



Diocese of Ontario

SPECIAL SYNOD

OCTOBER 26, 2019



**Diocese of Ontario
Special Synod Agenda
Saturday, October 26, 2019**

8:30 am	Registration Opens
9:30 am	Opening Worship Call to Order
	Registration Closes
	Motion Debate Vote
	Closing Eucharist

**Diocese of Ontario
Special Synod
October 26, 2019**

Motion which will be put before Synod for this Special Synod Meeting:

Be it resolved that the Special Synod of the Diocese of Ontario held on Saturday October 26, 2019 in Kingston, Ontario request the Bishop of Ontario to authorize the solemnization of the marriage of same sex couples in the Diocese of Ontario by those Clergy who choose to do so and with the support of the Church Wardens.

Draft of Proposed Pastoral Guidelines for Same-Sex Marriages Anglican Diocese of Ontario

Preamble

The following guidelines are presented in order to offer a generous pastoral response to those within committed same-sex relationships who are seeking marriage in the Church.

The document “This Holy Estate”, The Report of the Commission on the Marriage Canon of the Anglican Church of Canada, noted that a Christian theology of marriage: ***locates marriage within the Biblical narrative of a good creation fallen into sin but under redemptive grace in Jesus Christ which points toward the new creation. Marriage is thus an aspect of discipleship, which looks back at the covenanting Creator who gifted all things with life, and which looks ahead to the renewal of all things after the image of Jesus Christ.***

The 2019 meeting of General Synod chose not to amend Canon 21 on Marriage in the Church which would have made the language of the canon gender neutral, providing for the possibility of same sex marriage.

The 2019 General Synod adopted the following affirmations included in the document “A Word to the Church” submitted for consideration by the Council of General Synod.

Affirmation #1

Indigenous Spiritual Self-determination

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.

Affirmation #2

Diverse Understandings of the Existing Canon

We affirm that, while there are different understandings of the existing 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.

Affirmation #3

Diverse Understandings and Teachings

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.

Affirmation #4

Our Commitment to Presume Good Faith

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.

Affirmation #5

Our Commitment to Stand Together

We affirm our commitment to walk together and to preserve communion, one with another, in Christ, within this church, within our Anglican Communion, and with our ecumenical partners.

These affirmations opened up the possibility for individual dioceses within the Canadian Church to move to exercise a local option in requesting their bishop to authorize and make provision for same sex marriages. The Synod of the Diocese of Ontario meeting in Special Session approved the following resolution:

Be it resolved that the Special Synod of the Diocese of Ontario held on Saturday, October 26th, 2019 request the Bishop of Ontario to authorize the solemnization of the marriage of same sex couples in the Diocese of Ontario by those clergy who choose to do so and with the support of the Church Wardens.

There is diversity within the diocese among parishes that are opposed to same-sex relationships similar to the diversity found in parishes that are in favour. Recognition of this diversity affirms that parishes who hold similar viewpoints on this subject are not to be painted with one brush, and represent the rich breadth of life in parishes, with parishioners who are theologically astute and deeply committed Christians. The diversity of our diocesan community demonstrates that we are called to witness to the faith in a variety of ways, and though such witness is rooted in differing interpretations and understanding of Holy Scripture and the tradition, they are recognizably Anglican.

Theological Foundation

These guidelines attempt to strike a balance between the call for “gracious restraint” and the “pastoral generosity” required to meet the needs of same sex couples in our parishes. The call of the baptismal covenant on all Christians lies at the heart of these guidelines. We live within our covenant with God, embodied in the tenets of our faith outlined in the Creed and in the daily practice of our lives. We seek to grow in integrity and sanctity as we reflect the life of Christ in ourselves and in our relationships, through worship, reconciliation, proclamation, witness and action. The marriage of same-sex couples in the Church is framed in the light of their intention to grow into the fullness of Christ, individually and in their relationship, through faithful reflection of the gifts of the Spirit ([Galatians 5:22-23](#)).

Permission

The Diocesan Bishop is the Chief Liturgical Officer of the diocese and responsible for worship, pastoral care and oversight. The bishop will permit priests to preside in their parish at the marriage of a same-sex couple provided that the priest and churchwardens concur that this ministry will be offered.

The Diocesan Bishop will make that determination based on the following criteria:

1. The Parish will have demonstrated a process of prayer, education, consultation, discernment and consensus development that widely engages the parish community.
2. When the Priest and Churchwardens in consultation with the Parish Advisory Council feel that consensus has been reached, the Churchwardens will write a letter to the Diocesan Bishop outlining the process and decision reached and request permission be granted.
3. The Priest will separately communicate his/her support of such a decision and concurrence that the parish is ready to participate in accordance with these guidelines. If either the priest or churchwardens do not concur then the process ceases.
4. The Diocesan Bishop, at his discretion, may grant permission to the priest in the context of the parish or congregations within the parish in which s/he has pastoral responsibility.

