

**GENERAL SYNOD 2025
RESOLUTION**

Resolution Number A124

Subject: Thematic RCL

Moved By: Mr. Dion Lewis

Seconded By: The Rev. Stephen Black

Be it resolved that this General Synod:

Adopt the Thematic stream of lectionary readings presented in the Revised Common Lectionary (1992) for Pentecost/Ordinary time for use where permitted by the Ordinary.

Source: Faith, Worship, and Ministry Coordinating Committee

Submitted By: Faith, Worship, and Ministry Coordinating Committee

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

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

Does this motion contain within it any staffing implications? Yes No

EXPLANATORY NOTE/BACKGROUND

The Anglican Church of Canada is a founding member of the Consultation on Common Texts (CCT), an ecumenical liturgical roundtable that gathers representatives of nearly 30 denominations in North America. This ongoing group was the author of the Revised Common Lectionary (1992).

The Revised Common Lectionary (RCL) offers two streams of tables of readings for the Season after Pentecost up to Reign of Christ: one with a somewhat continuous stream in the Old Testament narrative, which is linked to the Psalm, (this is called the semi-continuous stream), and the other which continues the pattern of the other seasonal tables by a thematic connection between the gospel and the first reading (this is called the thematic stream). The full text – including the Thematic (or “Complementary”) readings can be found here: www.commontexts.org/rcl.

When The Anglican Church of Canada adopted the Revised Common Lectionary in 1995, it approved only the semi-continuous stream of readings. The argument at the time was that the semi-continuous reading of the Hebrew Scripture narrative texts in Pentecost/Ordinary time allowed more of the integrity of those Old Testament narratives to be held. Over the decades, other considerations have provided cause to wonder why continue to not permit the use of the thematic stream. Are Anglican parishioners in church Sunday by Sunday always to hear the longer narrative unfold? In those situations where it does not make sense to the liturgical life of the community, why not permit the use of the thematic stream?

Though no study has been done on practice, anecdotally there is evidence that there are a good number of Canadian Anglican clergy who do not know that the thematic stream of readings is not officially permitted. This in itself is no argument towards permission. Raising the question within the Liturgical Advisory Committee and Faith, Worship, and Ministry drew affirmations that the use of the thematic readings is somewhat normalized. This also is not a reason to argue for permission. It is as we heard that the thematic readings are being chosen intentionally by some, with reports of appreciating the flexibility for good pastoral, homiletic, and liturgical reasons, that suggests that a change in legislation would do well to follow practice, and open up to Canadian Anglicans, officially, the use of the thematic stream of RCL readings in Ordinary Time. This is to be enacted where permitted by the Ordinary (Diocesan Bishop).

The staffing implications are that, if adopted, eventually these changes will need to be incorporated in to the Canadian Church Desk Diary and Wall Calendar, the Online Lectionary, and The Book of Alternative Services (print and online). This is work normally undertaken by staff in Communications and Faith, Worship, and Ministry together, and will need to be worked into work plans as a new item.

PROCEDURE FOR ADOPTION (G)

In the normal course, an ordinary motion must be passed by a majority of the members of General Synod present and voting together.

Six members of General Synod may, prior to the question being put, require a vote by Orders, with a majority of each Order being necessary to pass.

If a question passes on a Vote by Orders, any six members (two from each of three different dioceses) may immediately before the next item of business require a vote to be taken by dioceses. A motion passes if a majority (or a tie) of dioceses vote in favour.

Source: Sections 4 and 5 of the [Declaration of Principles](#) and sections 18, 19 and 20 of the [Rules of Order and Procedure](#).