

ST. MARY'S  
Episcopal Church

1886-2011



This theme for January really makes my heart glad - it is about the full dignity and inclusion for all God's children, including lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (lgbt) people. We will have a movie night, two speakers, special prayers and banners in liturgy, a home-made Youtube video of hope to bullied teens, and this special edition newsletter.

I imagine some of you might question why so much energy is spent on this topic.

For one thing, the arc of justice for lgbt people is curving toward its conclusion, as more states provide marriage equality, as more Christian denominations affirm glbt people and welcome them to ordained ministry, as our military comes close to repealing Don't Ask Don't Tell. At the same time, with the increased visibility of brutality against lgbt people and the high suicide rates of lgbtq teens, we are more aware than ever that the world isn't yet as it should be. But we're close. I can see it coming.

Part of my job as a preacher, and our job as Christians, is to intersect the Gospel with what is going on in our day, shining the light of the love of God in all the places where people hurt, are excluded, or are suffering in any way. But the canon fodder for those who wish to deny dignity to glbtq people has always been scripture. Those denominations who are comfortable with big microphones have used them to slice bits of the Bible out of the context in which they were written and broadcast them to justify exclusion, hate, and violence. That is just wrong. It is evil, actually, and you know that is not a word I used often, or lightly.

I read the same Bible and from it hear messages of God's good creation, God's love for humanity, God's spirit pulling us all toward heaven on earth. I cannot sit by and quietly murmur about God's love while people wave signs that say "God hates fags" and calls some of God's own creation "abominations". As Sarah Turino so excellently says in her piece "Louder!", we need to be louder, because still so many people, the young especially, aren't hearing us. They aren't hearing about God's love. And it's our job to tell them. That's our mission given to us in Baptism. We do it by modeling our lives after Jesus Christ.

When I was ordained a priest, my best friend preached and gave me the iconic phrase that has shaped my entire ministry: bring the edges to the center. When new St Mary's vestries are installed, I give each of them the gift of a bowl and a spatula, inviting them to share in the ministry of bringing edges to the center (like when you are making cookies and need to scrape the sides of the bowl to mix everything up).

If I had lived in the sixties, I would be urging us to integrate churches and lunch counters and schools. In our day, this is our work. It's about gay and lesbian people working alongside allies like me to make the church a better place, the world a better place, for all God's creation.

I invite you to participate in all that the team of St Mary's people have put together for this theme. In the months to come, the vestry will be discussing the steps needed toward becoming an official 'Believe Out Loud' congregation, a trans-denominational designation of safe haven and full inclusion.

I invite you to search your heart, say your prayers, examine your pre-conceived notions, read your scripture, listen to stories that differ from your own, and hang with this community as we do the hard but rewarding work of seeking and serving Christ in all people, loving our neighbors as ourselves. But louder.

-LeeAnne



## Louder!

So - I have a large circle of gay friends. Within that circle and over the years, I have seen first-hand the damage that churches, people of churches, and religious dogma has done. It has made people feel unwelcome, unworthy, unloved.

When I told my friends that my church was going to celebrate LGBTQ people, do you know what each of them said without exception? "Thank you."

I struggle with my friends' choice to avoid God because of their pain. I struggle with their feelings of being unaccepted in God's eyes. I can understand their avoidance of church and religion. But to avoid God? But to many of them - facing the God that they were taught about means facing the pain that was caused by man's work as a representative of God. Facing the pain of being told that you're an abomination, you're a sinner, you're not normal.



Ridiculous. It makes me so ANGRY that people would do this to other people as representatives of Christ.

I am a new member at St. Mary's Episcopal Church. I feel that my voice may not be as important as other's voices. But on this issue, this issue, I will lay down my heart and I will yell from the mountain tops.

St. Mary's Episcopal Church needs to be a soft place for people to land in a very hard world. When someone has to hide who they are at school, work, from their family, from their friends...must they hide it from God too? Shouldn't God be the ONE PLACE THAT YOU CAN TURN AND BE CELEBRATED IN ALL YOUR BEAUTY? And shouldn't we, as represent-

atives of Christ, be that reflecting face in our church? Shouldn't we reflect back love, acceptance, celebration, communion, to everyone?

When someone is gay, lesbian, transgendered, bisexual, or questioning their sexuality - I want them to know that for one-two hours a week, they can come and be loved. I want the LGBTQ community to know St. Mary's for that love.

Let this January be a start of this love. Let us be LOUD in our welcoming to people of all sexual orientations. For most of us, this is nothing new. "Of course!" you say. But people need to know loudly. We need to invite our LGBTQ friends to church. We need them to know that they are welcome at St. Mary's. We need to turn up the volume on our love so that our LGBTQ friends can hear it. Louder friends. LOUDER.

Sarah

...When Anglicanism lost its tolerance for tolerance, it no longer served the Lord. But when it had a high sense of tolerance, an openness, an inclusiveness, it found its greatness. In unity and diversity we gather to answer the call of Christ Jesus, who is the source of our strength and the focus of unity.

The Right Reverend Edward Browning

*Excerpts from a sermon given by The Most Reverend Katharine Jefferts Schori, Presiding Bishop and Primate The Episcopal Church, in Grand Blanc Michigan this October.*

*Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself?*

Is Tyler Clementi our neighbor? He committed suicide out of shame, after his roommates treated him like a zoo animal, rather than a human being with basic human dignity and rights. Several other young gay people have killed themselves in recent weeks - not in such public or appallingly cruel circumstances, but for similar reasons.

The fellow on the road to Jericho was also treated in an appalling way - as an exploitable substance, rather than a dignified human being. He was robbed, stripped, beaten, and left for dead. We don't know exactly what the robbers were after, but it was something valuable. Three guys in Brooklyn suffered something similar a few days ago - they were abducted, stripped, beaten, tortured, and dumped, because their tormentors thought they "had broken the rules." Their rules apparently say that you have no dignity or expectation of life if you're gay.

Who is our neighbor? Who is being left for dead by the side of the road? Sometimes it's our collective neglect, rather than active persecution, that causes the end of other people's dignity.

The Samaritan didn't just take pity on the dying man in the ditch. He gave first aid, picked him up and carted him to a motel, nursed him through the night, and then paid the innkeeper to look after him until he was well enough to go on his way. Jesus and the lawyer call that mercy. Pity is kind of a distant and limited sorrow that doesn't take any personal responsibility. Mercy recognizes a hurting human being and shares in that suffering enough to do something about it.

We repeatedly promise to seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving our neighbor as ourselves. It takes all of us to love all people - none of us can do it alone.

Together we can challenge our neighbors whose fear has begun to turn to hate, together we can insist that freedom of religion applies to all of us, together we can work to reverse the prejudice that says some people can't have a place in this nation. That's the kind of mercy that Tyler Clementi needed - the same dignity that we accord all other teenagers, and prob-

ably an extra dose of compassion for kids who are struggling to understand their own identity, responsibility, self-worth, and indeed, belovedness.

So what about those neighbors who seem so much harder to love, like Tyler's two roommates? They deserve our compassion, too, along with accountability. Loving our neighbors as ourselves is about accountability, whether it's a lack of self-respect or the arrogant sense that I am the only person who matters. Tyler Clementi was shamed to death, and that has something to do with the inability of people around him to assure him that he was loved and filled with dignity because he was a child of God. His roommates evidently didn't have an adequate sense of self-love, either, if they had to look for it in shaming somebody else.

