

ST. ANDREW'S PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, OTTAWA

ANTI-DISCRIMINATION AND INCLUSION COMMITTEE

TERMS OF REFERENCE (DRAFT)

THEOLOGICAL AND BIBLICAL PREAMBLE

There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. - Galatians 3: 28

In our Theological and Biblical understanding of Inclusion and anti-Discrimination we turn to our understanding of Baptism and Communion, the Sacrament which along with the Scriptures are what Calvin calls the Marks of the church. It is through these that Jesus himself is revealed.

Galatians 3:28 is commonly understood to be part of the baptismal formula of the early church. It speaks to the new identity that we take on in our Baptism. There is certainly a diversity in the body of Christ and our calling to be one in him honours that. It is not, for example, that we are no longer a man or a woman per se, but that these things about us yield to a greater identity that we have as part of the body of Christ. In Christ, we belong to him and we belong to each other. We are sisters and brothers together, and each one's well being is important for the well being of our common life. When it comes to inclusion and anti-discrimination we do well to begin with baptism. We are called both to be as Christ to those we encounter and to seek the face of Christ in them as well.

Communion follows. This is the table where the body of Christ is fed and nurtured for its work in the world. Christ is our host here and we remember his words in Luke 13:29: *People will come from east and west and north and south, and will take their places at the feast in the kingdom of God.*

Unlike tables in other Kingdoms, Jesus' table is one where there is a seat for everyone, and more than that a share of the food. In Jesus' own day he sat and ate with Pharisees and prostitutes, tax collectors and fishermen. This remains one of the great challenges of the church. In its earliest days questions of purity had to be rethought so that both Jew and Gentile could sit at table together. From this understanding of communion comes a calling to examine our own practices to this day, how do they contribute to the welcome of each member of the body of Christ at the table. In our own living, many of us are accustomed to asking invited guests if they have food aversions or allergies. Our understanding of inclusion would broaden this to the other practices of the church including the way we speak in worship, how the physical space is made available to them, the music we sing, the food we share.

Just imagine the vegetarian invited out to eat and their host not knowing that they don't eat meat. Our understanding of inclusion would be a community in which members are not afraid to speak of who they are and do not feel they have to put on a mask. The

vegetarian in this example would feel free to state their needs. The work of Inclusion and Anti-Discrimination would extend this care to all. It would be a call to become a Sacramental Community.

Communion is full of meaning. As Calvinists we believe the true Presence of Christ is with us in this Sacrament as we are brought into God's own presence. There is remembrance in it of all the meals in which Jesus fed people including his last supper which was a meal of Grace and Forgiveness. Other denominations prefer to call communion the eucharist, a word that reminds us that it is a meal of Thanksgiving. Indeed Calvin would say that the only sacrifice we present at this meal is one of Thanksgiving and Praise. Those that call communion Mass, a word that is related to Mission, remind us that it is part of our sending into the world as well. Grounding our understanding of Inclusion and Anti-Discrimination in the Sacrament of Communion brings all this to bear on our understanding of the work we are called to.

Growing into the fullness of who we are called to be as individuals and as a community is the work of discipleship. Baptised into Christ Jesus himself, and nourished at his table we are gifted with each other and called to the work of living in the here but not yet Kingdom of God. Let us be of the same mind that was in Christ Jesus,

If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, ²make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. ³Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. ⁴Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. ⁵Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, - Philippians 2: 1 – 5

ENSUING RATIONALE

It is thus clear that the table of God's kingdom is inclusive. Christ welcomed all, and ministered to all, taking special care to extend grace to those socially deemed as "other" in the way of thinking relative to the time and place of Christ's sojourn - lepers, Samaritans, prostitutes, tax collectors.

To learn from Christ's example and to live as Christ lived is to consciously and actively embrace all, especially as concerns all works done in the name of Christ. The necessary corollary, then, is that the Church of Christ cannot abide discrimination. Instead, the Church must actively work to understand and then progressively eliminate it.

Discrimination is not defined within the Ontario Human Rights Code. Usually, however, it includes the following elements:

- not individually assessing the unique merits, capacities, and circumstances of a person,
- but instead making stereotypical assumptions based on that person's presumed traits, or based on the totality of one's own experiences,
- with the impact that the person or others are excluded, denied benefits, or denied rights.

Discrimination can exist regardless of intent.

Juxtaposed against it are the twin, related principles of Inclusion and Anti-Discrimination.

Diversity is about the individual. It is about the variety of unique dimensions, qualities and characteristics we all possess. These dimensions can include but are not limited to ethnicity, nationality, culture, ability, birth sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, age, immigration status, socioeconomic status, language, the geographic region in which we live, and many other qualities. It is about the rich tapestry woven into all that is human and that has been created by the Word of God, mirroring the similarly rich tapestry of God's other creations - in the natural environment on earth, and in the firmaments.

