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Marriage Equality Statement

from: [Diocesan House](#), Rochester

by The Rt. Rev. Prince G. Singh

Statement from The Rt. Rev. Prince G. Singh, Bishop of Rochester, and the Task Force on Marriage Equality

As we approach the implementation of the Marriage Equality Act, we rejoice in the extension of civil rights to same-sex couples in New York. We believe this extension to be fully consonant with the Good News of God in Jesus Christ proclaimed by the church.

This extension of marriage equality follows quite naturally with the history of the Episcopal Diocese of Rochester, which has tirelessly promoted the full inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons in the life of the church, including blessing their relationships as a pastoral response in many parish contexts, for almost forty years. While we recognize that there are differing opinions, even within our own church, we want to be clear that these differences do not break the fellowship by which we are bound together. Let us constantly seek reconciliation and act in ways that uphold both our convictions and one another's dignity.

After careful discernment and consultation, we recommend to our parish clergy that they proceed with fully welcoming all couples who seek to enter the marriage covenant of fidelity, mutuality and service. We encourage the celebration and blessing of all marriages in accordance with congregational guidelines. In doing so, we uphold the Episcopal Church's 2009 General Convention resolution (C056) that allows bishops to provide a "generous pastoral response" in those jurisdictions which allow for equal marriage, civil unions, or domestic partnerships. However, as with current canon law, presiding at any marriage is at the discretion of clergy.

It will take some time for the language of both the Book of Common Prayer and the Canons of the Episcopal Church to catch up to this new reality. In the meantime, the Bishop's office will be a resource for those seeking to celebrate and bless marriage with appropriate rites and careful preparation. We encourage clergy to do whatever

work of formation and discernment necessary, in order to create consensus, as much as possible, before moving forward. Further guidelines for the clergy will be forthcoming; this matter will be a topic of a clergy gathering on September 25.

May God bless us as we move forward in the spread of the freedom for which Christ sets us free (Galatians 5:1), and may God bless all couples who are seeking to celebrate their commitment and ask the blessing of God on it.