



THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA

The Diocese of Central Pennsylvania

Resolution of support for the development of public liturgies for the blessing of same sex unions.

WHEREAS, our baptismal covenant calls us to “respect the dignity of every human being” and,

WHEREAS, The Diocese of Central Pennsylvania is committed (Ref: Resolution No. 4 of the 130th Convention -2000) “...to celebrating the richness of our church communities, inclusive of all diversity of gender and sexual orientations, at all levels of the Church’s life”; and further, to “... stand together in opposition to all acts of exclusion or ostracism of, or violence toward gay and lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered persons (or those perceived or thought to be so), at all levels of the Church’s life”, and

WHEREAS, this commitment was reaffirmed by resolution at the Diocesan Convention in 2008,

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT The Diocese of Central Pennsylvania, being guided by the Holy Spirit, reaffirms its commitment to celebrate the richness of our church communities and to insure that all persons regardless of sex or sexual orientation are full and equal participants in the Life of Christ’s Church, by:

Encouraging our Deputies to the General Convention 2009 to vote for legislation that would initiate the process for development of public liturgies for the blessing of same sex unions.

Sponsored By: Joanne Bevilacqua, The Rev. Charles Hoffacker, Donald Hopkins, Robert Passow.

Co-sponsors: The Rev. Joseph DeLauter, Jason Dench, The Rev. Alexander Dyakiw, The Rev. James Edwards, Ann Gibboney, Richard Gibboney, Kathryn M. Grossman, Karen Harvey, Mildred B. Hopkins, Ph.D., The Rev. Robin Jarrell, The Rev. John X. Jobson, F. Scott Mauger, Barbara Passow, Kay Putnam, Toby Scott, The Ven. Canon Daniel L. Selvage, The Rev. James Zmyslo.

Background Information

Many members of the Episcopal Church, because of their sexual orientation, have not married, and yet many of them have entered into long term, faithful, monogamous relationships, similar to marriage in many respects. Many such unions result in extensive family relationships, including the raising of children. At present, in most jurisdictions, it is not possible for same gender couples to enter into a legal arrangement similar to marriage even though justice would indicate that the civil benefits of marriage are deserved. Many such couples also long for the blessing of their union by the Church. Indeed, in many dioceses of the Episcopal Church, ceremonies of blessing of such unions have taken place and continue to take place. At the 2003 Convention, the Church recognized “*that local faith communities are operating within the bounds of our common life as they explore and experience liturgies celebrating and blessing same-sex unions*” (Resolution C051). Many in the church feel uncomfortable about the performance of a rite

that has not been accepted by the Church at large, as would be represented by the publishing of a rite in the Prayer Book or the Book of Occasional Services. Passage of the present resolution would place the Diocese of Central Pennsylvania in support of taking the first step in developing such a common rite for the blessing of same-sex unions.