

North Caradoc –St. Andrew’s Session’s Statement on Diversity and Unity:

As we look back, we can see where we have come from in terms of understanding and accepting differences in human sexuality and orientation, and now look forward to where the Spirit leads us as followers of Christ.

From our Study & Conversation Gatherings and wider sharing within our two congregations, we have explored human sexuality and sexual orientation through scripture, tradition, reason and experience. We have shared our concerns & fears. We have prayed for discernment in this complex issue facing the PCC.

First, we ask, how do we interpret the world around us?

- The thread of love through all of scripture and all of life
- All human beings are created in God’s image
- The acceptance of people for who they are
- The role of Grace in our lives

Second, we look at, what is the basis for these statements?

It is apparent that from the beginning of God’s Holy Word until the end, God’s Love is the thread that connects all of God’s people from all times and places. This continues to be true for God’s children to this very day. It is also true that God made all human beings in God’s image and called it good. We uphold the 129th General Assembly’s affirmation that sexual orientation is “innate, established early in life and not a matter of choice. (A&P 2003, 543-544)” As we walk our journeys of faith we also find true that although we are created in God’s image sin and brokenness has become our shared story. In order to manage and maneuver the path to God’s love and goodness we look to God’s Son, who was born, lived, died and rose again for us, for direction.

Jesus, God’s Son, clearly teaches us to love people, not to hate them, not to make them feel hated, and not to stand idly by while people are mistreated. All scripture and teachings of the New Testament lead us to live lives of love, *the most excellent way* according to Paul. We are also shown that Jesus stands on the side of the least, the condemned, and the vulnerable. Currently we see our siblings who identify as LGBTQi as well as their families and friends on the side of the least and in need of our support.

As we choose to live like Christians we choose also to act like Jesus. Jesus accepted all people, all sinners, all brokenness, all God’s children. When we think of Jesus’ grace and compassion for all it is clear we need to change our priorities to focus on communicating love and the acceptance of all people because that is exactly what Jesus did.

So with our view of what the church is facing today we express that the Presbyterian Church in Canada first and foremost declare that homosexual practices and activities are not a sin therefore anyone who is gifted and called by God no matter their sexual orientation can serve as an ordained minister in the PCC. Furthermore, the PCC in recognizing that homosexuality is not a sin can be supportive of the marrying of same sex couples.

In conclusion, while we believe that it is important to move forward with changes in our full acceptance of LGBTQi members, we are concerned with maintaining unity within the PCC. We are unsure of how unity within the church can be maintained with such a divisive issue, but know that God can do all things. We pray for God’s will to be done and that God’s wisdom and compassion will continue to guide the PCC.

May our Triune God continual grant us wisdom and guidance as we carry on to reach out in love, peace & justice to all God’s children.