



Diocese of Eastern Newfoundland and Labrador

The Anglican Church of Canada

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My Dear People,

As most of you know by now the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada met this past week in Toronto. The singular topic for consideration at that gathering of our church leadership was Marriage Equality within the church – the right of same-sex couples to be married in the same way that opposite-sex couples are able to be married. As you may also know, the vote has now met the two-thirds majority required in the Houses of Laity, Clergy and Bishops. The same motion will be voted upon again at General Synod in 2019 and if it is passed a second time will become effective at a date following that synod. Much has been written and even more has been spoken about this outcome. I refer you to the letter by our Primate released on July 14 for more information and pastoral direction

I understand the great range of opinion and emotion around this matter and I know that our own diocese is not of a single mind. It is important for everyone to know that there will be no change in the Diocese of Eastern Newfoundland and Labrador until a final decision is made at the 2019 General Synod. We will also hold our own Diocesan Synod in 2018 where we will discuss the implications for the Anglican Church in Newfoundland and Labrador. It is also important for you to know that the motion contains a provision which means that no member of the clergy will be compelled to proceed with this change. Only clergy and parishes that are affirming of this measure will be authorized to proceed.

I ask the members of the Diocese of Eastern Newfoundland and Labrador to show maximum generosity of spirit one to another at this time. Let us make room in this great church of ours for all who want to belong to our family. I commend to your use our own study guide, *Easter(n) Reflections*, and also the Report of the Commission on the Marriage Canon, *This Holy Estate*.

I call our church to a time of respectful conversation and prayer over the next three years.

Lord Jesus Christ, you said to your apostles, "Peace I give to you; my own peace I leave with you." Regard not our sins, but the faith of your Church, and give to us the peace and unity of that heavenly city, where with the Father and the Holy Spirit you live and reign, now and forever.

With my every blessing,

+Geoffrey, *Eastern Newfoundland and Labrador*