

Wednesday,  
June 24, 2015

# ISSUES 2015

The daily General Convention newsletter of the Consultation

PG. 1 MARRIAGE EQUALITY

PG. 2 RESPONSES TO THE CHARLESTON MURDERS

PG. 3 COMMON PRAYER FOR THE 21ST CENTURY &  
EXCERPTS FROM 'TOO PROUD TO BEND'

PG. 4 THE STRUGGLE TO SEE WOMEN AS LEADERS &  
FROM THE HISTORY OF ISSUES:  
"FROM CONCERNED LAYWOMEN OF THE CHURCH"

## **Marriage Equality: A True Blessing to the Church and the World**

Over the past three years the Taskforce for the Study of Marriage has brought some of the greatest minds and most devout hearts of our church together to study and explore the meaning and context of marriage in our Anglican Christian context. They studied Holy Scripture and built upon on the theological works of the past two millennia. Their report both thoughtfully and faithfully explored the depth of God's gift to those who marry. Marriage, while dynamic throughout history, has stood through the ages as a specific way to live out our Christian lives and vocations. Their report -- which is part of the 78<sup>th</sup> General Convention Blue Book -- underscores another great truth; marriage blesses the church and the world.

Each of us knows of marriages which bless the church and the world she serves. More and more, most of us are witnessing the blessing that same-sex marriages bring to our congregations and communities.

At this time at least 75% of all Episcopalians live in states or jurisdictions which allow people of the same gender to marry. We can rejoice as a church since, in 2012, both chambers of the General Convention voted overwhelmingly to "end discrimination against same-sex marriage" [Resolution 2012.D018].

This week the Supreme Court of the United States is likely to open wide our courthouse doors to same-sex couples who wish to enter into the institution of marriage. This week the General Convention will be prayerfully considering whether The Episcopal Church will open its doors fully to these couples, too.

The Episcopal Church has the opportunity to lead and recognize the blessing that these marriages make to the whole church. We can build upon our many years of work welcoming gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people into our pews. The Episcopal Church can now welcome them before the altar and be blessed by their sacramental marriage commitments and their lives of faith.

This church has already recognized the blessing that same-sex couples bring to our Christian family and have rejected civil marriage discrimination. Now we can set our hope on Christ and affirm the blessing that marriage equality can bring to the Church. We can finally "let our yes be yes!"

- Matt Haines, President, Integrity USA

## **Calendar**

*Experienced deputies longingly remember the unofficial calendar from previous General Conventions put together by Louie Crew. It not only contained official events of the convention but also many events that the official calendar could not publicize. We've been asked to see if we can recreate that. Being in no way as resourceful as Louie, you can help by emailing us at [issuesatgc@gmail.com](mailto:issuesatgc@gmail.com) to publicize social justice events you think other deputies, bishops, alternates or attendees would want to know about. We'll post those events here and at [www.theconsultation.org](http://www.theconsultation.org) with more information.*

### June 24

5:00 pm - EPF Award Reception & Injustice Wall  
5:30 pm - Integrity Bishop & Deputy Reception  
7:00 pm - Hearing: Marriage Equality

### June 25

11:15 am - Hearing: Palestine Israel Divestment  
11:15 am - Hearing: Racism & Criminal Justice  
1:00 pm - EPF Speaker's Corner:  
Ann Coburn & Harry Gunkel on Palestine  
6:00 pm - New Community Festival  
7:30 pm - Hearing: Marriage Equality

### June 26

1:00 pm - Open Meeting of the Consultation  
1:00 pm - Historic Black College Forum  
7:30 pm - Hearing: Marriage Equality

### June 28

7:00 am - Episcopal Women's Caucus Breakfast  
7:15 am - Bishop's Against Gun Violence March

## **Getting ISSUES from the Internet**

This General Convention we are distributing ISSUES newsletter in three ways:

1. In print at the Convention Center
2. On our website at [www.theconsultation.org](http://www.theconsultation.org)
3. By email

If you would like to receive ISSUES by email, please send your email address to [issuesatgc@gmail.com](mailto:issuesatgc@gmail.com) and let us know you want to join the mailing list!

