petition, the people respond

Holy One, help us!

That *N.* may be released from the bondage of suffering, blessed God:

That our actions may proceed from love, blessed God:

That our best judgments may accord with your will, blessed God:

That you will hold *N.* and us in the palm of your hand this day, blessed God:

That all our fears may be relieved as we place our trust in you, blessed God:

That as *N.* labors into new resurrection birth, we may companion *him/her* with courage, blessed God:

That although we now grieve, joy may return in the morning, blessed God:

The Minister adds the following or some other collect

God our Wisdom: Bless the decisions we have made in hope, in sorrow, and in love; that as we place our whole trust in you, our choices and our actions may be encompassed by your perfecting will; through Jesus Christ who died and rose for us. *Amen.*

A Litany for the Withdrawal of Life-sustaining Treatment: Form 2

The Minister introduces the litany with these or similar words

LITURGY AND MUSIC

Hear, encourage, and strengthen us as we pray to you, Holy One, saying, “We put our trust in you.”

As the centurion placed his sick servant under Jesus’ authority, Holy One:

Here and after every petition, the people respond

We put our trust in you.

As Jonah cried out from the belly of the fish, Holy One:

As did the three young men in Nebuchadnezzar’s fiery furnace, Holy One:

As Gideon laid siege to his enemy with a tiny force, Holy One:

As the sons of Zebedee left their father and their boat to follow Jesus, Holy One:

As the magi followed the star, Holy One:

As did Martha and Mary at the opening of Lazarus’ tomb, Holy One:

As Mary Magdalene released her risen Teacher, Holy One:

The Minister adds the following or some other collect

God our Wisdom: Bless the decisions we have made in hope, in sorrow, and in love; that as we place our whole trust in you, our choices and our actions may be encompassed by your perfecting will; through Jesus Christ who died and rose for us. *Amen.*

If communion is not to follow, the service continues with the Lord’s Prayer. The minister may introduce the prayer with these or similar words

Let us pray in the words our Savior Christ has taught us

(PRINT BOTH FORMS IN PARALLEL COLUMNS)

Laying on of Hands (and Anointing)

The minister may lay hands upon the person from whom treatment is to be withdrawn (and/or may anoint the person), pray silently, then pray aloud using one of the following forms or similar words

N., I lay my hands upon you in the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ, beseeching him to uphold you and fill you with grace, that you may know the healing power of his love. *Amen.*

or this

N., I lay my hands upon you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, trusting that God will do better things for you than we can desire or pray for. *Amen.*

or this

N., I lay my hands upon you (and anoint you) in the name of our Savior Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

An Act of Commitment

The service may continue with this act of commitment by family member(s) and/or friend(s) to the individual from whom treatment will be withdrawn.

The minister may introduce the act of commitment with these or similar words

Our Savior Jesus Christ chose to be like us in all things, even to sharing our suffering and death. As God is faithful to us, I now invite you to make a covenant of faithfulness with N.

The family member(s) or friend(s) says

N., may Christ comfort you as you follow him on the path now set before you. With God's help, as your *family/friend*, I will journey beside you. With God's help, I will watch and wait with you, and with God's help, I will witness the love of Christ by my presence and prayers with you. Before God and your loved ones, I commit myself to you in the Name of Christ.

THE PEACE

All present may greet one another in the name of Christ.

DISMISSAL (WHEN COMMUNION DOES NOT FOLLOW)

If communion does not follow, the service may conclude as follows

Minister Into your hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit,
For you have redeemed me, O God of truth.

People Into your hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit.

COMMUNION

If the Eucharist is to be celebrated, the Priest or Bishop begins with the Offertory.

If Communion is to be administered from the reserved Sacrament, the service continues with the Lord's Prayer; the minister first saying

Let us pray in the words our Savior Christ has taught us.

(PRINT BOTH VERSIONS IN PARALLEL COLUMNS)

The minister may say the following Invitation

The Gifts of God for the People of God.

and may add

Take them in remembrance that Christ died for you, and feed on him in your heart(s) by faith, with thanksgiving.

