



The slide features a blue header with a white shield containing a red cross and a blue field with white stars. The text "Session Two: Truth, Justice, and the 'Anglican' Way" is written in white. Below the header, the questions "What do we stand for?" and "How do we know?" are displayed in black. A green line connects the header to a small graphic on the right that says "come and grow" with "2006" in a box above grass. At the bottom, the text "Session Two: Truth, Justice, and the 'Anglican' Way" and the number "1" are visible.

Session Two: Truth, Justice, and the "Anglican" Way


What do we stand for?
How do we know?

come and
grow
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Session Two: Truth, Justice, and the "Anglican" Way

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This session explores the Anglican identity, and particularly how we live our Anglican identity in the Episcopal Church. The General Convention, while a legislative body, is also an Anglican body and a deeply Christian body. We will look at how our identity as Christians, Anglicans, and Episcopalians shape our approach to discernment and decisions.



Does the Episcopal Church have a “voice?”

The Church of England (Anglican) was established at the crossroads of Catholic and Protestant paths:

- ❖ They rejected the authority of Rome (the Pope) to dictate doctrine.
- ❖ They continued to embrace Catholic liturgy—but in English.
- ❖ They believed that people should use their intelligence and experience to help discern the mind of Christ, alongside Scripture and Tradition.



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Is there one voice for the Episcopal Church? Is there one voice for the Anglican Communion?

The Church of England (the first “Anglican” church) set itself right from the beginning at the crossroads of catholic and protestant ideas, theology, values, and ethics—both catholic and protestant. Its unique gift has been to hold varying points of view together in unity, through prayer, study, reflection, and discernment.

The Episcopal Church, being a constituent member of the Anglican Communion, continues in these Anglican traditions.



The "Anglican Way"— Holding together diversity in unity.

Anglican theologians and leaders have always emphasized:


- ❖ Reconciling the World to God.
- ❖ Jesus as the "incarnation" of God.
- ❖ Redemption offered freely to all.
- ❖ Peace and Justice as our principal mission.



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By holding fast to these fundamentals, Anglicans have been able to make room for one another, to accommodate a wide range of experience, thought, practice, and perspective.




Anglicans engage their society

Anglicans have always recognized their responsibility to take on the issues of society.

- ❖ To bring the Light of Christ to the world.
- ❖ To offer a slow, deliberate, reasoned approach that addresses their *particular* society.

The “Anglican Communion” includes many, *very* different societies, with their own perspectives.



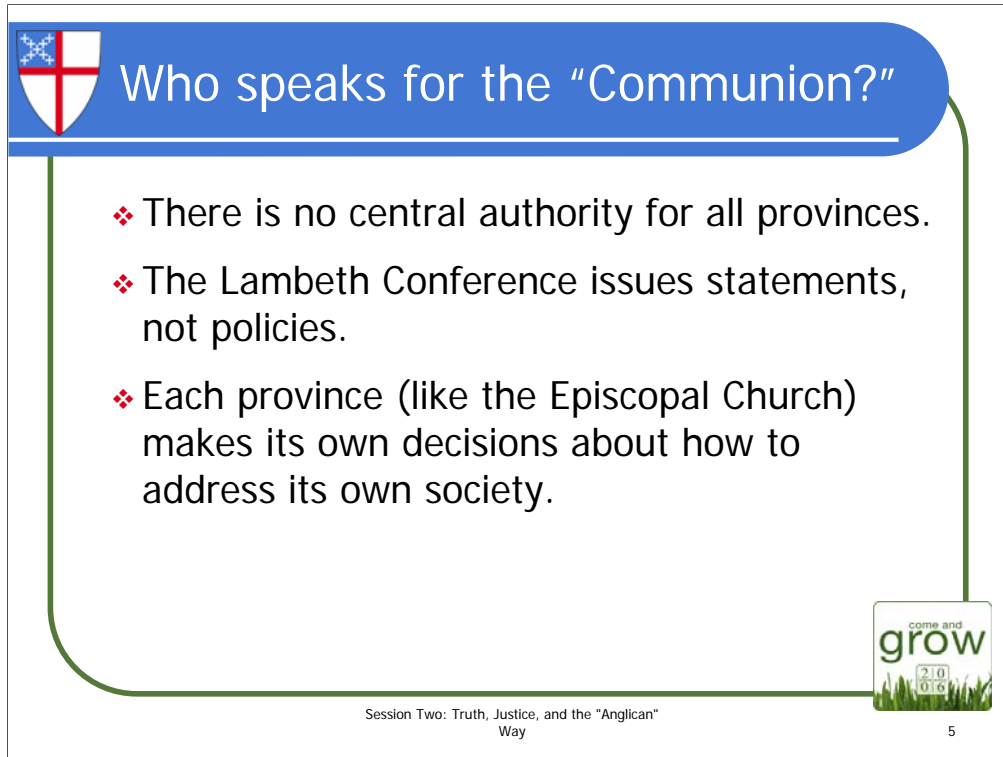
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Anglicans have always worked to address the current issues facing the society around them, offering their distinct, Christian point of view:


When society faces some serious, painful, complicated issue, the Church recognizes its responsibility to respond to the issue in the Light of Christ. The distinctly Anglican way of addressing issues is slow, reasoned, deliberate, and always in the context of its own, *particular* society.

The “Anglican Communion,” as we think of it today, is global, engaging many, *very* different cultures and societies.



 Who speaks for the "Communion?"

- ❖ There is no central authority for all provinces.
- ❖ The Lambeth Conference issues statements, not policies.
- ❖ Each province (like the Episcopal Church) makes its own decisions about how to address its own society.



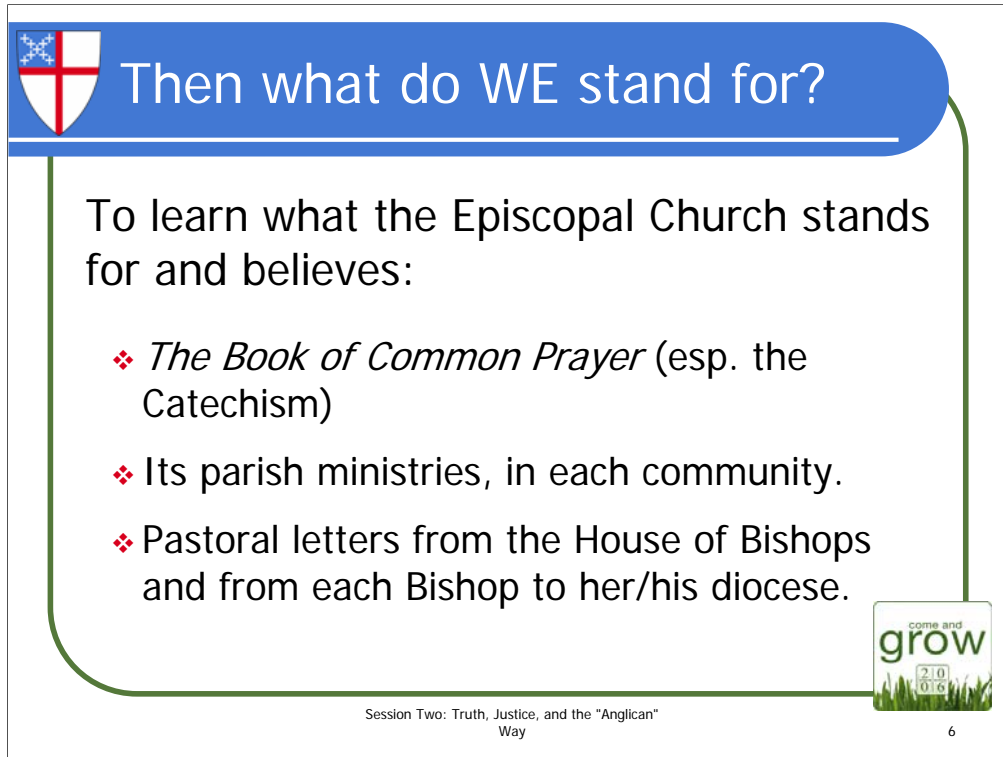
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There is no central, "teaching" authority for all the provinces of the Anglican Communion.

