

BELONGING AT ST ANDREW'S

PART V: INCLUSIVITY

AT ST ANDREW'S ON THE TERRACE



One of the statements St Andrew's makes which is greatly prized by the community is the following:

WELCOME TO ST ANDREW'S ON THE TERRACE

*Wherever you are on your faith journey,
wherever you have come from and wherever you are going to,
whatever you believe, whatever you do not believe,
you are welcome here.*

You can decide how you will connect!
This set of booklets aims to help with that decision

We are inclusive!

1991

We are an Inclusive Church



We declared ourselves to be an Inclusive Church on 8th December 1991.
Welcoming all people of every creed, race, class and sexual orientation.

Our declaration of intent:

“We strive to be:

A church without labels, welcoming all people;

An inclusive church, including people
of any creed, race, class or sexual orientation;

A church where lay participation in worship is fostered
and no talents are wasted;

A church which seeks to give a Christian shape
to social, economic and political affairs – to be light, salt and leaven.”

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St Andrew's Celebrates Breakthrough Decision

Tuesday, 21 October 2003, 2:39 pm

Press Release: St Andrew's on The Terrace

The home parish of Deborah Gordon, a lesbian woman who wishes to become a Presbyterian minister, is celebrating the decision of the Presbyterian Church that there is no barrier to her candidacy. Ms. Gordon's application for ministry training had been strongly supported by St Andrew's and by Wellington Presbytery.

"At St Andrew's on The Terrace, we have benefited greatly from Deborah's ministry of music, teaching, liturgy, preaching and care," says Douglas Wood, convenor of the St Andrew's Parish Council. "We believe she has gifts and abilities that fit her for ordained ministry and are delighted she will have the opportunity to be assessed for ministry training in the very near future."

Other gay and lesbian members of the Presbyterian Church also have cause for celebration. The Judicial Commission, which made the decision clearing the way for Ms Gordon to be assessed, considered the status of decisions and policies made on the issue over recent years. It concluded that a 1999 legal opinion that the Church had decided not to allow gays and lesbians in leadership roles was wrong. The Judicial Commission confirmed the Church's 1994 decision that there are currently no specific regulations barring the ordination of homosexual people.

"This is an overwhelmingly wonderful moment in the life of the Presbyterian Church," says Rev Dr Margaret Mayman, the minister of St Andrew's on The Terrace. "For gay and lesbian Presbyterians it is a welcome home, an honouring that we are members of the church with the same rights and responsibilities as everyone else. We have come to this day through the commitment of many gay and lesbian people who have struggled to remain in a church that had declared us second class Christians. I am thankful for Deborah's courage and for the dedication of all the gay and straight Presbyterians who have struggled to see our church become whole again," Dr Mayman said.

St ANDREW'S AND INCLUSIVENESS in 2004

At the recent meeting of the Presbyterian General Assembly, the following motion was passed. It will go to all Parishes and Presbyteries. The motion will then go back to the next General Assembly in 2006 for a second vote.

General Assembly Decision

"That General Assembly now rule in accordance with the Supreme and Subordinate Standards of the church and with previous Assembly decisions that this church may not accept for training, license, ordain or induct anyone involved in a sexual relationship outside of faithful marriage between a man and a woman.

In relation to homosexuality, in the interests of natural justice, this ruling shall not prejudice anyone, who as at the date of this meeting, has been accepted for training, licensed ordained or inducted. That this ruling be passed down under the Barrier Act to Presbyteries/Union District Councils. That the Book of Order and Judicial Committee be asked to prepare appropriate amendments to the Book of Order for the 2006 Assembly."

St Andrew's on The Terrace Declaration

For over ten years St Andrew's on The Terrace has declared itself to be an inclusive church. Our declaration of intent includes the following words:

"We strive to be:

A church without labels, welcoming all people;

***An inclusive church, including people of any creed,
race, class or sexual orientation;***

A church where lay participation in worship is fostered and no talents are wasted;

A church which seeks to give a Christian shape to social, economic and political affairs – to be light, salt and leaven."

