



BISHOP'S OFFICE

DIOCESE OF CALEDONIA

ANGLICAN SYNOD OFFICE: 201 - 4716 LAZELLE AVE.

TERRACE, BC V8G 1T2

Tel: 250-635-6016 Fax: 250-635-6026 E-mail: bishopdavid@telus.net

PASTORAL LETTER – GENERAL SYNOD 2019

To be read on Sunday, July 21st, 2019

Dear Brothers and Sisters of Caledonia,

The General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada convened in Vancouver, BC from July 11th to 16th. It was an experience filled with historical events, deep prayer, and inspiring music.

General Synod opened by making history in approving the representatives of the Anglican Council of Indigenous People (ACIP) as full members of General Synod. Previously, they were granted Observer status, so that they could speak but not vote. With this inclusive act completed, the General Synod then agreed that Sacred Circle and ACIP would be self-determining. Indigenous Anglicans can now change their governance, as they choose to, without a need for permission from General Synod thus creating a 5th Metropolitan ministry within the Anglican Church of Canada. Archbishop Mark MacDonald is now the National Indigenous Anglican Archbishop, and ACIP is continuing its work of self-determination.

Primate Fred Hiltz offered “An Apology for the Spiritual Harm” on behalf of the Anglican Church of Canada. This confession of past acts and attitudes calls the church into more profound repentance and works of reconciliation. The Indigenous Elders, who were present at General Synod, received the apology and offered their reflections. They reminded us that reconciliation and healing are processes and not single acts.

On Saturday, July 13th, history was made again with the election of Linda Nicholls as the first female Primate in Canada. Archbishop Nicholls’ installation took place at the conclusion of General Synod.

Many other good pieces of ministry took place at General Synod. A Prolocutor, Deputy-Prolocutor, and Council of General Synod were elected. Many others were elected to various committees of General Synod, including our own Dean, the Very Reverend Paul Williams to the Faith, Worship, and Ministry committee. The Pension Fund’s scope

expanded so that other non-profits could join ours. We strengthened our ecumenical and interfaith relations through a series of changes, including a replacement of the Prayer for the Conversion of the Jews in the BCP, and continuing relationships and partnerships with Muslims, Lutherans, and the United Church of Canada.

Overall this good work there was a pall. On Friday, July 12th, the General Synod's second vote to amend the Marriage Canon was defeated. In 2013, the General Synod was directed to legislate a change to the Marriage Canon. An amendment passed with controversy in 2016 but, it required a second vote to become law this year. There was much pain and anguish by the failure of this amendment. The National House of Bishops offered "A Message" as an apology for the deep hurt caused by this result.

Earlier that day, "A Word to the Church" was passed. This document outlined the history of the debate concerning same-sex marriage within the Anglican Church of Canada. It concluded with 5 Affirmations on:

1. Indigenous Spiritual Self-determination
2. Diverse Understandings of the Existing Canon
3. Diverse Understandings and Teachings
4. Our Commitment to Presume Good Faith
5. Our Commitment to Stand Together

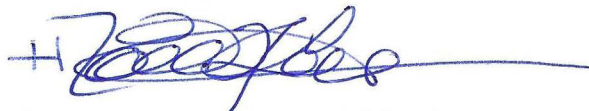
From these affirmations, the House of Bishops acknowledged that a pattern of "local option" has started with regard to marriage. They also noted, that it is appropriate in some dioceses and jurisdictions for this to continue. For some people, this has been a balm for the pain of an un-amended canon.

For Caledonia, this is an issue of much concern and hurt. While I do not doubt that it will be raised in the future, we will abide by the terms of the Marriage Canon. For those in the LGBTQ2S+ community and their allies, I apologize for the pain this causes you.

As I continue to reflect on my experience of General Synod, I can say that there is hope in the Anglican Church. I give God thanks and praise for our diversity, our faithfulness in prayer and discernment, and willingness to journey with those who differ from us.

As we live into the decisions made by General Synod, may we hold dear the resolutions for creating a Self-determining Indigenous Church and the Apology for Spiritual Harm. Let us continue to work with those who have responded to God's call to ministry and our many partners. May we uphold Primate Linda in prayer as she transitions into her new role and the people of Huron as they search for a new Bishop. As a church, we have agreed to continue to stand together. May God give us the courage and strength to do so.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "David TJ Lehmann", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

The Right Reverend David TJ Lehmann
Bishop of Caledonia

Links to related articles

Anglican Church of Canada
www.anglican.ca

General Synod 2019
<https://gs2019.anglican.ca>

An Apology for Spiritual Harm
<https://www.anglican.ca/news/an-apology-for-spiritual-harm/30024511/>

A Statement by the Indigenous Elders of General Synod 2019 on the Occasion of the
Primate's Apology for Spiritual Harm
<https://gs2019.anglican.ca/atsynod/a-message-from-the-elders/>

A Message from the House of Bishops
<https://gs2019.anglican.ca/atsynod/a-message-from-hob/>

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