The Lambeth Conference (all the bishops of the Communion meeting once every ten years) issues statements, but cannot dictate policy or theology to the provinces and dioceses of the Communion.

Each Province, and to a degree each Diocese, makes its own decisions about ethical matters, just as they make their own decisions about prayer books and liturgies.



Then what do WE stand for?

To learn what the Episcopal Church stands for and believes:

- ❖ *The Book of Common Prayer* (esp. the Catechism)
- ❖ Its parish ministries, in each community.
- ❖ Pastoral letters from the House of Bishops and from each Bishop to her/his diocese.


come and
grow
2006

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How do we know what we as the Episcopal Church stand for?

- *The Book of Common Prayer* and its catechism.
- Parishes through their ministry of service engage their own communities' issues.
- Pastoral letters from the House of Bishops and from individual bishops.
- The Constitution & Canons of the Episcopal Church.
- General Convention reports, policy statements, and resolutions
- Continuing leadership by National Church staff, Executive Council and Standing Committees, Commissions, and Boards, between General Conventions.




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Who are WE, as Anglicans?

Two statements ground the identity of Episcopal Church:

❖ The Church is the community of the New Covenant with Jesus Christ, who commands us:

- To love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength.
- To love our neighbors as ourselves.
- To love one another as Christ has loved us.






Who are WE, as Anglicans?

Two statements ground the identity of Episcopal Church:

- ❖ Our Mission is to “restore all people to unity with God and each other in Christ” by the ministry of its members when they “pray and worship, proclaim the Gospel, and promote justice, peace, and love” (BCP, 855)



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We hope that our polity—our structure and decision making—in the Episcopal Church will show forth our identity, even as we struggle with the difficult issues and come to decisions in legislation and our relationships with one another.




How do we live into our identity at General Convention?

- ❖ All deliberations begin with prayer and reflection.
- ❖ Every day begins with Bible study, table conversation and reflection, and Eucharist.
- ❖ All sessions of the House of Deputies and House of Bishops begin with prayer and meditation.
- ❖ Deputies and Bishops can call for prayer as the time for voting approaches.
- ❖ Hearings on controversial topics allow those present to speak without interruption, and to be heard respectfully. Everyone's voice is invited and welcomed.



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How do we live into our identity at General Convention?

The goal of legislation is to discern the mind of Christ, rather than to “win.”

- ❖ Resolutions are frequently amended.
- ❖ Deputies and Bishops change their minds.
- ❖ Resolutions are changed or developed further in the next Convention.
- ❖ Legislation is the Church’s way to discover or develop a way to address a concern.



