

The Territory of the People Anglican Church

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Pastoral Letter

July 18, 2019

Dear Friends in Christ:

You will be aware 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 it was a difficult, tension filled and yet surprisingly wonderful week.

For those hearing news of General Synod for the first time: on Friday evening, July 12, after a long day of deep, respectful listening, the motions to change the Marriage Canon of our church came before the assembly and did not pass the supermajority necessary in the House of Bishops. We prayed hard throughout the Synod for the leading of the Holy Spirit, and 75% of the Synod voted in favour of changing the marriage canon. Earlier in the day we overwhelmingly approved a [“Word to the Church”](#) which contains five affirmations we agreed would guide us in our conversation. I believe the Holy Spirit was at work within our General Synod and we can look with hope to what was affirmed, and celebrate a new day has dawned within the life of our beloved Anglican church.

I join many in the House of Bishops who acknowledge the deep pain and anguish inflicted across our Territory and the whole church, as a result of the failure to pass the changes to the marriage canon, as reflected in the [House of Bishops’ statement](#) on July 15, 2019. Although the bishops are not of one mind, “we see your tears, we hear your cries, and we weep with you. We have caused deep hurt. We are profoundly sorry.”

My prayer is that the Territory will live into the vision of our new name given to us by our Pastoral Elders Jimmy Toodlican and Amy Charlie. “The Territory of the People, a name that will show that we are welcoming and inclusive of all people”. May all people be welcomed in our churches and may they always find us a loving and caring people. And may we live into the old Celtic Christian tradition, *we don’t have to agree on anything to be kind to one another*. I pray we can all speak with kindness as we share with one another, as we indeed have a variety of opinions within our Territory.

For the past three years we have offered all the sacraments to all people who seek God's love through our Territory churches. The clergy were required to ask my permission to solemnize the marriage of same gender couples. I have offered my blessings on these requests as part of our most generous pastoral response to those who wish to be married within our parish churches. I will be communicating to the clergy my decision to remove this condition and ask that they follow the conditions as set out in the Marriage Canon for **all couples** seeking the sacrament of marriage within the Territory.

It is so easy for us to focus on only this one item before General Synod but in fact there was so much good news I would like to share with you.

- We elected our first woman primate, [The Rt. Rev Linda Nicolls](#), and I hope we will soon have a visit from her here in the Territory. We will be blessed to have her leadership within our Anglican Church.
- We made provision for changes to the Sacred Circle, ACIP (Anglican Council of Indigenous Peoples) giving them more autonomy, and affirmed the leadership of the National Indigenous Bishop as a Metropolitan, with responsibilities for a new expression of the Indigenous Church within the Anglican Church.
- We delighted in Archbishop Mark McDonald receiving a new pastoral staff as a symbol of his jurisdiction within our church.
- We were moved at the Primate's apology for spiritual harm we have caused Indigenous peoples, ([video link](#)), ([digital link](#)), and were blessed to be present at the [heart-felt acceptance](#) of the Elders at General Synod.
- We are blessed to have Dale Drozda, our youth delegate, elected to the Council of General Synod and she will join with our new Prolocutor, The Rev Dr. Karen Egan (Montreal) and new Deputy Prolocutor, Judith Moses (ACIP) in giving leadership to our church.

I am grateful to our delegates for the hard work they engaged in, and I know they have so much more to say. Diane Collins, Marlena Anderson, Ken Gray, Jo Ann Hinter and Dale Drozda need time to rest before sharing more news and reports with the Territory on their experience of General Synod.

I will be available to hear any concerns and answer any questions you may have and will happy to have you be in touch with me directly.

Blessings,

+Barbara

Word to the Church – Resolution 101: <https://gs2019.anglican.ca/cc/resolutions/a101/https://gs2019.anglican.ca/wp-content/uploads/A-Word-to-the-Church-Considering-the-proposed-amendment-of-Marriage-Canon-XXI.pdf>

House of Bishop's Statement <https://gs2019.anglican.ca/atsynod/a-message-from-hob/>

Linda Nicholls' Nomination Package: <https://gs2019.anglican.ca/primate/linda-nicholls/>

Primate's Apology for spiritual harm

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BHgWa2ytipQ&feature=youtu.be>

<https://gs2019.anglican.ca/atsynod/videos-highlights/>

Statement of apology acceptance by the Indigenous Elders

<https://gs2019.anglican.ca/atsynod/a-message-from-the-elders/>