Loving our neighbors means recognizing the body by the side of the road as a dignified human being, in need of mercy. Pray that our own wounds may let us see others'. Instead of just praying, "Lord have mercy," let our prayer be, "Lord let me be mercy; let us be mercy."

*Will you seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself?*

*We will, with God's help.*

"You have given the right answer; do this, and you will live." [Luke 10:28]





### Respect the Dignity of Every Human Being

*During the new bishop search process it was a priority to find someone who understood the complexities of diversity and inclusion, and so asked this question of each candidate: "Our diocese has varied ethnic and cultural components: American Indian, African American, Hmong American, Spanish Speaking Americans and GLBT. What has been your experience in working with these groups? What is your vision to strengthen and support these ministries?" Here is Bishop Prior's answer:*

The small rural farm town I grew up in was, unbeknownst to me at the time, a multi-cultural community. As a young person my friends were Spanish Speaking Americans, American Indian, African American and Anglo and I had no idea that this was not everyone's reality. I went to school, played sports, worked in the orchards and even "fell in love" for the first time with kids from different racial/ethnic backgrounds and thought nothing of it.

Likewise, I grew up in a family where my parents had friends and socialized with boy gay and lesbian couples. As such it was not challenging for me when in both high school and college a number of my closest friends told me they were gay or lesbian.

Frankly, it was not until I was in college and began serving in the larger church that I became painfully

aware of the level of homophobia, sexism, racism, ageism and bigotry in both our church and the larger culture. My entire scripting was based on an assumption that everyone was not only welcomed, but also encouraged to be full members of the community.

This experience was a major part of my motivation to attend seminary at CDSP (in Berkeley CA). I not only wanted to be a part of a seminary that was intentional about embracing diversity, but I also wanted to live in a community where I did not represent the dominant culture.

My time at CDSP and my continued work in the larger church, especially my involvement with youth ministry, was transformational. The core Gospel justice value of inclusion became a theological priority. Consistently since that time I have worked to challenge systems that at best marginalize, and at worst outright exclude others based on race, gender, sexual orientation or age. The foundational question that I always ask those I serve with is this: "who is not, and why are they not, at the table?"

In my experience, the critical dynamic of embracing the Gospel justice value of inclusion is to spend time with others in the context of their culture and community. It is to be intentional about listening to their story, to their reality. It is discerning with them the gifts for ministry they feel called to share both within their context and the larger community.

I was blessed as a young person to grow up in a diverse community. Subsequently I have been blessed to have a significant number of friends and colleagues in ministry who have continued to enrich my life and vocation. With that said, the amount of work and witness still needed to combat the lack of respect for the dignity of every human being is unquestionably clear.

By the Right Reverend Brian N. Prior

Bishop, The Episcopal Church in Minnesota

## Frequently Asked Questions prepared by

Susanne Powers

### LGBTI2SQA What do all those initials mean?

- L:** Lesbian (Sexual Orientation)  
A female that is sexually attracted to other females.
- G:** Gay (Sexual Orientation)  
A male that is sexually attracted to other males. Gay is also used as an umbrella term for LGB people.
- B:** Bi-Sexual (Sexual Orientation)  
A person that is sexually attracted to males and females.
- T:** Transgender (Gender Identity)  
An extremely broad umbrella term for persons whose self image is not the same as their biological gender.
- I:** Intersex (Gender Identity)  
People born with ambiguous genitalia
- 2S:** Two Spirit (Gender Identity)  
An English term used to describe North American Indigenous people with integrated genders.
- Q:** Queer (Sexual Orientation and/or Gender Identity)  
A term being reclaimed by the LGBT community. Queer is an umbrella term which encompasses all gender identities and sexual orientations outside the heterosexual mainstream.
- Q:** Questioning  
A person questioning their perception of their sexual and/or gender identify.
- A:** Ally  
Straight friends of the LGBTQ community

**\*Gender Identity:** An internalized, deeply felt sense of being male, female, both, or neither.

**\*Sexual Orientation:** The term used to describe sexual attraction. Sexual orientation exists along a *continuum* between heterosexual and homosexual, with bisexual in between. Asexuality exists outside of this spectrum. According to scientists, sexual orientation is not a choice.

### Does one choose to be gay? Do reparative therapies work?

Medical and social scientists believe that sexual orientation is not a choice and that same-sex attraction is a universal phenomenon in all species. There are religious organizations that claim people can 'correct' (change) their sexual orientation or gender identity and some LGBTQ people, out of devotion to their religious beliefs, will submit to this type of therapy. No studies show proven long-term changes except for behavior. Scientific studies indicate that reparative therapy does not work and can be harmful to one's emotional and physical well-being.

### Why is it so important for churches to 'advertise' they welcome LGBTQ people?

The modern church has a history of condemning, rejecting, or trying to change LGBTQ people. Therefore, LGBTQ people tend to assume a church is not 'safe' unless there is a clear indication otherwise.

### Why do gays want to get married?

One very important and often forgotten result of the Emancipation Proclamation was that when African American slaves were granted the right of full personhood, they were granted the right to have their families recognized through legal marriage. Inequality in marriage legislation often translates to an inequality of worth and the world has already learned that 'separate but equal' laws maintain inequality.

Many people do not realize that there is a difference between legal (civil) and religious marriage. The issue we hear and read about has to do with legal marriage and no religious group has ever been required to perform a legal marriage.

There are 1138 federal and 515 state (MN) rights, responsibilities, and privileges (laws) tied to marriage that lesbian and gay couples do not have access to because their families are prohibited from being legally recognized. Thus, civil marriage is a civil rights issue because a minority group is being denied access to rights granted to a majority.

### Why are we hearing about so many LGBTQ youth (and adults) killing themselves?

The short answer is that they always have been and the families and media did not talk about it.

According to a recent report by Faith in America, "more than a million LGBT teens are suffering debilitating depression because their families and religious institutions see them as deviants. Suicide rates amongst LGBT youth are four times higher than those of heterosexual youth." According to *Pediatrics*, "Gay kids who experience family rejection are eight times more likely to attempt suicide, are six times more likely to report high levels of depression and in general are far more likely to do drugs." According to a survey conducted by the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, 41% of all transgender people in the US have attempted suicide, 19% have been refused medical care, and 2% have been violently assaulted in a doctor's office.

The fear and hatred of this minority group is also reflected in hate crime statistics. According to the Southern Poverty Law Center's analysis of 14 years of hate crime data, "homosexuals, or those perceived to be gay, are more than twice as likely to be attacked in a violent hate crime as Jews or blacks, more than four times as likely as Muslims, and 14 times as likely as Latinos."

The stress of prejudice, discrimination, and religion-based condemnation and rejection explains the high levels of depression, substance and abuse, and suicide.

## What about scripture references to homosexuality?

It really depends on how one chooses to interpret the Bible. We need to keep in mind that, in this country, religious teachings have been used to support slavery, deny women the right to vote, deny African and Native Americans full and equal rights, deny interracial couples the right to marry, and the list goes on and on. I can't help but remember the news coverage of integration of schools with white adults holding their Bibles in the air and screaming obscenities at a little black girl entering the white school.



