

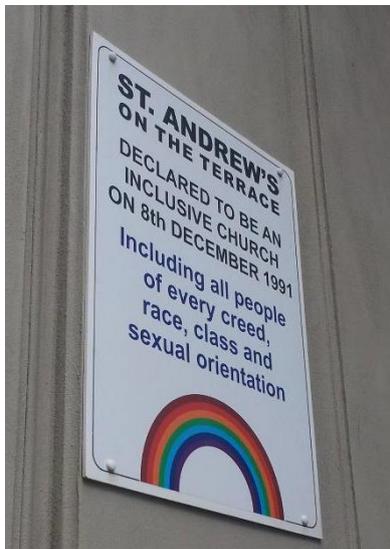
St Andrew's on The Terrace Welcomes Third Reading of Bill Wednesday, 17 April 2013, 9:25 am

Press Release: St Andrew's on The Terrace

The Presbyterian Parish of St Andrew's on The Terrace is eagerly anticipating the third and final reading of the Marriage Amendment Bill this evening. The parish has celebrated civil unions since 2005 and hopes that it will soon be able to treat opposite-sex and same-sex couples equally and offer both marriage and civil unions to all couples. This law change addresses the hopes and needs of real people, with real families and it is to them that we respond with compassion and love.

Parish Council member Ellen Murray says, "This is an issue of freedom of religion for us. At present the law prevents us from treating people in our faith community equally. Seeing all people as made in the image of God, and seeing all loving and just relationships as of value, is central to our faith."

St Andrew's minister, Rev Dr Margaret Mayman, says she hopes that the passage of the bill and the passage of time will alleviate the concerns of people of faith about marriage equality. Religious celebrants who do not support marriage equality will be free to maintain their religious beliefs and practices. The amendment to the bill has made this very clear.



Margaret Mayman says: "It is our hope that in time all people of faith will come to accept the relationships of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender New Zealanders. As New Zealanders we trust each other, and those of us who follow Jesus should remember his injunction that we love our neighbours as ourselves. We are a diverse nation and our differences of race, culture, religion and sexuality are something to celebrate. But we all deserve to be treated equally under the law."