



A Covenant for the Anglican Communion

A study and consultation guide



Anglican Church of Canada
Anglican Communion Working Group

Prayer for those engaged in the study of “A Covenant for the Anglican Communion”



Gracious and loving God,
who has called us into communion through your Son,
we give you thanks for the special gift of the Anglican Communion.
As we seek to serve you and your church by careful and prayerful
study of the Covenant for the Anglican Communion,
may we have ears to hear, eyes to see, minds to reason and hearts
to follow the guidance of your Spirit, that we might discern your way forward.
This we ask in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.



Anglican Church of Canada
Anglican Communion Working Group

Exploring *The Anglican Communion Covenant* A Study Kit for Individuals, Congregations and Dioceses

Developed by the Anglican Communion Working Group
of the Anglican Church of Canada

Pentecost, 2011



Welcome to *Exploring the Anglican Covenant*. This study guide is designed to help people in parishes and dioceses dig more deeply into the wording of the Covenant, and the meaning behind the words and to discuss together what the implications of adoption might be. This study is an important part of a national consultation process. The aim is to collect the insights, affirmations and concerns arising from group discussions across the country, and in doing so, inform our church's response for the wider Anglican Communion.

The materials are designed to support a three-session study of *The Anglican Communion Covenant*. To fully engage with the Covenant and with each other in discussion of its potential implications for our church, three sessions of 90 to 120 minutes each are recommended. If you do not have the option of three sessions, you will find suggestions to adapt to a one- or two-session study at the end of the guide. Whichever you choose, we hope that the questions and ideas that follow will help you provide effective leadership to your group as it works with the Covenant and the accompanying materials found in this guide.

This study guide includes:

- *Exploring the Anglican Covenant*—background documents prepared by the Anglican Communion Working Group to support this study
- tips for planners and facilitators
- outlines for group study sessions
- links to a short video clip from our Primate, the Most Rev. Fred Hiltz
- a PowerPoint presentation on the background for the Covenant
- the text of the Covenant
- a letter from two of our Canadian members of the Anglican Consultative Council
- a resource list
- links to a summary of **Frequently Asked Questions** about the Covenant developed by the Anglican Communion Office
- a consultation response form
- an evaluation/comments form.



Anglican Church of Canada
Anglican Communion Working Group

Letter from Sue Moxley and Suzanne Lawson for Study Kit on the Covenant



We greet you as your two continuing members of the Anglican Consultative Council, who attended the April 2009 meeting in Jamaica with former member, now-bishop Stephen Andrews. (The Ven. Peter Elliott has since been appointed to replace him.) At this meeting the Anglican Communion Covenant was considered for distribution to the Provinces of the Communion. It was obvious from the earnest and thoughtful discussions that a Covenant as a way of strengthening the Communion was of high importance to those in attendance representing the various Provinces of the Anglican Communion. There was tension in the discussion, but huge commitment to getting the Covenant as right as it could be. We knew and still know that the Covenant is not perfect, since it is the result of many varying points of view. There were some who thought that a Covenant was essential and others who thought it was not necessary at all.

We are pleased that the church across Canada will be studying the Covenant and sharing their ideas with the Council of General Synod so that this church may be better able to make a decision on adoption or not at General Synod, 2013. We have been asked to report on the progress towards decision in Canada when the Canadian members attend the next ACC meeting in 2012, and so your feedback will be most helpful to us for that purpose.

Whether you agree with the Covenant or not, there is much to be learned about our Anglican heritage and practice, by engaging in the study process. The Anglican Communion has been in turmoil over the past several years. This Covenant may or may not be of assistance in leading us towards a clearer mission together. The Anglican Communion Networks (<http://www.anglicancommunion.org/networks/index.cfm>) are self-funding groups that help profile various areas of interest in the Anglican world at large. They have shown that it is possible to work together towards specific parts of God's mission while holding diverse views.

As you study and ponder what makes for communion in the face of diversity, may you also experience God's blessing.



The Rt. Rev. Susan Moxley



Suzanne Lawson



Anglican Church of Canada
Anglican Communion Working Group

Planning for the Study



In preparing to hold a discussion on the Covenant you will want to do the following:

- Gather and read all the material available in this guide.
- Decide on a one-session discussion on the first three sections of the Covenant, a one-session exploration of the whole Covenant, or a three-session discussion on the whole Covenant (models will follow).
- Determine whether the study will be offered as an open session for all who are interested, integrated into the program of an already existing group (parish council, Bible study group, deanery chapter, etc.) or offered in a group gathered by invitation.
- Find a facilitator for the group(s). Note that a facilitator's job is to introduce the topic and the importance of the study, ensure that all have a chance to speak and to keep the meeting moving according to the time allotted. They will NOT be positioned as an expert who knows the answers to all the questions, NOR will they share their thoughts about the Covenant.
- Recruit a recorder to capture key questions, concerns and opinions, and submit them afterwards to the Anglican Communion Working Group on the form provided at the end of the study guide. The recorder will need to summarize and synthesize carefully: not submitting all that was said but accurately sharing both the content and tone of the discussion(s). The equivalent of a one- or two-pager is hoped for, not a treatise!
- The group may disagree. Ensure that the recorder is prepared and able to note all perspectives accurately and fairly, and that these are included in the summary feedback to the Working Group.

Planning the Logistics

- Find someone who will organize the logistics and promotion.
- Set the date(s) and time. If you are planning an open session, advertise that a group (or several) will be formed to study and discuss together *The Anglican Communion Covenant*. Advertise in the parish bulletin and/or newsletter and/or website, and make an in-person announcement several times about the dates.
- Ensure that a room is reserved and that, if you are going to show the Primate's video, a computer, LCD projector and a screen or blank wall area available to enable its viewing.
- Have copies made of the Covenant and the study guide for all who will attend. **Ask people to pick up their copy in advance of the meeting and read it in advance.**



Anglican Church of Canada

Anglican Communion Working Group

A Note to Facilitators

The Covenant document has both proponents and detractors in the life of our church today. Don't assume that there will be consensus in your group. It is recommended that early in the first session of the study, you help the group set some norms for their work together.

Group norms are a code of conduct that will guide people's behaviour during the discussions. The code, established by the group itself at the beginning of the study, will help create the conditions for full participation. With norms set and agreed to by group members, a facilitator may then remind people, should it become necessary, to abide by their own rules for healthy and constructive conversation.

What guidelines should be established to help ensure that all participants feel they can participate openly and safely in the discussions? Here's a list of examples (in no particular order) to get started:

As we work together we will

- speak for ourselves (use "I" statements)
- listen respectfully to each other's opinions
- expect that members will let the group know when they don't feel heard
- be tough on issues, soft on people
- recognize that we all may be challenged in ways we didn't expect
- support each other, especially at times where we are surprised or when our discussion moves to places we hadn't foreseen
- not be disappointed with disagreements
- avoid stereotyping
- be prayerful
- be positive
- bring our sense of humour to the conversations
- be willing to think creatively.

Write the list of norms on paper and post it where the group can see it. Ask the group if all can agree, and are willing to be held accountable to these norms. Post the list, written large enough for the whole group to read, at each session.



A Note to Parish Clergy

It is important that you attend and participate, but avoid dominating or taking over discussion. This is a time to let the discussion emerge from all people in attendance, many of whom might not have had much opportunity to consider issues relating to the international Anglican church before. This being said, there may be times when comments from you will be helpful, particularly if things go off track considerably or require a specific response for information or clarification.



Considering Sections One Through Three:

Our Inheritance of Faith, The Life We Share with Others,
and Our Unity and Common Life



Materials

- *Exploring the Anglican Covenant* Preamble and Part 1
- A few extra copies of the Covenant
- Video clip from Primate
- Equipment to show the video clip

Purpose

To look at how the Covenant describes relationship among Anglican churches worldwide; and

To consider how this description reflects the relationships we experience, or aspire to, as the Anglican Church of Canada with other churches making up the Communion

Suggested Format (2 to 2.5-hour session)

Gathering (10–20 minutes)

- Welcome and introduce the topic and its importance to all Anglicans
- Opening prayer
- If necessary, ask group participants to introduce themselves briefly
- Set group norms
- Run the video from the Primate (optional, but helpful)
- Briefly summarize the Preamble



Preparing for Discussion (10–15 minutes)

Introduce the first three sections of the Covenant with the opening paragraph of the commentary accompanying this study guide. You may also want to expand your introduction by briefly outlining the content of the first three sections.

Open your discussion with the following question:

What would you say to your friend, who knows nothing about Anglicanism, about who you are as a Canadian Anglican and your relationship(s) with other Anglicans?

Give people a few minutes to scan the first three sections of the Covenant AND the rest of the commentary—to refresh their memories and focus themselves for discussion. If they haven't read the materials in advance, give the group some time to do this.

Discussion

Choose one or more of these questions as time allows:

1. How do Sections One through Three of the Covenant describe the relationships we have as churches of the Anglican Communion?
 - a. In what ways is this description similar to our historic understandings of these relationships? In what ways is it different?
 - b. In what ways is it like or unlike the kind of relationships you believe we, in the Anglican Church of Canada, should aspire to with other Anglican churches internationally?
2. What specifically in these sections would you point towards as being most meaningful for you and your understanding of being part of the wider Anglican church? What specifically worries or concerns you about these sections?
3. What about the depth and emphases of description? Are these sections too detailed or not detailed enough? What is most emphasized? Are there things that should be taken out, or are there things not addressed that should be included?
4. If adopted by our General Synod, should these sections become a formal definition of Anglican doctrine within our Canadian church, or should they be considered to be more like a treaty among churches without any doctrinal implications?

Raise a question and wait for discussion. (Don't provide your answer or opinion first!) When the discussion seems to have run its course, introduce another question. Draw the discussion to a close near the time allotted.



