



DIOCESE OF ONTARIO

The Anglican Church of Canada

Canon 21

A response to General Synod in the form of a Memorial Resolution

Engaging discussion, within the Diocese of Ontario, on *This Holy Estate* gave consideration to resolution A051-R2, as passed on first reading at General Synod 2016, and which will be placed before General Synod 2019 for second reading.

Challenging us was how to balance the requirements placed upon the Diocese in two areas. **First**, from a governance perspective, calling for the ‘consideration’ of Resolution A051 following the first reading and **second** to respond to the resolution of General Synod calling for *This Holy Estate* to be considered at all levels of the Church.

A **Consultation Steering Committee** was formed by Bishop Michael Oulton in September 2017. Members of this Steering Committee included: Rev. Dr. William Morrow, Rev. Lisa Chisholm-Smith, Mr. Andrew Innes, Rev. John VanStone, Mrs. Anne Patterson, Mrs. Haroldine Neil-Burchert, Rev. Canon Dr. Barbara Robinson, The Very Rev. Don Davidson and Archdeacon Wayne Varley as Staff Support.

Our mandate: To focus on the referral from General Synod of Resolution A051-R2 amending Canon 21 (Marriage Canon). According to the Declaration of Principles of General Synod, canonical amendments:
Shall require to be passed by a two-thirds majority in each Order voting at two successive sessions of the General Synod, the Canons and alterations proposed having been referred for consideration to diocesan and provincial synods, following the first approval of the General Synod.

The work of the Steering Committee from September 2017 to the meeting of Diocesan Synod November 1-3, 2018 was directed toward facilitating the consideration of A051. The Report of the Commission on the Marriage Canon *This Holy Estate* and the study guide accompanying it was the focal point of engaging discussion and consultation within the Diocese. To accomplish this the committee sought to encourage as broad an engagement as possible with the report throughout this time by encouraging forums at the deanery, clericus, parish and individual levels. Other groups and organizations, both formal and informal, also were encouraged and engaged in discussions. All of these reports and submissions can be found at <http://ontario.anglican.ca/wp/canon-21-steering-committee/>

The Diocese of Ontario Synod devoted the morning of November 2nd to hear three presentations from: Reverend Dr. Christopher Brittain focussing on the Anglican Communion; Dr. Sylvia Keesmaat presenting the biblical rationale in favour of changing the Marriage Canon to accommodate same-sex relationships; and Reverend Dr. Glen Taylor presenting the biblical rationale opposing a change to the Marriage Canon.

Questions and comments from delegates on the presentations were received in written form until noon and were responded to by the appropriate presenter after reconvening for the afternoon session.

We then broke into small **breakout groups** to respond to two questions:

- 1. What do you have personally invested in the outcome of the vote?**
- 2. Regardless of the outcome, what concrete actions can we take so that the Diocese of Ontario models walking together with different perspectives on this issue after GS2019?**

A **non-binding straw poll** was taken to determine where our diocese might stand on the proposed change to the Marriage Canon.

General Synod 2016 passed Resolution A054 on first reading declaring that Canon 21 (on Marriage in the Church) applies to all persons who are duly qualified by civil law to enter into marriage.

Regarding this proposed change to the Marriage Canon,

I am,

In Agreement: _____ **107** _____

In Disagreement: _____ **43** _____

Undecided: _____ **13** _____

The afternoon session of Synod concluded with the passing of the following **resolution**:

Be it resolved that the Synod of the Diocese of Ontario, meeting November 1 to 3, 2018, memorialize the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada to receive all of the material prepared by members of the Diocese in respect of the proposed changes to Canon 21 and to fulfill the request of Resolution A054 of the General Synod 2016 in preparation for General Synod 2019 second reading.

Moved by: Anne Patterson

Seconded by: Dean Don Davidson

CARRIED

Respectfully submitted,