The Sacrament is administered with the following or other words

The Body (Blood) of our Lord Jesus Christ keep you in everlasting life. (*Amen.*)

If the person cannot receive either the consecrated Bread or the Wine, it is suitable to administer the sacrament in one kind only.

One of the usual postcommunion prayers is then said, or the following

(PRINT POSTCOMMUNION PRAYER, BCP P. 457)

or this

Faithful God
in the wonder of your wisdom and love
you fed your people in the wilderness with the bread of angels,
and you sent Jesus to be the bread of life.
We thank you for feeding us with this bread.
May it strengthen us
that by the power of the Holy Spirit
we may embody your desire
and be renewed for your service
through Jesus Christ our Savior. *Amen.*

If a person desires Communion but is unable to eat and drink the Bread and Wine, by reason of extreme sickness or disability, the minister should assure that person that all benefits of Communion are received through an act of spiritual communion even if the Sacrament is not received with the mouth. The minister (and/or the individual who is ill) may pray, using these or similar words

God of infinite mercy,
we thank you for Jesus our true Mother,
who feeds us with himself.
Though *N.(I)* cannot consume these gifts of bread and wine,
we (I) thank you that *he/she has (I have)* received the sacrament of Christ's presence,
the forgiveness of sins, and all other benefits of Christ's passion.
Grant that we may continue for ever in the Risen Life of our Savior,
who with you and the Holy Spirit,
lives and reigns, one God, now and for ever. *Amen.*

or this

Faithful God,
in the wonder of your wisdom and love
you fed your people in the wilderness with the bread of angels,
and you sent Jesus to be the bread of life.
Though *N.(I)* cannot consume these gifts of bread and wine,
we (I) thank you that *he/she has (I have)* received the sacrament of Christ's presence,
the forgiveness of sins, and all other benefits of Christ's passion.
By the power of the Holy Spirit,
may *we (I)* embody your desire
and be renewed for your service
through Jesus Christ our Savior. *Amen.*

GRACE

The Minister may conclude with one of the following

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all evermore. *Amen.*

or this

Glory to God whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine; glory to God from generation to generation in the Church and in Christ Jesus for ever and ever. *Amen.*

After this, treatment is withdrawn as needed.

Ministration at the Time of Death may follow at a later time when death is imminent.

Additional Collects

For health-care providers

God, our Healer and Redeemer, we give thanks for the compassionate care *N.* has received. Bless these and all health-care providers. Give them knowledge, virtue, and patience; and strengthen them in their ministry of healing and comforting; through Jesus Christ our Savior. *Amen.*

For all who suffer

O God, look with mercy on those who suffer, and heal their spirits, that they may be delivered from sickness and fear. Restore hope for the desolate, give rest to the weary, comfort the sorrowful, be with the dying; and bring them, finally, to their true heavenly home, for Jesus Christ's sake. *Amen.*

For one from whom treatment is to be withdrawn

Holy God, whose peace passes all understanding, we pray that in your good time you will free *N.* from all earthly cares, pardon *his/her* sins, release *him/her* from pain, and grant that *he/she* may come to dwell with all your saints in everlasting glory, for the sake of Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

BURIAL OF A CHILD

Concerning the Service

(INCLUDE "CONCERNING THE SERVICE", BCP P. 490, EXCEPT PARAGRAPH BEGINNING "AT THE BURIAL OF A CHILD")

When children die, it is usually long before their expected span of life. Often they die very suddenly and sometimes violently, whether as victims of abuse, gunfire, or drunken drivers, adding to the trauma of their survivors. The surprise and horror at the death of a child call for a liturgical framework that addresses these different expectations and circumstances.

GATHER IN THE NAME OF GOD

All stand while one or more of the following is said or sung

He will feed his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom. (Isaiah 40:11)

The eternal God is your refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms. (Deuteronomy 33:27)

LITURGY AND MUSIC

As a mother comforts her child, so I will comfort you. (Isaiah 65:13a)

When Israel was a child, I loved him, ...it was I who taught Ephraim to walk, I took them up in my arms... I led them with bands of love. I was to them like those who lift infants to their cheeks. I bent down to them and fed them. (Hosea 11: 1a, 3,4)

For these things I weep; my eyes flow with tears...But you, O Lord, reign forever; your throne endures to all generations.(Lam. 1: 16a, 5:19)

Jesus said, Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs. (Matt. 19: 14)

For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of the water of life, and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes. (Rev. 7: 17)

When all are in place, the Minister may address the congregation, acknowledging briefly the purpose of their gathering, and bidding their prayers for the deceased and the bereaved.