Closing (25 minutes)

Ask participants to share briefly:

- What have you learned from this session that is new to you?
- Is there anything else you would like to learn about Anglicanism and being Anglican?

Briefly introduce the next study session: Section Four outlines what would happen when member Provinces are having trouble getting along. Encourage participants to read the materials before the next session. Note that the Covenant text is actually integrated into this study guide's commentary, so participants will need just the one document.

Closing prayer



Anglican Church of Canada
Anglican Communion Working Group

Considering Section Four:

Our Covenanted Life Together What is it and What is it Supposed to Do?

Materials

- *Exploring the Anglican Covenant Part 2*

Purpose

To look at how the Covenant describes the procedures for adopting the Covenant and what it would mean to live within its provisions; and

To look at the mechanisms and processes proposed to deal with disagreement and conflict among Provinces of the Anglican church.

Suggested Format (2 to 2.5-hour session)

Gathering (10–20 minutes)

- Welcome, and introduce the topic and its importance to all Anglicans
- Opening prayer
- If necessary, ask group participants to introduce themselves briefly
- Ask participants (use one or both of these questions depending on time):

Do you have any questions or thoughts arising from our last session?

As you have been thinking about our discussion since the last session, is there anything that stands out as particularly significant for you? What has stuck in your mind?



Preparing for Discussion (10–15 minutes)

Introduce Section Four of the Covenant with the opening paragraphs of the commentary accompanying this study guide. You may also want to expand your introduction by briefly outlining the content. You may also want to acknowledge that this is the most complex and contentious part of the Covenant and remind the group of their norms before beginning the discussion.

Give people a few minutes to scan the materials to refresh their memories and focus themselves for discussion. If they haven't read the materials in advance, give the group some time to do this.

Open your discussion with the following question:

In a few words or a short phrase, what was your first impression upon reading this section of the Covenant?

Discussion

Choose two or more of these questions as time allows:

1. In what ways does Section Four address the balance of autonomy and interdependence among churches of the Anglican Communion? How would you describe what is being proposed?
2. In what ways do you see this part of the Covenant challenging or constraining us within the Canadian church? In what ways do you see it would enhance our church?
3. One of the concerns that has been expressed is that Section Four would limit the possibility and space for the “prophetic voice” to be heard within the Anglican church internationally.
 - a. Where and how do we hear the prophetic voice in our church?
 - b. Do you share the concern named above? Why or why not?
4. With particular reference to Section Four subsections 4.1–4.3, discuss what this might mean for the Anglican Church of Canada.
5. In summary, what can you affirm about this section of the Covenant, and what are your concerns or criticisms?



Closing (25 minutes)

Ask participants to name:

- What have you learned from this session that is new to you?

Is there anything else you would like to discuss before feeling prepared to frame your response to the Anglican Covenant Working Group? (Make note of these for your next session. Note if there are materials or other preparations to be made before the next session in order to equip people to have these discussions.)

- Briefly introduce the final study session. Tell the group that the task of your final meeting will be to frame and write your response to the Anglican Covenant Working Group and through them, to the wider Canadian church.

Closing prayer



Sharing Our Voice



Materials

- Flip chart and markers

Purpose

To write our response to the Covenant to the Anglican Communion Working Group and, through them, to the wider Anglican church.

Suggested Format (2 to 2.5-hour session)

Gathering (10–20 minutes)

- Welcome, and introduce the topic and its importance to all Anglicans
- Opening prayer
- If necessary, ask group participants to introduce themselves briefly
- Ask participants (use one or both of these questions depending on time):

Do you have any questions or thoughts arising from our last session?

As you have been thinking about our discussion since the last session, is there anything that stands out as particularly significant for you? What has stuck in your mind?

Preparing for Discussion (10–15 minutes)

Review any questions raised by the group at the end of your previous session: Is there anything else you would like to discuss before feeling prepared to frame your response to the Anglican Covenant Working Group?

Determine with the group how they would like to discuss these things.



Discussion

1. Work your way through the questions and discussions above, if any.
2. Ask the reporter to summarize the highlights of each of the previous sessions. Note where there is consensus and where the group has disagreed.
3. What would the group like to share in their report to the church from their discussions? Here are some ideas about what you might like to share:
 - a. What were your discussions like? What was the tone of the discussions and the experience of the study for participants?
 - b. How easy or difficult were the discussions?
 - c. What can the group say about their overall impressions of the Covenant?
 - d. Are the values, regarding the character of international relationships within the wider Anglican church, as expressed by the Covenant consistent with the proposed mechanisms of accountability? Are these mechanisms and processes likely to further the values or impede them? Why?

Finally: Having taken the time to examine the Covenant in detail, how would a decision to adopt, or not adopt, the Covenant further God's mission for the Anglican Church of Canada?

Closing (25 minutes)

- Ask participants to fill out the evaluation form for the study.
- Thank people for their participation.

Closing prayer



Notes on a Shorter Session

Should you be able to dedicate only one or two sessions to this study, you could do one of the following:

1. Choose to do just one of the first two sessions.
2. Focus on Sessions Two and Three, having asked the group to read the entire Covenant and study guide in preparation; choose one or two questions from each session that you think will generate the best discussion for the group.
3. After Session Two, delegate a smaller group to summarize the discussions from the first two sessions, and draft their response to the Covenant Working Group. This response can then be reviewed by the larger group by email before being sent off.



Exploring the Anglican Covenant

Preamble



At the 2010 meeting of General Synod in Halifax the following resolution was passed:

Be it resolved that this General Synod:

1. receive the final text of *The Anglican Communion Covenant*;
2. request that materials be prepared under the auspices of the Anglican Communion Working Group, for parishes and dioceses in order that study and consultation be undertaken on *The Anglican Communion Covenant*;
3. request that conversations, both within the Anglican Church of Canada and across the Communion, reflect the values of openness, transparency, generosity of spirit, and integrity, which have been requested repeatedly in the context of the discussion of controversial matters within the Communion;
4. request that the proposed Covenant be referred to the Faith, Worship and Ministry Committee and to the Governance Working Group in order to support these conversations by providing advice on the theological, ecclesiological, legal, and constitutional implications of a decision to adopt or not to adopt the Covenant;
5. direct the Council of General Synod, after this period of consultation and study, to bring a recommendation regarding adoption of The Covenant for the Anglican Communion to the General Synod of 2013.

In fulfillment of parts 2. and 3. of this resolution, a committee was formed under the auspices of the Anglican Communion Working Group to prepare materials and to encourage consultation. What follows is a process for study and feedback that is intended to help Anglicans in parishes and dioceses across the country engage in a meaningful exploration of this important document so that a comprehensive response can be formulated, and offered to the wider Anglican Communion, by the General Synod of 2013.

At the heart of our life and membership in the Anglican Communion there has always been a strong commitment to the building of relationships, and to careful and respectful dialogue. Our work as we undertake this study must reflect these commitments. These are as important in our relationships within the Anglican Communion as they are within our families, parishes and dioceses.

Many examples can be found in scripture that would articulate the centrality of open and gracious listening in the midst of diversity, but as we enter the season of Pentecost it is this story in the Book of Acts, of the gift of God's Holy Spirit descending upon and breathing life into the church, that is the most compelling.



Anglican Church of Canada

Anglican Communion Working Group

In the streets of Jerusalem, as people of different nationalities, contexts, experiences and perspectives gathered, we see the dramatic in-breaking of God's kingdom and God's call to mission received in a way that honours and celebrates that diversity. *"Now there were devout Jews from every nation under heaven living in Jerusalem. And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each"* (Acts 2:5-6).

In response to the gift of this same Spirit, active and present in our common fellowship and ministry, we take up the challenge offered to us by General Synod 2010 to not only engage in a study of the Covenant, but in the process to live the promise made in baptism to "seek and serve Christ in all persons": to draw closer into communion with each other. As the preamble section of the Covenant states, the goal of churches of the Anglican Communion solemnly covenanting together is as follows:

As people of God, drawn from "every nation tribe, people and language" (Rev 7.9), we do this in order to proclaim more effectively in our different contexts the grace of God revealed in the gospel, to offer God's love in responding to the needs of the world, to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, and together with all God's people to attain the full stature of Christ (Eph 4, 3, 13).

As we work through this study, it will be important to assess the degree to which the Covenant in all its sections would contribute to this goal.

To help study groups fully understand and explore the Covenant, the committee felt it would be important to recognize and wrestle with a number of questions raised by General Synod 2010 members in their table group discussions of the text. These questions have guided us in the preparation of these study materials:

- What is the Anglican Communion?
- Who are member churches and how does a church join?
- What are the theological and scriptural foundations for the concept of "covenanting"?
- What are the origins of this Covenant?
- How was it developed and under whose authority?

However, some questions are not so straightforward.

- What does it mean to be "in communion"?
- What is our current understanding of the Anglican church and how would the Covenant change it?
- Why do we need this Covenant at all?



Our discussions and responses to these questions will generate diverse opinions, concerns, hopes and commitments. There are no easy answers here, but these are the questions we are being asked to consider in dioceses, parishes and other local and national consultations.

As Anglicans across Canada engage in this covenant study, we will find a clearer sense of what the Anglican Church of Canada's response to the Covenant document should be. We will discover new insights into what it means to be in communion, and in fellowship, with each other as members of the body of Christ. It is to this end that we invite you to participate in this study.

Part 1 of this study focuses on the first three sections of the Covenant. Its contents, while not new, are the most accessible parts of the document. The study will help people look at these sections carefully and prayerfully, and come to a greater understanding of what is being proposed.

Part 2 of this study focuses on Section Four of the Covenant, the text of which is more technical and perhaps controversial. This is the section that deals with ways the Communion would address differences and disagreements among our churches internationally. This study will help people and groups to delve more deeply and thoroughly into the potential consequences of adopting this Covenant.