Inclusion is about the collective, composed as it is of those necessarily diverse individuals. To value inclusion is to value the work of Christ, and to thus create a culture that embraces all, striving for equity, respect, acceptance, and the valuing of difference.

MANDATE

In light of the foregoing, Session believes that St. Andrew's, Ottawa, will be well served by a standing committee, to be styled the Anti-Discrimination and Inclusion Committee ("the Committee").

With specific regard to the important and ongoing work of ensuring none are excluded and all can find nourishment at the table of Christ, it is the intention of Session that the Committee provide a sensory and guiding role within the body of Christ at St. Andrew's, Ottawa. Thus, the Committee will act as:

- the eyes of the congregation, looking at ways to ensure no one is excluded in our communion and in our outward service;

- the ears of the congregation, encouraging diverse voices, and listening within and outside the church on matters that concern Anti-Discrimination and Inclusion; and
- the voice of the congregation, teaching, advocating, proposing, and equipping, with the objective of ensuring all are welcome to partake and be nourished at the table of Christ at St. Andrew's, Ottawa.

MEMBERSHIP

The Committee shall be made up of ten voting members, and one ex-officio member.

The ex-officio member shall be the Minister.

The composition of the voting members shall be as follows:

- one voting member each shall be seconded from the following committees of Session:
 - Worship and Music,
 - Communications,
 - Christian Education,
 - Membership, and
 - Missions and Outreach;
- the convener of the Committee shall be a voting member, and shall be a member or an adherent of the congregation who is not concurrently serving as a ruling elder;
- in all instances in which the Committee is composed of a full complement of voting members, not less than five of the voting members shall be non-elders; and
- in all instances in which the Committee is composed of a full complement of voting members, not more than five of the voting members shall be ruling elders.

Every member of the committee shall be a member or an adherent of St. Andrew's Church, Ottawa.

Effort shall be expended to ensure the Committee is composed of persons who feel a sense of calling and are passionate about the work within the Committee's remit.

DURATION OF SERVICE

Each member of the Committee who has been seconded from another committee of Session shall serve for a period of not more than two years, after which that or another member of the other committee may be reappointed or appointed.

Members of the Committee who have not been seconded from another committee of Session shall be invited to consider serving for a period of not less than two years.

MEETINGS

The Committee shall endeavour to meet monthly.

The Committee shall endeavour to ensure that its members can attend meetings without the requirement that all be physically present in the same space.

The Committee may arrive at decisions by way of voting, or by way of consensus; however, the Committee shall attempt to arrive at all decisions by way of consensus-building. In the event voting is to be utilized in arriving at one or more decisions, quorum for the purposes of the vote shall be set at five voting members of the Committee.

On any matter voted on by the members of the Committee, should there be a set of strongly dissenting members, the results of the vote shall be stricken and the convener of the Committee shall seek the advice of Session.

RESPONSIBILITIES AND LINKAGES

The Committee shall identify annual goals, relative to one or a few matters within the ambit of Anti-Discrimination and Inclusion, in order to ensure focus is maintained in the implementation of its mandate.

The Committee shall work with other committees of St. Andrew's Ottawa, assessing current programs, policies, and practices in order to identify ways in which the objectives of Anti-Discrimination and Inclusion can be enhanced. In addition, should the Committee identify a programmatic, policy-oriented, or practical void specific to the objectives of Anti-Discrimination and Inclusion, the Committee shall make recommendations to Session on how the void might best be addressed.

The Committee shall dedicate itself to hearing from members, adherents, and visitors, including persons who are not substantively engaged in the programmatic or service-oriented life of St. Andrew's Ottawa. The Committee shall also dedicate itself to hearing from persons in the community who do not regularly attend within any type of

organized religious setting.

The Committee shall serve as a forum that members and adherents can approach with concerns or experiences that pertain to either or both Anti-Discrimination and Inclusion.

The Committee shall promote and provide opportunities for the congregation of St. Andrew's, Ottawa, to consciously, deliberately, visibly, and actively:

- foster and celebrate Anti-Discrimination and Inclusion within the ministries of the church;
- learn about Anti-Discrimination and Inclusion through information sharing and dialogue within the church;
- build a living narrative of inclusion, woven into the story and identity of St. Andrew's, Ottawa;
- undertake consequential acts, in the name of the church, that contribute to the reduction of discrimination within and outside the body of Christ; and
- become allies in the work of anti-discrimination within and outside the body of Christ.

Decisions adopted by the Committee shall constitute proposals for the consideration of another committee of St. Andrew's, Ottawa, or proposals directly to Session.

REPORTING RELATIONSHIP

The Committee shall report to Session, without limitation on content other than as may be necessary to protect the privacy of persons.

The Committee shall report to the congregation during annual general meetings, also without limitation on content other than as may be necessary to protect the privacy of persons.

AMENDMENT OR VARIATION

These terms of reference may be amended or varied by Session, on its own volition or upon the advice of the Committee.