

LGBTQ Commission

Annual Report to the Annual Convention of the Diocese of New Jersey (2022)

This past June, over 100 people gathered at Trinity Cathedral in Trenton for what we believe to have been the very first Pride Eucharist in the Diocese of New Jersey! We were honored to have both Bishop Stokes and Dean John in attendance. Clergy and lay members from across the diocese were there in force as well. There were Episcopalians who identify as LGBTQIA+ and there were also MANY of our allies! We love our allies!

Yes, this past year has been a year of great successes, but it has also been yet another year of challenges. Trans persons face increasing discrimination across this country and even in NJ. Trans persons, especially trans women of color, are still being murdered across this country. Internationally, there is a growing threat to the lives and freedoms of the LGBTQIA+ community. As I asked in my sermon during the Pride Eucharist, “What is the Church doing to protect, these, some of the most vulnerable of God’s children?”

Full inclusion of the LBTQIA+ community (also called the “queer community” by some, but not all) has been a slow but steady march in The Episcopal Church. There remain dioceses, parishes, and individuals across TEC who have not yet taken seriously the baptismal promise to “respect the dignity of every human being”, and we continue to work and pray for the day when that promise comes true for all of God’s children, in TEC and outside its doors.

We have offered several online training sessions, featuring lay and clergy members of the diocese sharing their stories and teaching some of the basics of LGBTQIA+ identities. We hope you will join a future training or watch one of our videos we hope to post to the diocesan website soon. We will also have future workshops on “Aging and the LGBTQ Community” and a workshop on sexual ethics.

Pray for us as our work continues in this diocese, the province, TEC, this nation and world. We want to profoundly thank Bishop Stokes for his continued and unflagging support of our communities. We also welcome Canon Dr. French as she has been called to serve and shepherd us. There are many exciting possibilities for us in the future. Be watching for announcements of upcoming workshops and pride events. If you have not yet joined our Facebook group, find us as “The LGBTQ Commission of the Diocese of New Jersey”. It’s a secure group, so you’ll have to ask to join.

We’ll say it again: God sees you! God hears you! God loves ALL of you!

Faithfully,

Scott+

The Rev. Daniel Scott Russell, Chair

2022 Members of the LGBTQ Commission

The Rev. Daniel Scott Russell, Chair

The Rev. Carolyn Bradley

The Rev. Allison Burns-LaGreca

The Rev. Micah Cronin

The Rev. Joanna Hollis

The Rev. Dr. Robert Laws

Jon Carl Lewis

Dr. Francesca Maresca

The Rev. Sharon Patterson

Alicia Picone Rodriguez

The Rev. Jeffrey Roy