Other groups within the Anglican Church of Canada, such as the Faith, Worship and Ministry Committee and the Governance Working Group, will also be reviewing the Covenant in order to provide advice on theological, ecclesiological, legal and constitutional implications.

It is important that General Synod 2013 delegates be well prepared for the discussions and discernment that will generate our church's response internationally. Upon completion, please send your learnings, comments and reflections to the Anglican Communion Working Group at acwg@national.anglican.ca.



1. Considering Sections One Through Three:

Our Inheritance of Faith, The Life We Share with Others, and Our Unity and Common Life



Commentary

Suppose some friends you really admire told you how much they appreciate the commitment they see in you as a Christian and an Anglican—and then asked you to tell them more about what it means to be an Anglican. What would you say to them about being Anglican and about your relationship with other Anglicans? This is what Sections One, Two, and Three of the Anglican Communion Covenant try to do. They describe the relationships among the churches that make up our Anglican Communion: who we are and what we hold in common.

Introduction to the Covenant Text and Sections One, Two and Three

Introduction to the Covenant Text

“This life is revealed, and we have seen it and testify to it, and declare to you the eternal life that was with the Father and was revealed to us—we declare to you what we have seen and heard so that you also may have communion with us; and truly our communion is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. These things we write so that our joy may be complete” (1 John 1.2-4).

- 1 God has called us into communion in Jesus Christ (1 Cor 1.9). This communion has been “revealed to us” by the Son as being the very divine life of God the Trinity. What is the life revealed to us? St John makes it clear that the communion of life in the Church participates in the communion which is the divine life itself, the life of the Trinity. This life is not a reality remote from us, but one that has been “seen” and “testified to” by the apostles and their followers: “for in the communion of the Church we share in the divine life” [1]. This life of the One God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, shapes and displays itself through the very existence and ordering of the Church.
- 2 Our divine calling into communion is established in God’s purposes for the whole of creation (Eph 1:10; 3:9ff.). It is extended to all humankind, so that, in our sharing of God’s life as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, God might restore in us the divine image. Through time, according to the Scriptures, God has furthered this calling through covenants made with Noah, Abraham, Israel, and David. The prophet Jeremiah looked forward to a new covenant not written on tablets of stone but upon the heart (Jer 31.31-34). In God’s Son, Christ Jesus, a new covenant is given us, established in his “blood...poured out for the many for the forgiveness of sins” (Mt 26:28), secured through his resurrection from the dead (Eph 1:19-23), and sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit poured into our hearts (Rom 5:5). Into



Anglican Church of Canada

Anglican Communion Working Group

this covenant of death to sin and of new life in Christ we are baptized, and empowered to share God's communion in Christ with all people, to the ends of the earth and of creation.

- 3 We humbly recognize that this calling and gift of communion entails responsibilities for our common life before God as we seek, through grace, to be faithful in our service of God's purposes for the world. Joined in one universal Church, which is Christ's Body, spread throughout the earth, we serve his gospel even as we are enabled to be made one across the dividing walls of human sin and estrangement (Eph 2.12–22). The forms of this life in the Church, caught up in the mystery of divine communion, reveal to the hostile and divisive power of the world the "manifold wisdom of God" (Eph 3:9–10). Faithfulness, honesty, gentleness, humility, patience, forgiveness, and love itself, lived out in mutual deference and service (Mk 10.44–45) among the Church's people and through its ministries, contribute to building up the body of Christ as it grows to maturity (Eph 4.1–16; Col 3.8–17).
- 4 In the providence of God, which holds sway even over our divisions caused by sin, various families of churches have grown up within the universal Church in the course of history. Among these families is the Anglican Communion, which provides a particular charism and identity among the many followers and servants of Jesus. We recognise the wonder, beauty and challenge of maintaining communion in this family of churches, and the need for mutual commitment and discipline as a witness to God's promise in a world and time of instability, conflict, and fragmentation. Therefore, we covenant together as churches of this Anglican Communion to be faithful to God's promises through the historic faith we confess, our common worship, our participation in God's mission, and the way we live together.
- 5 To covenant together is not intended to change the character of this Anglican expression of Christian faith. Rather, we recognise the importance of renewing in a solemn way our commitment to one another, and to the common understanding of faith and order we have received, so that the bonds of affection which hold us together may be re-affirmed and intensified. We do this in order to reflect, in our relations with one another, God's own faithfulness and promises towards us in Christ (2 Cor 1.20–22).
- 6 We are a people who live, learn, and pray by and with the Scriptures as God's Word. We seek to adore God in thanks and praise and to make intercession for the needs of people everywhere through common prayer, united across many cultures and languages. We are privileged to share in the mission of the apostles to bring the gospel of Christ to all nations and peoples, not only in words but also in deeds of compassion and justice that witness to God's character and the triumph of Christ over sin and death. We give ourselves as servants of a greater unity among the divided Christians of the world. May the Lord help us to "preach not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake" (2 Cor 4.5).
- 7 Our faith embodies a coherent testimony to what we have received from God's Word and the Church's long-standing witness. Our life together reflects the blessings of God (even as it exposes our failures in faith, hope and love) in growing our Communion into a truly global family. The mission we pursue aims at serving the great promises of God in Christ that embrace the peoples and the world God so loves. This mission is carried out in shared responsibility and stewardship of resources, and in interdependence among ourselves and with the wider Church.
- 8 Our prayer is that God will redeem our struggles and weakness, renew and enrich our common life and use the Anglican Communion to witness effectively in all the world, working with all people of good will, to the new life and hope found in Christ Jesus.



Anglican Church of Canada

Anglican Communion Working Group

The Anglican Communion Covenant: Preamble

We, as Churches of the Anglican Communion, under the Lordship of Jesus Christ, solemnly covenant together in these following affirmations and commitments. As people of God, drawn from “every nation, tribe, people and language” (Rev 7.9), we do this in order to proclaim more effectively in our different contexts the grace of God revealed in the gospel, to offer God’s love in responding to the needs of the world, to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, and together with all God’s people to attain the full stature of Christ (Eph 4.3, 13).

Section One: Our Inheritance of Faith

1.1 Each Church affirms:

- (1.1.1) its communion in the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church, worshipping the one true God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- (1.1.2) the catholic and apostolic faith uniquely revealed in the Holy Scriptures and set forth in the catholic creeds, which faith the Church is called upon to proclaim afresh in each generation [2]. The historic formularies of the Church of England [3], forged in the context of the European Reformation and acknowledged and appropriated in various ways in the Anglican Communion, bear authentic witness to this faith.
- (1.1.3) the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as containing all things necessary for salvation and as being the rule and ultimate standard of faith [4].
- (1.1.4) the Apostles’ Creed, as the baptismal symbol; and the Nicene Creed, as the sufficient statement of the Christian faith [5].
- (1.1.5) the two sacraments ordained by Christ himself—Baptism and the Supper of the Lord—ministered with the unfailing use of Christ’s words of institution, and of the elements ordained by him [6].
- (1.1.6) the historic episcopate, locally adapted in the methods of its administration to the varying needs of the nations and peoples called of God into the unity of his Church [7].
- (1.1.7) the shared patterns of our common prayer and liturgy which form, sustain and nourish our worship of God and our faith and life together.
- (1.1.8) its participation in the apostolic mission of the whole people of God, and that this mission is shared with other Churches and traditions beyond this Covenant.

1.2 In living out this inheritance of faith together in varying contexts, each Church, reliant on the Holy Spirit, commits itself:

- (1.2.1) to teach and act in continuity and consonance with Scripture and the catholic and apostolic faith, order and tradition, as received by the Churches of the Anglican Communion, mindful of the common councils of the Communion and our ecumenical agreements.
- (1.2.2) to uphold and proclaim a pattern of Christian theological and moral reasoning and discipline that is rooted in and answerable to the teaching of Holy Scripture and the catholic tradition.



Anglican Church of Canada

Anglican Communion Working Group

- (1.2.3) to witness, in this reasoning, to the renewal of humanity and the whole created order through the death and resurrection of Christ, and to reflect the holiness that in consequence God gives to, and requires from, his people.
- (1.2.4) to hear, read, mark, learn and inwardly digest the Scriptures in our different contexts, informed by the attentive and communal reading of—and costly witness to—the Scriptures by all the faithful, by the teaching of bishops and synods, and by the results of rigorous study by lay and ordained scholars.
- (1.2.5) to ensure that biblical texts are received, read and interpreted faithfully, respectfully, comprehensively and coherently, with the expectation that Scripture continues to illuminate and transform the Church and its members, and through them, individuals, cultures and societies.
- (1.2.6) to encourage and be open to prophetic and faithful leadership in ministry and mission so as to enable God’s people to respond in courageous witness to the power of the gospel in the world.
- (1.2.7) to seek in all things to uphold the solemn obligation to nurture and sustain eucharistic communion, in accordance with existing canonical disciplines, as we strive under God for the fuller realisation of the communion of all Christians.
- (1.2.8) to pursue a common pilgrimage with the whole Body of Christ continually to discern the fullness of truth into which the Spirit leads us, that peoples from all nations may be set free to receive new and abundant life in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Section Two: The Life We Share with Others: Our Anglican Vocation

2.1 Each Church affirms:

- (2.1.1) communion as a gift of God given so that God’s people from east and west, north and south, may together declare the glory of the Lord and be both a sign of God’s reign in the Holy Spirit and the first fruits in the world of God’s redemption in Christ.
- (2.1.2) its gratitude for God’s gracious providence extended to us down through the ages: our origins in the Church of the apostles; the ancient common traditions; the rich history of the Church in Britain and Ireland reshaped by the Reformation, and our growth into a global communion through the expanding missionary work of the Church; our ongoing refashioning by the Holy Spirit through the gifts and sacrificial witness of Anglicans from around the world; and our summons into a more fully developed communion life.
- (2.1.3) in humility our call to constant repentance: for our failures in exercising patience and charity and in recognizing Christ in one another; our misuse of God’s gracious gifts; our failure to heed God’s call to serve; and our exploitation one of another.
- (2.1.4) the imperative of God’s mission into which the Communion is called, a vocation and blessing in which each Church is joined with others in Christ in the work of establishing God’s reign. As the Communion continues to develop into a worldwide family of interdependent churches, we embrace challenges and opportunities for mission at local, regional, and international levels. In



Anglican Church of Canada

Anglican Communion Working Group

this, we cherish our mission heritage as offering Anglicans distinctive opportunities for mission collaboration.

