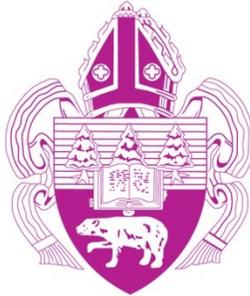


The Right Reverend Larry Robertson D.D.
Bishop of Yukon
Box 31136
Whitehorse, Yukon Y1A 5P7
Telephone: [867] 667-7746
Fax: [867] 667-6125
Email: synodoffice@klondiker.com



DIocese of Yukon ✚
ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA

July 2016

To the Members of the Diocese of Yukon:

Dear Sisters and Brothers:

Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, who's love for the world, changed the world and is still changing the world today. During this time of summer, I pray that as you get revitalize in mind and body you are also taking time to revitalize the soul.

I felt that I needed to write to you as many of you will be aware that while at General Synod I walked out of the meetings while they were discussing the possible change in the Marriage Canon. I have read several reasons as to why I did this. I only wish the authors had spoken to me first to get their facts straight. Because of this I want to set the record straight and to say some things about General Synod itself.

First, I want to say that I am proud of the delegates who came, Ms. Katina Vatcher, Mrs. Betty Davidson, Rev. Dorothy Odian, and the Ven. Sarah Usher. They conducted themselves with honour and love and you were very well represented as a Diocese.

Second, I want to say that there were many good things that happened that we can be proud as Anglicans to be part of. Our ongoing relationships with the Indigenous people's. We continue to move forward in a spirit of reconciliation with the Indigenous people both inside and outside the Church. The work of PWRDF continues with their outreach social work to the world around us helping where the need is great in the spirit of love and generosity. Our reaching out to refugees with love, financial support and friendship is an example to others. Indeed, there were many good things that happened at General Synod.

Unfortunately, it was not the good things that made the press. They seldom do. As you are aware in General Synod 2013 there was a first reading of a motion passed that instructed The Council of General Synod to prepare a motion for General Synod 2016 that would allow for Same Sex Marriages in the same way of heterosexual Marriage. My main concern with the motion was that it was directive. It assumed that same sex marriage was right and good and it directed the Council to find a way to make it possible. After that there were three years of discussion but always with the intention of bringing a motion favouring same sex marriage. This caused considerable anxiety among many in the church.

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Then during the General Synod when this was discussed instead of a reasonable discussion there was anger, rudeness, a lack of common courtesy and a visible lack of love towards each other. I do not care what the issue is about, Christians should not treat one another or anyone like that. After a while it bothered my soul so much that I left the discussion after letting the Primate know, and went to the Chapel to cry and pray.

Regardless of our position on the motion or our thoughts on how the process was conducted, it passed. What does this mean? This was only the first reading. It takes two readings in two successive General Synods to make it part of our Church. Until then anyone who performs a same sex marriage is breaking the tradition, and custom of our Church. The next opportunity for a second reading will be at General Synod 2019.

In the short term there is no change in our church. In the long term, even if it passes, it will depend on the wishes of our Diocesan Synod and Bishop. Over the next three years there will be an opportunity for those who wish to discuss this within our Diocese. This however, is an extremely sensitive subject. Hurt, pain and emotion are easily brought forward. When this happens, time is needed for healing and reconciliation. Because of this reason I am requesting that this not be a subject preached or discussed in the main worship service. If there is a desire in a parish to discuss this issue I request that it happens at an extra meeting and that a chaplain is appointed for those who may need one. I would also request an invitation be given to me to participate in the meeting. I will not have the damage done again to individuals, parishes and this Diocese over this subject as has happened in the past.

In the meantime, our policies and canons stand as is and we will follow them until this Diocese changes them. I should not need to stress this but I will. Changes in this Diocese will only be made by the consent of this Diocese and with the consent of the Diocesan Bishop.

In the meantime, and at all times, we have people to serve, a Gospel to proclaim and a Saviour to follow. We have a God who loves, Jesus who died for us and the Holy Spirit who seeks to guide us and shape us into the image of our Saviour. Let us together go and share his love to the people we serve.

Blessings in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Larry Robertson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a small cross-like mark above the first letter.

The Rt. Rev. Larry Robertson, DD
Bishop of Yukon