

Executive Summary of the Diocese of Huron Process for Considering the Motion to Change the Marriage Canon

June 2017

- A resolution to change the Marriage Canon so that it will apply to “all persons who are duly qualified by civil law to enter into marriage” was passed by the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada in 2016 (see appendix).
- The change is not yet approved. In order for it to be approved, it must be passed again by the next General Synod (in 2019). If approved in 2019, it will take effect on 1 January 2020.
- General Synod 2016 referred the resolution to all diocesan and provincial synods for consideration.
- The Bishop of Huron has appointed a task force (the Ven. Greg Jenkins, Canon Marilyn Malton, and the Rev'd Dr. Stephen McClatchie) to provide advice and assistance to the diocese in considering the proposed change to the Marriage Canon.
- A workshop was held at the Diocese of Huron Synod in May 2017 at which break-out groups shared their initial thoughts about the proposed change.
- A page on the diocesan website has been created with the resources from Synod. It will be updated as new resources become available. See: <http://diohuron.org/resources/> [click on “Marriage Canon Task Force”]
- The next step in the process is for the proposed changes to be discussed in each Deanery during Fall 2017. Based on the feedback from these gatherings, there will be a report at the Diocese of Huron Synod in May 2018.
- There will not be a vote on these proposed changes by the Diocese.
- In May 2017, the Bishop of Huron issued Pastoral Letters to the Diocese and to Diocesan Clergy indicating that, until the proposed change to the Marriage Canon is considered again by General Synod in 2019, nothing has changed in the Diocese of Huron with respect to the marriage of same-sex couples. Civilly married same-sex couples may have their marriages blessed in a church during a celebration of Holy Eucharist (as per existing diocesan policy) but marriage itself may neither be performed in the Church nor solemnized by a priest of the Diocese of Huron.
- If the proposed changes to the Marriage Canon are passed again by General Synod in 2019, the Bishop of Huron will decide whether or not to authorize clergy in the Diocese of Huron to solemnize a marriage between persons of the same sex.
- It is recognized that, if the proposed changes are passed and if the Bishop of Huron authorizes them for the Diocese of Huron, liturgical resources will be required (if such have not already been authorized by General Synod).

Appendix: The Resolution Passed by General Synod 2016

Resolution A051 (as amended and carried)

Be it resolved that this General Synod:

1. Declare that Canon XXI (On Marriage in the Church) applies to all persons who are duly qualified by civil law to enter into marriage.
2. Make the following consequential amendments to Canon XXI:
 - (a) in paragraph 2 of the Preface, delete the words “of the union of man and woman in”;
 - (b) in paragraph 4 of the Preface, substitute the words “the parties of the marriage” for the “husband and wife”;
 - (c) in section 16 a) of the Regulations, substitute “the parties to the marriage” for “a man and woman”;
 - (d) in section 17 b) of the Regulations, substitute “the parties of the marriage” for “husband and wife.”
3. Add the following to section 11 of the Regulations:
 - (e) A minister may only solemnize a marriage between persons of the same sex if authorized by the diocesan bishop.
4. Declare that this resolution shall come into effect on the first day of January after being passed by General Synod at Second Reading.

Prepared by:

The Marriage Canon Task Group (Greg Jenkins, Marilyn Malton, Stephen McClatchie)