The Minister says one of the following Collects, first saying

The Lord be with you.

People And also with you.

Minister Let us pray.

Silence

Holy God, your beloved Son took children into his arms and blessed them. Help us to entrust *N.* to your never failing loving-kindness. Comfort us as we bear the pain of *her/his* death, and reunite us in your good time in your Paradise; through Jesus Christ our Savior who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. *Amen.*

or this collect for the family and all who grieve

Gracious God, we come before you this day in pain and sorrow. We grieve the loss of *N.*, a precious human life. Give your grace to those who grieve (especially *N.*), that they may find comfort in your presence and be strengthened by your Spirit. Be with this your family as they mourn, and draw them together in your healing love; in the name of the one who suffered, died, and rose for us, Jesus our Savior. *Amen.*

THE LESSONS

One or more of the following passages from Holy Scripture is read. If the Eucharist is celebrated, a passage from the Gospel always concludes the Readings.

From the Old Testament

2 Samuel 12:16-23 (the death of David's child)

Isaiah 65:17-20, 23-25 ("I am about to create new heavens and a new earth")

Isaiah 66:7-14 ("As a mother comforts her child, so will I comfort you")

Jeremiah 31:15-17 (Rachel weeping for her children)

Psalms 23; 42:1-7

From the New Testament

Romans 8: 31-39 ("Who will separate us from the love of Christ?")

1 Thessalonians 4:13-14,18 (“We do not want you to be uninformed about those who have died”)

1 John 3:1-2 (“See what love the Father has given us”)

Psalms 121; 139:7-12; 142:1-6

The Gospel

Matthew 5: 1-10 (“Blessed are those who mourn”)

Matthew 18: 1-5, 10-14 (“this child is the greatest in the kingdom”)

Mark 10:13-16 (“Let the little children come to me”); see also Matthew 19:13-15;
Luke 18:15-17

John 10:11-16 (“I am the Good Shepherd”)

THE SERMON

The Apostles’ Creed may be said.

(INCLUDE INTRO AND TEXT, BCP P. 496)

The service continues with the Prayers. If the Eucharist is not celebrated, the Lord’s Prayer concludes the intercessions.

THE PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

The Deacon or other person appointed says

In the peace of God, let us pray, responding “O God, have mercy.”

In the assurance of your mercy, in thanksgiving for the life of your child *N.*, and in confident expectation of the resurrection to eternal life, we pray

Here and after every petition, the people respond

O God, have mercy.

(Remember *N.*’s parents, *N. N.* Help them to hold each other in their hearts, that this sorrow may draw them together and not tear them apart, we pray)

(Remember *N.*’s brother(s) *N., N.* and sister(s) *N.,N.*, that *they/he/she* may be enfolded in love, comforted in fear, honored in *their/his/her* grief, and kept safe, we pray)

Remember all the family and friends of *N.*, that they may know the consolation of your love, and may hold *N.* in their love all the days of their lives, we pray

Support them in their grief, and be present to all who mourn, we pray

Teach us to be patient and gentle with ourselves and each other as we grieve, we pray

Help us to know and accept that we will be reunited at your heavenly banquet, we pray

Finally, our God, help us become co-creators of a world in which children are happy, healthy, loved and do not know want or hunger, we pray

The Minister concludes the prayers with this collect

Compassionate God, your ways are beyond our understanding, and your love for those whom you create is greater by far than ours; comfort all who grieve for this child *N.* Give them the faith to endure the wilderness of bereavement and bring them in the fullness of time to share with *N.* the light and joy of your eternal presence; through Jesus Christ our

LITURGY AND MUSIC

Lord. *Amen.*

When the Eucharist is not to be celebrated, the service continues with the Commendation or with the Committal.

AT THE EUCHARIST

(PRINT RUBRICS AND POSTCOMMUNION PRAYER FROM BCP PP 498-9.)

