



diocese of  
California

The Episcopal Church in the San Francisco Bay Area

Diocese of California  
The Episcopal Church  
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My Dear Sister and Brother Clergy,

I know that the program year for congregations is in full swing and many of you had wonderful liturgies for Blessing of the Animals. I was grateful to see so many of you at our clergy retreat and I hope you will continue taking good care of yourselves as I know this time of year continues to be very busy. Soon we'll be sharing the life of the diocese together at Diocesan Convention.

I wrote to you on June 29 authorizing you to officiate at same-sex civil marriages using "I will bless you and you will be a blessing," authorized by the General Convention in 2012. As some of you pointed out, this document is not, on its own, sufficient for legal reasons. As approved by the General Convention, "I will bless you and you will be a blessing" does not meet California law for marriages.

After consulting with our chancellor we have modified the rite so that it does have the necessary language for use when marrying couples in the state of California, not only blessing a previously solemnized civil marriage. The changes are minor, but sufficient. The modified version can be found [here](#) and is available on [diocal.org](http://diocal.org) under [Clergy Resources](#). Both this letter and my initial letter will be available there soon

Opposite-sex couples are not to use "I will bless you and you will be a blessing," and likewise, the Book of Common Prayer marriage rite is not to be modified for use with same-sex couples. This may change in time, but for now these are the rites as authorized in this diocese. I also remind you that existing canonical requirements for marriage and pre-marital preparation are applicable to same sex couples.

I encourage all of you to review the Bluebook report by the Standing Commission on Liturgy and Music to the 2012 General Convention. It is available [here](#). Please note that General Convention amended the liturgy from the Bluebook report, though the rest of the report is accurate. Please be sure to use the rite that says "Modified for use in the Diocese of California." I look forward to hearing from you about your experiences with this beautiful new liturgy.

As I have said before, I rejoice at this time of marriage equality within our state and the diocese.

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