



# EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN CONNECTICUT

PARTICIPATING IN GOD'S MISSION

## **Question #4:**

*How would the practice of Open Communion change the life of the church?*

## **Description of work done and findings:**

Various theologies and practices around the sacrament of Holy Communion have emerged across The Episcopal Church and within ECCT. These have emerged in response to the desire to evangelize, to extend Christ's hospitality to all, and to grow the numbers of persons affiliated with the Church. We acknowledge that some clergy currently promote and oversee the deliberate practice of open Communion, understood to be communion administered to both baptized and unbaptized persons. We also differentiate the promotion and practice of open Communion from the pastoral judgment that clergy and Eucharistic ministers find themselves exercising during the administration of the sacrament.

In part, emergent and various understandings of both the sacrament of Baptism and the sacrament of Holy Communion are responses to a characteristic of the shift from Christendom to the New Missional Age, namely from an ecclesiocentric to a missiocentric Church and society.

Our group identifies study and education on the nature and significance of both sacraments of Holy Communion and Baptism as important to the life of the Church today.

## **Next steps:**

We invite the bishops to constitute a task force inclusive of both clergy and laity to study biblical teaching as well as historical and current sacramental theology and practice; to develop educational materials to share with clergy and laity of the Church; and to explore further whether and how experimentation with open communion could and/or should be made canonically permissible.

The production of educational materials may need funding, and we propose that any budget requests be made in the next ECCT budget cycle.

We also recommend a clergy day be devoted to discussion of theologies of both Baptism and Holy Communion and open Communion in particular.

## **Action needed from Convention:**

Direct the bishops to constitute said task force.

**Status of action requested at 234th Annual Convention: Approved/adopted**