

## The Anglican Communion & Marriage Equality

Once every decade bishops from all over the world gather for a special conference with the purpose of helping to reestablish the Anglican Communion identity as one unified body. Even though disagreement exists within the community, the Anglican Communion remains bonded by a commitment to the way of the cross, a love of God and neighbor, a commitment to common prayer, and a progressive approach to theology and ecclesiology. Recently, serious controversy surfaced during the Lambeth Conference currently occurring in Canterbury, England.

A week prior to the conference, bishops received a new document entitled *The Lambeth Calls*. The document contained several proposed resolutions, although not specifically identified as amendments. Passing these resolutions required bishops to vote at the conference. Initially, the only two options for voting stated: "This Call speaks for me. I add my voice to it and commit myself to take the action I can to implement it," or "This Call requires further discernment. I commit my voice to the ongoing process." Notably, one of the added calls in the last-minute document, called for a reaffirmation of the controversial 1998 Lambeth statement that denied marriage to same-sex couples. Many bishops expressed tremendous concern with what seemed to shift the conference, originally advertised to focus on uniting issues, to voting on controversial issues.

More concerning, the original proposed responses failed to provide an option for bishops to express clear support for same-sex marriage. Several bishops released statements strongly disagreeing with *The Lambeth Calls*, which they believed would only cause further division within the Anglican Communion. Consequently, conference organizers, including Archbishop Welby, decided to adjust the original proposal. Several bishops, including Bishop Brown, affirmed the changes. Many people felt an intense sigh of relief that the organizers of the conference found common ground by adjusting the call statement in question and also supplying a different way for bishops to respond.

Striving to maintain unity and finding common ground in a community with disagreement on both trivial matters and areas of high importance remains a challenge. Existing in a community with those we disagree requires a firm commitment. Although originally not a supporter of same-sex marriage, I now fully support marriage equality and the LGBTQIA+ community. I am very grateful for the patience of those who disagreed with my initial position but continued our relationship, staying in open conversation. After carefully studying the scriptures and wrestling with my position, I came to my current affirming stance. Much information exists on what the scriptures actually say on the matter of marriage in the original languages some of which may come as a surprise. If anyone has further questions or would like to hear about my own journey on the issue, I would welcome the opportunity for conversation. The bishops of the Worldwide Anglican Communion continue their work on a global scale. We continue our own work here at Saint Barnabas so that we might love God, love our neighbors as ourselves, and make a difference in this world.

Faithfully,  
Fr. Kenn+

### Current Resolution

*Many Provinces continue to affirm that same gender marriage is not permissible. Lambeth Resolution I.10 (1998) states that the 'legitimizing or blessing of same sex unions' cannot be advised. Other Provinces have blessed and welcomed same sex union/marriage after careful theological reflection and a process of reception. As Bishops we remain committed to listening and walking together to the maximum possible degree, despite our deep disagreement on these issues.*

## **Original Resolution**

*“It is the mind of the Anglican Communion as a whole that same gender marriage is not permissible. Lambeth Resolution I.10 (1998) states that the ‘legitimizing or blessing of same sex unions’ cannot be advised. It is the mind of the Communion to uphold ‘faithfulness in marriage between a man and a woman in lifelong union’*

Additionally, a third voting option has been added; *‘This Call does not speak for me. I do not add my voice to this Call.’”*