

# Episcopalian Church

*"[Protestant](#), yet [Catholic](#)".<sup>[5]</sup>*

The **Episcopal Church**, also known as the **Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America (PECUSA)**, is the [Province](#) of the [Anglican Communion](#) in the [United States](#), [Honduras](#), [Taiwan](#), [Colombia](#), [Ecuador](#), [Haiti](#), the [Dominican Republic](#), [Venezuela](#), the [British Virgin Islands](#) and parts of [Europe](#).<sup>[2][3][4]</sup> In keeping with Anglican tradition and theology, the Episcopal Church considers itself "[Protestant](#), yet [Catholic](#)".<sup>[5]</sup>

The Church was organized shortly after the [American Revolution](#) when it was forced to break with the [Church of England](#) on penalty of treason as Church of England clergy were required to swear allegiance to the British monarch,<sup>[6]</sup> and became, in the words of the 1990 report of the [Archbishop of Canterbury's](#) Group on the Episcopate, "the first Anglican Province outside the [British Isles](#)".<sup>[7]</sup> Today it is divided into nine provinces and has dioceses outside the U.S. in Taiwan, [Central](#) and [South America](#), the [Caribbean](#) and Europe. The [Episcopal Diocese of the Virgin Islands](#) encompasses both American and British territory.

The Episcopal Church was active in the [Social Gospel](#) movement of the late nineteenth century and since the 1960s and 1970s has played a leading role in the [progressive](#) movement and on related political issues. For example, in its resolutions on state issues the Episcopal Church has opposed the [death penalty](#), and supported the [civil rights movement](#) and [affirmative action](#). Some of its leaders and priests marched with civil rights demonstrators. The church calls for the full civil equality of gay men and lesbians. Most dioceses ordain openly gay men and women; in some, same-sex unions are celebrated with services of blessing. In 2009, the church's General Convention passed resolutions that allowed for gay and lesbian marriages in states where it is legal. On the question of abortion, the church has adopted a nuanced position. About all these issues, individual members and clergy can and do frequently disagree with the stated position of the church.

The Episcopal Church ordains women to the priesthood as well as the diaconate and the episcopate. The current Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church is [Katharine Jefferts Schori](#), the first female [primate](#) in the Anglican Communion.

## Gay & Lesbian Bishops Welcome in Episcopalian Church

Wednesday July 15, 2009



The Episcopal Church voted this week to welcome openly gay and lesbian bishops to serve. Wait, that's [old news](#), right? Didn't openly gay V. Gene Robinson become a bishop back in 2004? Well, yes he did. And the decision of the church to consecrate him caused such a controversy that the Episcopalian

Church placed a moratorium on appointing any more openly gay or lesbian bishops.

This week the church voted to end that moratorium and [open the doors once again to openly gay and lesbian bishops](#). In a move that is likely to further stir up controversy and may even divide the church, the Episcopalian Church has decided to take a liberal stand on homosexuality, based on the Bible's general themes of justice and love. The stance is good news for gay and lesbian Christians, but it certainly doesn't end the Christian debate about what the Bible [does and does not say about homosexuality](#).