5. Permission is granted for the clergy/parish relationship at that time. When a cleric leaves a designated parish or church, the designation will be revisited with the Diocesan Bishop upon the appointment of a new cleric.

These provisions parallel the provisions contained in the Bishop's Guidelines "When Persons in a Same Sex Relationship who have entered into Civil Marriage seek Reception and Recognition of their Marriage by the Church" issued in 2013. The continuing provision of the 2013 guidelines will provide a possible pastoral response in cases where couples have been civilly married. The 2013 guidelines will be amended to include reference to utilizing the order for the Blessing of a Civil Marriage in the Book of Occasional Services as the basis for the liturgy.

Same-Sex Marriages

This pastoral response is extended to same-sex couples in our midst who seek to live in mutual love and faithfulness in a stable, life-long, committed monogamous relationship.

1. The blessing or marriage of any same-sex couple is expected to be part of an existing pastoral relationship with a priest and local congregation.

2. At least one of the couple must be baptized.

3. All requirements of civil law must be followed, including proper legal documentation.

4. The marriage must be registered with the government and recorded in the proper parochial registers.

5. The same theological and moral values, pastoral care, liturgical and other parish policies and practices apply equally to both heterosexual and homosexual couples. This includes, but is not limited to, expectations and provisions for:

- Who may be married in the church
- Premarital preparation
- Requirements regarding remarriage after divorce
- Signing of the marriage licenses by the officiating minister
- Entry of the marriage in the parish register
- Parish policies with regard to use and availability of facilities.

6. The marriage liturgy will normally take place in the Church building. The permission of the Diocesan Bishop will be sought should the proposed marriage location be other than in the Church building.

7. Clergy whose conscience will not allow them to preside at these Celebrations may decline to do so and any decision to perform or not perform the liturgy authorized for a same sex marriage will not be used as the basis for any adverse personnel action or denial of appointment and employment.

Same-Sex Couples in Parishes not Designated

1. It is expected that no one will be excluded from receiving the eucharist or baptism in any parish on the basis of their sexual orientation or their views on the issue of same-sex blessings or marriage, whether in favour or opposed.

2. Same-sex couples in a parish not designated to perform marriages may approach the Bishop to seek an alternative.

3. A cleric who serves in a parish not designated but who wishes to assist in a same-sex marriage in a designated parish must consult with the diocesan bishop.

Authorized Liturgy

The Episcopal Church's trial liturgy "The Witnessing and Blessing of a Marriage", authorized for use by the 78th General Convention in 2015, will be the only liturgy authorized for the marriage of same-sex couples until the Ecclesiastical Province of Ontario authorizes a liturgy for use within the dioceses of the province.

The rites "Solemnization of Holy Matrimony" in the Book of Common Prayer (1962) and "The Celebration and Blessing of a Marriage" in the Book of Alternative Services (1985) are not permitted for use for the marriage of same-sex couples until explicitly authorized by General Synod.

Diocesan Diversity

The Diocese of Ontario honours and appreciates the diversity represented in its parishes and clergy. This diversity will continue to be reflected in the selection and appointment of clergy, and in the membership of committees and councils of the diocese. We recognize there are theological and cultural differences across our diocese and within parishes which are strained by both the limits and permission represented in authorizing same sex marriages.

- All congregations and individual Anglicans are called to exercise pastoral generosity one to another.
- Permission to participate in marriage of same sex couples will be extended only to those parishes and clergy who fulfill the requirements noted above and are granted permission by the diocesan bishop.
- No clergy nor parishes will be required to participate the marriage of same-sex couples.

While there is one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, there remains deep and painful differences about marriage in the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church. We continue to hold one another in tender regard as we gently and respectfully move forward as a Church.

(With acknowledgement of the policy regarding same sex marriages produced by the Diocese of Toronto which was relied upon as a source document for this policy)

Where is Synod being held:

This Special Synod will be held at the **Royal Canadian Legion Limestone Branch 560**
It is located at **734 Montreal Street, Kingston**, Ontario K7K 3J4.

Easily accessed from Highway 401 or from downtown Kingston. There is parking at the front and at the rear. The facility provides accessibility.



Registration

For those Lay Delegates whose Clergy have forwarded the signed Synod Lay Representative Sheet, you will only require **Photo ID** to register. Those Alternates already Certified also only require **Photo ID**. Those Alternates who have not been Certified (and the Registrar notified) will require a signed Certificate from their Incumbent/Priest In Charge in addition to **Photo ID**.

General Etiquette:

Please be considerate of those in attendance who may have allergies to cologne and perfume and please refrain from using scented products for the duration of Synod. You will be reminded that mobile devices should be put into silent mode during sessions of Synod.

Food:

There will be a light Continental Breakfast provided at 8:30 and coffee/tea throughout the Meeting

Parking:

Parking at the front and rear.

