

Report to Executive Council and General Convention
Diocese of Pittsburgh Anglican Covenant Study

1. Six parishes out of the twenty-nine congregations of the Diocese of Pittsburgh submitted reports from their own studies of the Anglican Covenant: St. Thomas, Oakmont; St. Michael-of-the-Valley, Ligonier; All Saints, North Versailles; St. Francis, Somerset, St. Andrew, Highland Park, and Christ Church, Indiana. It should also be pointed out that in the autumn of 2010, a special presentation with a lively question and answer session and discussion was held at the Clergy Conference of the Diocese, led by the Task Force on the Study of the Anglican Covenant appointed by Bishop Price.
2. Of the six parish studies undertaken, three congregations held a combination of large group presentations followed by small group studies. The other three congregations simply held large group presentations. One parish also had their vestry study the document.
3. Five of the six studies occurred on Sunday morning, during regular Christian Education time. The sixth parish held its study on Sunday afternoon. Most studies seemed to last for three weeks, although two parishes had six week studies. The number of people participating in the studies ranged from twelve in the smaller parishes to forty to fifty in the larger parishes (neither of the three largest parishes in the Diocese submitted reports)
4. Congregations used resources provided by the Executive Council, by the Diocese of Pittsburgh and by the clergy in respective parishes. One parish also used materials available from the Anglican Communion Office.
5. With the exception of one congregation, parishioners were not at all well-informed about the Anglican Covenant before the studies began.
6. Some of the questions that surfaced during the studies were: What happens if we don't sign it? Is this the only way to move forward? Who would benefit the most? Is the Covenant active or passive? Why are we doing this now? Will it actually do or change anything? How do we balance autonomy and interdependence?
7. Uniformly, all parishes reported positive reactions to the first three sections of the Covenant as an accurate and helpful description of Anglican belief.
8. In the question of how most people were inclined to feel toward the Covenant, five of the six parishes reporting indicated ambivalence leaning toward a guarded hopefulness (though with more skeptical minorities). One parish reported negative attitudes toward the Covenant. One parish vestry unanimously endorsed the Covenant.
9. Reasons given for the attitudes toward the Covenant included: a doubt that it would work, a love for Anglican identity and Communion relationship, "catholic" versus "denominational" ecclesiologies, concerns about whether TEC would enter the Covenant in "good faith", anxieties about the punitive or permissive aspects of section four, a concern about whether its accountability structures were actually in keeping with Anglican tradition and a hope that it might help hold the Anglican Communion together.
10. Most parish responses indicated generally low enthusiasm for the whole enterprise, often related to the perceived esoteric nature of the text and terminological difficulties in understanding it as well as an uncertainty as to what effect it might have on the Episcopal Church.

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Diocese of Pittsburgh

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