

The Diocese of New York Studies the Proposed Anglican Covenant

Responding to a request from the Executive Council of The Episcopal Church, Bishop Sisk has called the Diocese to study the proposed Anglican Covenant. A Task Force has been appointed to lead the Diocese in conversation, reflection, and prayer. On April 26, the Bishop wrote to the Diocese as follows:

To the Members of the Episcopal Diocese of New York,

A proposal for an “Anglican Covenant” has been drafted by a special committee from within the Anglican Communion, appointed by the Archbishop of Canterbury, and has been sent to all the member Churches of the Anglican Communion for study, and eventually to be considered for adoption.

I write to be sure that you know of this proposal, and that you are aware that if it were adopted by the Communion, it would change the nature of the relationships among the Provinces of the Anglican Communion, of which The Episcopal Church is an integral part.

The word-wide Anglican Communion is an historic fellowship of churches which share a common heritage, based on the ethos of the Church of England. The spiritual head of the Communion is the Most Reverend Rowan Williams, Archbishop of Canterbury. Relationships between the churches have been supported by our heritage and mission, by the leadership of the Archbishop of Canterbury, by regular meetings among the Communion’s hundreds of bishops (the Lambeth Conferences), by a representative council of laity and clergy (the Anglican Consultative Council), and by gatherings of the regional archbishops (the Council of Primates).

The Anglican Covenant would define our life together through a much more comprehensive statement of beliefs and understandings, and

would include a mechanism for determining sanctions for Provinces judged to be outside norms of theology or practice.

Each Province, including The Episcopal Church, has been asked to study the proposed Covenant, and eventually, each in its own pattern, to choose to adopt the Covenant or not.

The Anglican Covenant is available on line at www.anglicancommunion.org.

I have appointed a small diocesan Covenant Study design group. They have scheduled TWO MEETINGS for the Diocese to consider the Covenant. One will be on Monday, May 23, from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. at Saint Peter's Church in Peekskill, and the other on Tuesday morning, May 24 from 10:00 a.m. to noon in Donegan Hall at Diocesan House.

The meetings are open to everyone, lay and clergy. The purpose for the meetings is for us to learn about the Covenant, the context in which it has been created, its content, and the possible implications of the decision before us. We have asked Bishop Catherine Roskam, who has served as bishop-representative for The Episcopal Church to the Anglican Consultative Council and has attended two gatherings of Anglican Bishops from around the world at the Lambeth Conference, and Dr. Kathryn Grieb, Professor at the Virginia Theological Seminary, who was a member of the international panel that drafted the Covenant – to be our keynoters. There will be plenty of time for questions and discussion in small groups.

The next step is to gather your thoughts from the meetings. The design group will collate comment papers from attendees at the two meetings, and will collect further responses that can be sent to covenant@dioceseny.org.

The design group then will organize our responses, and forward them to the Executive Council of The Episcopal Church and to our diocesan deputies to the next General Convention (to be held in July 2012). The response of The Episcopal Church will be the work of the General Convention.

Again, this is an important time in our historic Communion. I urge you to attend one of the two planned sessions, enter the conversation, ask the questions, carry the proposal back to your parish, and respond in one of the three ways available.

I pray for you every blessing in this deeply holy season as we continue to celebrate the miracle of the risen Christ.

*Faithfully yours,
The Rt. Rev. Mark S. Sisk*

Opportunities for Conversation

Two gatherings have been scheduled for conversation and reflection.

Monday Evening, May 23rd at St. Peter's Church in Peekskill, 7:00-9:00pm

The Rev. Dr. Kathy Grieb, Professor of New Testament at Virginia Theological Seminary will be on hand to give her insight into the Covenant process. Professor Grieb participated in the drafting of the proposed Covenant. The Rt. Rev. Catherine Roskam, Bishop Suffragan of the Diocese of New York will also take part in the presentation. Bishop Roskam has just completed a term as representative of The Episcopal Church on the Anglican Consultative Council.

Tuesday Morning, May 24th in Donegan Hall at Diocesan House on the Cathedral Close, 10:00am-Noon

A second gathering to provide an opportunity to engage Professor Grieb and Bishop Roskam in conversation regarding the proposed Covenant.

Resources to facilitate a personal or parish-wide study of the proposed Covenant

- [The Proposed Covenant in several languages](#)
- [An analysis prepared by the Church Times from the United Kingdom](#), which includes several essays as well as an annotated version of the Covenant “with footnotes.”

- [The Executive Council Study Guide](#) (neutral in tone, a scripture based study). Available in English, Spanish, and French.
- [The Anglican Communion Office Study Guide \(in favor of the proposed covenant\)](#)
- [A study guide prepared by the Diocese of Texas](#) (in favor of the proposed covenant)
- [Link to www.noanglican covenant.org](http://www.noanglican covenant.org) (a gathering place for documents and resource that are opposed to the adoption of the proposed Convent)

Actively Seeking Comments

The Task Force is seeking comments regarding the proposed Covenant. The conversations at the two gatherings with Professor Grieb will be documented. Comments are also solicited from individuals – lay and ordained – as well as from Vestries.

Comments should be directed to Archdeacon William Parnell at covenant@dioceseny.org. Comments may also be mailed to Bill’s attention at

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Members of the Task Force

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