

Updated June 15, 2023

**THE ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA
GENERAL SYNOD 2023
RESOLUTION**

Resolution Number A052

Subject: Repealing Canon XIII on Deaconesses

Moved By: Chancellor Canon David P. Jones, K.C.

Seconded By: The Ven. Alan T. Perry

Be it resolved that this General Synod:

Repeal Canon XIII.

Source: Governance Working Group

Submitted By: Governance Working Group

Does this motion contain within it any financial implications? Yes **No**

If yes, has the General Synod Expenditures Committee considered the implications? Yes No

EXPLANATORY NOTE/BACKGROUND

The office of deaconess was established in the nineteenth century as an avenue of Christian service for women. A training college, the Deaconess and Missionary Training Home was established in Toronto in 1893 under the auspices of Wycliffe College to prepare young women for service in domestic and foreign missions. In Canada the office of deaconess was first regulated with the adoption of Canon XVII (later XXV and now XIII) in 1921. Deaconesses served under the authority of the diocesan bishop in a variety of areas of pastoral ministry including providing pastoral care to women and children, visiting the sick, instructing people in the faith and assisting in preparation for baptism and confirmation. Deaconesses were given basic first aid and nursing training. Liturgically, the role of deaconess was expanded in the 1960s to include officiating at Morning and Evening Prayer, preaching and, in the absence of a priest or deacon, officiating at baptism, funerals and thanksgiving after childbirth.

In 1968, the Lambeth Conference recommended that “those made deaconesses by laying-on of hands with appropriate prayers be declared to be within the diaconate”. (Resolution 32). In 1969, the General Synod resolved that “in regard to women presently ordained as deaconesses in the Anglican Church of Canada, the Primate be asked to initiate any steps which may be necessary to ensure that those who are so ordered may belong to the diaconate”. The House of Bishops subsequently resolved “that this House considers that the action of the 1969 General Synod has established for the Anglican Church of Canada the fact that duly ordained deaconesses are to be regarded as being members of the diaconate of the Church”.

With the advent of the ordination of women as deacons, priests and bishops, as well as increasing empowerment of lay ministry, the order of deaconess as an avenue for Christian service for women has

fallen into disuse. The long period of faithful service of women as deaconesses in the Anglican Church of Canada is an important chapter in our history, but in the twenty-first century, with the order of deaconess no longer necessary for women to serve in Christian ministry, the need for a Canon to regulate this office is now past.

PROCEDURE FOR ADOPTION (E)

Section 11 c) ii) of the [Declaration of Principles](#) requires the enactment or amendment of a canon (which does not deal with doctrine, worship or discipline) to be approved at one session of General Synod by a two-thirds majority of each Order voting separately.