



The  
Diocese of Huron

CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSED CHANGES  
TO THE MARRIAGE CANON

Report of the Marriage Canon Task Force

Submitted by

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&

The Marriage Canon Task Force

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October 2018

## Diocese of Huron Synod 2018

### Report of The Marriage Canon Task Force

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#### Web site:

<http://diohuron.org/resources/>

[click on “Diocesan” and then on “Marriage Canon Task Force”]

#### *Quotes from Deanery Participants:*

*We need to understand that we can walk together even if we don't agree.*

#### 1. The Diocese of Huron and the Marriage Canon

In 2016, General Synod passed a resolution to change the Marriage Canon (Canon XXI, On Marriage in the Church) so it will apply to “all persons who are duly qualified by civil law to enter into marriage.” This resolution will only come into effect if passed by General Synod at a second reading (in 2019). Between the first (2016) and second (2019) reading, the resolution is to “be referred for consideration to diocesan and provincial synods.”

In response to the resolution of General Synod, the Bishop of Huron established a Marriage Canon Task Force (“MCTF”). The purpose of the MCTF is to develop and oversee a process for the Diocese of Huron to consider the proposed changes to the Marriage Canon, but not to vote on this matter. This process will allow the Diocese to send our considered opinions and concerns to General Synod. To this end, in consultation with our Bishop, the MCTF developed and distributed resources, facilitated

*If same sex marriage will be approved most probably I will stop any relationship with the Anglican Church.*

*If it doesn't pass, my pastoral work with all youth groups, and especially with LGBT youth in foster care, will become very difficult. It will be seen as the Church failing to honour their lives.*

*The Diocese of Huron has done 'due diligence'; voices have been heard. “Be Not Afraid”*

*Regardless of the outcome there is a need for ways to assist in reconciliation.*

the consideration process, and collected, collated, and reported comments, questions, and concerns to the Bishop.

The members of the MCTF are:

- The Ven. Greg Jenkins
- Canon Marilyn Malton
- The Revd. Dr. Stephen McClatchie

For the Diocese of Huron, the consideration process began at Synod 2017 when members participated in break-out groups to discuss the following questions:

1. How does the motion to change the Marriage Canon challenge you or encourage you?
2. What do you need clarified to help you prepare your synod report to the parish (regarding the Diocesan process to consider the motion to change the Marriage Canon)?
3. Given that we have been asked to have this conversation, what would be helpful at the Deanery level?

Written responses from individual members of Synod were also sought and encouraged.

Bishop Linda gave a presentation on the Marriage Canon and, following a summary of feedback from the break-out groups, responded to questions that were raised. Her presentation and a summary of Synod participants' feedback is available on the Diocesan web site (see page 1).

In addition, the MCTF prepared and circulated a background paper before Synod that provided an introduction to the task; traced the history of the question of same-sex blessings and marriages in Canada, in the Anglican Church of Canada, and in the Diocese of Huron; and briefly summarised the situation in selected other provinces of the Anglican Communion.

This is also available on the web site. Following Synod 2017, a summary

### *Quotes from Deanery Participants:*

*I want General Synod to hear that every church, every person, would be praying earnestly about this and that every voice would be heard and respected. And that Truth would prevail.*

*Continue to get together to share and to listen as colleagues, as Parishes from both sides. Provide opportunities for this ministry.*

*I will need a deepening of faith in order to be pastoral to my colleagues or parishioners who are 'opposed' to sacramental inclusion. I hope there will be a 'support' group for me if the vote is 'no'.*

*The roller-coaster experience of the last General Synod vote has taught us how difficult dealing with the outcome will be, whatever it is. I believe this process is 'Spirit-Led, and I very much want a vote 'in favour'. I also know that there will be strong emotions at the parish level, so the need for pastoral resources to deal with 'emotion' is clear. We must find ways to stay together regardless of the outcome.*

*We don't restrict gay members of the Church from any other 'sacramental' opportunities, so why 'this' one?*

of the theological and scriptural issues around the proposed changes was prepared and posted on the Diocesan website.