THE COMMENDATION

(PRINT OUT BCP p. 499 — “Give rest, O Christ”)

The minister, facing the body, says

We commend *N.* to the mercy of God, our maker, redeemer and comforter.

N., our companion in faith and fellow child of Christ, we entrust you to God. Go forth from this world in the love of God who created you, in the mercy of Jesus who died for you, in the power of the Holy Spirit who receives and protects you. May you rest in peace and rise in glory, where pain and grief are banished, and life and joy are yours for ever. *Amen.*

or this

(PRINT OUT BCP p. 499 “Into your hands, O Merciful Savior...”)

The blessing and dismissal follow.

THE COMMITTAL

One or more of the following anthems is sung or said

They are before the throne of God,
and worship him day and night within his temple,
and the one who is seated on his throne will shelter them.
They will hunger no more and thirst no more;
the sun will not strike them, nor any scorching heat;
for the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd,
and he will guide them to springs of the water of life,
and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes. (Rev. 7: 15-17)

or this

See, the home of God is among mortals. He will dwell with them as their God;
they will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them;
he will wipe away every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more;
mourning and crying and pain will be no more, for the first things have passed away.
Those who conquer will inherit these things, and I will be their God, and they will be
my children. (Rev. 21: 3b-4, 7)

Before the following prayer, the coffin may be lowered into the grave. Then, while earth is cast upon the coffin, the minister says these words

(“in the sure and certain hope...” — PRINT TEXT, BCP P. 501)

Then shall be sung or said

Jesus said to his friends, “You have pain now; but I will see you again, and your hearts will rejoice, and no one will take your joy from you.” (John 16:22)

Then the minister says

The Lord be with you.

People And also with you.

Minister Let us pray.

Loving God, we stand before you in pain and sadness. You gave the gift of new life, and now it has been taken from us. Hear the cry of our hearts for the pain of our loss. Be with us as we struggle to understand the mystery of life and death. Receive *N*. in the arms of your mercy, to live in your gracious and eternal love, and help us to commit ourselves to your tender care. In Jesus’ name we pray. *Amen*.

or this

God, you have loved us into being. Hear our cries at our loss of *N*. Move us from the shadow of death into the light of your love and peace in the name of Mary’s child, Jesus the risen one. *Amen*.

Here one or more of the additional prayers may be said. Then the Lord’s Prayer may be said.

(PRINT OUT IN TWO COLUMNS)

The Blessing follows.

The God of peace.... (PRINT TEXT, BCP p. 503)

The service concludes with this Dismissal

Since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, so will it be for those who have died: God will bring them to life with Jesus. Alleluia.

Go in peace in the name of Christ.

Additional Prayers

The death of an infant

God our Creator, you called into being this fragile life, which had seemed to us so full of promise: give to *N*, whom we commit to your care, abundant life in your presence, and to us, who grieve for hopes destroyed, courage to bear our loss; through Jesus Christ our Savior. *Amen*.

For a miscarriage

O God, who gathered Rachel’s tears over her lost children, hear now the sorrow and distress of *N* (and *N*) for the death of *their/her/his* expected child; in the darkness of loss, stretch out to *them/her/him* the strength of your arm and renewed assurance of your love; through your own suffering and risen Child Jesus. *Amen*.

LITURGY AND MUSIC

For a stillbirth or child who dies soon after birth

Heavenly Father, your love for all children is strong and enduring. We were not able to know *N.* as we hoped. Yet you knew *her/him* growing in *her/his* mother's womb, and *she/he* is not lost to you. In the midst of our sadness, we thank you that *N.* is with you now. *Amen.*

For a mother whose child has died near birth

Loving God, we thank you that in your mercy you brought your daughter *N.* through childbirth in safety. We pray that *N.* (and *N.*) will know your support in this time of trouble and enjoy your protection always, through Jesus Christ our Savior. *Amen.*

