

Along with the election of Katharine Jefferts-Schori to be our 26th Presiding Bishop, The Episcopal Church's response to the Windsor Report took center stage in the media reporting on the 75th General Convention which ended last week. But much more happened during the nine day gathering of deputies and bishops from the 109 dioceses that make up The Episcopal Church in 14 countries. Some of the other important things that the church did during this triennial gathering are listed below. A separate summary of the response to the Windsor Report will follow shortly.

Here is a partial list of actions of the General Convention:

Approved a budget for the next triennium of more than \$152,000,000. The mission priorities of this budget are:

1. Justice and Peace – promoting peace and justice for all of God's creation and continuing our participation in and promotion of the eight Millennium Development Goals in the world, in our dioceses, in our parishes, and in our individual lives
2. Young Adults, Youth and Children – particularly intentional inclusion and full incorporation in the thinking, work, worship and structure of the Church
3. Reconciliation and Evangelism – reconciling and engaging those who do not know Christ by participating in God's mission of reconciling all things to Christ and proclaiming the Gospel to those who are not yet members of the church.
4. Congregational Transformation – revitalizing and transforming congregations through commitment to leadership development, spiritual growth, lifelong learning, dynamic and inclusive worship, greater diversity, and mission
5. Partnerships – across the Anglican Communion and beyond, as well as with ecumenical and interfaith partners

Finished revising Title III of the canons (the Ministry Canons), adjusting some of the changes made three years ago and completing work on the canons which apply to bishops and to clergy coming to The Episcopal Church from other Christian traditions.

Approved Interim Eucharistic sharing with the United Methodist Church. This includes recognition of the UMC as "a member of the one, holy, Catholic and apostolic Church in which the Gospel is rightly preached and taught" and encourages the development of a common Christian life between the two bodies. The agreement permits common, joint celebrations of the Eucharist (Holy Communion) between the two churches. This same procedure was part of our evolving relationship with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America that has led to our full communion with them.

Called for equal representation of women and men on all decision-making bodies within the church at local, diocesan and national levels. This recommendation originated with the 2005 meeting of the Anglican Consultative Council.

Created a mission initiative for the New Orleans/Mississippi coast area that will gather data that can be used to advance evangelism elsewhere in the church.

Rejected proposed revision of Title IV of the canons of the church and authorized a new task force to study aspects of church disciplinary canons. Proposed changes to Title IV would have replaced the current court-oriented system with a multi-layered approach intended to focus on mediation and reconciliation which included a controversial provision that would subject certain lay leaders to the new canons.

Approved a pilot project to provide summer camps for children whose parents are in prison. A line item in the budget already approved by General Convention included \$65,000 for the new program.

Asked the Church Pension Fund to do a church-wide healthcare feasibility study for clergy and lay employees of the church.

Authorized the creation of a Standing Commission on Lifelong Christian Education and Formation to develop and recommend policies for children, youth, adults, and seniors for lifelong Christian formation (A105).

Opposed the criminalization of homosexuality, opposing state or federal constitutional amendments that prohibit same-gender civil marriage or civil unions and affirming the civil rights of gays and lesbians.

Reiterated the church's support for gay and lesbian people as "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."

Approved active support for the right of workers to form a union and increase the support nationwide for passage of "living wage" legislation. It also commits the church to contract solely with union hotels in its meetings, or hotels that offer "living wages" to employees (D047).

Approved additional commemorations in the Calendar of the Church Year and authorize trial use thereof for the triennium 2007–2009, for Harriet Bedell, Deaconess and Missionary; Anna Julia Heyward Cooper, Educator; James Theodore Holly, Bishop of Haiti and Dominican Republic; Oscar Romero, Archbishop of San Salvador, and The Martyrs of El Salvador; Tikhon, Patriarch of Russia and Confessor; Vida Dutton Scudder, Educator and Witness for Peace; and Frances Joseph-Gaudet, Educator and Prison Reformer (A063 and A064).

Approved for trial use new liturgies concerning rites of passage, including reaching puberty, earning a driver's license and dating relationships (A067).

Acknowledged the authority of the triune God, exercised through Scripture (D069.)

Recognized the position in the Constitution and Canons that only those who have been baptized in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit shall be eligible to receive Holy Communion; and that the 76th General Convention receive a pastoral and theological understanding of the relationship between Holy Baptism and Eucharistic practice (D084).

Directed the Standing Commission on Ministry Development to design strategies for raising awareness and responding to the crisis of educational debt for seminarians (B006).

Urged the church to work to ensure that governments provide programs that combat social and economic conditions that place children at risk or diminish children's ability to achieve their full potential in the world (A018).

Authorized the establishment of a Church Planting Initiative to raise funds for new congregations (A042).