Instead of looking at what some interpret to be scriptural justification of condemnation of gay people, let's look at the example of Jesus and scripture that justifies inclusion. We have a wonderful post resurrection example in the story of the first gentile (non-Jewish) convert to Christianity. In Acts, there is the story of Phillip and the Ethiopian Eunuch. An angel told Phillip to go to a wilderness road where Phillip encountered a eunuch reading the scripture. This eunuch (transgender person) was someone of great importance and status within the kingdom of Ethiopia where he served. However, as far as the Jews were concerned, he was a eunuch gentile from 'the ends of the earth.' And, because he was a eunuch (transgender), there were Levitical laws which kept him from converting to Judaism. Even so, the eunuch worshipped in Jerusalem and read the scripture.

As the story moves along, Phillip explains the 'good news' of Jesus to the eunuch. As they were travelling, Phillip and the eunuch came to some water. The eunuch, knowing the cultural and scriptural prohibitions and the 'good news' of Jesus as told to him by Phillip then asked, "What is to prevent me from being baptized?" Phillip baptized the eunuch.

However, this is not our primary example. As Christians, our primary example is in the life and teachings of Jesus.

Jesus message was simple. God loves us and we should love and care for one another. The only people we ever really see being excluded are religious people that think they are better than everyone else because they are exclusive and obey all of the 'laws.' One of my favorite examples of this is in Matthew 23. The very first of the 'seven woes' is: "Woe to you....for you lock people out of the kingdom of heaven." Jesus is all about inclusion.

## The Good and the Bad

by Ruth Weise

Looking back at "good" and "bad" times in my life brings to mind the memory of my "significant other" with whom I shared living for more than 20 years. The good times included going from apartment living to buying a house; having her parents live in half of a double bungalow and accept me as one of the family; taking trips back to Scotland where she was born; many hours of laughter and relaxation.

The bad times included dealing with her mother's death, her father's death two years later; and her death two years after that. The loss was extremely painful - tears came frequently. It was especially difficult because with the exception of my priest no one knew she was my partner.

I became better able to work with folks who were grieving. Over time the pain has lessened and the memories take precedence. I'm much better in work with others who grieve and can support them with silence when indicated. And I learned that the heart doesn't really break!



## "We" and "Us"

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Sometimes, looking back, I'm not sure what was harder: growing up gay, or growing up without religion. Certainly, the gay thing was difficult. Anti-gay rhetoric was everywhere, even as androgyny and ambiguous sexuality had exploded in 1980s pop-culture. (In retrospect, it's hard to see any ambiguity in bands like Wham! or Culture Club, but it was all so new then. How could we be sure?) The cruelty of gay jokes, especially at the dawn of the AIDS era, stung.

So, too, did the feeling of exclusion that accompanied a faith-free youth. Friends underwent confirmation, participated in church retreats and youth groups, and talked about missionary activities. While my non-practicing Muslim father and Lutheran mother created secular rituals around Christmas and Easter, these were mere trappings of something I craved to experience on a deeper level. And for so long, as a teen and then as an adult, this yearning felt at odds with my sexual orientation. All it takes is one bad apple - thank you, Fred Phelps, for all those "God Hates Fags" signs at AIDS funerals - to make the whole barrel of Christianity appear hostile and unwelcoming.

When Gene Robinson was ordained Bishop of New Hampshire, it was like the Episcopal Church had tapped me on the shoulder and said, "Psst. Hey, you. Do you want to come over? We've got a gay Bishop!" It was with a combination of excitement and fear that I attended my first service at St. Mark's Cathedral with my dear friend Sarah (Turino). I had gone to other churches that had seemed gay friendly, only to be quashed by Diocesan orders or uprisings within the parish. Was the Episcopal Church sincere, or would it be like Lucy Van Pelt, and pull the football away just as I ran to kick it?

I don't remember details of the service. What I remember vividly is being invited to participate in Communion for the first time. Sarah urged me to go up to the altar with her. It felt like I was breaking into a bank. "I'm never going to get away with this!" I had paranoid delusions of being spotted as a homosexual non-Christian and being whisked away in handcuffs. We got closer and closer to the altar, past the gorgeous singing of the choir and the

vibrations of the organ, and knelt. There in my cupped hand, I received the wafer. And no one scolded me or removed me from church. I was welcomed, along with the wealthy dowagers and the young parents, the old man who hobbled with his cane and the 40-something woman whose face lit up at the sight of the Eucharist. Then I sipped the wine.

I had fantasies of that first Communion being transformative. That the Holy Spirit would enter my body and angelic harps would play and I would see the world anew with the wisdom of the ages. None of that happened. But I turned around and saw the congregation, and for the first time, it wasn't "me" and "them." It was "we" and "us." And maybe that was all the transformation I really needed.

I know that the conflict over ordaining openly gay men and women hasn't been resolved within the Church. It might not be within my lifetime. But Gene Robinson was the welcome sign that brought me in, and I have stayed. I know I'm not the only one. How many others took their first steps into a church, into a community, because of that small beacon, that one hand extended in greeting, offering us a place at the table? And doesn't everyone - *everyone* - deserve to come inside?





## My Transformation



This is a story about my transformation. One of our sons was married in 1975, had a daughter in 1976, was divorced in 1978, moved to California in about 1979 and wrote us a letter in 1980 which Meredith first read and then handed me to read while we sat in the car at the grocery store. She waited as I read Glenn's words telling us he was gay and had met someone he truly loved, a man he called Corky.

The meaning of what Glenn had written did not fully register at first. The term "gay" was new to me. I couldn't equate it with the term queer which I knew and used a lot. Not my son. I knew some homosexual guys. Homosexuality was OK for them but not my son. I just didn't believe it. I attributed this letter to a totally messed up guy who had been warped by a worthless wife. Was I homophobic? I guess so.

Meredith wanted to go out to California to talk to and support Glenn and to meet Corky. My response was an emphatic NO!! She said she wouldn't go without me. And that's where the matter stood for sometime.

Meredith made an appointment with the chaplain at the University Episcopal Center, the Rev Jim Diamond, who did a lot of pastoral work with GLBT students and friends. After talking with him for an hour or so he said to us, "I think I am seeing a couple of parents coming out of the closet."

In the meantime Glenn and Corky moved to the Los Angeles area. I finally relented and agreed to go out to that worthless place. It was there in Los Angeles area that I had a chance to see Glenn, meet Corky, meet and be accepted by them and Glenn's other friends, and see my son relaxed and happy. These people warmly accepted me with no trouble. And I found myself accepting and enjoying them. Who had changed? ME!

In May 1985 we had a gathering of our whole clan out on the St Croix River for my 60<sup>th</sup> birthday...all four of our sons and spouses and children. Of course Glenn and Corky were there. Corky was scared to death for it was his first encounter with Glenn's brothers. That weekend is best summed up by the statement of Jim, our oldest and the most like me. He said of Corky, "He's really a nice guy." Through grace and meeting each other right where we are, our biases and prejudices get washed away.

Thanks be to God!

The Reverend Grant Robinson

## There will be no outcasts!

Edmond Lee Browning, international peacemaker, promoter of the ordination of women and gays, spiritual advocate for people with HIV/AIDS and defender of minorities and other marginalized people in the church, declared that there "will be no outcasts" during his acceptance speech after his election as the 24th presiding bishop of the Episcopal Church on Sept. 12, 1985 in Anaheim, California at the 68th General Convention.

"I have today invited you, all of you, to share the diversity of views, of hopes, of expectations, for the mission of this Church," he said on that occasion. "I want to be very clear -- this church of ours is open to all -- there will be no outcasts -- the convictions and hopes of all will be honored."