Inclusiveness is of prime importance to our faith community. We do not want any of our members to consider they are not fully valued. We affirm all people are equally loved by God and are welcome at St Andrew's.

We are working with other parishes to respond to the Church's recent decision. We will continue to go about our daily business according to our inclusive mission and declaration of intent.

Parish Council, St Andrew's on The Terrace

13 October 2004

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St. Andrew's on The Terrace shocked by decision

Friday, 29 September 2006, 3:45 pm

Press Release: St Andrew's on The Terrace

St. Andrew's on The Terrace shocked at Presbyterian ban on gay, lesbian and de facto leadership

St. Andrew's on The Terrace along with other progressive Presbyterian congregations is shocked but defiant in the face of the news today that the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church ratified its ban on gay and lesbian leadership in the church.

With the ratification of "Motion 69" the Assembly has confirmed its rejection not only of gay and lesbian people, but also of people living in de facto relationships, as being eligible to become ministers or elders.

"This decision is an aberration," says Parish Council Convenor Douglas Wood, "and it flies in the face of sound modern understanding of the teachings of the Christian faith. Many good and faithful Presbyterian Christians will be labelled as unfit to lead based on an arbitrary ruling about their marital status or sexuality."

He adds that, "Our own parish leadership team and that of many parishes in Aotearoa NZ include members who under this new rule are now suddenly declared as unwanted in leadership." The parish sees the rule as contrary to the spirit of a modern Christian sexual ethic which recognises that the qualities of love, faithfulness and mutuality are to be encouraged and strived after in all forms of relationship.

"It is an embarrassment for the Church that the General Assembly should come to such an unjust decision," says St. Andrew's Associate Minister Paul Barber. "The struggles facing gay and lesbian Christians as well as Christians in de facto relationships within the church have many parallels with the struggle of women and Maori to achieve justice and equal recognition within the church. This motion of General Assembly is not

faithful to the gospel message of love, justice and reconciliation as found in the scriptures."

The decision of this year's Presbyterian General Assembly confirmed a motion that was passed at the previous Assembly in 2004. The rule that now comes into effect will prohibit the licensing, ordination or induction of gay and lesbian people and people living in de facto relationships into leadership positions in the church.

The people of St. Andrews on The Terrace, along with a number of parishes, have re-stated their intention to continue to select leaders on the basis of their gifts, skills and commitment to a shared vision as a worshipping community. Douglas Wood refers to the parish's decision in 1991 when St. Andrew's declared itself to be an open and inclusive parish, welcoming all to be part of the life of the faith community, regardless of race, creed, class or sexual orientation. "Inclusiveness is of vital importance in the mission of our faith community" he says, "We do not discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation or marital status."



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Church Stand against Presbyterian Discrimination

Sunday, 28 September 2008, 2:41 pm

Press Release: St Andrew's on The Terrace

St Andrew's on the Terrace Presbyterian Church is taking a stand against previous Presbyterian General Assembly decisions to exclude gay and lesbian people from leadership positions in the Presbyterian Church. On Tuesday night (30 September, 7 pm), on the eve of the 2008 General Assembly, the parish will hold a public screening of a new documentary, "For the Bible Tells Me So."

At a time when the issue of homosexuality is polarising the Church on an unprecedented scale, this compassionate and insightful new documentary focuses on some of those caught in the crossfire. Through the experiences of five Christian families, it shows how insightful people of faith handle the realization of having a gay child.

Informed by such respected voices as Bishop Desmond Tutu, the film also provides a useful deconstruction of the arguments used to justify homophobia by the church, and explains the cultural and historical context of the biblical verses that are frequently misinterpreted as condemning homosexuality.

The St Andrew's screening will be followed by a panel discussion on the impact of religious homophobia on families in Aotearoa New Zealand. Panellists are Dr Mark Henrickson of Massey University, and author of the Lavender Islands study on lesbian, gay, and bisexual New Zealanders; Elizabeth Kerekere of Out There! Queer Youth Development Project; and Fraser Paterson, Presbyterian Minister and daughter Robyn Paterson, New Zealand Film Maker.

