

The Territory of the People Anglican Church of Canada

BISHOP BARBARA'S STATEMENT

July 14, 2016

Dear Friends in Christ:

You will be aware that I have been away at General Synod for the past week and if you have been following the meeting by social media/email news releases or live streaming, you will know that it was a difficult, tension filled and yet surprising wonderful week.

For those hearing news of General Synod for the first time: on Monday evening after a long day of deep and for the most part respectful listening, the motions to change the Marriage Canon of our church came before the assembly. More than 60 people spoke for and against the motions, amendments were passed and a final motion came before us and we voted by clickers.

Following the tally, Archbishop Hiltz declared that the motion had **failed** the necessary 2/3 majority in the House of Clergy by one vote. To change our canons a 2/3 majority must be achieved in each of the Houses of Bishops, Clergy and Laity. There was great shock and sadness amongst many and we wondered about the mission and ministry of our Church. For others there was relief as they felt the need to follow their understanding of scripture and tradition within our Church. We sat together in silence, and then **together** we ended the evening in prayer.

Early on Monday a motion was passed to have a record of the vote made available to the delegates. On Tuesday afternoon we received the records and discovered that at least three delegates, our delegate The Rev Danny Whitehead, a priest and lay person from Quebec whose votes had not been recorded. Along with these unrecorded votes, the vote of the General Secretary Archdeacon Michael Thompson had been registered as a non-voting member and was not counted in the House of Clergy. In stunned silence we heard the Chancellor explain what had happened and Archbishop Hiltz declare the motion to change the Marriage Canon **carried in all Houses**. There was no sense of joy in the room; we were all aware of how others were now hurting. We went immediately into worship to conclude the work of Synod, sadly without many for whom this was a painful turn of events. I was heartbroken to see members of our Anglican family walk out of General Synod and not feel that we could come together around the table in a final act of **worship**.

The question for us now is, **how we will walk together** as the family of God in the Central Interior as we prepare for these changes in the life of the national church? On Tuesday morning of General Synod we were invited to talk about next steps in our territorial groups and our team of delegates offered many excellent insights that will serve us well now that we have a different outcome.

I am suggesting that we begin this time of discernment:

- By first making ourselves familiar with the new Marriage Canon and the report of the Marriage Canon Commission, *This Holy Estate* and engaging in the conversation that our Primate Fred invites us into.
- By seeking the counsel of our Pastoral Elders,
- By setting up a Bishop's Task Force to help us to discern how we wish to respond,
- By praying hard together that we come to the Assembly in May 2017 with some clarity on this change of the Marriage Canon,

In the mean time we will all need to be mindful of how we **care for one another** in the midst of the hurt that many are experiencing. I would encourage us to do what we do best – have respectful conversation with one another, always remembering that we have people of different opinions in our midst along with members of the LGBTQ2S+ and their families within our communities.

Within the Territory of the People we continue to welcome all. Within our welcome we will offer God's love and support to all and we will offer each of God's sacraments to all who seek them.

Let me end by telling you of our amazing team of delegates and supports from the Territory who attended General Synod on our behalf and give thanks for the wonderful leadership for us.

- Melissa Green, who served as the Chair of the General Synod Agenda Committee and ensured that our agenda ran smoothly.
- Cathy Wozlowski, who was elected to the Anglican Journal Committee.
- Dale Drozda, who was elected as the Youth delegate on the Council of General Synod from the Province of BC and Yukon.
- The Rev Len Fraser and the Rev Danny Whitehead both worked hard to serve us within the discussion at General Synod.
- Pastoral Elder Amy Charlie, a guest of the Anglican Indigenous Council sat with us and gave us wise input on the various items before General Synod.
- Dean Ken Gray gave leadership in the presentation on church investments with ecological justice implications.
- Barry Baskin, a member of St Paul's, gave us support from the Observers gallery.

There is so much good news coming out of the Synod that needs to be shared and celebrated:

- The new task force on environmental and justice concerns,
- The messages of hope that we heard from our Ecumenical partners, the Diocese of Cuba and the Diocese of Brazil,
- The messages of support and friendships expressed by Michael Curry, the Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church, and the good news that the Secretary General of the Anglican Communion Josiah Idowu-Fearon brought to us,
- The good news shared by the Anglican Foundation, PWRDF, and Council of the North
- And the sharing of a new mission statement and dream of the Indigenous Council,
- All our work was surrounded by excellent and inspiring worship and music.