## 2. The Deanery Conversations

Responding to what we heard at Synod 2017, the MCTF designed a series of Deanery Conversations that took place in Fall 2017 and Winter 2018 in order to take the pulse of the Diocese on the proposed changes to the Marriage Canon, provide opportunities for conversation, and receive comments and questions. Each Deanery, via the Regional Deans, was provided with resources and asked to organize two opportunities for a facilitated discussion of the following questions to occur: The Lenni Lenape Algonkian Iroquoian Council (LAIC) and Youth Synod were also invited to host gatherings and provide written submissions.

1. What questions do you have about the proposed changes to the Marriage Canon?
2. (a) How will the outcome of the vote at General Synod 2019 affect you?; and (b) What resources will you need from the Diocese if the motion passes or if it does not pass?
3. Based on what you have heard from each other, what do you most want General Synod to hear from the Diocese of Huron about the proposed changes to the Marriage Canon?

The MCTF provided a video to be shown at each gathering in order to introduce the process and summarize some of the principal issues about the proposed changes. The video was also posted on the Diocesan website.

This report provides a distillation and summary of the comments received from each gathering and individual written submissions. Every response, question, and suggestion, arranged by the themes used below in

### *Quotes from Deanery Participants:*

*Everyone wants Christ's love to be reflected in our Church. I don't like seeing people hurt –right or wrong. Afraid it will not be the last vote.*

*I am gay and belong to a GSA (Gay-Straight Alliance) at my high school. Many of its members have experienced insults and discrimination by 'Christians' and have come to expect disappointment from 'any' church. It will be extremely difficult to support my friends if it doesn't pass.*

*If it passes I will be joyful for friends who have felt alienated from their church because of children or grandchildren, or sisters or brothers who have been excluded from the marriage sacrament.*

*I don't think I could stay in a Church that would sanction same sex marriage.*

*How do we live together with such deep differences?*

*It may have an effect on a rural community more than an urban one. It may put the church under attack more. A small number of dissenters for either decision can have a big impact on a small congregation.*

Appendix A, has been provided to the Bishop's Office. This information will form the basis of a presentation by the MCTF at Huron Synod 2018.

### *Participation at Deanery Conversations*

Deanery	# Gatherings	# Clergy	# Laity	Total
Brant-Oxford / Norfolk	1	10	2	12
Delaware	2	3	22	25
Kent	2	5	16	21
Essex	2	18	30	48
Huron/Perth	2	10	32	42
Lambton	1	6	60	66
London	2	14	51	65
Saugeens*				
Waterloo	2	12	26	38
TOTAL	14	78	239	317

\* The Saugeens gatherings, scheduled for November, were postponed to April owing to the unexpected death of The Revd. Chad Honneyman and the challenges of winter travel in the region.

## 3. What We Heard in the Deanery Conversations

### *Overview of Deanery Responses*

**There is significant fear and anxiety** expressed about the issue of changing the Marriage Canon in the Diocese of Huron and a strong desire for “clear communication,” sometimes even approaching a sense of “please tell us what to do.” Fear and anxiety about the unknown and discomfort with the uncertainty involved in this unfolding process appears to be shared among all participants.

- o Participants seem to be feeling ill-equipped for “fall out” after the 2019 vote; there is a desire for resources around conflict, reconciliation, and pastoral care.
- o There is a desire for “clear communication” before the 2019 vote: for example, statements, assurances, guidelines, tools, theological packages, Biblical packages/Bible studies, a simplified version of *This Holy Estate*, liturgies, paperwork, etc. in both print and web-based formats.
- o Many questions raised fall into the “**what if**” category, mostly centred on potential conflict:

### **Quotes from Deanery Participants:**

*If this becomes doctrine does this allow people who believe the Bible literally to still be comfortable in the church?*

*If changes pass, will clergy opposed to same-sex marriage be obliged to refer couples to other priests or offer a blessing? Will there be a referral roster and protocol whereby a priest who will not marry same gendered couples will refer to an Anglican priest who will?*

*Will the passing of the changes create another kind of contentious issue whereby a parish seeking a new Rector may reject a candidate solely based on her/his stance on presiding at a same-gendered marriage?*

