



## Where Does the Episcopal Church Stand?

### Timeline of church legislative action:

**1974** - Women ordained as priests and elected as bishops.

**1976** - The church votes for full inclusion, recognizing that all persons share a full and equal claim upon the love, acceptance, and pastoral concern and care of the church.

**1994** - Sexual orientation added to the non-discrimination canons for aspiring priests.

**2003** – The Rev. Gene Robinson is consecrated Bishop in the Episcopal Diocese of New Hampshire, the first openly gay bishop in a major Christian denomination.

**2009** - “God’s call is open to all.” - a resolution passes to eradicate discriminatory barriers to the election of bishops.

**2015** - Gender-neutral and same-sex marriage ceremonies officially adopted five days after the Supreme Court ruling.

**2018** - The church votes to advocate for “federal legislation that protects transgender and gender non-conforming persons from discrimination.”

## Topics in Alphabetical Order:

[Abortion](#)

[Birth Control](#)

[Intimate Relationships Other Than Marriage](#)

[LGBTQIA+ Inclusion & Same-Sex Marriage](#)

[Sex Education](#)

[Transgender & Non-Binary Rights](#)

## Abortion

“Resolved, that this 71st General Convention of the Episcopal Church express its unequivocal opposition to any legislative, executive or judicial action on the part of local, state or national governments that abridges the right of a woman to reach an informed decision about the termination of pregnancy or that would limit the access of a woman to safe means of acting on her decision.”

[Full text](#)

“I marveled when I initially learned of the Episcopal Church's view on sexuality when it came to birth control within a committed relationship and its middle ground stance on the abortion issue... I really liked how it toed the line between protecting life but also keeping realistic with women's reproductive rights and one's bodily autonomy.” – Comment from Reddit/Episcopalian

## Birth Control

The Episcopal Church, in order to improve the quality of life for all, commend to the several dioceses and agencies of the Episcopal Church as well as to the relative structures of the Anglican Communion programs and projects to provide information to all men and women on the full range of affordable, acceptable, safe, and non-coercive contraceptive and reproductive health care services, utilizing educational programs which start with parents and their children.

And be it further resolved, that governments everywhere be encouraged to recognize, acknowledge and seek remedies to reverse the rapid global population growth that adversely affects the health, education and quality of life of women; the prospects for peace; and depletes environmental resources... [Full text](#)

## Intimate Relationships Other Than Marriage

Resolved, That the 79th General Convention seeks to minister to the growing number of persons entering into sexually intimate relationships other than marriage, while acknowledging the Church's teaching on marriage, by calling for the curation and increased awareness of resources that provide pastoral guidance and teaching on relationships that involve sexual expression; and be it further

Resolved, That the selection process for resources shall be guided by the following principles that were adopted by General Convention 2000-D039: "That we expect such relationships will be characterized by following statement guide the development of these resources: "Qualities of relationship that ground in faithfulness the expression of sexual intimacy include: fidelity, monogamy, commitment, mutual affection and respect, careful and honest communication, physical maturity, emotional maturity, mutual consent, and the holy love which enables those in such intimate relationships to see in each other the image of God."

[Full Text](#)

## LGBTQIA+ Inclusion & Same-Sex Marriage

The Episcopal Church is officially fully LGBTQIA+ affirming

The work of LGBTQ+ advocacy in the Episcopal Church has largely been taken up by the newly formed [LGBTQ Caucus](#) in the House of Deputies, which identified priorities for the last General Convention in July, 2022.

Integrity USA, the nonprofit organization that has advocated for full LGBTQ+ inclusion within The Episcopal Church since 1974, [voluntarily dissolved](#) in January, 2022. While [some local chapters](#) continue to maintain a presence, the national network has been dormant [since 2018](#), when General Convention [approved a resolution](#) granting full churchwide access to same-sex marriage rites:

"The 79th General Convention authorizes a marriage rite for same-sex couples in civil jurisdictions that do not allow same-sex marriage, and establishes procedures for pastoral care of same-sex couples while preserving conscience-based exemptions for clergy." [Full text](#)



"I am mindful that Pride is both a celebration and a testament to sorrow and struggle that has not yet ended... I offer special thanks to God for the strength of the LGBTQIA+ community and for all that you share with your spouses, partners and children, with your faith communities, and indeed with our entire nation." (June, 2019) – Presiding Bishop Michael Curry

## Sex Education

The Episcopal Church supports sex-education programs for young people that "include an emphasis on abstinence as well as on proven harm and risk reduction strategies." (GC 1997-D032).