The Chair of Synod, Guests and Observers:

Synod is chaired by the Bishop. The Rules of Order used at Synod are set out in the Constitution. It can be found at <http://ontario.anglican.ca/wp/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Constitution-of-the-Diocese-of-Ontario-As-Approved-at-Synod-2018.pdf>

There will be no Observers or Visitors on the floor for this Synod. It will be Live Streamed

Quick Guide to Rules of Order

Speaking to A Motion

Before you go to the microphone:

- Please consider putting your thoughts on paper
- Please try to say something that hasn't already been said before.
- Continue listening to the debate. If your point has already been made by someone before you, you can bow out of the line and return to your seat.
- Consult with others about ideas and thoughts (but not too loudly, be considerate of the speaker).

When you go to the microphone:

- Wait to be acknowledged by the chair.
- Say your name and parish as well as any other relevant Diocesan involvement (eg Synod Council member, Committee member, etc).
- State if you are in support or against this motion.
- State your thoughts as clearly as possible, supporting your argument with fact or thought.
- Finish with a thank you and return to your seat.
- All remarks must be directed to the Chair. Remarks must be courteous in language and deportment - avoid all personalities, never allude to others by name or to motives
- You may speak for a maximum of 5 minutes and only once to each motion (other than the Mover and Seconder)

Rules of Order

- Before the motion is stated by the Chair (the question) members may suggest modification of the motion; the mover can modify as he or she pleases, or even withdraw the motion without consent of the seconder; if mover modifies, the seconder can withdraw the second
- Debate can not begin until the Chair has stated the motion or resolution and asked "are you ready for the question?" If no one rises, the chair calls for the vote
- **Point of Privilege:** Pertains to noise, personal comfort, etc. - may interrupt only if necessary!
- **Point of Inquiry:** Inquire as to the correct motion
- **Point of Information:** Generally, applies to information desired from the speaker: "I should like to ask the (speaker) a question."

- **Point of Order:** Infraction of the rules, or improper decorum in speaking. Must be raised immediately after the error is made
- **Amend:** Inserting or striking out words or paragraphs, or substituting whole paragraphs or resolutions
- **Withdraw/Modify Motion:** Applies only after question is stated; mover can accept an amendment without obtaining the floor
- **Lay on the Table/Table a Motion:** suspends further consideration/action on pending question till a future meeting
- **Close Debate:** Closes debate if successful

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- *Who attends Synod?*

Synod consists of the Diocesan Bishop, Clergy of the Diocese who are in fulltime or part time parish or designated ministries, elected Lay Delegates from each Vestry, the Chancellor, Vice Chancellor and the Officers of Synod. There will be no Observers or Guests on the floor at this Special Synod.

- I am a Lay Delegate elected by my vestry. What if I can't attend?

Members of Synod (Lay or Clerical) must be registered and present at Synod in order to participate or vote. If a Lay Delegate is unable to attend, then they can only be replaced by an Alternate, who must also be elected at a duly constituted Vestry Meeting (Annual or Special). Alternates must have the Certificate signed by the Incumbent/Priest In Charge in order to register. Alternates only attend if one of the other Lay Delegates are not at Synod. There are no provisions for Proxies.

- *What goes on at Synod?*

The Church (Diocese), like every institution (religious or social) needs to take stock of itself at moments in its life and history. This requires reflection on its present situation, with the purpose of helping to chart a course for the future of the Church, as it seeks to respond to the needs of the Christian community in accordance to the Church's teaching.

This Special Synod will have a single agenda item (the Motion) for the business of Synod. No other matters will be considered.

A regular Synod will occur as per usual in late October 2020.

- *How do I prepare for Synod?*

Delegates should be engaged and prepared to be full participants. At Synod 2018, Same Sex (Equal) Marriage was a significant part of the Agenda. The "Tool Box" and the Memorial set by this diocese to General Synod 2019 can be found:

<http://ontario.anglican.ca/wp/canon-21-steering-committee/>

- *If there a Registration Fee?*

There is no fee or cost for Clergy or Lay Delegates for this Special Synod

- *Who chairs Synod?*

Synod is chaired by the Bishop of the diocese (Rt Rev Michael Oulton)

- *There is a new Constitution and Canons. What will govern how this Synod is conducted?*

The new Constitution and Canons approved at Synod 2018 will govern this Synod

- *What is the procedure for voting at this Synod?*

The voting on the Motion will be done by ballots which will be distributed at Registration

- *What is the quorum for Synod?*

No less than one quarter of the registered Clerical Members of the Session of Synod must be present and entitled to sit and vote in Synod and not less than one quarter of the registered Lay Members of the Session of Synod must be present and entitled to sit and vote in Synod

- *What happens after Synod?*

Only a Diocesan Bishop may give permission for any liturgy (including Marriage) in the diocese. The Motion to be discussed and voted on is for Synod to make a request of the Bishop.

The Bishop will take a period of time to consider what he has heard at Synod and will then announce a decision. Based upon discussion at Synod, there may also be an update to the Guidelines if the decision is to move forward.