## Hope

by Kathy Caron, visitor to St. Mary's

Reality came to light in a deep way at our house on September 26<sup>th</sup> of this year. Our oldest son was assaulted on his college campus, right outside his residence hall... his home. He was called a faggot, punched in the face, and knocked down. I wonder what violence does for perpetrators who choose to act out towards GLBT folks? Is it going to make them no longer exist? Did they think Justin was going to retreat and begin to hide who he is? What are they really afraid of?

I reflect on these questions often these days, and it causes me to think about the privilege that I have to choose, or not, to wear my rainbow ribbon, or ally button. Many GLBT folks have their sexual orientation perceived on a daily basis, and I imagine are acutely aware of the bias they encounter in the looks they receive, in the vague feeling they have about the discomfort or judgment of the person standing by them. I get that sometimes when I wear my ribbon, or walk through stores with my son; but I can take it off and not have to deal with that distraction. I need to, and we all need to look at the reality of LGBT folks, simply walking in this world. We all need to be sensitive to our own discomforts that may exist, and own them as our own.

This experience, while deeply concerning and sad, has also proven to offer much opportunity for awareness, for action, and for change. Justin has always been supported in our home and truly loved in his school community, and among our friends. However, this experience has put a face on an issue that far too many people can easily ignore. This has made many people think, and that is good.

At his college, there was acknowledgement, support, and action...at all levels. As a mental health professional, I can tell you that those are all key elements in any person's healing from any kind of trauma. Before administration had much time to formally respond, the students used their tech savvy to utilize social media to garnish support for the "Stand Up Against Hate" campaign. Over 500 people joined the *Face Book* page that encouraged the campus community to wear different colors of the rainbow every day as a sign of support and solidarity, they held a "Rally 4 Respect" mid week and ended the week with a march through campus. The students felt empowered, and the administration stood beside them in their efforts. Students and high level administrators were on the news, and quoted in the newspaper. In no way did the school give in to the temptation to prioritize image over student care. The students healed from this experience in a deeper way due to the

wise and compassionate actions of the school. I am grateful to them for that.

This incident was not a reflection of the institution our son attends, rather of the society he lives in. This could happen on any campus, to any person of a marginalized population. The institution he attends had an unplanned opportunity, and they seized it in a way that demonstrated to the students that they truly care about them, and demonstrated to those involved that intolerance, of any kind, was not acceptable.

Reality. It seems to pretty clear these days...how the bias, verbal slurs, bullying, and even silence contribute to the continued marginalization, and internalized oppression of GLBT folks. However, I have seen firsthand how our youth are standing up, speaking out, and honoring who they are. I am proud of my son, his friends, and his school. They are all courageous, brave, and unapologetic about who they are. They give me great hope!

Reality

It was so much easier to protect you  
when you were young.

At the time it seemed difficult

But we could shield you

We could take the fall

We could hold you close

And make it all better.

You could be carefree,

Dress how you wanted,

Be who you were,

and express yourself

without judgment

or repercussion.



That is all different now,

and I am so sorry!

I wish I could explain to you

why people are fearful,

I wish I could confidently say

it won't ever happen again,

I wish I could protect you

This time.

Kathy Caron. September 27, 2010

## Made in God's Image

by Mindy Boynton

My name is Mindy. I am a middle age mother of 4 adopted children, my husband Tom of 33 years and live in Scandia, MN. We moved from Connecticut 16 years ago and I bumped into LeeAnne at Ascension in Stillwater. She and I became great friends and she immediately put me to work helping the teenagers discern where God was in their life. At the time I was raising 2 of my children, Molly Mee age 8 and Kate age 5.

My children were very involved with many things but this article is just about Kate. She arrived from Thailand in the summer of 1990. She was small, feisty and ever determined to beat her older brothers and sister in any activity that was played. She could out-run them all, hit the whiffle ball further, serve a tennis ball faster and was an incredible hockey player. She loved to play Barbies with Molly and I never thought anything of the fact that she cut all of their hair so that they could be boys.

Tom & I always thought that Kate was going to be a fabulous Lesbian as she loved girls. They intrigued her but she was always on the outside looking in. She wore basketball shorts, wind pants, baggy shirts & sweatshirts, anything to hide her body. Still to this day she reminds me that I made her be the flower girl at her brother's wedding. It was a very painful time for her and I never put it all together. Her own Mother and I never even saw how unhappy she truly was. I should have been able to figure it out.

Kate graduated from Chisago Lakes High School in a very white culture. Needless to say they didn't have any Gay-Straight alliance at this school. She just hid behind all of her hockey clothes and hoped that nobody ever noticed her. Went away to Beloit College where her life was quickly changed. Nobody cared that she was different there. She just fit in, met girls that she became great friends with, played tennis where they even let her wear tennis shorts....no more skirts! God, she was happy.

After her 1<sup>st</sup> year at Beloit she came home for her break and told Tom & I about a class she had taken and how she had some news for the two of us. I sat in the chair just looking at her. She said, "Mom, I know you believe in this whole God thing, but I'm telling you he has screwed up and put me in the wrong body". "I was never supposed to be a girl"! Then I noticed that she had started to cry and this is not a child that cries. All I said to her was, "Kate, you only have one chance at this life and you might as well find happiness with it. If it is going to be in a boy's body, than we will find you the best doctors in the Twin Cities and get you some help." Then we all cried... and we did find the best of the best!

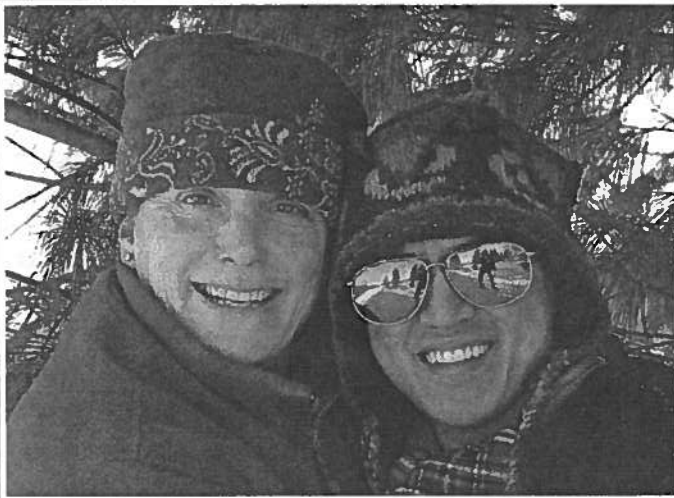
During this summer I had the need to make this

transition as "official" as I could so I got all of my Episcopal gurus together to throw a big Name Changing Party at our home. We all stood in a circle on our hill where different friends have been married. Rev. Michele Morgan, Kate's mentor and priest read these words. *"Holy One of Blessing, in baptism you bring us to new life in Jesus Christ and you name us Beloved. We give you thanks for the renewal of that life and love in Katherine, who now takes on a new name. Strengthen and uphold him as he grows in power, and authority, and meaning of this name: we pray in the Name above names, Jesus, your Son, whom with you and the Holy Spirit, the Triune God, we adore. Amen"* We also had a reading from the letter of Paul to the Galatians. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male or female; for all are one in Christ Jesus. As the sun set on our hill, we all raised our glasses to Sebastian as he walks into his new life of freedom. Again many tears of happiness were seen on friends and family.