*In the matter of ‘conscience’, what about clergy who strongly support same gender marriage, but serve in a diocese whose Bishop does not permit the same? How will a ‘patchwork’ Anglican Church of Canada function?*

*Why is so much time being spent on this issue when Bishops and Clergy ultimately, can, of their own volition, choose to continue to segregate the LGBT community. There is a need for ‘standardization’.*

- What happens if, whichever way the vote goes, the priest and congregation have an opposing view to that of the bishop?
- If the changes do pass what will actually happen with regard to the conscience clause? There is confusion, anxiety, and mistrust about the conscience clause.
- There are concerns about a “patchwork” approach from diocese to diocese; sometimes this was expressed as a desire for “standardization.”

There is considerable **confusion about church governance/polity:**

- Many participants seem not to understand how decisions are made in the Church. More education is needed around the respective roles and responsibilities of bishops, clergy, laity, Diocesan Synods, and General Synod in the Anglican Church of Canada.
- Given the confusion among participants about the process of changing the Marriage Canon and who is actually involved in making this decision, it is sometimes difficult to know which bodies are being referenced in comments from participants, e.g., “the task force,” “the committee,” “Synod.”

There is **significant mistrust of the Church and of the Bishop on this issue:**

- This mistrust is reflected in comments such as, “We are being manipulated”; “Does our input matter?”; “Decision has already been made”; “Some voices are not being heard,” Why bother if the bishops can decide?, etc.
- Also, the majority of participants seem to feel that they are unlikely to get the resources needed from the Diocese or that that they do not need any Diocesan resources.

### **Quotes from Deanery Participants:**

*What affect would this change have on relationships around the communion? Is this the right time?*

*Curious – what scripture change made it possible to get here. How can we support a church that goes against Sound Doctrine?*

*If Jesus’ teaching is about loving one another, why is it taking so long to change?*

*What, if any, diocesan resources will be ‘readily’ available, to enable caring for those who might feel hurt and/or angered by the outcome of the General Synod 2019 vote?*

*Will there still be room for conservatives in the church if this passes?*

*Is there protection for conscience of individual clergy and will this protection be guaranteed to continue?*

*I wasn’t aware there were resources –want Biblical passages for both sides. Want resources now –not after.*

*How can we be sure our opinions will be respected?*

There is a **tendency in the process to confuse having one's voice heard with getting the outcome one wants.**

- o It can be challenging to negotiate opportunities to voice opinions/desires and the collective discernment process of the church. The process itself was variously characterised as “too fast” or “too slow”.
- o Does having one's opinion respected mean having it included in the report from our Diocese? Influencing the outcome of the vote at General Synod? Having influence after the vote?

Some participants' understanding and use of Scripture sees a **conflict between “theology” and the certainty of what the Bible/God's law has to say** about same-sex marriage.

**There is a spectrum of responses to the possible effects of the 2019 vote.**

- o In response to the question about how the outcome will affect you, many participants did not think that the outcome would affect them personally, but they expressed an anticipated need for supports and resources especially in the area of pastoral care.
- o Understandably, responses focussed on emotions, depending on the outcome and one's position, of anticipated hurt/pain/unhappiness or happiness. Regardless of the outcome, there is a sense that there will be sadness, loss, hurt, and a need for pastoral care.
- o For some participants the outcome of the vote (either way) may result in them leaving the Anglican Church of Canada.

**What do participants want General Synod to know?**

- o That there is a need throughout the process for love, respect, and walking tougher (including in the Anglican Communion and ecumenically). The process should include prayer and time for discernment.
- o Many participants wonder if there is another way/path/option, e.g. could the church get out of the “marriage business” altogether.
- o Some participants feel strongly that the time is right for a yes vote; others feel strongly that a no vote will always be the right decision.
- o Some participants do not believe that all voices will be heard; others are grateful for the engagement process.

#### **4. What Will Happen at Huron Synod 2018**

The MCTF will engage Synod 2018 with the report and a dialogue with Bishop Linda. There will not be a vote at Synod on the proposed changes to the Marriage Canon.

In addition, Synod will elect its clergy and lay representatives to General Synod 2019. These representatives will attend General Synod 2019 in Vancouver and vote on the proposed changes to the Marriage Canon (as well as other matters).