- (2.1.5) that our common mission is a mission shared with other Churches and traditions beyond this Covenant. We embrace opportunities for the discovery of the life of the whole gospel, and for reconciliation and shared mission with the Church throughout the world. We affirm the ecumenical vocation of Anglicanism to the full visible unity of the Church in accordance with Christ's prayer that "all may be one". It is with all the saints in every place and time that we will comprehend the fuller dimensions of Christ's redemptive and immeasurable love.

2.2 In recognition of these affirmations, each Church, reliant on the Holy Spirit, commits itself:

- (2.2.1) to answer God's call to undertake evangelisation and to share in the healing and reconciling mission "for our blessed but broken, hurting and fallen world" [8], and, with mutual accountability, to share our God-given spiritual and material resources in this task.
- (2.2.2) to undertake in this mission, which is the mission of God in Christ [9]:
- (2.2.2.a) "to proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom of God" and to bring all to repentance and faith;
- (2.2.2.b) "to teach, baptize and nurture new believers", making disciples of all nations (Mt 28.19) through the quickening power of the Holy Spirit [10] and drawing them into the one Body of Christ whose faith, calling and hope are one in the Lord (Eph 4.4-6);
- (2.2.2.c) "to respond to human need by loving service", disclosing God's reign through humble ministry to those most needy (Mk 10.42-45; Mt 18.4; 25.31-45);
- (2.2.2.d) "to seek to transform unjust structures of society" as the Church stands vigilantly with Christ proclaiming both judgment and salvation to the nations of the world [11], and manifesting through our actions on behalf of God's righteousness the Spirit's transfiguring power [12];
- (2.2.2.e) "to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and to sustain and renew the life of the earth" as essential aspects of our mission in communion [13].
- (2.2.3) to engage in this mission with humility and an openness to our own ongoing conversion in the face of our unfaithfulness and failures in witness.
- (2.2.4) to revive and renew structures for mission which will awaken and challenge the whole people of God to work, pray and give for the spread of the gospel.
- (2.2.5) to order its mission in the joyful and reverent worship of God, thankful that in our eucharistic communion "Christ is the source and goal of the unity of the Church and of the renewal of human community" [14].



Anglican Church of Canada

Anglican Communion Working Group

Section Three: Our Unity and Common Life

3.1 Each Church affirms:

- (3.1.1) that by our participation in Baptism and Eucharist, we are incorporated into the one body of the Church of Jesus Christ, and called by Christ to pursue all things that make for peace and build up our common life.
- (3.1.2) its resolve to live in a Communion of Churches. Each Church, with its bishops in synod, orders and regulates its own affairs and its local responsibility for mission through its own system of government and law and is therefore described as living “in communion with autonomy and accountability” [15]. Trusting in the Holy Spirit, who calls and enables us to dwell in a shared life of common worship and prayer for one another, in mutual affection, commitment and service, we seek to affirm our common life through those Instruments of Communion by which our Churches are enabled to be conformed together to the mind of Christ. Churches of the Anglican Communion are bound together “not by a central legislative and executive authority, but by mutual loyalty sustained through the common counsel of the bishops in conference” [16] and of the other instruments of Communion.
- (3.1.3) the central role of bishops as guardians and teachers of faith, as leaders in mission, and as a visible sign of unity, representing the universal Church to the local, and the local Church to the universal and the local Churches to one another. This ministry is exercised personally, collegially and within and for the eucharistic community. We receive and maintain the historic threefold ministry of bishops, priests and deacons, ordained for service in the Church of God, as they call all the baptised into the mission of Christ.
- (3.1.4) the importance of instruments in the Anglican Communion to assist in the discernment, articulation and exercise of our shared faith and common life and mission. The life of communion includes an ongoing engagement with the diverse expressions of apostolic authority, from synods and episcopal councils to local witness, in a way which continually interprets and articulates the common faith of the Church’s members (*consensus fidelium*). In addition to the many and varied links which sustain our life together, we acknowledge four particular Instruments at the level of the Anglican Communion which express this co-operative service in the life of communion.
1. We accord the Archbishop of Canterbury, as the bishop of the See of Canterbury with which Anglicans have historically been in communion, a primacy of honour and respect among the college of bishops in the Anglican Communion as first among equals (*primus inter pares*). As a focus and means of unity, the Archbishop gathers and works with the Lambeth Conference and Primates’ Meeting, and presides in the Anglican Consultative Council.
 2. The Lambeth Conference expresses episcopal collegiality worldwide, and brings together the bishops for common worship, counsel, consultation and encouragement in their ministry of guarding the faith and unity of the Communion and equipping the saints for the work of ministry (Eph 4.12) and mission.
 3. The Anglican Consultative Council is comprised of lay, clerical and episcopal representatives from our Churches [17]. It facilitates the co-operative work of the Churches of the Anglican Communion, co-ordinates aspects of international Anglican ecumenical and mission work,



Anglican Church of Canada

Anglican Communion Working Group

calls the Churches into mutual responsibility and interdependence, and advises on developing provincial structures [18].

4. The Primates' Meeting is convened by the Archbishop of Canterbury for mutual support, prayer and counsel. The authority that primates bring to the meeting arises from their own positions as the senior bishops of their Provinces, and the fact that they are in conversation with their own Houses of Bishops and located within their own synodical structures [19]. In the Primates' Meeting, the Primates and Moderators are called to work as representatives of their Provinces in collaboration with one another in mission and in doctrinal, moral and pastoral matters that have Communion-wide implications.

3.2 Acknowledging our interdependent life, each Church, reliant on the Holy Spirit, commits itself:

- (3.2.1) to have regard for the common good of the Communion in the exercise of its autonomy, to support the work of the Instruments of Communion with the spiritual and material resources available to it, and to receive their work with a readiness to undertake reflection upon their counsels, and to endeavour to accommodate their recommendations.
- (3.2.2) to respect the constitutional autonomy of all of the Churches of the Anglican Communion, while upholding our mutual responsibility and interdependence in the Body of Christ [21], and the responsibility of each to the Communion as a whole [22].
- (3.2.3) to spend time with openness and patience in matters of theological debate and reflection, to listen, pray and study with one another in order to discern the will of God. Such prayer, study and debate is an essential feature of the life of the Church as it seeks to be led by the Spirit into all truth and to proclaim the gospel afresh in each generation. Some issues, which are perceived as controversial or new when they arise, may well evoke a deeper understanding of the implications of God's revelation to us; others may prove to be distractions or even obstacles to the faith. All such matters therefore need to be tested by shared discernment in the life of the Church.
- (3.2.4) to seek a shared mind with other Churches, through the Communion's councils, about matters of common concern, in a way consistent with the Scriptures, the common standards of faith, and the canon laws of our churches. Each Church will undertake wide consultation with the other Churches of the Anglican Communion and with the Instruments and Commissions of the Communion.
- (3.2.5) to act with diligence, care and caution in respect of any action which may provoke controversy, which by its intensity, substance or extent could threaten the unity of the Communion and the effectiveness or credibility of its mission.
- (3.2.6) in situations of conflict, to participate in mediated conversations, which involve face to face meetings, agreed parameters and a willingness to see such processes through.
- (3.2.7) to have in mind that our bonds of affection and the love of Christ compel us always to uphold the highest degree of communion possible.



In reading these sections, we are compelled to ask how well they describe the relationship we experience, or aspire to, as the Anglican Church of Canada with other churches making up the Communion. Are these sections too detailed or not detailed enough? How well do they capture something of the unique gift and witness of the international Anglican Communion? Is there more to be said—or does it say too much?

One of the questions posed by Sections One through Three points to a possibly significant consequence.

If adopted by our General Synod, should Sections One, Two and Three become a formal definition of Anglican doctrine within our Canadian church, OR should they be seen as a treaty among national churches without any doctrinal implications?

The Anglican priest and theologian Richard Hooker in the late 1500s laid out the generally accepted Anglican way of addressing this. He wrote that we should look to scripture, reason and tradition as we try to find God’s will for us and the way that Jesus wants us to live our lives.

“What Scripture doth plainly deliver, to that first place both of credit and obedience is due; the next whereunto is whatsoever any man can necessarily conclude by force of reason; after these the voice of the Church succeedeth. That which the Church by her ecclesiastical authority shall probably think and define to be true or good, must in congruity of reason overrule all other inferior judgments whatsoever” (Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity, Book V, 8).

Hooker’s words, *“the voice of the Church,”* raises the question of Anglican doctrine. This is a term often used, but only loosely defined, in many of the current debates about the Covenant and the controversies and issues surrounding it.

So what is doctrine and why does it matter?

A good, generally accepted, working definition of *doctrine* seems to be, *“What the Church of Jesus Christ believes, teaches, and confesses on the basis of the word of God.”*¹

Roman Catholics are used to a church structure in which authority, particularly that of the Pope, lays out what Roman Catholics are to believe on specific issues and how they are to live their lives as a result of this defined doctrine if they are to be Roman Catholics in good standing in the eyes of their church. Many Protestant denominations have detailed codes of belief that their members are called to profess, such as Presbyterianism’s *Westminster Confession*.