My child's transition is much different than anyone I have bumped into in this amazing 2 year journey. We are all the lucky ones because we love one another, unconditionally. My child has not changed more than his name. He has gone from Katherine Gould Boynton to Sebastian (Baz) Gould Boynton. He takes testosterone and has had a mastectomy but nothing else has changed. He still walks like a jock, keeps his hair very short and wears the same clothes. He is a fabulous son, great brother and most importantly, a terrific person with a heart made of gold. Isn't that all we ever want out of life. Just to raise good people who will take care of the poor, sick and lonely.

I have already mentioned that LeeAnne is a good friend of mine but I need to tell you all that I am most pleased by the fact that you are bring GLBTQ out of the closet and front and center in your church. People of faith are fond of saying that everyone is "made in God's Image," but intersex and transgender people get the message loud and clear that "everyone" doesn't include them. We all need to communicate a gently assertive expectation that we as Christians need to get up to speed on something too rarely discussed but very important for the life of the church and its ministries.

My hope for Baz is that he will come to St Paul and join you all on your journey to welcome all people into the life of the church. And loving all of your neighbors, no matter how they are dressed, what they look like or even if they believe. Just love them and they will come.



## Be Who You Truly Are In Your Heart

If you don't mind, I'd like to take a little of your time to tell you a story. It's about a girl who was sitting in her 4th and last class of the day, Feminism 101. Having filled Kate Bornstein's "Gender Workbook" out the night before for an assignment the class discussion was mainly on that subject. Having thought that the assignment was fun and rather interesting she was quite enthusiastic to talk about the book but she quickly realized that her upbeat opinion of the book was a minority view. After hearing complaint after complaint on the workbook she left rather confused and a little upset but already late for tennis practice she didn't have much time to let those thoughts linger.

It wasn't until later that night, sitting at her desk watching Xena Warrior Princess and finishing her diagram on the molecular structure of DNA did those thoughts return. She realized with startling clarity the reason why she was so upset about the negative criticism on the workbook was because she didn't have a definition of her gender and within a second of that realization she thought to herself, I'm a guy. Now some of you would probably freak out by now or panic or just break down and cry but for the first time in her life she felt this weight being lifted. Finally being able to understand why she never felt comfortable in her own skin brought a sense of peace that she never thought she'd feel.

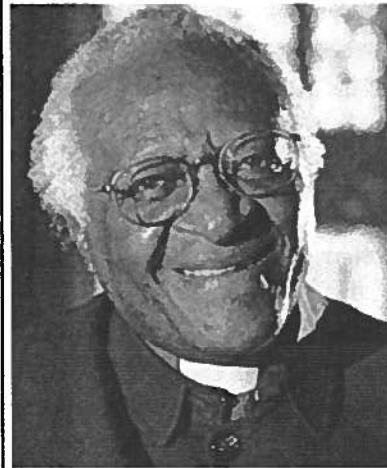
I'm sure some of you have already figured out, but that girl was me. My name obviously wasn't always Sebastian. My name had been Kate. That was a little over two years ago. Since then I have been living on

testosterone for 2 years with the love and support of my friends and family. I know sadly, that I am one of the lucky few to be accepted and loved by my friends and family. Words cannot describe the love that they have shown me. There are so many LGBTQ people out there that don't have that support and knowing that your community is so accepting of us reminds me that we are not alone. There are people in this world who love us no matter our gender, sexuality or race. My hope is that by writing this story I have shown someone who was like me, hiding who they are because of what society deemed "normal", that there is no need to hide anymore. By being who your truly are in your heart there is a community that's growing everyday who will support you and love you unconditionally.

by Sebastian Boynton

Gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered people are part of so many families. They are part of the human family. They are part of God's family. And of course they are part of the African family."

No one chooses to be gay, Sexual orientation, like



skin color, is another feature of our diversity as a human family. Isn't it amazing that we are all made in God's image, and yet there is so much diversity among his people? Does God love his

dark - or his light-skinned children less? The brave more than the timid? And does any of us know the mind of God so well that we can decide for him who is included, and who is excluded, from the circle of his love?

Archbishop Desmond Tutu

## What does the Bible say about Homosexuality?

This is the intro piece from the blog 'Whosoever' by Candace Chellew-Hodge. If you go to her site, <http://www.whosoever.org/bible/>, you will find each of the passages dealt with directly (much too long to put in Fishtales!)

Of the negative or critical e-mails I receive from critics of this magazine and its mission, I'd estimate 90% of them advise me to read my Bible. Specifically, I am urged to read at least one or all of the six passages we as GLBT Christians know as the "clobber passages". These are verses, we're told, where God condemns homosexuality in no uncertain terms.

As I inform those letter writers, I have read my Bible, and I've paid close attention to those "clobber passages." So have many Bible scholars. We all agree that nowhere in the Bible are same-sex committed and loving relationships condemned. It's just not there. Instead, the Bible holds much joy, comfort and love for GLBT Christians willing to wade into its pages and hear the loving voice of God.

In this section of 'Whosoever' we explore the 6 "clobber passages" and several other verses used as "prooftexts" of homosexuality's condemnation.

Before we begin we must clarify the concept of "prooftexts" or eisegesis. To defend their assertion that God condemns homosexuals, people always use small passages from the Bible to prove their point. Using the Bible in this manner is destructive. Instead of "exegesis" which involves examining the history of scripture to find out what it means and how it applies to us, "eisegesis" approaches scripture with a preconceived idea of what you will find there. It is abuse of scripture.

In eisegesis you search the Book until you find a passage you think applies and use it as your "proof" that God backs you up. You isolate that phrase or passage, take it out of context and improperly use it to back up your argument. It's like a friend taking a sentence or phrase out of a letter you wrote and using it to represent what you believe as a whole. It's easy to be taken out of context. You wouldn't want your views represented that way, but that's how the ideas and beliefs of the Bible's authors are presented everyday!

It is my sincere hope that GLBT Christians and our critics alike will approach this material with open hearts and minds. Not everyone will come away convinced, but I've discovered it takes time to unlearn all the misinterpretations of scripture we've been taught through the years. I invite you to sit with this information, pray and meditate on it, and let God speak to your heart. I hope that when your journey is complete you'll see God's word with new eyes and realize GLBT Christians are welcomed in Jesus' one word, "Whosoever." - Candace Chellew-Hodge

From Edmond Browning...

I'm a traditionalist. That's right. I'm a traditionalist because I treasure and believe in the ethos of Anglicanism. As Anglicans, we discern God's will through Scripture, tradition and reason. However, some have chosen to embrace biblical literalism instead of our Anglican tradition. History tells us that biblical literalism was used to support both the practice of slavery and the denigration of women. We have moved past slavery and we are moving past the oppression of women. It is time to move past using literalistic readings of the Bible to create prejudices against our gay and lesbian brothers and sisters. Dear friends in Christ, Biblical literalism may be someone's tradition, but it's not our tradition and it's time we came home to our Anglican roots.

The Right Reverend Edmond Browning  
Former Presiding Bishop

*During his term as presiding bishop, Browning visited South Africa, Palestinian refugee camps in the West Bank and Gaza; AIDS wards in San Francisco at the height of the epidemic, El Salvador, East Asia, Burma, Panama, Nicaragua, Haiti and Cuba, and was the first Anglican primate to visit China. He met with Yassar Arafat, chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization, and was at the White House in 1993 when the Oslo Accord, the first ever face-to-face meetings between Israel and the PLO, was signed. In 1990, Browning met personally with President George H. W. Bush and urged him not to go to war.*

*Browning was chief consecrator of the first woman bishop in the Episcopal Church and the Anglican Communion on February 11, 1989: Barbara Clementine Harris as Bishop Suffragan of the Diocese of Massachusetts.*



**Where does the Episcopal Church stand on gay and lesbian issues?**

The Episcopal Church is still wrestling with the full inclusion of gay and lesbian folk and their equal access to the sacraments--though we are further ahead than most denominations. Many dioceses and congregations are actively supportive, a few are actively hostile, and most are somewhere in between.