"We are concerned the religious homophobia continues to divide families and forces gay and lesbian people to make a choice between their faith and their sexuality," says St Andrew's minister Margaret Mayman. "On this occasion we celebrate triumphs of the human spirit in the stories of people of faith who love and include the breadth of God's family. We are

determined to continue to be a vocal and visible presence in the Presbyterian Church, reminding our denomination that such love is of God.”

St Andrew’s and a number of other Presbyterian Churches around New Zealand have stated that they will not discriminate against gay and lesbian people, and people in de facto relationships who were also covered in the exclusive legislation, and will choose people for leadership based on their gifts and their sense of call.



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Religious homophobia divides families

Wednesday, 1 October 2008, 3:12 pm

Press Release: St Andrew's on The Terrace

Last night 180 people attended the Wellington premiere of "For the Bible Tells Me So" at St Andrew's on the Terrace Presbyterian Church. Attendees were a mix of church-goers and members of Wellington's gay community, including some who will be attending the Presbyterian General Assembly which begins tomorrow. In 2006, the church excluded from leadership gay and lesbian people and people in de facto relationships.

The documentary was well received with many in the audience visibly moved by the stories of five Christian families and their gay and lesbian children. It also addressed the issues of biblical misinterpretation that are at the base of much discrimination against gay and lesbian people.

The screening was followed by a panel discussion on the impact of religious homophobia in Aotearoa New Zealand. Dr Mark Henrickson, senior lecturer in Social Work at Massey University shared the results of research on the place of religion and spirituality in the lives of gay and lesbian New Zealanders.

Commenting on the declining numbers of Christians in New Zealand, Dr Henrickson said, "Proportionately, almost 2.4 times as many lesbian, gay and bisexual Christians have left Christianity as have the general population.

"If Christian religious traditions want to keep lesbians, gays and bisexuals out of their communities, then what they are doing is working. If through negative messages they want lesbian, gays, and bisexuals to change their identities or lifestyles', that is not happening, because most appear more likely to abandon their religious traditions than their identities," he said.

He also noted the negative correlation between religious involvement and family acceptance of GLB children. Respondents who identified as 'No Religion' reported significantly more support from their families than

current Christians. Families with 'No Religion' were also significantly more likely to include a partner in family gatherings than current Christians.

The other panellists were Elizabeth Kerekere, takataapui activist of Out There! Queer Youth Development Project; and Fraser Paterson, Presbyterian Minister and his daughter Robyn Paterson, New Zealand Film Maker. Each told powerful and moving stories of encountering and triumphing over religious discrimination.

St Andrew's minister Margaret Mayman restated the commitment of her congregation to be a place where gay and lesbian people do not have to choose between spirituality and sexuality, where they can be part of a faith community as they seek to live the tension between identity and religious tradition creatively.

"We will continue to be a place of welcome and healing for those who have been hurt, and we will continue to work for change and for justice in the churches," Dr Mayman said.

BACKGROUND NOTE In 2002, the Presbyterian Church commissioned research company AC Nielsen to interview couples with young children who were open to western spirituality but who did not attend church. They were questioned about their attitudes to the church. The research indicated that one of the most off-putting aspects of church for these young families was judgemental attitudes held by the churches, particularly lack of acceptance of divorce, de-facto relationships, and homosexuality.

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St Andrew's on The Terrace Celebrates Inclusive Community

Wednesday, 7 December 2011, 11:36 am

Press Release: St Andrew's on The Terrace

Twenty years ago – on 8th December 1991, the people of St Andrew's on The Terrace Presbyterian Church declared themselves to be an inclusive church and nailed a rainbow sign to the front of the church announcing this stance to the city.

This past Sunday December 4th 2011 they marked the 20th anniversary of this declaration by reaffirming the commitment during a special service.

The sign still identifies the Church as a place where all are welcome – people of every creed, race, class and sexual orientation.

