

**Bishop's Policy on The
Marriage or Blessing of Same-Sex Couples
Effective October 9, 2014**



**The Right Reverend Scott B. Hayashi
Eleventh Bishop of Utah**

October 9, 2014

PURPOSE

These pastoral guidelines for the Diocese of Utah establish the conditions under which clergy may choose to perform marriages for same-sex couples making a life-long commitment to one another or to bless a same-sex couple who have been married civilly.

The 77th General Convention of The Episcopal Church gave to our Church a possibility for blessing a same sex marriage. According to Resolution **A049**, a “generous pastoral response” is available to meet the needs of Episcopalians who live in states where same-sex marriage is legal.

Clergy who serve in congregations who desire to provide this service are required to undertake a study, with the Vestry or Bishop’s Committee and invite the entire congregation as well, of the document prepared by the SCLM “I Will Bless You and You Will Be a Blessing.”* After a period of prayerful study and reflection of the information presented in this report, if the Vestry or Bishop’s Committee of the congregation agrees with the Rector or Vicar to proceed with marriages or blessings of same-sex couples, the Bishop shall be notified of the decision by a letter signed by the Rector / Vicar and the Wardens. In addition, an announcement to the congregation of the decision of the Rector/Vicar and Vestry/Bishop’s Committee shall also be made before the first service of blessing or marriage of a same-sex couple.”

The Liturgy, “The Witness and Blessing of a Lifelong Covenant” shall be used for the service with the addition of the lines in italics if the service is a marriage.

Dear friends in Christ,
we have gathered together today
to witness N. N. and N. N. publically committing themselves to one another
*in marriage according to the laws of the State of Utah, ***
and, in the name of the Church, to bless their union:
a relationship of mutual fidelity and steadfast love,
forsaking all others,
holding one another in tenderness and respect,
in strength and bravery,
as long as they live.

Inasmuch as N. and N. have exchanged vows of love and fidelity
in the presence of God and the Church,
I now pronounce that they are bound to one another
*in holy marriage according to the laws of the State of Utah, ***
as long as they both shall live. Amen.

The “Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage” from the Book of Common Prayer may not be used. Nor may “The Witness and Blessing of a Lifelong Covenant” be used for the marriage of a heterosexual couple.

Clergy shall, where applicable, adhere to Canon I.18 and Canon I.19 of the Episcopal Church for all couples. The marriage and / or blessing shall be duly recorded in the parish registry. Clergy are authorized to sign the marriage licenses for the State of Utah.

*Clergy and congregations that have already done this in response to the previous Bishop’s Policy on The Marriage or Blessing of Same-Sex Couples dated Advent 2012 are not required to repeat the process.

**At the time of writing the State of Arizona has not allowed same-sex couples to be married. If and when that changes the word – Arizona – should be used instead of Utah.