**Minneapolis, 1976** An historic resolution was passed that acknowledged and affirmed the presence of persons of homosexual orientation in the Church for the first time. It was the same Convention that first passed a new Book of Common Prayer (a vote that was confirmed in 1979 on second reading) and opened presbyteral and episcopal ordination to women.

*Resolved, that it is the sense of this General Convention that homosexual persons are children of God and have a full and equal claim with all other persons upon the love, acceptance, and pastoral concern and care of the Church.*

*Resolved, that this General Convention expresses its conviction that homosexual persons are entitled to equal protection of the laws with all other citizens, and calls upon our society to see that such protection is provided in actuality.*

**Anaheim, 1985** *Resolved, that the 68th General Convention urge each diocese of this Church to find an effective way to foster a better understanding of homosexual persons, to dispel myths and prejudices about homosexuality, to provide pastoral support, and to give life to the claim of homosexual persons "upon the love, acceptance, and pastoral care and concern of the Church" as recognized by the ...resolution in 1976."*

**Indianapolis 1994** This GC put the term "sexual orientation" in the canons for the first time...

*Resolved, No person shall be denied rights, status, or an equal place in the life, worship, and governance of this Church because of race, color, ethnic origin, national origin, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, disabilities or age, except as otherwise specified by Canon.*

**Philadelphia 1997** *Resolved, That this 72nd General Convention apologizes on behalf of the Episcopal Church to its members who are gay or lesbian and to lesbians and gay men outside the Church for years of rejection and maltreatment by the Church; . . . That this Church repents of its sins committed against lesbian and gay people—physical, psychological and spiritual—through covert and overt action and inaction. We seek amendment of our life together and we ask for God's help in sharing the Good News with all people.*

**Minneapolis 2003** Reaffirmed the equality of gay and lesbian person in the church, reiterated an apology to gays and lesbians for years of maltreatment and rejection by the church, pledged to include openly gay and lesbian people on committees established to discuss sexuality issues, and directed national church center staff to include "persons of various sexual orientation" in its evangelism target populations.

Reaffirmed the Episcopal Church's historical support of civil rights for gay and lesbian persons; reaffirmed a call for federal, state, and local governments to provide same-sex couples with similar protections to those of married couples; and opposed federal and state constitutional amendments prohibiting same-sex civil marriage or civil unions.

**Where does the Episcopal Church stand on the ordination of non-celibate gay and lesbian people?**

Closeted gay and lesbian people have been ordained throughout Christian history. The same has been true in the Episcopal Church. In 1977, Bishop Paul Moore of NY ordained Ellen Barrett as the first openly lesbian priest in the Episcopal Church. Since then, numerous openly gay and lesbian clergy have been ordained or come out of the closet. We currently have 2 active 'out' bishops, and one retired 'out' bishop.

**Denver 1979** *Resolved, There are many human conditions, some of them in the area of sexuality, which bear upon a person's suitability for ordination:*

*Resolved, Every ordinand is expected to lead a life which is "a wholesome example to all people" (BCP, pp. 517, 532, 544). There should be no barrier to the ordination of qualified persons of either heterosexual or homosexual orientation whose behavior the Church considers wholesome.*

Before the 1991 GC in Phoenix, Arizona, tensions were high because two more high-profile ordinations had taken place: one in the Diocese of Newark and one in the Diocese of Washington. GC reaffirmed previous statements and called for more study.

In 1993 Bishop Otis Charles of Utah retired and came out.

**Indianapolis 1994** *Resolved, No one shall be denied access to the selection process for ordination in this Church because of race, color, ethnic origin, age, national origin, marital status, sexual orientation, disabilities or age, except as otherwise specified by these Canons. No right to ordination is hereby established.*

**The Righter Trial 1996** Several conservative bishops filed heresy charges against retired Bishop Walter Righter because he had ordained an openly gay man to the diaconate. The ecclesiastical court dismissed the charges—ruling that the Episcopal Church had no clear doctrine on the issue.

In 2003, Gene Robinson of New Hampshire was consecrated as the first openly gay bishop in the Episcopal Church.

**Columbus 2006** The game-changing "Bo33":

*Resolved, the House of Deputies concurring, That the 75th General Convention receive and embrace The Windsor Report invitation to engage in a process of healing and reconciliation; and be it further*

*Resolved, that this Convention therefore call upon Standing Committees and bishops with jurisdiction to exercise restraint by not consenting to the consecration of any candidate to the episcopate whose manner of life presents a challenge to the wider church and will lead to further strains on communion.*

Everyone was clear that "manner of life" was code for "gays and lesbians in same-gender relationships." In a vote by orders, the resolution passed by more than a two-thirds majority in both orders. The passage of BO33 was enormously disappointing. An unknown but significant number of the LGBT faithful left the Episcopal Church for unequivocally accepting denominations. In the year following General Convention, nine diocesan conventions passed resolutions expressing dissent or opposition to BO33. Despite the *de facto* moratorium on additional LGBT bishops, the Rev. Canon Michael Barlowe was a candidate for Bishop of Newark and the Very Rev. Tracey Lind was a candidate for Bishop of Chicago. Neither was elected. We will never know for sure what influence BO33 had on those elections.

**Los Angeles 2009** *Resolved, That the 76th General Convention affirm the value of "listening to the experience of homosexual persons," as called for by the Lambeth Conferences of 1978, 1988, and 1998, and acknowledge that through our own listening the General Convention has come to recognize that the baptized membership of the Episcopal Church includes same-sex couples living in lifelong committed relationships "characterized by fidelity, monogamy, mutual affection and respect, careful, honest communication, and the holy love which enables those in such rela-*

*tionships to see in each other the image of God" (2000-D039); and be it further*

*Resolved, That the 76th General Convention recognize that gay and lesbian persons who are part of such relationships have responded to God's call and have exercised various ministries in and on behalf of God's One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church and are currently doing so in our midst; and be it further*

*Resolved, That the 76th General Convention affirm that God has called and may call such individuals, to any ordained ministry in The Episcopal Church, and that God's call to the ordained ministry in The Episcopal Church is a mystery which the Church attempts to discern for all people through our discernment processes acting in accordance with the Constitution and Canons of The Episcopal Church; and be it further*

*Resolved, That the 76th General Convention acknowledge that members of The Episcopal Church as of the Anglican Communion, based on careful study of the Holy Scriptures, and in light of tradition and reason, are not of one mind, and Christians of good conscience disagree about some of these matters.*

Also in 2009 The Diocese of Minnesota offered a lesbian candidate for bishop, the Rev. Bonnie Perry, but she was not elected.

The Diocese of Los Angeles offers two glbt as candidates for bishop, and the Rev. Mary Glaspool was elected and subsequently consecrated as one of their bishops.