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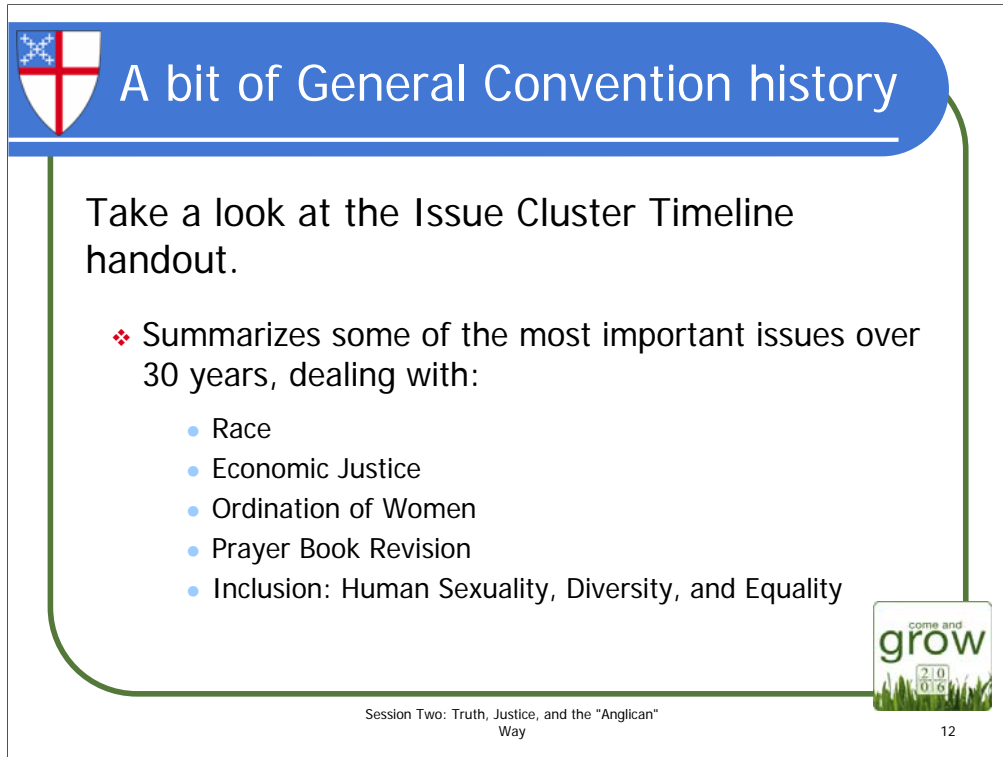
Resolutions are frequently amended by negotiation at hearings and in legislative committee meetings.

Deputies can change their minds: They don’t come with their minds made up and agendas in hand.

Resolutions at one Convention can be changed or developed further in the next Convention.

The mission of the Church is ongoing; legislation becomes an attempt to discover or develop a way of addressing a concern

It’s as useful an index of Episcopal Church thought over time to look at which resolutions the Convention rejects as at those it passes.



A bit of General Convention history

Take a look at the Issue Cluster Timeline handout.

- ❖ Summarizes some of the most important issues over 30 years, dealing with:
 - Race
 - Economic Justice
 - Ordination of Women
 - Prayer Book Revision
 - Inclusion: Human Sexuality, Diversity, and Equality

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A bit of General Convention history...

Everyone has the Issue Cluster Timelines and the Synopsis of Social Teaching. The Issue Cluster Timeline is a digest of all the legislation summarized in the Synopsis of Social Teaching. You can see the most important resolutions over the last 30 years, which may be summarized as follows:

Race:

- The Church has moved from recognizing racism in clergy deployment to recruiting people of color to ordained ministry.
- We have moved from establishing diocesan committees on racism to requiring anti-racism training for all diocesan leaders.
- From the late 70's forward, the Church has supported affirmative action and more proactive means to address institutional and structural racism.

Economic Justice:

- The church has passed a number of resolutions calling for study of economic justice concerns—affecting labor, early childhood health and education, problems of urban and rural poverty, and the living wage.
- Most of the resolutions that urge US or international bodies to address economic justice simply make the Convention's feelings known to the governmental body.
- The Church has passed some resolutions that change its own behavior, especially with respect to a living wage for church employees.

Ordination of Women:


- While the Canons were amended in 1976 to give women the right to ordination, in the years that follow room is still given for bishops to follow their consciences in this matter
- Convention consistently rejects resolutions that would widen the ability of parishes and dioceses to resist the ordination of women

Prayer Book Revision:

- After years of Trial Liturgy texts, the "new" prayer book was adopted by the Convention in 1976. The version date was later changed to 1979.
- The Church has steadfastly tried to care for those who felt alienated by the revision of the Prayer Book, and has apologized to them even as recently as GC2000.
- The Church has continued to authorize supplemental liturgical materials (*Enriching Our Worship* and other texts) throughout the past 30 years.
- Resolutions indicate the preparation of the Church for a more thorough revision of the *Book of Common Prayer*.