## Appendix A

### Details of What We Heard in the Deanery Conversations:

There were similar ideas voiced at the various Deanery gatherings. The following tables present these clusters of ideas organized into themes.

### *Question 1: What questions do you have about the proposed changes to the Marriage Canon?*

<p><b>Theme:</b> Conscience Clause; conflicting views among various groups</p>
<p><b>Questions and Comments:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why does it even exist? Still in effect?</li> <li>• Desire for assurances, concern about possible legal and employment ramifications (for clergy and for parish selection committees)</li> <li>• Clergy referral questions and concerns: obligatory? Roster and protocol for same? Set formula for refusing?</li> <li>• Differences between bishop and clergy: any option for clergy who differ from bishop?</li> <li>• Differences between congregations and clergy</li> <li>• Can laity object to a marriage?</li> </ul>
<p><b>Theme:</b> Bishops being able to support or not support, opt-in or opt-out of, changes to the Marriage Canon</p>
<p><b>Questions and Comments:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If the bishop says no/is not supportive of changes: is it a question of obedience for clergy? any option for clergy? Disciplinary implications? Referral to other diocese? What happens when new bishop elected with different view?</li> <li>• If the bishop says yes/is supportive of changes: are we compelled to agree? If bishop says yes regardless of vote, how can s/he discipline a priest? What happens to a bishop who proceeds regardless of vote?</li> <li>• Why are we spending so much time on the issue when bishops (and priests) can decide to segregate LGBT community?</li> </ul>

**Theme:** Desire for “standardization”/concerns about a lack of “standardization”

**Questions and Comments:**

- In matter of conscience, what about clergy who strongly support same-sex marriage but serve in a diocese whose bishop does not permit the same? How will a 'patchwork' Anglican Church of Canada function?

**Theme:** Implications for local congregations

**Questions and Comments:**

- what happens if bishop/priest are willing but parish unwilling
- who decides? Pastoral implications at parish level? Creation of another contentious issue between priest and people?
- If local church disagrees with decision of General Synod, will they lose the church building?
- Room for “local option”?

**Theme:** Unity/division at various levels

**Questions and Comments:**

- How will the Church address these divisions?
- Concerns about Anglican Church of Canada, Anglican Communion, international relationships
- Concerns about congregational splits
- Concern about relations with other denominations, positive and negative

**Theme:** Marriage liturgy/blessing/preparation

**Questions and Comments:**

- What will the liturgy be like? Same as current marriage rite (concern about redefinition of a sacrament) or separate (conflicting views about the advisability of this)
- Will (the same) marriage preparation be required?

**Theme:** Role of scripture in decision-making

**Questions and Comments:**

- How do we decide without clear guidance from scripture? What did Jesus teach about marriage and same-sex? Do we have sufficient scriptural warrant to change? Has God's law changed in other areas also?

**Theme:** Understanding/teaching/doctrine about marriage

**Questions and Comments:**

- Will the Anglican definition of marriage differ from the rest of society? What of scriptural teaching that marriage is between a man and a woman? What is theological basis for/against change? Will integrity of church be undermined?
- Why not use a different term?

**Theme:** Process/decision-making process

**Questions and Comments:**

- What happens if the General Synod vote is no? Third-vote tie breaker? Time limit for debate?
- What contingency plans are there for amendments (e.g. to conscience clause) at General Synod?
- Are conservative Christians represented? Will Diocese of Huron allow conservatives to attend General Synod?
- Too fast/too slow
- On what basis has the bishop even allowed this discussion?
- If other dioceses/parishes not engaged in this process, how can we confident in 2019 decision?
- After the vote, hope that it is not left to individual parish vestry to pass motions
- If we say no will the question be brought again to weary us all

**Theme:** Why does it need to change?

**Questions and Comments:**

- Why now? What is the motivation?

**Theme:** Input – does it matter?

**Questions and Comments:**

- How can we be sure our opinions will be respected? How important is my opinion?  
Will both views in Huron be represented at General Synod?
- Will this discussion make a difference? Will it have weight?
- This is just another attempt to persuade me to your point of view; we are being manipulated.