Anglicans, however, have historically been reluctant to put in place detailed doctrinal requirements for members of our church. Hooker and other Protestants, for instance, held that there were things such as the belief that Jesus Christ is the Son of God that are indispensable to our belief, and there are many other things over which good Christians can differ in opinion which *“neither damn nor save the soul.”*

Consistent with this Anglican tradition, our Canadian church has made very few formal definitions of doctrine. One of the most important is what is known as the *Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral*, which was endorsed by the third Lambeth Conference in 1888 and was formally adopted by the second session of our General Synod in 1896.

1. Pelikan, Jaroslav. *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine*. London, 1971. Volume one, page one.



That, in the opinion of this Conference, the following Articles supply a basis on which approach may be by God's blessing made towards Home Reunion:

- (a) The Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, as "containing all things necessary to salvation," and as being the rule and ultimate standard of faith.
- (b) The Apostles' Creed, as the Baptismal Symbol; and the Nicene Creed, as the sufficient statement of the Christian faith.
- (c) The two Sacraments ordained by Christ Himself—Baptism and the Supper of the Lord—ministered with unfailing use of Christ's Words of Institution, and of the elements ordained by Him.
- (d) The Historic Episcopate, locally adapted in the methods of its administration to the varying needs of the nations and peoples called of God into the Unity of His Church.

—Resolution 11, Lambeth Conference 1888

It had been originally intended as a basis on which to negotiate with other denominations about the possibility of reuniting the Christian church. However, it quickly became accepted among Anglicans as a clear and simple statement of doctrine that Anglicans agree on and hold in common, but one that does not require belief in other less important matters where there is not the same agreement.

This resolution from the Lambeth Conference of 1888 forms the core of Section One of the Covenant text we are considering.



Anglican Church of Canada

Anglican Communion Working Group

2. The Covenant Section Four:

Our Covenanted Life Together What is it and What is it Supposed to Do?



From the beginning of the covenant drafting process, it was clear that the most difficult part would be the text that has ultimately evolved as Section Four: Our Covenanted Life Together.² The problem was how to balance the commitment to Communion while identifying some way of addressing how the Communion might deal with those circumstances where significant differences arise between members.

On the one hand, there were those within the Communion who wanted to frame responses using the language of discipline. On the other hand, some felt that such an approach could be used to exclude those whose theological perspectives appeared to be at variance with the norm, and would potentially restrict the prophetic voices within the church.

Background

The Lambeth Commission on Communion, commonly known as the *Windsor Report* (2004), first broached the possibility of a Covenant³ and included for discussion an example of what a Covenant might look like. This was intended as a discussion starter, and in the resulting conversations was widely criticized as being too legalistic.

In the first draft of the Covenant (the Nassau draft, 2007), the tone of Section 6: Unity of the Communion, remained in the eyes of many as still too legalistic and punitive. The appendix to the St Andrews draft (Draft 2, 2008), partially in response to these concerns, provided a process for addressing differences and included the possibility of mediation. This approach was also criticized as being quasi judicial.

As the drafters approached the Ridley-Cambridge draft (Draft 3, 2009), they found themselves confronted with serious concerns from across the theological spectrum. The Ridley-Cambridge draft endeavoured to provide a solution that would be acceptable to as many as possible. As a result, Section Four of the original Ridley-Cambridge draft shifted tone towards a pastoral and / relational approach to addressing differences.

2. For those interested, this section in the final document was Section 6 of the Nassau Draft (Draft 1) and the Appendix to the St Andrew's Draft (Draft 2). These texts may be viewed for comparison at http://www.anglicancommunion.org/commission/covenant/report/draft_text.cfm.

3. Paras 118 and 119



Following the affirmations and commitments to be found in the first three sections of the Covenant, the drafters worked to create a document that would both affirm the principles expressed and, through this lens, invite the commitment of the Provinces to the procedures of Section Four. The degree of success they have achieved is still subject to debate.

In Part 1 of this study guide we discussed the qualities and character of our relationships as Anglicans in Communion. We explored how we might describe those things that we as churches of the Communion can affirm in common and commit ourselves to. Section Four addresses the tougher questions of how we can live together when there are disagreements and conflicts.

Section Four sets out procedures for both adopting the Covenant and living under its provisions; it describes who may adopt it. It includes practical mechanisms for seeking resolutions in the case of disputes and describes a process for withdrawal from the Covenant. Finally, this section acknowledges that the Covenant is not carved in stone, and a method of amendment is included. The proposed intent throughout is to seek to strengthen relationships within the Anglican family.

Section Four Unpacked

Because of the complexity of this section, we will introduce each part separately.

4.1 Adoption of the Covenant

Subsection 4.1 describes the commitment involved in adopting the Covenant.

- (4.1.1) Each Church adopting this Covenant affirms that it enters into the Covenant as a commitment to relationship in submission to God. Each Church freely offers this commitment to other Churches in order to live more fully into the ecclesial communion and interdependence which is foundational to the Churches of the Anglican Communion. The Anglican Communion is a fellowship, within the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, of national or regional Churches, in which each recognises in the others the bonds of a common loyalty to Christ expressed through a common faith and order, a shared inheritance in worship, life and mission, and a readiness to live in an interdependent life.
- (4.1.2) In adopting the Covenant for itself, each Church recognises in the preceding sections a statement of faith, mission and interdependence of life which is consistent with its own life and with the doctrine and practice of the Christian faith as it has received them. It recognises these elements as foundational for the life of the Anglican Communion and therefore for the relationships among the covenanting Churches.
- (4.1.3) Such mutual commitment does not represent submission to any external ecclesiastical jurisdiction. Nothing in this Covenant of itself shall be deemed to alter any provision of the Constitution and Canons of any Church of the Communion, or to limit its autonomy of governance. The Covenant does not grant to any one Church or any agency of the Communion control or direction over any Church of the Anglican Communion.



Anglican Church of Canada

Anglican Communion Working Group

- (4.1.4) Every Church of the Anglican Communion, as recognised in accordance with the Constitution of the Anglican Consultative Council, is invited to enter into this Covenant according to its own constitutional procedures.
- (4.1.5) The Instruments of Communion may invite other Churches to adopt the Covenant using the same procedures as set out by the Anglican Consultative Council for the amendment of its schedule of membership. Adoption of this Covenant does not confer any right of recognition by, or membership of, the Instruments of Communion, which shall be decided by those Instruments themselves.
- (4.1.6) This Covenant becomes active for a Church when that Church adopts the Covenant through the procedures of its own Constitution and Canons.

4.2 The Maintenance of the Covenant and Dispute Resolution

Subsection 4.2 is the heart of Section Four, and outlines a process for trying to address occasions and circumstances that may arise in which churches have serious differences or misunderstandings with one another.

- 4.2.1 Acknowledges that each church recognizes and seeks to live by the common commitments made in the Covenant.**
- (4.2.1) The Covenant operates to express the common commitments and mutual accountability which hold each Church in the relationship of communion one with another. Recognition of, and fidelity to, this Covenant, enable mutual recognition and communion. Participation in the Covenant implies a recognition by each Church of those elements which must be maintained in its own life and for which it is accountable to the Churches with which it is in Communion in order to sustain the relationship expressed in this Covenant.
- 4.2.2 Notes that the Instruments of Communion monitor the Covenant through the Standing Committee.**
- (4.2.2) The Standing Committee of the Anglican Communion, responsible to the Anglican Consultative Council and the Primates' Meeting, shall monitor the functioning of the Covenant in the life of the Anglican Communion on behalf of the Instruments. In this regard, the Standing Committee shall be supported by such other committees or commissions as may be mandated to assist in carrying out this function and to advise it on questions relating to the Covenant.
- 4.2.3 Addresses circumstances when a question arises in the life of the Communion, each church seeks to live out its commitments.**
- (4.2.3) When questions arise relating to the meaning of the Covenant, or about the compatibility of an action by a covenanting Church with the Covenant, it is the duty of each covenanting Church to seek to live out the commitments of Section 3.2. Such questions may be raised by a Church itself, another covenanting Church or the Instruments of Communion.
- 4.2.4 Acknowledges that when there is not a common mind, the Standing Committee seeks to facilitate agreement and may seek advice from the Instruments (ACC and Primates).**



- (4.2.4) Where a shared mind has not been reached the matter shall be referred to the Standing Committee. The Standing Committee shall make every effort to facilitate agreement, and may take advice from such bodies as it deems appropriate to determine a view on the nature of the matter at question and those relational consequences which may result. Where appropriate, the Standing Committee shall refer the question to both the Anglican Consultative Council and the Primates' Meeting for advice.
- 4.2.5 Notes that if a church takes a controversial action against advice, the Standing Committee can recommend interim relational consequences.**
- (4.2.5) The Standing Committee may request a Church to defer a controversial action. If a Church declines to defer such action, the Standing Committee may recommend to any Instrument of Communion relational consequences which may specify a provisional limitation of participation in, or suspension from, that Instrument until the completion of the process set out below.
- 4.2.6 Explains that on the basis of advice, the Standing Committee may declare something to be incompatible with the Covenant.**
- (4.2.6) On the basis of advice received from the Anglican Consultative Council and the Primates' Meeting, the Standing Committee may make a declaration that an action or decision is or would be "incompatible with the Covenant".
- 4.2.7 Delineates that again, on the basis of advice, the Standing Committee shall recommend relational consequences to the churches and/or the Instruments.**
- (4.2.7) On the basis of the advice received, the Standing Committee shall make recommendations as to relational consequences which flow from an action incompatible with the Covenant. These recommendations may be addressed to the Churches of the Anglican Communion or to the Instruments of the Communion and address the extent to which the decision of any covenanting Church impairs or limits the communion between that Church and the other Churches of the Communion, and the practical consequences of such impairment or limitation. Each Church or each Instrument shall determine whether or not to accept such recommendations.
- 4.2.8 Clarifies that only churches that have adopted the Covenant can participate in the decision-making of this process.**
- (4.2.8) Participation in the decision making of the Standing Committee or of the Instruments of Communion in respect to section 4.2 shall be limited to those members of the Instruments of Communion who are representatives of those churches who have adopted the Covenant, or who are still in the process of adoption.
- 4.2.9 Is predicated on the assumption that each church agrees to put means in place to oversee its own participation in the Covenant.**
- (4.2.9) Each Church undertakes to put into place such mechanisms, agencies or institutions, consistent with its own Constitution and Canons, as can undertake to oversee the maintenance of the affirmations and commitments of the Covenant in the life of that Church, and to relate to the Instruments of Communion on matters pertinent to the Covenant.