Inclusion: Human Sexuality, Diversity, and Equality

- This is the most contemporary expression of controversy in the Church.
- The Convention has consistently called for dialogue about human sexuality—in dioceses and parishes.
- The Convention has consistently rejected resolutions that seek to say that homosexual persons are not fit subjects for baptism or ordination.




A bit of General Convention history

The Church in Convention has tried:

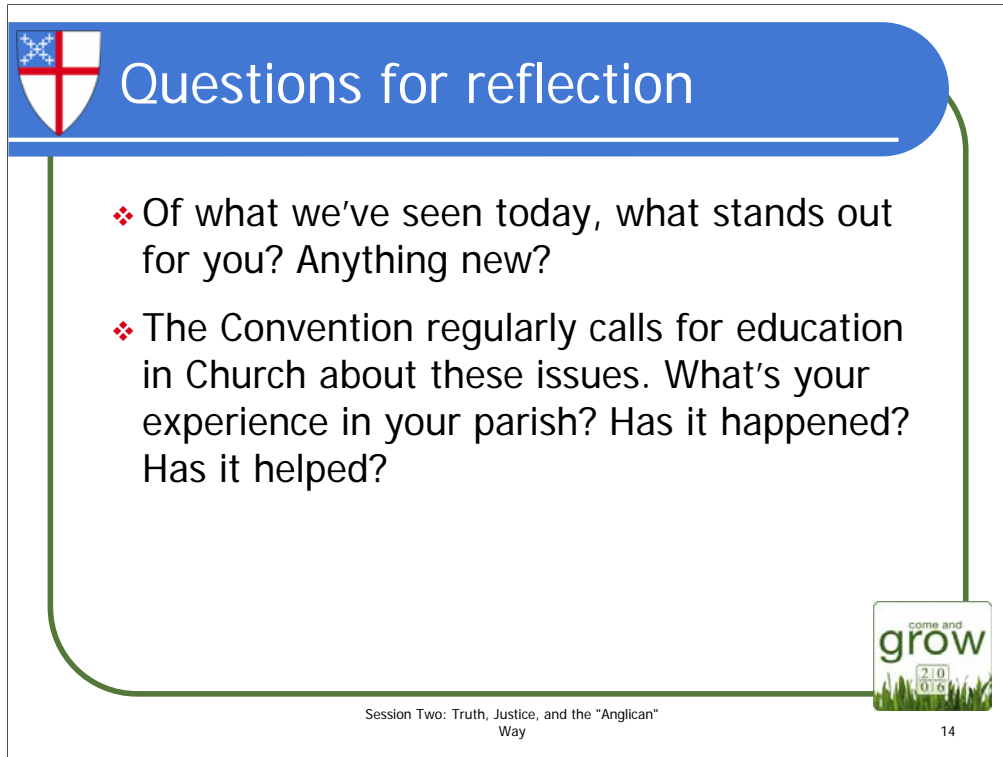
- ❖ To educate the Church about issues.
- ❖ To include information about secular culture and cultures elsewhere in the Communion.
- ❖ To establish moral guidelines.
- ❖ To establish practical boundaries for people to follow in making their decisions.
- ❖ To keep together in worship and dialogue, even when we disagree with one another.


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In all these issues, the Church in Convention has tried to find ways to educate its members about the issues, to include information about how the secular culture and other branches of the Anglican Communion consider these issues, to establish moral guidelines and practical boundaries for the members of the church to follow in their own decision making, and to keep together in worship and dialogue members of the church who might otherwise disagree sharply with one another.



