

**TEC Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music**  
**Addressing General Convention Resolution C056, *Liturgies for Blessing***

**Outline of Theological Principles**  
**December 31, 2010**

**I. Baptismal Grounding**

The Christian life is rooted in the sacrament of baptism, an effective sign of our participation in God's mission in the world and a reminder of our hope for the fulfillment of all things in God-in-Christ. Every covenant and commitment we make as Christians offers an opportunity to live out our baptismal covenant in new ways.

**II. Theological Retrieval**

Rooting the blessing of covenantal relationships in baptism suggests a fruitful retrieval of three key touchstones from Christian history concerning the significance of those covenants, including same-gender relationships:

1. The *sacramental* character of covenantal relationships (committed relationships make God's presence and divine grace visible);
2. The *Trinitarian* imprint of covenantal life (the perpetual and mutual self-giving and other-receiving of the Holy Trinity);
3. The *eschatological* vision inspired and evoked by covenantal relationship (the desire that leads us to commit ourselves to another person reflects the human desire and hope for union with God-in-Christ).

**III. Renewing the Church's Theological Reflection**

Retrieving the sacramental character, Trinitarian imprint, and eschatological vision in committed relationships can renew the church's theological reflection on covenantal relationships, including same-gender unions, with these five key principles:

- *Vocation*: People are called into long-term committed relationships, as a vocation;
- *Covenant-making*: Loving faithfulness can participate in and reflect God's own covenantal commitment to God's creation;
- *Households*: Covenants create households as "*schools of virtue*" for life-long formation in spiritual discipline nurtured by divine grace;
- *Fruitfulness*: Faithful love in relationship enables the offering of countless gifts to the wider community that would not be possible in the same way apart from that relationship, including: lives of service, compassion, generosity, and hospitality;
- *Mutual Blessing*: The liturgical blessing of a covenantal relationship acknowledges the fruits of the Spirit in that relationship and in turn becomes a blessing to the faith community, strengthening the community for its mission and ministry in the world.

**IV. Summary of Theological Principles**

Covenantal relationships are one way for Christians to live out their baptismal calling in the world. As the Church discerns the fruits of the Spirit in faithful commitments – such as households marked by compassion, generosity, and hospitality – these commitments become a blessing to the wider community. Blessing covenantal relationships, including same-gender unions, thus belongs to the mission of the Church in its ongoing witness to the good news of God-in-Christ and the Christian hope of union with God.