Sandra Kirby, Convenor of the Parish Council for Wellington's St Andrew's on The Terrace says: "Our community feels strongly that the love of God extends to all people and we aim to demonstrate this in our faith community."

"Too often people find churches to be places of judgement and we believe this is counter to the Christian message. We look forward to the day when all churches and congregations are inclusive."

In 2002, St Andrew's called an out gay minister, Rev Dr Margaret Mayman, to be their minister. The congregation is thriving as a place where gay and straight people gather together despite the exclusive rulings of the Presbyterian denomination.

The church has continued to be a place of welcome and hospitality for all members of the Wellington community, not just on Sunday but through the week as it makes its splendid facilities available to Wellingtonians for music and dance, education, spiritual renewal, social justice and community activities.

“This anniversary enabled us to reaffirm and celebrate who we are,” said Dr Mayman. The work of hospitality and welcome continues in our connections with people who have come to New Zealand as refugees and as we become more inclusive of people with disabilities. Our next project is to achieve full disabled access to our facilities through installation of a ramp and lift in the hall building.”



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St Andrew's on The Terrace supports Marriage Equality

Thursday, 11 October 2012, 11:00 am

Press Release: St Andrew's on The Terrace

St Andrew's on The Terrace Media Release

In response to the Presbyterian General Assembly's decision to oppose the Marriage Amendment Bill currently before Parliament, the Minister and Community at St Andrew's on The Terrace Presbyterian Church (Wellington) today restated their commitment to be an inclusive church, welcoming and including people of any sexual orientation or gender identity.

St Andrew's dissents from the Assembly's decision to oppose marriage equality. Marriage equality is not an issue on which Presbyterians agree.

"We are looking forward to the passing of the Marriage Amendment Bill which will mean that we can offer to perform and bless civil marriages for same-sex couples," says minister Rev Dr Margaret Mayman. "And we are relieved that the Assembly left ministers with the freedom to make decisions about whom they will marry."

St Andrew's community supports the law change because it sees sexual orientation and gender identity as irrelevant in the celebration of a couple's union. St Andrew's has been blessing the relationships of same sex couples for over twenty years and celebrating civil unions since 2005.

But currently not all couples can choose the rich cultural institution of civil marriage as part of marking their commitment to each other.

"At the moment we are forced to treat same-sex couples differently from other couples. I look forward to the time when we are able to meet same-sex couples' requests to celebrate their marriage," says St Andrew's on The Terrace Minister, Margaret Mayman. "Because what matters in marriage is love and commitment."

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."

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St Andrew's on the Terrace Will Defy Church's Ban on Same-Sex Marriage Tuesday 7 October 2014, 6:30 pm

Media Statement: Presbyterian Church Decision

St Andrew's on The Terrace Presbyterian Church (Wellington) is deeply disappointed but defiant in the face of the news today that the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church has voted to ban Ministers from performing marriages between same-sex couples. "This decision is deeply disturbing and we strongly dissent from it" says St Andrew's Parish Convenor, Sonia Groes-Petrie. "The Presbyterian tradition is for ministers to have freedom to make decisions about whom they will marry. There is a range of opinions on same-sex marriage within the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand and today's decision does not reflect that diversity."

Interim Minister Jim Cunningham says "I'm appalled at the decision that has been made. We see sexual orientation and gender identity as irrelevant in the celebration of a couple's union. It is the quality of the relationship, the love and commitment that matters. St Andrew's has been blessing the relationships of same sex couples for over twenty years, celebrating civil unions since 2005 and marriages since August last year." The national church has been debating the implications of same-sex marriages now being legal. It seems incredible that the church is legislating against love. It's embarrassing that religious organisations are the only stumbling block to full equality for same-sex couples" says St Andrew's Parish Councillor and General Assembly representative Paul Barber.

In the wake of this decision, St Andrew's on The Terrace restated their commitment to be an inclusive church, faithful to the gospel message of love and justice. "We have Ministers within our community who are registered as civil celebrants and we will continue to be able to provide a welcoming place for any couple who wishes to marry. Inclusiveness is of vital importance in the mission of our faith community. We will continue to work towards our vision for our national church where diversity is celebrated and where no-one is excluded."

