

January 19, 2016

Dear Grace Church Family and Friends,

In recent days, you may have seen or heard reports that the Episcopal Church has been banned or suspended from the Anglican Communion. Such reports are not entirely accurate.

Last week, the primates of the Anglican Communion, the presiding bishops and archbishops of the thirty-eight regional or national churches that make up the worldwide Anglican Communion, met at Canterbury Cathedral in England. The primates meet every few years to pray, worship, and take counsel for the Anglican family of churches, and their meeting last week was the first since the General Convention of The Episcopal Church met in July and changed our church canons allowing for the marriage of gay and lesbian persons.

Differences between Anglican churches on the place of LGBT people in the life of the church created significant tension at the primates' meeting, and in their communiqué issued at the end of the gathering, the primates acknowledged their differences in theology, while also declaring "desire to walk together."

In an addendum to the communiqué, the primates' state: *It is our unanimous desire to walk together. However, given the seriousness of these matters we formally acknowledge this distance by requiring that for a period of three years The Episcopal Church no longer represent us on ecumenical and interfaith bodies, should not be appointed or elected to an internal standing committee and that while participating in the internal bodies of the Anglican Communion, they will not take part in decision-making on any issues pertaining to doctrine or polity.*

While it is not clear if the primates have the authority to recommend such action, it is clear that the Episcopal Church has not been banned or suspended, as has been widely reported.

In response to the primates' gathering, Bishop Mariann, Bishop of the Diocese of Washington, has written to all the congregations in the diocese, and The Most Reverend Michael Curry, Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church, has recorded a video with his reactions. Links to both can be found below.

Here at Grace Church, we will continue to welcome ALL of God's children, no matter who they are, where they come from, or what their sexual orientation might be, because we believe that is the way of Jesus. Our diversity strengthens our community and offers us a glimpse of God's kingdom, and that will never change.

See you in church,
Andrew

Here is the link to Bishop Mariann's Letter:

<http://www.edow.org/blog/walk-in-love-a-letter-from-bishop-mariann-on-the-primates-meeting/>

Here is the link to the Presiding Bishop's video:

<http://www.episcopalchurch.org/blog/michaelcurry/video>