LeeAnne and The Reverend Mary Glaspool

**Where does the Episcopal Church stand on same-sex marriages?**

**Philadelphia 1997** Six Diocesan Conventions submitted the following resolution to GC, but it failed by just one deputation:

*Resolved, That this 72nd General Convention direct the Standing Liturgical Commission to develop, after critical study of pertinent rites already in use by faith communities, a rite or rites for the blessing of committed relationships of persons of the same sex, and to present such forms to the 73rd General Convention for inclusion in the Book of Occasional Services.*

**Minneapolis 2003**

*Resolved that, we recognize 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.*

*Resolved that we commit ourselves, and call our church, in the spirit of Resolution A104 of the 70th General Convention (1991), to continued prayer, study, and discernment on the pastoral care for gay and lesbian persons, to include the compilation and development by a special commission organized and appointed by the Presiding Bishop of resources to facilitate as wide a conversation of discernment as possible throughout the church.*

*Resolved that our baptism into Jesus Christ is inseparable from our communion with one another, and we commit ourselves to that communion despite our diversity of opinion and, among dioceses, a diversity of pastoral practice with the gay men and lesbians among us.*

**Los Angeles 2009** *Resolved, the House of Deputies concurring, that the 76th General Convention acknowledge the changing circumstances in the United States and in other nations, as legislation authorizing or forbidding marriage, civil unions or domestic partnerships for gay and lesbian persons is passed in various civil jurisdictions that call forth a renewed pastoral response from this Church, and for an open process for the consideration of theological and liturgical resources for the blessing of same gender relationships; and be it further*

*Resolved, That the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music, in consultation with the House of Bishops, collect and develop theological and liturgical resources, and report to the 77th General Convention; and be it further*

*Resolved, That the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music, in consultation with the House of Bishops, devise an open process for the conduct of its work inviting participation from provinces, dioceses, congregations, and individuals who are engaged in such theological work, and inviting theo-*

*logical reflection from throughout the Anglican Communion; and be it further*

*Resolved, That bishops, particularly those in dioceses within civil jurisdictions where same-gender marriage, civil unions, or domestic partnerships are legal, may provide generous pastoral response to meet the needs of members of this Church; and be it further*

*Resolved, That this Convention honor the theological diversity of this Church in regard to matters of human sexuality; and be it further*

*Resolved, That the members of this Church be encouraged to engage in this effort.*

As a result, an increasing number of bishops have created official, written policies that permit the blessing of same-sex relationships: Arkansas, Bethlehem PA, California, Connecticut, Delaware, El Camino Real CA, Hawai'i, Long Island, Maryland, Mass., Nevada, New Hampshire, NC, San Diego, S. Ohio, Utah, and Vermont.

**2012** It is anticipated that the results of the gathering of rites of same-sex blessings will have been collected and options for official rites will be brought to a vote for inclusion in the official liturgies of the church.

I have assembled these bits of legislation from a variety of sources, including Integrity's website. (Integrity is a coalition of lgbt people and their allies working toward full inclusion in the Episcopal Church.) I have posted some very good documents on our St. Mary's website which explain the process in more depth. As you can see, we have been officially discussing homosexuality since 1976. It has been a long road with many twists and turns, some disappointments, some joys, but it is clear the arc is toward full inclusion. We'll get there, no doubt.

Just to remind you, the Episcopal Church makes decisions every three years at General Conventions (GCs). We have a bicameral legislative process, with one house being only Bishops, and the other house being equal numbers of lay and ordained people. Legislation must pass in the exact same language in both houses for it to be accepted. No one has authority to make policy decisions in the Episcopal Church - not even bishops! - outside of legislation that has been passed at a GC.

I have just been elected to my 5<sup>th</sup> GC as a clergy deputy from Minnesota, and I continue to be grateful to St. Mary's people for giving me the space to put my heart and energy into our legislative process - I find it thrilling, and challenging, and important, and hopeful, so thanks.  
-LeeAnne



I figured out a long time ago that our life experiences appear often to be placed there intentionally as the Creator's purpose, even when we aren't paying much attention. On my ordination stole I have written on the reverse side, 'Be still (listen) and know that I am God' from psalm 46 the parenthesis is mine, or from the Zen masters, pay attention, pay attention, pay attention. My life is full of these thin places.

My older cousin Joe, by 3 years, and I pretty much grew up together. We both were Eagle Scouts loved to camp, fish with our grandfather, and avoided the younger members of our respective families by disappearing at gatherings. We were avid readers, introverts, gifted in math and science, and looking back probably considered nerds. We gave each other slide rules one Christmas, pretty cool stuff. We lived about 35 miles apart so spending time together was a regular event, and since he was older I generally got to hang out with him, and escape my 5 younger siblings.

My family was Episcopalian, his parents had been saved at a Billy Graham rally...we didn't talk about religion that much...my aunt was particularly hostile towards the catholic nature of being an Episcopalian, and the fact we did not use the bible at our services, or so the thought.

We were together camping the spring of his senior year at high school, he preparing to move off to college, Cal Poly...Around the campfire he handed me a book... this was not uncommon, we shared books all the time, but this was different. He asked me to read it that night, and we could talk about it the next morning.....sort of weird but I went along....the book was City of Night by John Rechy...now recognized as one of the top 25 gay novels of all times.

I stayed up until early morning, finished most of the book...amazed...unsettled....compulsively turning pages....this was pretty raw stuff for a 15 year old....I don't think it was legal at the time...

Next morning Joe was unusually quiet. We fished...he then sat down, cried, for a long time, and told me that this book was about him...and he had no idea what to do... between sobbing, crying...he made me promise it had to be my secret, that his parents must never know.

I was uncomfortable to say the least; I loved my cousin... but had no idea about this...but I promised. We talked, sat, fished, did not speak about it anymore that day. It was overwhelming. Over the next few months before he left for college we shared more books, had ongoing conversations, and he prepared for the changes college brings.

He completed college, become a civil and electrical engineer, a colonial in the army...(long before DADT), and to this day is a senior port inspector in California. He has lived around the world, bicycled in the Tour de France, skied wherever there is snow.

Through the years he had a trail of 'girl' friends he would occasionally bring to family events...but his presence was more and more infrequent... We continue to be close in spirit, when we see each other. Our lives have taken dif-

ferent paths.

Our parents and grandparents died without really knowing their son, grandson and nephew....though I suspect my grandmother knew...I listened more than once to my aunt, and his brother and sister, carry on about Gays and Lesbians, thankful that my cousin was not around. I would argue of course, to the point that my father while he was alive begged me not to talk about my faith, or the church, particularly homosexuals, at family gatherings. I have walked out of countless family events too angry to stay and hold my tongue and more importantly to hold my promise.

My cousin awakened in me my a deeply rooted commitment to gender equality. I have spent my life studying, reflecting and writing...my thesis in Feminism is the direct result of my restless call to understand. I did not have any confusion about my cousin's orientation, but more importantly to understand the hatred, exclusion, and mean spirited nature of fellow Christians. These were not the loving open Episcopalians I grew up with, but I know them well across the limbs on our family tree.

As a youth I hung out at All Saints Pasadena...now famous for being taken to court by Bush and the IRS. It was there in the 60's I discerned was formed as a Conscientious Objector, and committed as a peace maker. In the mid 90's at All Saints Pasadena, I participated in the first Beyond Inclusion conference, representing The Episcopal Church in Minnesota. I celebrated as that congregation became the first major community to not only welcome, but advocate, ordain, and bless the relationships of GLBT Christians. The Reverend George Regas was my mentor in the 60's during his long tenure lead that community to where it is today.