Resolved, That this 72nd General Convention, while recognizing that parents are the loving source of authority in the education of children, acknowledge the Church's unique role in ministering to all youth, particularly in the area of faith and morals: and be it further

Resolved, That all parishes are urged to teach and support sexual abstinence, self-respect, resistance to peer pressure and respect to those who say "no" to sex before marriage.

Particularly in the area of disease-prevention strategies, the Church believes such programs should "discuss frankly the need for fidelity within sexual relationships or abstinence as the only totally safe sexual practices" but also "promote safe sexual practices such as the use of condoms during sexual intercourse." (GC 1988-D104).

## Transgender & Non-Binary Rights

The Episcopal Church is officially fully LGBTQIA+ affirming and has actively expressed its support for trans rights in [Acts of Convention: Resolution # 2018-C022](#):

### **Support End of Discrimination Against Transgender and Non-Binary People**

Final Text:

Resolved, That the 79th General Convention of The Episcopal Church reaffirm its support for the enactment of laws at the local, state and federal level that prohibit discrimination based on gender identity or the expression of one's gender identity; and be it further

Resolved, That The Episcopal Church support legislative, educational, pastoral, liturgical, and broader communal efforts that seek to end the pattern of violence against transgender people in general and transgender women in particular, calling attention especially to the rising violence against transgender women of color and gender non-conforming people; and be it further

Resolved, That The Episcopal Church oppose all legislation that restricts public restroom, locker room and shower access for transgender and gender non-conforming people, recognizing that such bills disproportionately impact and contribute to a pattern of violence against transgender women and non-binary identified people; and be it further

Resolved, That The Episcopal Church ask dioceses and parishes to remove barriers to full participation in congregational life by making their gender-specific facilities and activities fully accessible to all, regardless of gender identity and expression; and be it further

Resolved, That The Episcopal Church direct the Office of Government Relations to advocate for passage of federal legislation that protects transgender and gender non-conforming persons from discrimination; and be it further

Resolved, That The Episcopal Church urges dioceses, parishes, and Episcopalians to advocate for passage and enactment of similar legislation at the local and state level.

[Acts of Convention: Resolution # 2018-C054](#):

### **Guiding Principles for Inclusion of Transgender and Non-binary People**

Resolved, That the 79th General Convention affirm the following guiding principles for the inclusion of transgender and non-binary people and urge that the Dioceses of the Episcopal Church prayerfully consider adopting and implementing the following guiding principles for the inclusion of transgender and non-binary people in their parishes, missions, schools and camps:

Guiding Principles for the Inclusion of Transgender and Non-Binary People in Dioceses, Parishes, Missions, Schools and Camps:

We believe that all people are created in the image of God and that all people are beloved children of God. Because this is true,

1. We will protect the rights and respect the dignity of transgender and non-binary persons, refusing to reject, judge, abuse, belittle or in any way dehumanize them.
2. We will engage the complex realities for transgender and non-binary persons in our churches, schools, and camps, and not yield to the temptation to ignore those realities.
3. We will recognize and accept our responsibility to protect the privacy of transgender and non-binary persons.
4. We will make decisions about how to support transgender and non-binary minors in our schools and camps in sensitive and appropriate communication with their parents.
5. We will provide a safe environment for transgender and non-binary persons, for those who support them, and for those who do not understand our commitment to these principles.
6. We will stay flexible in response to the complex and changing ramifications of this work by being open to relevant stories, to emerging information, and to the movement of the Holy Spirit.

And be it further

Resolved, That materials to help promote the Guiding Principles of this resolution be developed and curated by the Office of Formation through partnerships with organizations such as Integrity and TransEpiscopal.

### **Resolution Adopted by the House of Bishops, March 19, 2022**

In light of the baptismal covenant's promise to see Christ in all persons, and the recent and any actions by elected officials in Texas, Alabama, Arizona, Idaho, Iowa, New Hampshire, Michigan, Missouri, Florida, Arkansas, Ohio, North Dakota,

Mississippi, South Dakota, Nebraska, Indiana, South Carolina and any other states, municipalities, and school districts targeting transgender children and their families, we, the Bishops of The Episcopal Church gathered at Camp Allen, Texas, in March 2022, voice our love and continued support for all persons who identify as transgender or non-binary and their families. We decry legislative initiatives and governmental actions targeting trans children and their families. We urge all in our Church to create safe spaces and shield all people from harassment based on gender identity.

<https://www.episcopalchurch.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2022/03/Resolution-adopted-by-HOB-FINALtemplate.pdf>

**Have more to add?** Write [faithformation@ecww.org](mailto:faithformation@ecww.org)