

## Discussion on changing Canon 21 of the Anglican Church of Canada

St. Mark's, Barriefield

13 June 2018

Notice had been given for four weeks prior to the evening's conversation, which took place in the parish hall.

Eight members of the parish were present, with another five having sent in their regrets for the meeting, but with those regrets their thoughts on the future direction of the church with regards to Christian Marriage.

The meeting began with prayer that we might heed the guidance of God the Holy Spirit, as we met to discuss and wrestle with what the Holy Spirit was saying to His Church.

We then received a brief back-ground to where the Anglican Church of Canada was at the moment: that the ACC had approved the changes at one General Synod, but were compelled to vote again in 2019 for the changes to be implemented, and that our own Diocese was calling on the parishes to offer their thoughts on the matter for our own Diocesan Synod in November 2018.

We then shared our thoughts on the issue.

The following is a brief synopsis of what was shared by members of the discussion:

- The Church is to be accepting of all and everyone. Too often it seems as though the Church ostracizes rather than welcomes people into its midst.
- The Church is not a place for same –sex marriage, particularly as the Church is not at all in agreement over this issue: there are other denominations which do not believe this to be right: If we in the ACC say it is, what are we saying to those other denominations?
- There is still much confusion and uncertainty over the issue: some choose to 'sit on the fence', in good faith, while always insisting that the Church be a place of welcoming and inclusion. Sadness and anger that the Church is being divided over this issue.
- Some do not know what the true answer to this issue is, but do believe that what was offered by the Deanery Gathering was far too biased on one side, and not respectful enough to varying opinions.
- We are a people under authority; God's authority, and His guidance. We need to be faithful to the teaching we have been given. Marriage is extremely important to God: marriage as it is given in Holy Scripture – between a man and a woman. Christian Marriage is, in the Bible, only between a man and a woman. How can we presume to suggest changes to that? Where do we have the authority to do that?
- We have friends who are finally able to be who they want to be: gay.
- Injunctions in the Bible were for the time, are not necessarily pertinent to our time now.
- Regardless of the decision, and of the outcome, our local church is a place of refuge, blessing and community. We will continue to attend even if we disagree with certain decisions, because our local church is a place of welcome and community: where we feel invited to disagree, and

yet be. At the same time, some felt that if the ACC does not move forward with these changes to the Marriage Canon then they felt the ACC to be not inclusive enough, and they will struggle to find the relevance of the ACC in their lives.

- The meeting was summed up in recognizing that St. Mark's, like the Anglican Church of Canada as a whole, was not at all of one mind on this issue. Some were passionate for changing our marriage practices: others equally passionate about keeping them as they are. We accepted that we would not reach consensus, or agreement, but that we would, despite that, strive with all our hearts to ensure that St. Mark's is a place of welcome and blessing – to people of all persuasions.

- The conversation and the evening ended along those lines, with a strong affirmation by most present that this parish is a place of welcome, and inclusion, and that we were determined that it remain so.

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The evening ended in prayer.