For children who die by violence

Loving God, Jesus gathered your little ones in his arms and blessed them. Have pity on those who mourn for *N.*, an innocent slaughtered by the violence of our fallen world. Be with us as we struggle with the mysteries of life and death; in our pain, bring your comfort, and in our sorrow, bring your hope and your promise of new life, in the name of Jesus our Savior. *Amen.*

or this

God our deliverer, gather our horror and pity for the death of your child *N.* into the compass of your wisdom and strength, that through the night we may seek and do what is right, and when morning comes trust ourselves to your cleansing justice and new life, through Christ our Savior. *Amen.*

or this

God, do not hide your face from us in our anger and grief for the death of *N.* Renew us in hope that your justice will roll down like mighty waters and joy spring up from the broken ground in a living stream through Jesus our Savior. *Amen.*

For one who has killed

Holy God, we lift into the light of your justice *N.* (the one) who has taken the life of your child *N.* Where our hearts are stone return to us hearts of flesh; that grief may not swallow us up, but new life find us through Jesus the crucified, with whom we are raised by your power. *Amen.*

For those who mourn

God of compassion and strength: keep safe the soul of your child *N.*, whose moment of pain and fear is past. Send your healing to *N.* (and *N.*) and all who mourn, that their suffering may find peace and resolution within your love, whose Spirit gives life in Christ our Savior. *Amen.*

or this

Most loving God: the death of your Son has opened to us a new and living way. Give us hope to overcome our despair; help us to surrender *N.* to your keeping, and let our sorrow find comfort in your care, through the name and presence of Jesus our Savior. *Amen.*

or this

God, as Mary stood at the foot of the cross, we stand before you with broken hearts and tearful eyes. Keep us mindful that you know our pain, and free us to see your resurrec-

tion power already at work in *N.*'s life. In your time, raise us from our grief as you have raised *N.* to eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Savior. *Amen.*

or this

Merciful God, you grant to children an abundant entrance into your kingdom. In your compassion, comfort those who mourn for *N.*, and grant us grace to conform our lives to *her/his* innocence and faith, that at length, united with *her/him*, we may stand in your presence in the fullness of joy; for the sake of Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

For a child dead by suicide

Out of the depths we cry to you, merciful God, for your child *N.* dead by *her/his* own hand. Meet our confusion with your peace, our anger with forgiveness, our guilt with mercy, and our sorrow with consolation. Help us acknowledge the mystery that our lives are hid with Christ in you, whose compassion is over all whom you have made. *Amen.*

or this

All-knowing and eternal God, come to our help as we mourn for *N.* dead by *her/his* own hand. We know only in part, we love imperfectly, and we fail to ease one another's pain as we intend. But you are the God whose property is always to have mercy, and so we put our trust in you and ask the courage to go on, through our Savior Christ, who suffered for us, and whom you raised to new life. *Amen.*

HYMNS APPROPRIATE FOR THE BURIAL OF A CHILD

The Hymnal 1982

- | | |
|----------|--|
| 482 | Lord of all hopefulness |
| 490 | I want to walk as a child of the light |
| 620 | Jerusalem, my happy home |
| 645, 646 | The King of love my shepherd is |
| 676 | There is a balm in Gilead |
| 712 | Dona nobis pacem |

Wonder, Love, and Praise

- | | |
|-----|-------------------------------------|
| 787 | We are marching in the light of God |
| 800 | Precious Lord, take my hand |
| 810 | Eagle's wings |
| 813 | Way, way, way |

Lutheran Book of Worship

- | | |
|-----|---------------------------------|
| 474 | Children of the heav'nly Father |
|-----|---------------------------------|

Other Sources

- | | |
|---------------|------------------------|
| Root, Geo. F. | Jewels/Little Children |
| | Jesus loves me |
| | Softly and tenderly |

TRANSLATIONS OF SCRIPTURE

Resolution A070 Revise Canon II.2 Translations of Scripture

- 1 *Resolved*, the House of _____ concurring, that existing text of Title
2 II, Canon 2: Of Translations of the Bible, be replaced with the following -
3 The translation of the Holy Scriptures commonly known as the King James
4 or Authorized Version is the historic Bible of this Church. The Lectionary in
5 the Book of Common Prayer makes use of the Revised Standard Version (1952)
6 (and the New Revised Standard Version (1990)) for its enumeration of chapters
7 and verses. The Lessons prescribed in the Book of Common Prayer shall be
8 read from versions of the Bible, including those in languages other than English,
9 which shall be authorized by diocesan bishops for use within their dioceses or in
10 specific ministries, or by the House of Bishops for general use.