**Theme:** Why is it taking so long?

**Questions and Comments:**

- Why wait until 2020 for implementation?

**Theme:** Pastoral concerns

**Questions and Comments:**

- Is there any recourse for couples who are denied?
- Will a same-sex couple have a “second class” marriage if they move to a diocese that does not approve?
- Need for diocesan resources regardless of outcome

**Theme:** Possibility of church getting out of “marriage business”

**Questions and Comments:**

- What would this look like? Should only provide “blessings” to the already civilly married.

**Theme:** Other

- Any implication for ability to be ordained?
- What about transgender and questioning individuals?

*Question 2 (a): How will the outcome of the vote at General Synod 2019 affect you?*

**Theme:** Hurt/pain/unhappiness if the vote is “no”

**Questions and Comments:**

- Disappointed and depressed; sad (personally and about hurt feelings caused); distressed; devastated; embarrassment (church making a wrong turn, hypocritical)
- How explain to LGBT friends, community, parishioners, many of whom expect disappointment from “any” church
- Church needs to lead by example: concern about pastoral implications
- Currently in discernment process for ordination and will rule it out if this does not pass
- I know that it will pass some day

**Theme:** Hurt/pain/unhappiness if the vote is “yes”

**Questions and Comments:**

- Disappointed and sad
- My heart is broken; this is so wrong

**Theme:** Hurt/pain/unhappiness if the vote goes either way

**Questions and Comments:**

- Sadness/loss over whoever is the “losing side” (people disenfranchised); lot of hurt; pain for all; distressing; need for healing
- How walk with both sides?
- Distracting

**Theme:** Happiness if vote is “yes”

**Questions and Comments:**

- Joy; pride; relief; full support of decision
- Positive personal implications: acceptance of friends/relatives; clergy able to marry friends/relatives; I can get married in church

**Theme:** Happiness if vote is “no”

**Questions and Comments:**

- OK, supportive; not overjoyed

**Theme:** Leave/stay & unity/disunity if vote is “yes”

- Will leave/stop any relationship with Anglican Church of Canada
- Have to assess whether to stay
- I think I could stay; I will probably come around to it but I will probably be dead; I will stay, but wonder what marriage is now
- Disruptive to parish life; disappointment in being out of sync with rest of Anglican world

**Theme:** Leave/stay & unity/disunity if vote is “no”

**Questions and Comments:**

- Devastated to the point of leaving the church
- Will stay
- Will prove the church is unaccepting

**Theme:** Leave/stay & unity/disunity if vote goes either way

**Questions and Comments:**

- Sad that this could tear the church apart
- Why is this the deal breaker?
- Is already having an effect: people are leaving
- How do we live together with such deep differences?
- Lots of explaining will be required
- Regardless, will work toward unity and not division
- Do I have a future in church as a parent of young children; is there a place for me?

**Theme:** View of Marriage if vote is “yes”

**Questions and Comments:**

- Will no longer see weddings as a sacrament or any different than a blessing
- Church needs to get out of marriage business

**Theme:** Impact, or not, on church/congregation

**Questions and Comments:**

- May have more impact in rural areas; will affect dynamic of church family
- Small number of dissenters for either decision can have big impact on small congregation
- Where is the voice of the congregation?

**Theme:** Impact on view of Diocese of Huron if vote is “yes”

**Questions and Comments:**

- Will lose faith in leadership and level of respect for bishops
- Will be difficult to support diocesan projects

**Theme:** Concerns about place for conservatives if vote is “yes”

**Questions and Comments:**

- Will there still be room for conservatives in the church? Is there room for difference?

**Theme:** Desire for Change

**Questions and Comments:**

- Want to celebrate all relationships; we need to catch up with the times

**Theme:** Views on LTBTQ2

**Questions and Comments:**

- Do I need to accept lifestyle? Can I love them as people and reject same-sex marriage?
- Sympathy for the community and wish that it could be accommodated in different fashion

**Theme:** Other, if vote is “no”

**Questions and Comments:**

- How long before it is raised again and pushed through?
- Will question spiritual integrity of church?
- What do “welcome,” “inclusivity,” and “non-judgemental” look like now?

