

*General Convention: part legislature,
part family reunion*

Imagine Eucharist for 8,000 people. Imagine a marketplace of goods and ideas. Imagine quiet conversations among friends, old and new. Imagine one of the largest legislatures in the world. Imagine the utter silence of prayer before momentous decisions.

The every-three-years gathering of the Episcopal Church known as General Convention is all of these things. The 75th gathering begins in Columbus, Ohio, on June 13 and runs until June 21. Bishops and elected deputies, clergy and lay, from Episcopal dioceses all over the world will make broad decisions about our policies and our worship.

Those decisions take the form of resolutions agreed to by both the House of Deputies and the House of Bishops. The House of Deputies ranges in size between 800 and 1,000 members. There are 311 bishops eligible to sit in their house. Resolutions come from the groups which carry out the work authorized by the previous convention, bishops, dioceses, provinces (geographic collections of diocese), and deputies. Committees hear public testimony on all resolutions before they come to the houses.

Deputies cannot be instructed to vote one way or another. They agree to have an open heart so that they can prayerfully listen to others and be led by the Holy Spirit. And, they cannot refuse to vote on an issue.

Convention is more than legislation. All business stops each morning so that everyone can join in the Holy Eucharist. The exhibit hall is a marketplace in which organizations and interest groups present their wares, recruit members and do their best to influence legislation. Many church-related organizations hold meetings in conjunction with Convention.



The Episcopal Church welcomes you
The 75th General Convention, Columbus

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We can predict some of the issues a general convention will face. Others arise during the convention. Among the decisions facing the 75th Convention are:

- + Electing the 26th Presiding Bishop to succeed Frank T. Griswold and to lead us for the next nine years in developing policy, carrying out Convention's programs and strategies, and representing our church to the world,
- + Electing a new House of Deputies president to succeed George W. Werner who will also help us carry out Convention's programs and strategies,
- + Responding to the devastation on the Gulf Coast,
- + Approving a nearly \$152 million budget for our mission and ministry,
- + Responding to the recommendations of the Windsor Report (see below) regarding the consecration of an openly gay man as the bishop of New Hampshire and the blessing of same-gender relationships,
- + Making statements on the authority of the Bible and on such public-policy issues as the war in Iraq, abortion, the health-care crisis, "defense of marriage" laws among others, and
- + Revising our laws on qualifications and codes of conduct for ministry.

Read more about it

- General Convention website
www.episcopalchurch.org (click on General Convention logo)
- Convention coverage
www.episcopalchurch.org/ens/
- Budget information
www.episcopalchurch.org/documents/budgetprosoped_missionfinal.pdf
- The Windsor Report
www.anglicancommunion.org/commission/index.cfm
- Episcopal Church's initial response to part of the Windsor Report
www.episcopalchurch.org/documents/ToSetOurHopeOnChrist.pdf

“ Almighty and everliving God, source of all wisdom and understanding, be present with those who take counsel for the renewal and mission of your Church . . . ”

The Book of Common Prayer, p. 818

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