Explanation

The proliferation of biblical translations in many languages and for a variety of uses makes it impractical for the church to authorize specific versions for use in worship as a matter of canon law. The language proposed here addresses the need for the careful selection of texts to be used in public worship while allowing for regional flexibility of selection.

[\(Footnotes\)](#)

¹ On the subject of tradition see, among others: Edward Shils, *Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981) for a sociologist,s account of tradition and the way it works; and further, S. N. Eisenstadt, *Tradition, Change and Modernity* (New York: John Wiley, 1973). Much that is relevant to problems about traditioning within the Christian movement can be found in the debates that began substantively with the publication of J. H. Newman, *An essay in the Development of Christian Doctrine* (London, 1845): see, e.g. Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Development of Christian Doctrine* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969); idem, *The Vindication of Tradition* (new Haven: Yale University Press, 1984); and Owen Chadwick, *From Bossuet to Newman* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1957); R. P. C. Hanson, *Tradition in the Early Church* (London: S. C. M. Press, 1962). A valuable recent study (which has nothing to do with Christian teaching) is G. Allan, *The Importances of the Past* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1986), which can be read along with D. Gross, *The Past is Ruins: Tradition and the Critique of Modernity* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1992); and D. Brown, *Boundaries of our Habitations: Tradition and Theological Construction* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1994).

² The Greek verb is also used in the NT to refer to the “handing over,” i.e. the betrayal, of Jesus.

³ Thus παραδοσις is used in the Gospels to signify “the tradition of the elders” (cf. Mk. 7:5; 8, 13)—i.e., interpretations of the Law that were studied and discussed (rather like classic “cases” in contemporary law schools—another setting in which tradition is important) by students of the books of Moses. In the Gospels, the term bears a pejorative sense because early Christians, and very likely Jesus himself, rejected, in whole or in part,

the scribes' way of reading and interpreting the Law. Perhaps for this reason, the books of the New Testament do not normally use the noun "tradition" to refer to the content of what Christians receive by way of teaching and proclamation.

⁴ See, e.g. Polycarp of Smyrna, Philippians 2.1–3, and esp. 3.2 ("the faith that has been given to you"). Note also the definition of "tradition" given by R. P. C. Hanson: "That which is handed down from the very beginning of the Christian faith, the Christian teaching of gospel"; to which he then adds, "the method by which it is handed over, and the sources from which it is derived" (*Origen's Doctrine of Tradition*, London: S.P.C. K., 1954, p. 13).

⁵ "Tradition acquired other names in post-apostolic times. Irenaeus could speak of "this tradition which is from the apostles" simply as "the truth" or as "the body of the truth," and he distinguishes the tradition of true belief (which most directly concerns him) from correct praxis, though neither, he thinks, can be actualized apart from the other. His favorite term for it, however, seems to have been the expression *υποθεσις της αληθειας*. By this "hypothesis of the truth," he seems to have meant the "economy of our salvation" (AH 3.1.1), i.e., the plot or sequential logical structure of the Christian "story" of humanity's creation, fall, redemption, and fulfillment in God, which was of course focused in the advent of the Word incarnate.

⁶ Consider the consistent method of Aquinas's *Summa theologiae*, in which each article of each question is in fact an issue generated by disagreements—or at least apparent disagreements—in the tradition. "Is such-and-such the case? It seems not; for X, Y, and Z say.... But on the other hand A, B, and C say.... On the contrary, I say...." This questioning and responding is a *form* of traditioning.

⁷ Here, it will be noted, a deliverance of earlier traditioning is being re-traditioned while being thought through again: a process that is native to the business of traditioning. See note 6 above.

⁸ It would make sense to speak of tradition as a "source" only if one confined the reference of the word "tradition" to the content of traditioning and further identified that content with a specific writing or set of writings: e.g., the classical creeds. The creeds certainly state, in classic form, the "truth," or "gospel," or "message" that traditioning conveys, and state it, moreover, in the form of an act of affiance (F. D. Maurice) in which the realities they name are actually engaged. Nevertheless they are the first step in the interpretive activity that constitutes tradition and not the whole content of it.