4.3 **Withdrawing from the Covenant**

Subsection 4.3 says that any church may withdraw from the Covenant, though it may trigger relational consequences.

- (4.3.1) Any covenanting Church may decide to withdraw from the Covenant. Although such withdrawal does not imply an automatic withdrawal from the Instruments of Communion or a repudiation of its Anglican character, it may raise a question relating to the meaning of the Covenant, and of compatibility with the principles incorporated within it, and trigger the provisions set out in section 4.2 above.

Subsection 4.4 clarifies what the text of the Covenant is and provides an amendment procedure.

- 4.4 The Covenant Text and its amendment (4.4.1) The Covenant consists of the text set out in this document in the Preamble, Sections One to Four and the Declaration. The Introduction to the Covenant Text, which shall always be annexed to the Covenant text, is not part of the Covenant, but shall be accorded authority in understanding the purpose of the Covenant.
- (4.4.2) Any covenanting Church or Instrument of Communion may submit a proposal to amend the Covenant to the Instruments of Communion through the Standing Committee. The Standing Committee shall send the proposal to the Anglican Consultative Council, the Primates' Meeting, the covenanting Churches and any other body as it may consider appropriate for advice. The Standing Committee shall make a recommendation on the proposal in the light of advice offered, and submit the proposal with any revisions to the covenanting Churches. The amendment is operative when ratified by three quarters of such Churches. The Standing Committee shall adopt a procedure for promulgation of the amendment.

Conclusion

The Covenant ends with a declaration of intent to live together in the body of Christ.

Our Declaration

The churches declare themselves to be in Covenant and offer their life together to God. With joy and with firm resolve, we declare our Churches to be partakers in this Anglican Communion Covenant, offering ourselves for fruitful service and binding ourselves more closely in the truth and love of Christ, to whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit be glory for ever. Amen.

“Now may the God of Peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, make you complete in everything good so that you may do his will, working among us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.” (*Hebrews 13.20, 21*)



Additional online resources



Websites

Anglican Communion

www.anglicancommunion.org/commission/covenant

- includes full Covenant text, texts of earlier drafts and comments from Communion provinces

Anglican Communion Institute

www.anglicancommunioninstitute.com

- includes several articles on the Covenant presented by the Anglican Communion Institute

Anglican Communion Working Group, Anglican Church of Canada

www.anglican.ca/acwg

- presents summary of Anglican Covenant materials offered to Canadian Anglicans for their feedback

No Anglican Covenant

www.noanglican covenant.org

- information and analysis compiled by a coalition opposed to the Covenant

Church Times supplement guide

www.churchtimes.co.uk/uploads/documents/Anglican%20Covenant_18%20March.pdf

- This thorough guide includes many viewpoints and is available only to Church Times subscribers.

Other resources

Online forms

www.anglican.ca/acwg

- These evaluation forms and Council of General Synod response forms can be filled out and submitted online.

PowerPoint

www.anglican.ca/acwg

- a presentation on the origins and contents of the Covenant, prepared by Bishop George Bruce (Ontario)

Video

www.anglican.ca/acwg

- In this short online video, the Primate introduces the Anglican Covenant and the study materials from the Anglican Communion Working Group.



Anglican Church of Canada

Anglican Communion Working Group



Introduction to the Covenant Text

“This life is revealed, and we have seen it and testify to it, and declare to you the eternal life that was with the Father and was revealed to us – we declare to you what we have seen and heard so that you also may have communion with us; and truly our communion is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. These things we write so that our joy may be complete.” (1 John 1.2-4).

1. God has called us into communion in Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 1.9). This communion has been “revealed to us” by the Son as being the very divine life of God the Trinity. What is the life revealed to us? St John makes it clear that the communion of life in the Church participates in the communion which is the divine life itself, the life of the Trinity. This life is not a reality remote from us, but one that has been “seen” and “testified to” by the apostles and their followers: “for in the communion of the Church we share in the divine life”¹. This life of the One God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, shapes and displays itself through the very existence and ordering of the Church.
2. Our divine calling into communion is established in God’s purposes for the whole of creation (Eph 1:10; 3:9ff.). It is extended to all humankind, so that, in our sharing of God’s life as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, God might restore in us the divine image. Through time, according to the Scriptures, God has furthered this calling through covenants made with Noah, Abraham, Israel, and David. The prophet Jeremiah looked forward to a new covenant not written on tablets of stone but upon the heart (Jer 31.31-34). In God’s Son, Christ Jesus, a new covenant is given us, established in his “blood ... poured out for the many for the forgiveness of sins” (Mt 26:28), secured through his resurrection from the dead (Eph 1:19-23), and sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit poured into our hearts (Rom 5:5). Into this covenant of death to sin and of new life in Christ we are baptized, and empowered to share God’s communion in Christ with all people, to the ends of the earth and of creation.
3. We humbly recognize that this calling and gift of communion entails responsibilities for our common life before God as we seek, through grace, to be faithful in our service of God’s purposes for the world. Joined in one universal Church, which is Christ’s Body, spread throughout the earth, we serve his gospel even as we are enabled to be made one across the dividing walls of human sin and estrangement (Eph 2.12-22). The forms of this life in the Church, caught up in the mystery of divine communion, reveal to the hostile and divisive power of the world the “manifold wisdom of God” (Eph 3:9-10). Faithfulness, honesty, gentleness, humility, patience, forgiveness, and love itself, lived out in mutual deference and service (Mk 10.44-45) among the Church’s people and through its ministries, contribute to building up the body of Christ as it grows to maturity (Eph 4.1-16; Col 3.8-17).
4. In the providence of God, which holds sway even over our divisions caused by sin, various families of churches have grown up within the universal Church in the course of history. Among these families is the Anglican Communion, which provides a particular charism and identity among the many followers and servants of Jesus. We recognise the wonder, beauty and challenge of maintaining communion in this family of churches, and the need for mutual commitment and discipline as a witness to God’s promise in a world and time of instability, conflict, and fragmentation. Therefore, we covenant together as churches of this Anglican Communion to be faithful to God’s promises through the historic faith we confess, our common worship, our participation in God’s mission, and the way we live together.
5. To covenant together is not intended to change the character of this Anglican expression of Christian faith. Rather, we recognise the importance of renewing in a solemn way our commitment to one another, and to the common understanding of faith and order we have received, so that the bonds of affection which hold us together may be re-affirmed and intensified. We do this in order to reflect, in our relations with one another, God’s own faithfulness and promises towards us in Christ (2 Cor 1.20-22).

¹ *The Church of the Triune God*, The Cyprus Statement of the International Commission for Anglican Orthodox Theological Dialogue, 2007, paragraph 1,2.

6. We are a people who live, learn, and pray by and with the Scriptures as God's Word. We seek to adore God in thanks and praise and to make intercession for the needs of people everywhere through common prayer, united across many cultures and languages. We are privileged to share in the mission of the apostles to bring the gospel of Christ to all nations and peoples, not only in words but also in deeds of compassion and justice that witness to God's character and the triumph of Christ over sin and death. We give ourselves as servants of a greater unity among the divided Christians of the world. May the Lord help us to "preach not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake" (2 Cor. 4.5).
7. Our faith embodies a coherent testimony to what we have received from God's Word and the Church's long-standing witness. Our life together reflects the blessings of God (even as it exposes our failures in faith, hope and love) in growing our Communion into a truly global family. The mission we pursue aims at serving the great promises of God in Christ that embrace the peoples and the world God so loves. This mission is carried out in shared responsibility and stewardship of resources, and in interdependence among ourselves and with the wider Church.
8. Our prayer is that God will redeem our struggles and weakness, renew and enrich our common life and use the Anglican Communion to witness effectively in all the world, working with all people of good will, to the new life and hope found in Christ Jesus.

The Anglican Communion Covenant

Preamble

We, as Churches of the Anglican Communion, under the Lordship of Jesus Christ, solemnly covenant together in these following affirmations and commitments. As people of God, drawn from "every nation, tribe, people and language" (Rev 7.9), we do this in order to proclaim more effectively in our different contexts the grace of God revealed in the gospel, to offer God's love in responding to the needs of the world, to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, and together with all God's people to attain the full stature of Christ (Eph 4.3,13).

Section One: Our Inheritance of Faith

1.1 Each Church affirms:

(1.1.1) its communion in the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church, worshipping the one true God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

(1.1.2) the catholic and apostolic faith uniquely revealed in the Holy Scriptures and set forth in the catholic creeds, which faith the Church is called upon to proclaim afresh in each generation². The historic formularies of the Church of England³, forged in the context of the European Reformation and acknowledged and appropriated in various ways in the Anglican Communion, bear authentic witness to this faith.

² Cf. The Preface to the Declaration of Assent, Canon C15 of the Church of England.

³ The Thirty-nine Articles of Religion, the 1662 Book of Common Prayer, and the Ordering of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons

(1.1.3) the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as containing all things necessary for salvation and as being the rule and ultimate standard of faith⁴.

(1.1.4) the Apostles' Creed, as the baptismal symbol; and the Nicene Creed, as the sufficient statement of the Christian faith⁵.

(1.1.5) the two sacraments ordained by Christ himself – Baptism and the Supper of the Lord – ministered with the unfailing use of Christ's words of institution, and of the elements ordained by him⁶.

