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To be read in all parishes in the Diocese of British Columbia on July 21, 2019

Dear friends,

I write to you as we, as a church national, come through General Synod 2019. Thank you for your prayers—for me and the other delegates. We certainly felt the prayers coming from our diocese and I can assure you that as members of General Synod, our delegates did our diocese proud.

We're excited about the future of our church nationally and the election of Linda Nicholls as primate and I believe that Synod has made a wise decision in this choice for us as part of the worldwide Anglican Communion. Please pray for Canon Ian Alexander as he takes up his role on the Council of General Synod and the Communications Committee.

I am sure that you've heard of the decisions that have been made as part of our journey of reconciliation and decolonization. We heard a heartfelt apology by Primate Fred Hiltz for the church's cultural and spiritual arrogance and for the harm we inflicted to the Indigenous peoples. As a diocese, it was encouraging to see Synod deciding to support the Anglican Council of Indigenous People and their vision of a self-determining Indigenous church. At this time, we are not exactly sure of what that means for us on these islands and inlets, but we look forward to conversation with the now Archbishop Mark MacDonald, with those from our diocese who witnessed this decision, Yvon Gesinghaus, Marvin Underwood, Fern Perkins and Canon Victor Flett, and with Indigenous representatives from the communities in the diocese.

It was deeply emotional when the amendment to the marriage canon did not pass at General Synod, especially because we had worked long and hard to allow every voice to be heard in the preparation of that resolution. We experienced much pain and grief. Please resist the temptation to blame the Indigenous church for things not going the way we had hoped or expected; this is unhelpful and unjust. The result was indicative of a broken system in need of reform.

We were encouraged by the statement from the house of bishops which allows for "local option." I have included their statement below. It supports this diocese's journey over the last three years and allows for other dioceses to make similar decisions. Please also find below the statement from my charge at our diocesan synod in 2018. We will continue on the journey of reconciliation; we will learn to live well together in our diversity.

Please find below the affirmations that come from [A Word to the Church](#) which was passed overwhelmingly by Synod.

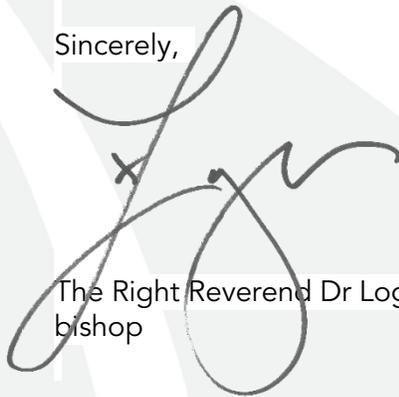
There were many other historic and important decisions made at this General Synod, and it is my hope that you will learn about these from our delegates and our national church website.

Although the gathering of General Synod is now over, please support and pray for all those who are charged with executing the actions arriving out of this gathering.

Over the past number of years, we have journeyed with First Nations peoples and learned much about reconciliation. We discovered that it is not something added on to our Christian life, but central to who we are as disciples of Jesus. Reconciliation must be for us a way of relating to every situation and every person. I am inviting us as a diocese to continue to acknowledge that we have differences in understanding around marriage. Being a reconciliation people means we live together, respecting these differences, caring for and supporting one another even when we don't agree. The Holy Spirit does not bring uniformity but offers us unity in our diversity. As we move forward, may we allow the Spirit to draw us together, honouring each other as divinely beloved along the way.

Over General Synod, I have seen our delegates live this in many and various ways. We can be proud they came as peacemakers and our witness to the church was one of living well together.

Sincerely,



The Right Reverend Dr Logan McMenemy
bishop

Diocesan Synod 2018 Bishop's Charge Excerpt

We have learned that conflict need not disable us but can be used as a positive influence to transform us as individuals and as community. I have supported those congregations and clergy that adhere to the traditional understanding of marriage. I will continue to do that, no matter what decision comes out of the second reading of the marriage canon. I have also supported, and will continue to support, those clergy and congregations that support the changes to the marriage canon—recognizing that such forms of marriage continue to involve the same preparation and requirements as all other marriages within the church.

It seems to me that this is the most Anglican way forward. I am advised that this option does not contravene the marriage canon, in either its present or revised forms. It can be a witness to the church and reflects the very best of what it means to be an Anglican and a Christian. We will no longer debate sexual orientation and gender difference in this diocese. In my experience, debate has not moved folk from one position to another on this subject. Debate has only hurt people. We live together with differences; this is the work of reconciliation. It is my hope that we as a diocese can be a witness to the church nationally, showing how we can live and walk together, in the understanding that unity is not the same as uniformity.

A Message from the House of Bishops of the Anglican Church of Canada to General Synod 2019

We, members of the House of Bishops of the Anglican Church of Canada, see the pain and anguish inflicted on LGBTQ2S+ people, on members of the General Synod, across the Church, and in the world, as a result of the work and the vote on the matter of Canon 21, concerning marriage. We see your tears, we hear your cries, and we weep with you. We have caused deep hurt. We are profoundly sorry.

Although the bishops are not of one mind, we look with hope to the "[Word to the Church](#)" and its affirmations which General Synod 2019 overwhelmingly approved on Friday, July 12.

We are walking together in a way which leaves room for individual dioceses and jurisdictions of our church to proceed with same-sex marriage according to their contexts and convictions, sometimes described as "local option."

Together, we affirm the inherent right of Indigenous peoples and communities to spiritual self-determination in their discernment and decisions in all matters.

Although we as bishops are not able to agree, in the name of Jesus Christ, we commit to conduct ourselves "with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:2-3).

From the document "A Word to the Church"
<https://gs2019.anglican.ca/cc/resolutions/a101/>

1. Whatever the action of the church at this General Synod, we affirm the right of Indigenous persons and communities to spiritual self-determination in their discernment and decisions regarding same-sex marriage.
2. We affirm that while there are different understandings of the current marriage canon, those bishops and synods who have authorized liturgies for the celebration and blessing of a marriage between two people of the same sex understand that the existing canon does not prohibit same-sex marriage.
3. We acknowledge the ongoing reality that there is a diversity of understandings and teachings about marriage in the Anglican Church of Canada, and we affirm the prayerful integrity with which those understandings and teachings are held.
4. We affirm our commitment to presume good faith among those who hold diverse understandings and teachings, and hold dear their continued presence in this church.
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