



The Right Reverend Jennifer A. Reddall
BISHOP OF ARIZONA

June 12, 2023

Dear Siblings in Christ,

“In Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ.” - Galatians 3:28

The vows I took as your bishop include the following: “Will you boldly proclaim and interpret the Gospel of Christ, enlightening the minds and stirring up the conscience of your people?” To which I answered, “I will, in the power of the Spirit.”

To the end of enlightening your minds and stirring up your consciences, I write today to engage each of our members in reflection about how you can, both as an individual follower of the Gospel of Christ, and as a congregation, support transgender, nonbinary and intersex people during a period of increasing legal oppression and violence.

I want to be clear that the trans and nonbinary community is not a group that stands outside the Episcopal Diocese of Arizona. We have trans and nonbinary clergy, postulants, and members of our congregations. They are part of the Body of Christ, and when one part of the Body is injured, we are all injured. Recent laws and proposed legislation in many states, including Arizona, seek to limit medical care, reduce the protection of trans and nonbinary children at school, forbid access to restrooms, and make the full range of gender expression and dress illegal. These laws harm not just those who are trans and nonbinary, but all of us.

There are congregations in our Diocese that support their trans and nonbinary members and full LGBTQ+ inclusion as part of their core identity. There are other congregations who desire to do so, but would benefit from more learning and understanding to do so sensitively. And there are congregations whose understanding of Jesus’ welcome of all is conflicted, and who do not have firsthand experience of fully including all the baptized in their churches. It is to those congregations and individuals that I particularly write today, as there is much to learn.

The inclusion of trans, intersex and nonbinary people into the Episcopal Church is not a fringe issue. The House of Bishops in both 2022 and 2023 unanimously voted to decry the types of legislative initiatives above and to urge all in our Church to create safe spaces and shield all people

from harassment based on gender identity. Our Canons make explicit that gender identity and expression is not a barrier to the access to any level of ministry in the Episcopal Church. (Title III.1.2).

Living into the reality of our nondiscrimination canons is still a work in progress. And this is our work. If inclusion is already part of your personal and congregational identity, I encourage you to enter the work of education and advocacy. If inclusion is something you want to learn more about so that with greater understanding you can see the light of Christ in all your neighbors, here are three resources you can use.

www.transepiscopal.org has links to liturgical and theological resources and General Convention legislation.

www.thetrevorproject.org has information about supporting LGBTQ+ youth and teens, along with statistics about how that support saves lives.

www.onecommunity.com are our Arizona partners in supporting non-discrimination legislation in our state. We will be offering the opportunity for everyone at our Diocesan Convention this fall to take their “unity pledge” of support.

I am aware of the responsibility and honor of my role in introducing this conversation to some areas of our diocese. I do so with love and with my hope set on Christ, who truly makes us One.

In Jesus' Name,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Reddall", preceded by a plus sign (+).

The Right Rev. Jennifer A. Reddall
Sixth Episcopal Bishop of Arizona