(1.1.6) the historic episcopate, locally adapted in the methods of its administration to the varying needs of the nations and peoples called of God into the unity of his Church⁷.

(1.1.7) the shared patterns of our common prayer and liturgy which form, sustain and nourish our worship of God and our faith and life together.

(1.1.8) its participation in the apostolic mission of the whole people of God, and that this mission is shared with other Churches and traditions beyond this Covenant.

1.2 In living out this inheritance of faith together in varying contexts, each Church, reliant on the Holy Spirit, commits itself:

(1.2.1) to teach and act in continuity and consonance with Scripture and the catholic and apostolic faith, order and tradition, as received by the Churches of the Anglican Communion, mindful of the common councils of the Communion and our ecumenical agreements.

(1.2.2) to uphold and proclaim a pattern of Christian theological and moral reasoning and discipline that is rooted in and answerable to the teaching of Holy Scripture and the catholic tradition.

(1.2.3) to witness, in this reasoning, to the renewal of humanity and the whole created order through the death and resurrection of Christ, and to reflect the holiness that in consequence God gives to, and requires from, his people.

(1.2.4) to hear, read, mark, learn and inwardly digest the Scriptures in our different contexts, informed by the attentive and communal reading of - and costly witness to - the Scriptures by all the faithful, by the teaching of bishops and synods, and by the results of rigorous study by lay and ordained scholars.

(1.2.5) to ensure that biblical texts are received, read and interpreted faithfully, respectfully, comprehensively and coherently, with the expectation that Scripture continues to illuminate and transform the Church and its members, and through them, individuals, cultures and societies.

(1.2.6) to encourage and be open to prophetic and faithful leadership in ministry and mission so as to enable God's people to respond in courageous witness to the power of the gospel in the world.

⁴ The Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral of 1886/1888

⁵ The Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral of 1886/1888

⁶ cf. The Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral 1886/1888, The Preface to the Declaration of Assent, Canon C15 of the Church of England.

⁷ cf. The Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral 1886/1888

(1.2.7) to seek in all things to uphold the solemn obligation to nurture and sustain eucharistic communion, in accordance with existing canonical disciplines, as we strive under God for the fuller realisation of the communion of all Christians.

(1.2.8) to pursue a common pilgrimage with the whole Body of Christ continually to discern the fullness of truth into which the Spirit leads us, that peoples from all nations may be set free to receive new and abundant life in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Section Two: The Life We Share with Others: Our Anglican Vocation

2.1 Each Church affirms:

(2.1.1) communion as a gift of God given so that God's people from east and west, north and south, may together declare the glory of the Lord and be both a sign of God's reign in the Holy Spirit and the first fruits in the world of God's redemption in Christ.

(2.1.2) its gratitude for God's gracious providence extended to us down through the ages: our origins in the Church of the apostles; the ancient common traditions; the rich history of the Church in Britain and Ireland reshaped by the Reformation, and our growth into a global communion through the expanding missionary work of the Church; our ongoing refashioning by the Holy Spirit through the gifts and sacrificial witness of Anglicans from around the world; and our summons into a more fully developed communion life.

(2.1.3) in humility our call to constant repentance: for our failures in exercising patience and charity and in recognizing Christ in one another; our misuse of God's gracious gifts; our failure to heed God's call to serve; and our exploitation one of another.

(2.1.4) the imperative of God's mission into which the Communion is called, a vocation and blessing in which each Church is joined with others in Christ in the work of establishing God's reign. As the Communion continues to develop into a worldwide family of interdependent churches, we embrace challenges and opportunities for mission at local, regional, and international levels. In this, we cherish our mission heritage as offering Anglicans distinctive opportunities for mission collaboration.

(2.1.5) that our common mission is a mission shared with other Churches and traditions beyond this Covenant. We embrace opportunities for the discovery of the life of the whole gospel, and for reconciliation and shared mission with the Church throughout the world. We affirm the ecumenical vocation of Anglicanism to the full visible unity of the Church in accordance with Christ's prayer that "all may be one". It is with all the saints in every place and time that we will comprehend the fuller dimensions of Christ's redemptive and immeasurable love.

2.2 In recognition of these affirmations, each Church, reliant on the Holy Spirit, commits itself:

(2.2.1) to answer God's call to undertake evangelisation and to share in the healing and reconciling mission "for our blessed but broken, hurting and fallen world"⁸, and, with mutual accountability, to share our God-given spiritual and material resources in this task.

(2.2.2) to undertake in this mission, which is the mission of God in Christ⁹:

⁸ IASCOME Report, ACC-13

⁹ The five Marks of Mission are set out in the MISSIO Report of 1999, building on work at ACC-6 and ACC-8.

- (2.2.2.a) “to proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom of God” and to bring all to repentance and faith;
- (2.2.2.b) “to teach, baptize and nurture new believers”, making disciples of all nations (Mt 28.19) through the quickening power of the Holy Spirit¹⁰ and drawing them into the one Body of Christ whose faith, calling and hope are one in the Lord (Eph 4.4-6);
- (2.2.2.c) “to respond to human need by loving service”, disclosing God’s reign through humble ministry to those most needy (Mk 10.42-45; Mt 18.4; 25.31-45);
- (2.2.2.d) “to seek to transform unjust structures of society” as the Church stands vigilantly with Christ proclaiming both judgment and salvation to the nations of the world¹¹, and manifesting through our actions on behalf of God’s righteousness the Spirit’s transfiguring power¹²;
- (2.2.2.e) “to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and to sustain and renew the life of the earth” as essential aspects of our mission in communion¹³.

(2.2.3) to engage in this mission with humility and an openness to our own ongoing conversion in the face of our unfaithfulness and failures in witness.

(2.2.4) to revive and renew structures for mission which will awaken and challenge the whole people of God to work, pray and give for the spread of the gospel.

(2.2.5) to order its mission in the joyful and reverent worship of God, thankful that in our eucharistic communion “Christ is the source and goal of the unity of the Church and of the renewal of human community”¹⁴.

Section Three: Our Unity and Common Life

3.1 Each Church affirms:

(3.1.1) that by our participation in Baptism and Eucharist, we are incorporated into the one body of the Church of Jesus Christ, and called by Christ to pursue all things that make for peace and build up our common life.

(3.1.2) its resolve to live in a Communion of Churches. Each Church, with its bishops in synod, orders and regulates its own affairs and its local responsibility for mission through its own system of government and law and is therefore described as living “in communion with autonomy and accountability”¹⁵. Trusting in the Holy Spirit, who calls and enables us to dwell in a shared life of common worship and prayer for one another, in mutual affection, commitment and service, we seek to affirm our common life through those Instruments of Communion by which our Churches are enabled to be conformed together to the mind of Christ. Churches of the Anglican Communion are bound together “not by a central legislative and executive authority, but by mutual loyalty sustained through the common counsel of the bishops in conference”¹⁶ and of the other instruments of Communion.

(3.1.3) the central role of bishops as guardians and teachers of faith, as leaders in mission, and as a visible sign of unity, representing the universal Church to the local, and the local

¹⁰ *Church as Communion* n26

¹¹ WCC 1954 Evanston, *Christ the Hope of the World*

¹² Moscow Statement, 43

¹³ IARCCUM, *Growing Together in Unity and Mission*, 118

¹⁴ Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry, WCC,

¹⁵ A Letter from Alexandria, the Primates, March 2009

¹⁶ Lambeth Conference 1930

Church to the universal and the local Churches to one another. This ministry is exercised personally, collegially and within and for the eucharistic community. We receive and maintain the historic threefold ministry of bishops, priests and deacons, ordained for service in the Church of God, as they call all the baptised into the mission of Christ.

(3.1.4) the importance of instruments in the Anglican Communion to assist in the discernment, articulation and exercise of our shared faith and common life and mission. The life of communion includes an ongoing engagement with the diverse expressions of apostolic authority, from synods and episcopal councils to local witness, in a way which continually interprets and articulates the common faith of the Church's members (*consensus fidelium*). In addition to the many and varied links which sustain our life together, we acknowledge four particular Instruments at the level of the Anglican Communion which express this co-operative service in the life of communion.

- I. We accord the Archbishop of Canterbury, as the bishop of the See of Canterbury with which Anglicans have historically been in communion, a primacy of honour and respect among the college of bishops in the Anglican Communion as first among equals (*primus inter pares*). As a focus and means of unity, the Archbishop gathers and works with the Lambeth Conference and Primates' Meeting, and presides in the Anglican Consultative Council.
- II. The Lambeth Conference expresses episcopal collegiality worldwide, and brings together the bishops for common worship, counsel, consultation and encouragement in their ministry of guarding the faith and unity of the Communion and equipping the saints for the work of ministry (Eph 4.12) and mission.
- III. The Anglican Consultative Council is comprised of lay, clerical and episcopal representatives from our Churches¹⁷. It facilitates the co-operative work of the Churches of the Anglican Communion, co-ordinates aspects of international Anglican ecumenical and mission work, calls the Churches into mutual responsibility and interdependence, and advises on developing provincial structures¹⁸.
- IV. The Primates' Meeting is convened by the Archbishop of Canterbury for mutual support, prayer and counsel. The authority that primates bring to the meeting arises from their own positions as the senior bishops of their Provinces, and the fact that they are in conversation with their own Houses of Bishops and located within their own synodical structures¹⁹. In the Primates' Meeting, the Primates and Moderators are called to work as representatives of their Provinces in collaboration with one another in mission and in doctrinal, moral and pastoral matters that have Communion-wide implications.

It is the responsibility of each Instrument to consult with, respond to, and support each other Instrument and the Churches of the Communion²⁰. Each Instrument may initiate and commend a process of discernment and a direction for the Communion and its Churches.

3.2 Acknowledging our interdependent life, each Church, reliant on the Holy Spirit, commits itself:

(3.2.1) to have regard for the common good of the Communion in the exercise of its autonomy, to support the work of the Instruments of Communion with the spiritual and

¹⁷ Constitution of the ACC, Article 3 and Schedule

¹⁸ cf. the Objects of the ACC are set out in Article 2 of its Constitution.