# Responses to the Murders in Charleston

From the *Union of Black Episcopalians*

*Up Golgotha's rugged road  
I see my Jesus go.  
I see him sink beneath the load,  
I see my drooping Jesus sink.  
And then they laid hold on Simon,  
Black Simon, yes, black Simon,  
And Simon bore the cross.*



- From *God's Trombones* by James Weldon Johnson

We believe the rugged road up Golgotha is the road to justice and peace. For more than 400 years "black Simon" has been forced to bear the cross of redemption. The heavy cross being borne is that of lynching, church burnings and bombings, police brutality, and the murder of innocent worshippers. Even until today, the children of "Black Simon" continue to be "laid hold upon"; grieved but determined souls struggling with Christ towards justice and peace for all. The Union of Black Episcopalians call upon all in our churches and community to join us in prayer, moral support and visible actions of support for Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church, Charleston, S.C.; and, also, the public repudiation of racial violence and injustice in our society.

*"Guide the people of this land, and of all the nations, in the ways of justice and peace; that we may honor one another and serve the common good."* [BCP p.388]

- The Rt. Rev. Nathan Baxter

From the *Episcopal Peace Fellowship*

The Episcopal Peace Fellowship (EPF) affirms President Barack Obama's call for tougher gun laws in the wake of the racially charged killing of nine black persons in the historic Emanuel AME Church in Charleston, South Carolina June 17. "Once again," President Obama said, "innocent people were killed in part because someone who wanted to inflict harm had no trouble getting their hands on a gun ... At some point as a country, we have to reckon with the fact that this type of mass violence does not happen in other advanced countries. It is in our power to do something about it."



"A long-time advocate for sensible gun regulation, EPF urges the US Congress to immediately strengthen our nation's gun laws," said the Rev. Allison Sandlin Liles, EPF executive director. "It is overwhelmingly tragic that Dylann Roof walked into a church with a tradition of safety and sanctuary, sat for approximately one hour Wednesday night, then allegedly fatally shot nine individuals."

Maryland Bishop Gene Sutton – a member of EPF who has spoken out against gun violence during an EPF event last year – released this statement <http://episcopalmaryland.org/what-will-it-take/>

"As the 2015 General Convention of the Episcopal Church begins June 24 in Salt Lake City, Utah, EPF supports and is working for passage of three gun violence resolutions slated for a vote. They are C005 Decreasing Gun Violence – C030 Control of Automatic Weapons – and, D0118 Curb Gun Violence," Liles said.

Bishop Scott Hayashi of the Diocese of Utah who will host General Convention in Salt Lake City said, "I am deeply mournful and angry that we have yet another incident of innocent people murdered. We know that the horrific crime of racism is also paramount in this case. The scourge of racism has been compounded by an epidemic of gun violence."

"It is right for the Church to pray, to weep and to grieve over another mass shooting in our country, but as the Church we must also transform these prayers into action for stronger gun laws in our country," Liles said.

The Episcopal Peace Fellowship has advocated for peace since its founding on Armistice Day 1939. EPF website – <http://epfnational.org/>

## Taking Action Against Gun Violence

The Episcopal Peace Fellowship's Gun Violence Prevention Action Group – <http://epfnational.org/gun-violence-prevention-action-group/> – is planning an active and effective presence at General Convention. We see Convention as an opportunity to make gun violence prevention a focus for the Episcopal Church. Specifically, we plan to:

- Support "Bishops Against Gun Violence" in their witness during Convention. **EPF members can help** without attending Convention by going to their website ([www.bishopsagainstgunviolence.org](http://www.bishopsagainstgunviolence.org)) and checking the list of "Our Bishops" to see if your bishops are members. Thank those who are. Encourage those who are not yet members to join.
- Monitor and support resolutions that limit gun violence. Constructive resolutions have passed in various dioceses – collectively these resolutions can create a positive vision for state and federal legislation for the next decade as well as strengthen the "Episcopal Public

Policy Network" to promote reforms in American gun laws.