**Theme:** Other, if vote is “yes”

- I refuse to believe it’s a done deal, I don’t agree with it; my faith is being tested; I worry about the future of the ACC
- The church and world is evolving; a yes seems obvious and progressive
- I am new to the church and this causes me great conflict but hearing others being supportive; a desire for a positive vote is very encouraging

**Theme:** Other, if vote is either way

**Questions and Comments:**

- Church can move on to other issues
- No matter what, the Spirit will determine the outcome
- What can we do if we do not agree?

Question 2 (b): *What resources will you need from the Diocese if the motion passes or if it does not pass?*

**Theme:** Healing/reconciliation/conflict management and resolution/counselling/pastoral care

**Questions and Comments:**

- Needed regardless of outcome; special needs for clergy (support)
- Time
- Continued conversations in this format (safe)
- Encouragement, not judgement
- Education/explanation
- Safe place/opportunity to deal with anger and sadness
- Any First Nations models that could help?

**Theme:** Clear communication

**Questions and Comments:**

- Needed before 2019: make web site resources easier to find; clarity: existing resources feel ambiguous; copies of *This Holy Estate* to parishes
- Timely announcement of result and clarity of next steps by bishop; consistency

**Theme:** Guidelines, including on conscience clause

**Questions and Comments:**

- Specific for clergy; general for laity
- Clear outline of expectations and implementation (or not)
- Written assurance by bishop about conscience clause
- Specific instructions for parish selection committees

**Theme:** Theological information

**Questions and Comments:**

- Scriptural and theological focus; not biological
- Biblical foundation for both sides; bible study tools
- Explanation of theological rationale, regardless of outcome

**Theme:** Prayer/Discernment

**Questions and Comments:**

- For clergy and laity
- Resources to assist with extra prayer, discerning the leading of the Spirit

**Theme:** Liturgies/Marriage Preparation

**Questions and Comments:**

- Liturgy needed before the change happens; clear liturgy with clear guidance
- Resources for marriage preparation
- Strong leadership and support, prayerful and mindful of the Gospel and not on finances

*Question 3. Based on what you have heard from each other, what do you most want General Synod to hear from the Diocese of Huron about the proposed changes to the Marriage Canon?*

**Theme:** Need for love/inclusivity/respect – *some overlap with need for reconciliation, walking together*

**Questions and Comments:**

- Loving disagreement; look at loving core values of church; love and kindness trumps all
- Need to follow Jesus and love everyone, including our enemies; are we Christian if we do not? Must practice what we preach.
- We're all God's children and everyone deserves to be happy
- Look to what we have in common rather than on our differences; respect all views/voices

**Theme:** Need for reconciliation/walking together – *some overlap with need for love/inclusivity/respect*

**Questions and Comments:**

- A plan needs to be in place before the vote
- Listen to one another; hear people's stories and pain
- Focus on fact that Christ came not to condemn but to save and apply to both sides
- We need to understand that we can walk together even if we do not agree

**Theme:** Is/will be division – *overlap with first two*

- Are we prepared? A big split is coming; we are going to lose people. How will we come back together?
- We are concerned about the union of the Anglican Communion
- Desire to avoid parallel Anglican bodies

**Theme:** Yes, move ahead

**Questions and Comments:**

- We want the change; very much in favour
- Have been talking a long time; get on with it
- I believe that a majority of people want it to go ahead
- We need to be on the side of the oppressed, not the oppressors; we want an inclusive church
- We are all one in Christ

**Theme:** No, do not move ahead

**Questions and Comments:**

- Please do not do this; do not change the Word of God; God will not be able to bless the church if this passes
- The church does not need to follow the way of the world
- If it passes, will there be a church to go to? This will damage our church
- Process should be steeped in prayer

**Theme:** Input – does it matter?

- Our input has no import
- Will both sides be given equal weight? Will there be justice for everyone's point of view
- Are the No voices being heard? Rural voices? Indigenous voices? Youth?

**Theme:** Process/timing

**Questions and Comments:**

- What happens if the General Synod vote is No?