LITURGY AND MUSIC

73 RD GENERAL CONVENTION		74 TH GENERAL CONVENTION			75 TH GENERAL CONVENTION			76 TH GENERAL CONVENTION			77 TH GEN. CONVENTION		
		22 months			22 months			22 months			22 months		
2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	
	1 2 3 4 5 6 S S S S S C C C C C L L L L L M M M M M	1 2 3 4 5 6 S S S S S C C C C C L L L L L M M M M M	1 2 3 4 5 6 S S S S S C C C C C L L L L L M M M M M	1 2 3 4 5 6 S S S S S C C C C C L L L L L M M M M M	1 2 3 4 5 6 S S S S S C C C C C L L L L L M M M M M	1 2 3 4 5 6 S S S S S C C C C C L L L L L M M M M M	1 2 3 4 5 6 S S S S S C C C C C L L L L L M M M M M	1 2 3 4 5 6 S S S S S C C C C C L L L L L M M M M M	1 2 3 4 5 6 S S S S S C C C C C L L L L L M M M M M	1 2 3 4 5 6 S S S S S C C C C C L L L L L M M M M M	1 2 3 4 5 6 S S S S S C C C C C L L L L L M M M M M	1 2 3 4 5 6 S S S S S C C C C C L L L L L M M M M M	
	36 months												
	36 months												
	36 months												
	36 months												
2000	Jamboree-CONFERENCE Collation and Interpretation of data Launching task forces and drafting committees Identifying consultants	↑ ↑ Task forces and drafting committees Jamboree-Conf Conference Report	Proposal for the scope, shape and content of the Revision, Renewal and Enrichment of our Common Worship Text Liturgy Music Catechesis	Jamboree-Conf Drafting Editing Testing Reworking CATECHESIS	Jamboree-Conf Drafting Editing Testing Reworking Jamboree-Conf Catechesis Interim Report	INTERIM REPORT Drafting Editing Testing Reworking Jamboree-Conf Catechesis Interim Report	Jamboree-Conf Drafting Editing Testing Reworking Catechetical Program	Jamboree-Conf Drafting Editing Testing Reworking Preparation for First Reading Catechetical Program	FIRST READING Revision Editing Testing Reworking Catechetical Program	Jamboree-Conf Revision Editing Testing Reworking Catechetical Program	REVISION Editing Testing Reworking Catechetical Program Preparation for First Reading Jamboree-Conf	SECOND READING Catechetical Program	

2000	2003	2006	2009	2012
<p>Focus Groups DATA COLLECTION COLLATION INTERPRETATION</p>	<p>GENERAL CONVENTION</p> <p>(work continues)</p> <p>PROPOSAL</p>	<p>GENERAL CONVENTION</p> <p>Drafting Editing Testing Education and Training</p> <p>Music Text Liturgy Catechetical Training</p>	<p>GENERAL CONVENTION</p> <p>Drafting Editing Testing Education and Training</p> <p>READING</p>	<p>General Convention</p> <p>Revision Editing Testing Final Copy Catechetical</p> <p>Second Reading</p>
<p>Data Collection DISCERNING THE SCOPE AND CONTENT OF THE REVISION, RENEWAL AND ENRICHMENT PROPOSAL</p> <p>ESTABLISH TASK FORCES AND COMMITTEES</p>	<p>→</p>	<p>DRAFTING, REVISING, EDITING TESTING</p> <p>First Reading</p>	<p>REVISING, EDITING TESTING</p> <p>Second Reading</p>	<p>REVISING, EDITING TESTING</p> <p>Second Reading</p>
<p>PREPARATION OF MUSICAL RESOURCES</p> <p>2011</p>				
<p>PREPARATION OF MATERIALS IN ALL THE LANGUAGES USED IN OUR CHURCH</p> <p>2011</p>				



DISCERNING, DEVISING, IMPLEMENTING A PROGRAM OF LITURGICAL CATECHESIS TO SUPPORT
THE REVISION, RENEWAL AND ENRICHMENT OF OUR COMMON WORSHIP

2011