- Usher resolutions that limit gun violence through Convention –
  - o **All EPF members:** please speak at committee hearings and ask your Bishops and Deputies for support.
    - ◇ If you are attending Convention as a visitor, contact EPF to let us know if you would be willing to track legislation and/or speak at committee hearings.
  - o **EPF members who are Deputies or Bishops:** please speak on the floor of Convention.
    - ◇ If you are a Bishop or a Deputy, let EPF know if you would be willing to co-sponsor new legislation or speak on the floor of Convention.

# Common Prayer for the Twenty-first Century

It has been 36 years since the adoption of the 1979 Book of Common Prayer. In recent years there has been an increasing amount of liturgical experimentation in parishes across The Episcopal Church. This rich and diverse creativity at the local level has enhanced the experience of worship in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The whole Church should be able to benefit from new local insights in worship in a dialogue that can serve worship everywhere in the Church. The Annual Convention of the Episcopal Church in Connecticut has filed resolution C016 and the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music has filed resolution A066, with the same text, to amend Article X of the Constitution of The Episcopal Church to enable General Convention to provide for the "use of other forms for the renewal and enrichment of the common worship of this Church for such periods of time and upon such terms and

conditions as General Convention may provide." The proposed amendment would create a framework for experimentation that would also ensure common prayer for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Should General Convention adopt this amendment, it would encourage creative ideas to be brought forward from the grassroots so that they can be refined and improved in a dialogue that includes lay and clerical deputies and bishops from the dioceses of this Church. Considerations of liturgical theology, ecclesiology, ecumenical insights and liturgical guidelines adopted by the International Anglican Liturgical Consultation would be part of that dialogue. The proposed amendment would enable General Convention, if it chose, to establish a general framework for any liturgical experimentation that could clearly delineate those who should be part of a conversation that would

enable the flourishing of creative experimentation while ensuring that those in the local congregation have a definitive role as well as the bishop in authorizing use in that parish. The proposed amendment, then, allows maximal flexibility and the nimbleness required to respond to and claim the creative liturgical ferment across the Church by authorizing General Convention, with its lay and clerical deputies and bishops, to respond to specific experimental worship proposals. It also allows for General Convention to create a general framework for authorizing experimentation at the local level at any time that maintains the important voice of the baptized in this Church, along with the local cleric and bishop, in the forming of the worship of this Church.

- Robert J. Brooks,  
Associated Parishes for  
Liturgy and Mission

## Please join us for the Episcopal Peace Fellowship/ Sayre Peace Award Reception

Today, June 24, from 5:00-6:30 pm, you are welcome to join us at the St. Mark's Cathedral at 75 South 200 East, Salt Lake City (walk 3 blocks East on W 100 S or take the city bus).

Help us celebrate the life and work of Newland Smith and lift up our Wall of Injustice installation. Tickets available at the door or at <https://www.showclix.com/event/EPFGCReception>

## From Too Proud to Bend: Journey of a Civil Rights Foot Soldier

*Long-time civil rights advocate, Consultation member, and former deputy of the Diocese of New York Nell Braxton Gibson has recently written a powerful memoir of her experiences as a young black woman in the south during the Civil Rights movement. This year in ISSUES, we are pleased to share excerpts from her book which are all the more pertinent in light of today's violence and rising awareness of racism.*

Second in a series of ten excerpts from Nell Braxton Gibson's memoir

At the time of this excerpt the author is thirteen years old

Two of the men, Roy Bryant and J. W. Milam, got out of the car, went to the door of the cabin, and ordered Wright to "get that boy who done the talkin'." Mose pleaded with them to leave young Till alone, telling them the boy was from up North and didn't know the ways of the South, but the men dragged Till outside, shoved him into the backseat of their car, and drove off. Joining a mob of like-minded vigilantes, Bryant and Milam proceeded to the Tallahatchie River where they forced Emmett Till out of the vehicle. They made him carry a seventy-five-pound cotton gin fan to the riverbank and then strip naked. They tortured him, shot him in the head, crushed his skull, gouged out an eye, and tied his body to the cotton gin fan with barbed wire before dumping it in the river.