¹⁹ Report of the Windsor Continuation Group, 69.

²⁰ cf IATDC, Communion, Conflict and Hope, paragraph 113.

material resources available to it, and to receive their work with a readiness to undertake reflection upon their counsels, and to endeavour to accommodate their recommendations.

(3.2.2) to respect the constitutional autonomy of all of the Churches of the Anglican Communion, while upholding our mutual responsibility and interdependence in the Body of Christ²¹, and the responsibility of each to the Communion as a whole²².

(3.2.3) to spend time with openness and patience in matters of theological debate and reflection, to listen, pray and study with one another in order to discern the will of God. Such prayer, study and debate is an essential feature of the life of the Church as it seeks to be led by the Spirit into all truth and to proclaim the gospel afresh in each generation. Some issues, which are perceived as controversial or new when they arise, may well evoke a deeper understanding of the implications of God's revelation to us; others may prove to be distractions or even obstacles to the faith. All such matters therefore need to be tested by shared discernment in the life of the Church.

(3.2.4) to seek a shared mind with other Churches, through the Communion's councils, about matters of common concern, in a way consistent with the Scriptures, the common standards of faith, and the canon laws of our churches. Each Church will undertake wide consultation with the other Churches of the Anglican Communion and with the Instruments and Commissions of the Communion.

(3.2.5) to act with diligence, care and caution in respect of any action which may provoke controversy, which by its intensity, substance or extent could threaten the unity of the Communion and the effectiveness or credibility of its mission.

(3.2.6) in situations of conflict, to participate in mediated conversations, which involve face to face meetings, agreed parameters and a willingness to see such processes through.

(3.2.7) to have in mind that our bonds of affection and the love of Christ compel us always to uphold the highest degree of communion possible.

Section Four: Our Covenanted Life Together

4 Each Church affirms the following principles and procedures, and, reliant on the Holy Spirit, commits itself to their implementation.

4.1 Adoption of the Covenant

(4.1.1) Each Church adopting this Covenant affirms that it enters into the Covenant as a commitment to relationship in submission to God. Each Church freely offers this commitment to other Churches in order to live more fully into the ecclesial communion and interdependence which is foundational to the Churches of the Anglican Communion. The Anglican Communion is a fellowship, within the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, of national or regional Churches, in which each recognises in the others the bonds of a common loyalty to Christ expressed through a common faith and order, a shared inheritance in worship, life and mission, and a readiness to live in an interdependent life.

(4.1.2) In adopting the Covenant for itself, each Church recognises in the preceding sections a statement of faith, mission and interdependence of life which is consistent with its own life and with the doctrine and practice of the Christian faith as it has received them. It recognises these elements as foundational for the life of the Anglican Communion and therefore for the relationships among the covenanting Churches.

²¹ Toronto Congress 1963, and the Ten Principles of Partnership.

²² cf. the Schedule to the Dar es Salaam Communiqué of the Primates' Meeting, February 2007

(4.1.3) Such mutual commitment does not represent submission to any external ecclesiastical jurisdiction. Nothing in this Covenant of itself shall be deemed to alter any provision of the Constitution and Canons of any Church of the Communion, or to limit its autonomy of governance. The Covenant does not grant to any one Church or any agency of the Communion control or direction over any Church of the Anglican Communion.

(4.1.4) Every Church of the Anglican Communion, as recognised in accordance with the Constitution of the Anglican Consultative Council, is invited to enter into this Covenant according to its own constitutional procedures.

(4.1.5) The Instruments of Communion may invite other Churches to adopt the Covenant using the same procedures as set out by the Anglican Consultative Council for the amendment of its schedule of membership. Adoption of this Covenant does not confer any right of recognition by, or membership of, the Instruments of Communion, which shall be decided by those Instruments themselves.

(4.1.6) This Covenant becomes active for a Church when that Church adopts the Covenant through the procedures of its own Constitution and Canons.

4.2 The Maintenance of the Covenant and Dispute Resolution

(4.2.1) The Covenant operates to express the common commitments and mutual accountability which hold each Church in the relationship of communion one with another. Recognition of, and fidelity to, this Covenant, enable mutual recognition and communion. Participation in the Covenant implies a recognition by each Church of those elements which must be maintained in its own life and for which it is accountable to the Churches with which it is in Communion in order to sustain the relationship expressed in this Covenant.

(4.2.2) The Standing Committee of the Anglican Communion, responsible to the Anglican Consultative Council and the Primates' Meeting, shall monitor the functioning of the Covenant in the life of the Anglican Communion on behalf of the Instruments. In this regard, the Standing Committee shall be supported by such other committees or commissions as may be mandated to assist in carrying out this function and to advise it on questions relating to the Covenant.

(4.2.3) When questions arise relating to the meaning of the Covenant, or about the compatibility of an action by a covenanting Church with the Covenant, it is the duty of each covenanting Church to seek to live out the commitments of Section 3.2. Such questions may be raised by a Church itself, another covenanting Church or the Instruments of Communion.

(4.2.4) Where a shared mind has not been reached the matter shall be referred to the Standing Committee. The Standing Committee shall make every effort to facilitate agreement, and may take advice from such bodies as it deems appropriate to determine a view on the nature of the matter at question and those relational consequences which may result. Where appropriate, the Standing Committee shall refer the question to both the Anglican Consultative Council and the Primates' Meeting for advice.

(4.2.5) The Standing Committee may request a Church to defer a controversial action. If a Church declines to defer such action, the Standing Committee may recommend to any Instrument of Communion relational consequences which may specify a provisional limitation of participation in, or suspension from, that Instrument until the completion of the process set out below.

(4.2.6) On the basis of advice received from the Anglican Consultative Council and the Primates' Meeting, the Standing Committee may make a declaration that an action or decision is or would be "incompatible with the Covenant".

(4.2.7) On the basis of the advice received, the Standing Committee shall make recommendations as to relational consequences which flow from an action incompatible with the Covenant. These recommendations may be addressed to the Churches of the Anglican Communion or to the Instruments of the Communion and address the extent to which the decision of any covenanting Church impairs or limits the communion between that Church and the other Churches of the Communion, and the practical consequences of such impairment or limitation. Each Church or each Instrument shall determine whether or not to accept such recommendations.

(4.2.8) Participation in the decision making of the Standing Committee or of the Instruments of Communion in respect to section 4.2 shall be limited to those members of the Instruments of Communion who are representatives of those churches who have adopted the Covenant, or who are still in the process of adoption.

(4.2.9) Each Church undertakes to put into place such mechanisms, agencies or institutions, consistent with its own Constitution and Canons, as can undertake to oversee the maintenance of the affirmations and commitments of the Covenant in the life of that Church, and to relate to the Instruments of Communion on matters pertinent to the Covenant.

4.3 Withdrawing from the Covenant

(4.3.1) Any covenanting Church may decide to withdraw from the Covenant. Although such withdrawal does not imply an automatic withdrawal from the Instruments of Communion or a repudiation of its Anglican character, it may raise a question relating to the meaning of the Covenant, and of compatibility with the principles incorporated within it, and trigger the provisions set out in section 4.2 above.

4.4 The Covenant Text and its amendment

(4.4.1) The Covenant consists of the text set out in this document in the Preamble, Sections One to Four and the Declaration. The Introduction to the Covenant Text, which shall always be annexed to the Covenant text, is not part of the Covenant, but shall be accorded authority in understanding the purpose of the Covenant.

(4.4.2) Any covenanting Church or Instrument of Communion may submit a proposal to amend the Covenant to the Instruments of Communion through the Standing Committee. The Standing Committee shall send the proposal to the Anglican Consultative Council, the Primates' Meeting, the covenanting Churches and any other body as it may consider appropriate for advice. The Standing Committee shall make a recommendation on the proposal in the light of advice offered, and submit the proposal with any revisions to the covenanting Churches. The amendment is operative when ratified by three quarters of such Churches. The Standing Committee shall adopt a procedure for promulgation of the amendment.

Our Declaration

With joy and with firm resolve, we declare our Churches to be partakers in this Anglican Communion Covenant, offering ourselves for fruitful service and binding ourselves more closely in the truth and love of Christ, to whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit be glory for ever. Amen.

“Now may the God of Peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, make you complete in everything good so that you may do his will, working among us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.” (Hebrews 13.20, 21)

Submission to the Council of General Synod on the study of *The Anglican Communion Covenant*



You can fill out this form online at www.anglican.ca/acwg or send it by email to acwg@national.anglican.ca.

Alternatively, you can mail this form to the Rev. Paul Feheley, principal secretary to the Primate, Anglican Church of Canada, 80 Hayden St., Toronto, M4Y 3G2. Please send it as soon as possible after your group has finished its discussions.

What were the significant things that people mentioned they had learned from this study?

What were the key questions that people had about *The Anglican Communion Covenant*?



Anglican Church of Canada
Anglican Communion Working Group

What are the key concerns that the study participants mentioned?

Is there anything else your group wants to share with General Synod?

Name (optional): _____

Email address (optional): _____

Parish (optional): _____

Diocese (optional): _____



Evaluation of study guide on *The Anglican Communion Covenant*



You can fill out this form online at www.anglican.ca/acwg or send it by email to acwg@national.anglican.ca.

Alternatively, you can mail this form to the Rev. Paul Feheley, principal secretary to the Primate, Anglican Church of Canada, 80 Hayden St., Toronto, M4Y 3G2. Please send it as soon as possible after your group has finished its discussions.

What was most helpful about this study guide?

How could this guide have better helped your study planning?

Did your group submit a study response to the Council of General Synod? Yes No

How large was the group that gathered to study the Covenant?



Anglican Church of Canada
Anglican Communion Working Group