**Theme:** Perception that awareness is low in parishes

**Questions and Comments:**

- Congregations don't know enough
- Need to raise awareness at parish level

**Theme:** Other

**Questions and Comments:**

- Are there lessons to be learned from the processes around the remarriage of divorced people and/or the ordination of women?

## Appendix B

Motion Passed by General Synod 2016

General Synod 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.

# Addendum to the Report of the Marriage Canon Task Force

## Report on the Discussions at the Diocese of Huron Synod 2018

### 1. What Happened at Huron Synod 2018

Following a year of deanery-level conversations, the Synod of the Diocese of Huron came together to review and discuss the Report of the Marriage Canon Task Force. After prayer and a brief presentation of the Report by the Task Force, the Bishop of Huron and the Primate of the Anglican Church engaged in a moderated question-and-answer session on issues derived from the Report: on what will happen if the vote is yes or no; on its implication for clergy and congregations; on the impact of the decision on our ecumenical and international relationships; and on living together, or not, after the decision.<sup>1</sup>

Synod members were then asked to provide written feedback on the Report (which had been distributed in the Synod Circular) and on the presentation and session with the Bishop and Archbishop that had just occurred. They were specifically asked to indicate whether or not their views were represented in the Report.

After recording their individual comments, members then moved into table discussions on practical next steps for the Diocese to take as well as on what additional resources might be needed. This information was also collected on the same form.

The feedback forms were collected and reviewed by the MCTF who presented a summary of them the next day (see below). Bishop Linda then responded to a number of points made and outlined the immediate next steps for the Diocese of Huron.

### 2. Feedback from Huron Synod 2018 Members

- A sizeable majority of members of Synod both in favour of and opposed to the change felt that their views were reflected in the Report of the Marriage Canon Task Force.
  - For every ten people who said that the report reflected their views, one did not and wished to see changes. In some cases, that was because there was a hope that the Report would have a clear conclusion or make firm recommendations, which was not its purpose.
  - Some felt that the views of those who attended the deanery gatherings were not proportionally representative of the views across the diocese or that some people did not feel that it was safe to attend.
- Synod members were encouraged by the prayerful and pastoral process used to develop and consider the Report as well as by its thoughtful, frank, and sensitive presentation.

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<sup>1</sup> Video excerpts of this session and discussion guides prepared by the MCTF for use in parishes are available on the Diocese of Huron web site at <http://diohuron.org/resources> [click on “Diocesan” and then on “Marriage Canon Task Force”].

- They were encouraged by the sense that both sides have had a voice in the discussion, that the bishop has truly been listening, that the tone of the conversation has shifted over the past year, and that the final decision will be honoured regardless of the outcome.
  - Some members expressed concern that minority views will not be represented by the Diocese’s delegates to General Synod (and, by extension, concern about the way that decisions are made in the Anglican Church).
  - Other members noted that the decision has a different kind of impact and potential pain for the LGBTQ community. To see it as a theological issue only can seem to justify hatred and bigotry.
  - Some members felt that the process did not engage enough with scripture, or theology, or social justice questions, or power analysis.
- There is a strong desire in Huron to continue to walk together regardless of the outcome, which we recognize will be painful and emotional either way.
    - There is a clear statement that courtesy and tolerance must go both ways.
    - There is a strong desire for the continued careful use of language so that no person or position is diminished or rejected (e.g., “moving forward” seems to suggest that the opposite is backwards).
    - The notion that two faithful theological streams of thought on marriage already exist in the Church and will continue to exist regardless of the outcome at General Synod 2019 seemed to resonate strongly with Synod delegates.
  - There was strong appreciation of and considerable compassion expressed for the Primate and for our Bishop as they guide the Church in its discernment on the issue.

### **3. Summary of the Diocese of Huron Synod’s Consideration of the Proposed Changes to the Marriage Canon**

The Diocese of Huron engaged in a year-long consideration process, at two consecutive synods, and at deanery gatherings open to all.

The process:

- confirmed that we are not of one mind about the proposed changes;
- identified a number of issues and concerns;
- hosted gatherings and provided resources to respond to concerns;
- resulted in a report the overwhelming majority of synod members felt reflected their views.