I discerned the priesthood in my early 20's but changed my path after a not so helpful conversation with the bishop over my status as a Conscientious Objector. I journeyed spiritually for about 30 years exploring other traditions; I understood finally that my spiritual passion was grounded in the Gospels call to me, surrounding the inclusion of GLBT brothers and sisters, creating a culture of peace, and removing the barriers of white privilege in all of its manifestations. That is my diaconal heart.

I owe much of this to my cousin...his trust with me and his painful honesty, the cloak he had to live under, the absurdity of his fundamentalist family. His coming out opened in me the commitment to and passion for justice that is the core of my spiritual being, and my calling in mission and ministry.

In this church of ours,  
there will be no outcasts!

The Reverend Rex McKee



## District 202

In 1991, a group of concerned adults and youth gathered around a kitchen table to discuss a concern. There were no safe and supportive, sober and drug-free places—or safe spaces—for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) youth. Through a unique youth/adult partnership, District 202 opened its doors less than a year later.

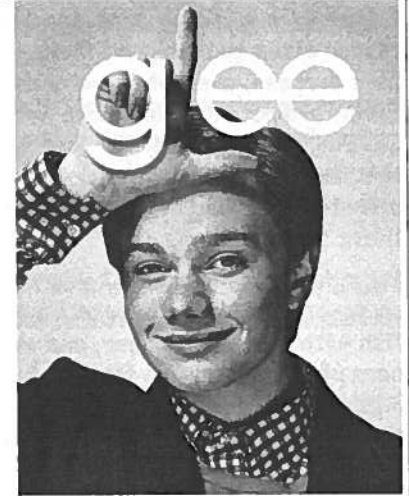
Then something remarkable happened in this newly created "safe space." LGBT youth created a new community of their own design, without the daily isolation or pressures of those times. And with it, these youth found their voices, built their self-confidence and mentored their peers. They became empowered.

Now 18 years later, this pioneering "safe space," which gave birth to six LGBT youth-serving organizations and became a model for many more, is evolving. District 202's mission has not changed, but how it delivers on that mission has changed. This change is the culmination of three years research, a community roundtable/assessment, youth surveys, and discussions with current and potential funders. District 202 continues to empower LGBT youth through a unique blend of programs, face-to-face interaction throughout the Twin Cities and online engagement through our secure social networking site. Creating safe spaces online and throughout the Twin Cities is the most efficient and effective use of our and our community's resources.

St. Mary's will be supporting District 202 by donating half of the book, sticker, and ribbon sales to them, plus we are talking about the possibility of having them meet in our building on a regular basis.

For more information

<http://www.dist202.org/>



### January 5

Movie Night: *Glee*

Come to St. Mary's room to eat hot popcorn and watch some episodes of the hit TV show *Glee*. We'll pay particular attention to the storyline involving Kurt, the gay teen living into his sexuality, and his experiences being bullied at school.

### January 26 7pm-8:30pm

#### The Bible and Homosexuality

Have you heard it said that the Bible condemns homosexuality? Want to know what to say in response? At this forum, respected religious leaders from Out-front MN will be presenting those 'clobber' passages from scripture used to deny glbt people dignity, respect, and equal treatment under the law.

More information about these forums will be available through the weekly email, bulletin announcements, and the website as the dates get closer.

## Wear a rainbow ribbon!

Children of St Mary's have made and will be selling rainbow ribbons for people to wear on their lapels - \$1 each.

## Stickers!

At St. Mary's in January you will be able to purchase rainbow stickers for your car or wherever - one says St. Mary's specifically, and the other says Peace.

## Creating Change

This is the annual national conference for LGBT folk and their allies - this year in Minneapolis Feb 2-6. St. Mary's is collaborating with the local Integrity Chapter to staff an Episcopal Church Welcomes You booth at the event. Interested in visiting? Helping staff the table? Contact LeeAnne or Sarah Turino and we'll loop you in.

## "It Gets Better" Youtube channel:

<http://www.youtube.com/user/itgetsbetterproject>

Pour yourself a cup of tea, grab a box of Kleenex and listen to these amazing stories

**The Trevor Project** A 24-hour, national helpline for gay and questioning teens 866 4U TREVOR  
[www.thetrevorproject.org](http://www.thetrevorproject.org)

LeeAnne preached a sermon on the bullying of gay teens, you can go to itunes to listen. It was 10/17, and the title was We Promise It Gets Better.

## Recommended books

### Children's

And Tango Makes Three \* By Justin Richardson and Peter Parnell

Molly's Family By Nancy Garden

Dad And Pop By Kelly Bennett

All Families Are Special\* By Norma Simon

In Our Mothers' House By Patricia Polacco

Heather Has Two Mommies By Leslea Newman

King and King (also King And King and Family) By Lynda de Haan and Stern Nijland

Sissy Duckling By Harvey Fierstein

Uncle Bobby's Wedding By Sarah S. Porannen

Not All Princesses Dress in Pink By Jane Yolen and Heidi E. Y. Stemple

### Young Adult

Luna By Julie Anne Peters

Misfits\* By James Howe

Will Grayson By John Green and David Levithan

Let's Get this Straight: The Ultimate Handbook for Youth with LGBTQ Parents By Tina Fakhrid-Deen

Will By Maria Boyd

Wildthorn By Jane Eagland

Annie on My Mind By Nancy Garden

Absolutely, Positively Not... By David Larochelle

### Adult

Going to Heaven: the Life and Election of Bishop Gene Robinson\*

The Eye of the Storm by Bishop Gene Robinson

Families Like Mine: Children of Gay Parents Tell It Like It Is\* By Abigail Garner

Straight Parents, Gay Children, Keeping Families Together

By Roberta A. Bernstein

Dirt, Greed, and Sex: Sexual Ethics In The New Testament And Their Implications For Today

By William Countryman

Reasonable and Holy: Engaging Same-Sexuality

By Tobias Haller

Me By Ricky Martin

My Princess Boy: A Mom's Story about a Young Boy Who Loves to Dress Up

By Cheryl Kilodavis and Suzanne DeSimone

Same Sex Unions in Premodern Europe

By John Boswell

No Outcasts

By Edward L. Browning

Gay Priest: An Inner Journey

By Malcolm Boyd

Are You Running with me Jesus?

By Malcolm Boyd

\*We will be selling copies of this book at St. Mary's on Sundays in January



Saint Mary's Episcopal Church  
1895 Laurel Avenue  
Saint Paul, MN 55104



In this church of ours, there will be no outcasts. With these words the former presiding bishop of The Episcopal Church, The Right Reverend Edmond Browning accepted his election and call as our leader over 25 years ago. Saint Mary's lives into that commitment day after day and welcomes and embraces all, without distinction. We live in the light our Baptismal Covenant calls us to seek and serve.

This special edition of Fishtales is full of powerful and heartbreaking stories from a diversity of our sisters and brothers. It provides a snapshot of our recent history as a Christian Denomination. We have gathered resources, recommended books, and organized events throughout the next few weeks to further discern our lives together as we embrace and advocate for and with our GLBT brothers and sisters.

Spend some time with these materials. Share them with your friends and neighbors and your children. May we Love one another as Christ loves us.

The Rt. Reverend Brian Prior, Bishop

The Reverend LeeAnne Watkins, Rector

The Reverend Rex McKee, Deacon

Robert Butterbrodt, Senior Warden

Suzann Brown, Junior Warden

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**St. Mary's is a Christ-centered community with a mission to express God's love for all people.**

*Celebrating 125 years as a worshipping community in Merriam Park.*