

The Episcopal Diocese of Albany  
**Task Force on Communion Across Difference**

April 12, 2023

**CONFIDENTIAL**

Standing Committee of  
The Episcopal Diocese of Albany  
via email

Re: Update on the Work of the Task Force

The Diocese of Albany Task Force on Communion Across Difference (“CAD”) has met now a half dozen times since October 2022. We write the Standing Committee to give you an initial report on our work. We anticipate that additional recommendations will follow.

Thank you. First, we commend and wholeheartedly thank the Standing Committee for recognizing the need for healing in the Diocese regarding matters of faithful human sexuality. That need for healing is shared by ALL members of CAD, both “traditional” and “progressive.” We give thanks to the Standing Committee for organizing and supporting CAD to be a part of the healing process.

Healing and Hope within CAD. We are amazed at the faithfulness and spiritual gifts of CAD members. We are laity, deacons, priests, and bishops. We span the full range of views in TEC on matters of human sexuality. Yet we have been able to do far more than merely treat each other “charitably.” We have come to have profound respect and love for one another. We find ourselves flourishing together within our differing theological views. This bodes well for the mission of the Diocese of Albany.

Process within CAD. How has this “flourishing” come about? We have taken time to (i) pray and reflect together on Holy Scripture, (ii) share faith stories, and (iii) articulate our lived experiences of faithful marriage and sexuality. These processes revealed hurt within our members. Our pain reflects, we believe, the widespread woundedness in the Diocese of Albany surrounding matters of same-sex marriage and ordination of LGBTQ+ persons, the woundedness that showed itself at the last convention.

And yet, through honest sharing, love-filled listening, and prayer, CAD has found anger replaced by compassion and even joy. It is our goal, our hope, that this healing may extend to all corners of our Diocese.

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CAD is Not Substitute for Convention. We understand all the good reasons for truncating convention. Given the unfortunate history in the Diocese of a lack of frank discussion of the merits and problems of same sex marriage, the prohibition of canonical amendments at the upcoming convention is viewed by some with suspicion— perhaps unfairly – as an attempt to avoid discussion of these issues.

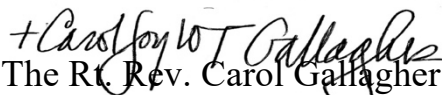
That said, we the members of CAD agree that legal / legislative forums seldom provide an opportunity for healing on divisive issues, and sometimes -- as at the last Convention -- turn polemic and disrespectful. Therefore, CAD encourages the Standing Committee to work with us on providing smaller, non-legislative forums for promoting healing on divisive issues.

Small Group Healing. We propose small group gatherings throughout the Diocese of Albany which use the processes that have brought about healing and hope in CAD in the areas of same sex marriage and ordination / licensing of LGBTQ+ clergy. Members of CAD have offered to facilitate these forums with assistance from others.

Again, thank you for your support of our work. We pray that your work as the ecclesiastical authority may be fruitful and not overly burdensome. We leave to your discretion possible wider dissemination of this letter.

The Task Force on Communion Across Difference

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The Rt. Rev. Michael Smith  
Co-Convener

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The Rt. Rev. Carol Gallagher  
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