 Questions for reflection

- ❖ Of what we've seen today, what stands out for you? Anything new?
- ❖ The Convention regularly calls for education in Church about these issues. What's your experience in your parish? Has it happened? Has it helped?

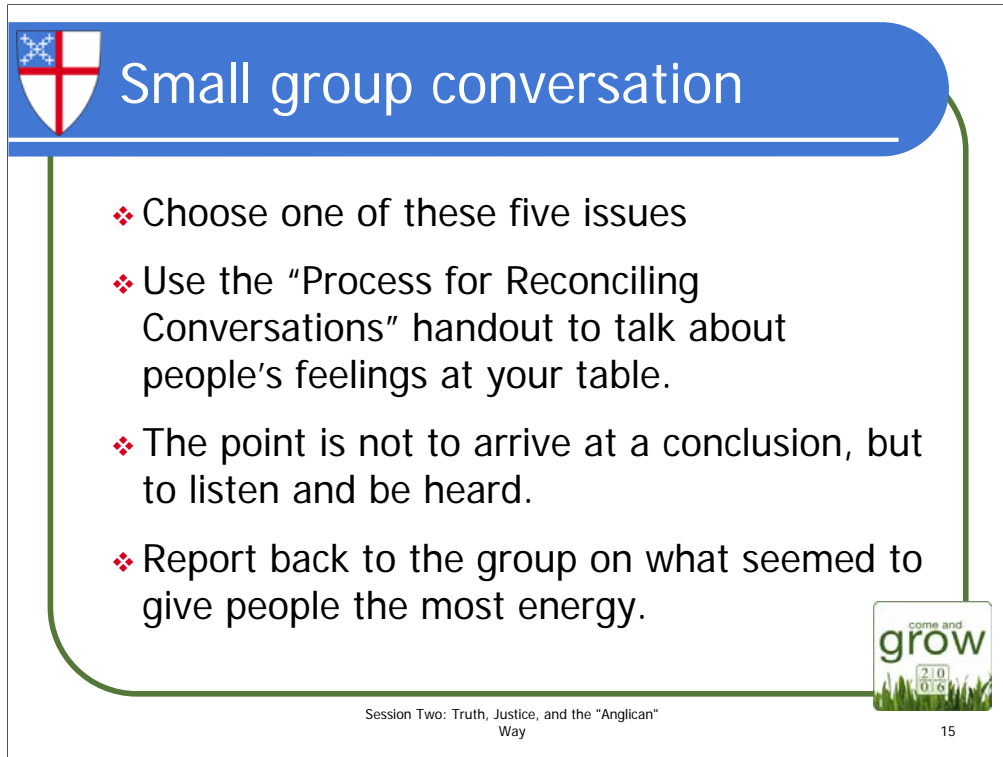
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Questions for Reflection:

1. As you think about what's been said, what stands out the most for you? What did you learn that you didn't know before?
2. Repeated calls for education of the Church about all five of these issues have been made at GC. What's your experience (in your parish) of education about these issues? Has it happened? Why or why not?



The slide features a blue header with a white shield containing a red cross and a blue canton with white stars. The title "Small group conversation" is written in white on the blue background. Below the header, four bullet points are listed, each preceded by a red diamond symbol. A green line forms a large frame around the text. In the bottom right corner, there is a small graphic of a sign that says "come and grow" with "2006" below it, and a small number "15" in the bottom right corner of the slide.

Small group conversation

- ❖ Choose one of these five issues
- ❖ Use the “Process for Reconciling Conversations” handout to talk about people’s feelings at your table.
- ❖ The point is not to arrive at a conclusion, but to listen and be heard.
- ❖ Report back to the group on what seemed to give people the most energy.

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Questions for Reflection:

3. Take ONE of these five issues and use the “Process for Reconciling Conversations” to discuss the feelings of people at your table about it. (Note that the point of this discussion is not to arrive at a conclusion.)
4. Report in plenary the portion of your discussion that engaged the greatest amount of energy at your table.