All in all, there is much for us to celebrate as we return home and look to discerning our way forward on the many changes that now face us with our Anglican Church.

I am asking in each parish this Sunday, that the Primate's statement will be read and you may share the contents of this message from me. Please continue to pray for Archbishop Fred Hiltz as he gives leadership to our church in the coming days and thank God for his patience and faithful service to us.

Please be in touch with me at apcibishop@shaw.ca if you have questions or concerns.

Blessings,

+*Barbara*

Archbishop Fred Hiltz's Statement to the church to be read this Sunday in each parish.

“Forbearing one another in love”

Archbishop Fred Hiltz, Primate

July 14, 2016

In light of decisions made at General Synod 2016 concerning the solemnizing of same-sex marriage, I pray our Church can and will take to heart Paul's plea with the Christians living in Ephesus, "I beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all lowliness and meekness, with patience, forbearing one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace". (Ephesians 4:1-3)

Going into General Synod, the delegates knew there would be pastoral implications whether the Resolution to amend the Marriage Canon passed or not. In order to pass it would, according to the Declaration of Principles (General Synod Handbook), require a two-thirds majority in each of the three orders voting: bishops, clergy, and laity.

On Monday, July 11 the result of the vote was that in the orders of bishops and laity there was the required two-thirds majority but not in the order of clergy. The vote was very close. The pastoral implication was that LGBTQ2S persons and those who have

accompanied them were disappointed and saddened. Many wept. The Synod sat in silence.

Because the vote was so very close, on Tuesday morning there was a request that the record of this vote be made public and Synod concurred. Analysis of the actual vote revealed that one clergy member's vote was not properly recorded. The Chancellor then advised the Synod that according to the numbers we in fact did have a two-thirds majority vote in the order of clergy, and I announced the resolution had therefore passed in all three orders. The pastoral implication was that a number of members of Synod were disappointed and saddened. Many wept. The Synod sat in silence.

We have been deeply divided over the solemnizing of same-sex marriage for a very long time. That has not changed. In the midst of this division, I need to take to heart Paul's counsel and I encourage our whole Church to do the same. "Lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called," writes St. Paul. He reminds us of our fellowship in Christ Jesus, through our baptism, and in the eucharist. He reminds us that we are "the Body of Christ, members one of another", and that we in fact need each other, and need to find ways to make room for one another.

In keeping with the theme of Synod, "You are my witnesses" the question with which we must now wrestle is this, "For what kind of pastoral and prophetic witness can and will we be known?"

I pray that witness not be marred by fraction and breaking of communion with one another, but rather that "forbearing of one another in love" that "eagerness to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace". More than ever we must make efforts not to turn away from one another but rather to one another, not to ignore but to recognize one another, not to walk apart but together. We need as a Church to work hard at maintaining our communion in Christ, for in his reconciling love is our hope and our life.

The Synod passed on first reading an amendment to the Marriage Canon to allow for same-sex marriage in our Church. Because it is a Canon about doctrine, consideration of the

matter is required in “two successive sessions of the General Synod”. So the matter will be before the General Synod in 2019. In the meantime, it is referred “for consideration to diocesan and provincial Synods”.

I call the Church to seize this opportunity. I commend the General Synod’s reaffirmation by resolution of the 2004 General Synod Statement on the integrity and sanctity of same-sex relationships, and its call for a much wider and deeper engagement with the report, “This Holy Estate”. I will ask the Council of General Synod (CoGS) to give immediate attention to the matter of translation, at least of the executive summary of the report and frequently asked questions. I will ask CoGS to consider what other resources might be helpful. I will be asking the House of Bishops at their fall meeting to consider how we encourage “further consideration” of the matter, and to show strong leadership in their dioceses in hosting events, dialogues, and studies.

In all these conversations I want to encourage much more engagement with people who identify as LGBTQ2S. We have spent a lot of time talking about them. I believe we need to take much more time to talk with them and to learn of their lived experience of covenanted love in relationships that are monogamous and life-long. I know that will require of all of us a good deal of courage and grace.

Finally, I ask that without ceasing, we pray for one another, mindful always of the counsel of Paul.

“I beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all lowliness and meekness, with patience, forbearing one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” (Ephesians 4: 1-3)



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