Days later when investigators pulled his corpse up, it was so badly mutilated that his uncle could only identify him by the initialed ring his nephew wore. The boy's casket was sent by train to his mother in Chicago, who collapsed on the station platform when she saw the remains of her only child. She decided to leave the casket open so the rest of the world could see what had been done to him.

On the day of his wake, thousands of people lined the Chicago streets to pay their respects. Jet magazine, a national Negro weekly, ran a photograph of his mutilated body on their pages, causing the outrage of the throngs of people who saw it. Most sent record-level contributions to the NAACP's "fight fund." Reported nationwide, the Emmett Till murder alerted the world to the horrors of life in Mississippi.

Note: The good folks at Amazon.com would be happy to help you read more from Nell's book.

## The Struggle to See Women as Leaders

The older I get, the more respect I have for the limits of our capacity to see what's in front of us clearly. The filters of our brains are set hard and set early. We can shift them, but it takes steady commitment to open a new and broader aperture and let in the light of vision where shadows have prevailed.

Our capacity – in and out of the Episcopal Church – to see women as leaders has been impaired by generations of filter-setting. No surprise, then, that we overlook women – lay & ordained – as the leaders we need in an era of transformation in our Church. Participant in my own oppression, I struggle to see my own leadership capacity, let alone that of my sisters, clearly. If I, as a woman, cannot see myself, how will I persuade others to see what they are preset to overlook?

This little column of ISSUES will be devoted to widening the aperture of our perception of women offering adventurous, faithful, Spirit-led leadership at General Convention and beyond. I'm looking to profile women here at General Convention that we haven't heard about yet. Suggestions? Email [smallvoice142@gmail.com](mailto:smallvoice142@gmail.com).

- The Rev. Holly Lyman Antolini

## From the history of ISSUES

*ISSUES, conceived in the living room of the late William Stringfellow, has been around as a voice for social justice at General Conventions since 1967. This year we are going to reprint some articles from our history.*

*October 8, 1973, Louisville*

It is therefore in the sacramental heart of the living body of Christ that we as women must stand and insist that we be fully included. What is at stake here is more than ordination, it is the claim of women that our humanity IS sacramentally expressed in the body and blood of our Lord. The repudiation of ordination to the priesthood for women says to us that not only are women not fully susceptible to the movement of the Holy Spirit, but also that we are somehow deficient in our basic sacramental capacity... that Christ did not take on full female humanity as well as full male humanity... and therefore at some deep and painfully real level we are excluded from that sacramental heart of the community through which we ultimately experience the freely given grace of God. We believe this cannot be. We absolutely deny the ability of any convention or Church governing body to make it so. We believe God intends women to function in every aspect of Church life, and most assuredly in its sacramental life.

- Concerned Laywomen of the Episcopal Church



The Consultation is a collaboration of progressive organizations within the Episcopal Church that partner to work for social justice. Before every triennial General Convention, we come together to develop a platform that will guide our shared advocacy and goals.

The Consultation member organizations are:

Associated Parishes for Liturgy and Mission  
Episcopal Asiamerica Ministry Advocates  
Episcopal Church Publishing Company  
Episcopal Network for Economic Justice  
Episcopal Peace Fellowship  
Episcopal Urban Caucus  
Episcopal Women's Caucus  
Integrity  
TransEpiscopal  
Union of Black Episcopalians



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