

This copy is for your personal, noncommercial use only. You can order presentation-ready copies for distribution to your colleagues, clients or customers [here](#) or use the "Reprints" tool that appears next to any article. Visit [www.nytreprints.com](http://www.nytreprints.com) for samples and additional information. [Order a reprint of this article now.](#)

PRINTER-FRIENDLY FORMAT  
SPONSORED BY



March 17, 2010

# Episcopalians Confirm a Second Gay Bishop

By LAURIE GOODSTEIN

A majority of bishops and dioceses of the Episcopal Church have approved the election of the church's second openly gay bishop, the [Rev. Mary D. Glasspool](#), a decision likely to increase the tension with fellow [Anglican churches](#) around the world that do not approve of homosexuality.

The worldwide Anglican Communion, the network of churches connected to the Church of England, has been in turmoil since the Americans elected their first openly gay bishop, [V. Gene Robinson](#), in New Hampshire in 2003. Theological conservatives in the Communion say the Bible condemns homosexuality, while liberals say the Scripture is open to interpretation.

Bishop Glasspool, 56, is to be consecrated as one of two new assistant bishops, known as suffragan bishops, in Los Angeles on May 15. Both elected suffragan bishops are women — the first ever to serve in the diocese.

Both were [elected](#) at a convention of the diocese in December, but according to church rules had to win the approval of a majority of the bishops and standing committees (made up of clergy and laypeople) of the church's 110 dioceses. Bishop Glasspool's confirmation was never certain.

Bishop Glasspool, who has been serving in Maryland as an adviser to the bishops for nine years, said Wednesday in an interview: "I feel overjoyed. I feel relieved. I'm breathing again."

She and her partner, Becki Sander, a postgraduate student in social work, have been together for 22 years.

The bishop said she intended to reach out to those who opposed her. Asked whether she anticipated that her election would have repercussions in the Anglican Communion, she said, "While I understand that not everyone rejoices, I don't understand what will functionally be different tomorrow than today with respect to our relationships around the world."

Conservative prelates in the Communion had asked the Episcopal Church to refrain from electing any more openly gay bishops, but Episcopalians **passed a resolution** at their convention in 2009 saying that the church should be open to the ministry of all qualified people, regardless of sexual orientation.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, **Rowan Williams**, the leader of the Church of England and spiritual head of the Anglican Communion, issued a warning in December that Bishop Glasspool's election "raises very serious questions not just for the Episcopal Church and its place in the Anglican Communion, but for the Communion as a whole."

He did not elaborate on what steps the Communion might take should her election be confirmed.

Bishop Glasspool's father was also an Episcopal priest. She was born on Staten Island, and grew up in the rectory of St. James Church in Goshen, N.Y., where her father served for 35 years.