

**8 March 2017**

**Diocese of Argyll and The Isles Synod**

Discussion and vote on proposed amendment to Canon 31 (Marriage) – the change being one that would allow same-sex marriage to be opted into by the denomination and those clergy who wished to opt in. A conscience clause and other protections for those who cannot, in conscience, support this change was also presented.

The vote, on whether to support the amendment, was held by ballot. The results were:

House of Bishop(s):	1 in favour	
House of Clergy:	5 in favour	2 against
House of Laity:	12 in favour	7 against
Totals:	18 in favour	9 against
	(67%)	(33%)

This result, received in silence and prayer, will be returned to the General Synod Office to inform this June’s General Synod in Edinburgh.

The discussion before the vote was held in table groups, reported back by the table facilitators. Below is a summary of the feedback.

Table 1

We thought this document was a well-crafted gift to the Anglican Communion in its balance and its careful safeguarding.

We considered the "opt-in" stipulation to be a very positive way of working and dealing with people's differing attitudes.

We regarded it as a good way to hold the family of the church together without letting anyone down.

We noted that despite the fact that only one person on the table actually had a right to vote, we had worked hard together and wished our (unanimous) views could be registered in some way.

Table 2

3 out of 5 people on this table have personal family experience of this issue with homosexual relatives who wish to or have been married.

We must take note of the Bishop’s mantra: we are all equal in the sight of God.

We are also concerned by the divisiveness of this subject – the whole issue has gone on too long.

Table 3

Graciously worded. Vestries may differ from congregations, congregations should be aware of vestries responsibilities in this.

Opt in is good. Culturally different paths of our Diocese and some may still feel it this is difficult.

Table 4

No connection between Women in Ministry and same sex (wedding) marriage.

Concern overlength of time that the safeguards will stay in place. Felt that there is a large sector of the church would insist on this.

Scriptural point of view stated in 1929 prayer Book.

There are different interpretations of scripture.

Should you interpret scripture written 2000 years ago in the light of current culture or culture of 2000 years ago when circumcision was a major disagreement.

Vestries views are to be taken into account.

#### Table 5

Inadequate process – not taken into account properly issues in regard to reason, tradition & scripture.

Not enough discussion and taking account of views of the Diocese.

Canon only allows for possibility of something to happen within accordance of Laws of Scotland.

What will guide us? – time and space to allow Holy Spirit to guide us.

We need to trust the Holy Spirit.

Opening door and allowing possibility of change

Who are we to judge – created equal. Not impose views on others.

Explore other options than marriage – the greatest good

Discussion on understanding of meaning of marriage and changes and how it relates to scripture.

Don't believe the conscience clause and protections are strong enough.

#### Table 6

Christ's words – the measure of all things  
unchallengeable  
breaking the concept of marriage

Scripture/teaching

We live as a family. Why are we different?

Civil partnerships

The conscience clause helps but still couldn't vote for it as I would still be culpable in allowing action against Christ's words – the measure of all truth.

#### Table 7

Against – would put me off getting married

Female priesthood – nothing wrong  
marriage or civil partnership

In support –Gays made in God's image  
we should welcome including marry

Table divided

#### Table 8

Equal image of God, for Women's ministry and sexuality

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Glad past is past. Process is important.

Marriage as sacrament very recent. Doctrine of marriage not from Moses. Marriage between two individuals.

Position in Anglican Communion – autonomous.

#### Table 9

Range of views at table with people coming from different backgrounds.

Feeling against because no other religions allow it.

Feeling for because Society has changed and we should not turn people away from church and God.

Discussion on safeguards and whether they were enough and whether they would eventually go.