Other recent Social Justice initiatives include proposals to the Church on Peace (2014) and the Living Wage (2012)

LIVING WAGE

This proposal was unanimously supported by the Parish Council and Congregation of St Andrew's on The Terrace. It was presented to Wellington Presbytery on 17 May 2012 where it also received unanimous support. It was presented in this form to the General Assembly in October 2012 where it passed with a strong majority.

Proposal: A Living Wage for all in Aotearoa New Zealand

- a) This proposal is brought to the 2012 General Assembly by the Presbytery of Wellington.
- b) The proposal is:
 - i. That the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand affirm and support the Living Wage Campaign.

The Living Wage Aotearoa New Zealand Campaign says:
“A living wage is the income necessary to provide workers and their families with the basic necessities of life. A living wage will enable workers to live with dignity and to participate as active citizens in society. We call upon the Government, employers and society as a whole, to strive for a living wage for all households as a necessary and important step in the reduction of poverty in New Zealand.”
 - ii. That the PCANZ encourages congregations, church schools, and social service agencies with a connection to the PCANZ to examine their employee remuneration packages and work towards payment of a living wage.
- c) The reasons for the proposal are that:
 - i. Christians are called to be witnesses to God's love in word and action, and to be servants of reconciliation.
 - ii. The practice of considering the needs of others is firmly rooted in biblical teachings and Christian tradition. (Acts 4:32, 34-35)

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- iii. The prophet Isaiah speaks about God's vision for a world where God's people "shall not build another inhabit; they shall not plant and another eat: for like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be, and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands. They shall not labour in vain." (Is 65: 21-23a)
- iv. Christians believe that we are all made in the image of God. People and their work have a dignity that makes the labour market substantially different from the purchase of other goods. The price of a person's labour should not be determined solely by the market.
- v. New Zealand has gone from one of the most equal countries in the OECD to one of the most unequal in the past 20 years
 - a. The richest 150 people in New Zealand grew their wealth by 20% in 2010 while wages moved by less than 2%
 - b. The top 1% of earners has more wealth than the bottom 60%, or three times more than the combined cash and assets of the poorest 50 per cent
 - c. 200,000 NZ children are likely to be living in poverty – one in six Pakeha, one in four Pacific, and one in three Māori children. Poverty impacts negatively on health and the ability of children to learn.
- vi. As the gap between the rich and poor grows in New Zealand and poverty increases, more and more New Zealanders don't get paid enough to meet their needs, enjoy their lives, and participate in society.
- vii. All over the world communities are uniting to address poverty and inequality through living wage campaigns. The Living Wage Campaign in Aotearoa New Zealand is being initiated by the Service and Food Workers Union Ngā Ringa Tota. However, it aims to connect unions, community and faith-based organisations together around a common goal of achieving a living wage as a necessary step in reducing inequality and poverty in our society.

- viii. The Living Wage campaign has benefits across society, for rich and for poor. Poverty has high social and economic costs. People working two jobs don't have the time or resources to participate or volunteer in community life and as a result the whole community is impoverished. Low pay results in low productivity, high turn over and industrial disputes.
- ix. The Living Wage Campaign is a cross-sector response to inequality that seeks to include a wide range of persons and groups who care about economic justice
 - d. The Living Wage Campaign will call for a living wage that is based on an independently calculated rate.(this is still being developed by New Zealand economists but may be in the order of \$17 per hour).
 - e. It will work with local networks to build local organisation to address local needs.
 - f. It will acknowledge the many facets of a living wage including tax, transfers, and social services.
 - g. It will recognise the many voices in our community that are fighting for a just society for those in and outside of paid work.
 - h. It will make the living wage a real issue that unites communities.

d) The recommendation is:

- i. That the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand affirm and support the Living Wage Campaign.

The Living Wage Aotearoa New Zealand Campaign says:

“A living wage is the income necessary to provide workers and their families with the basic necessities of life. A living wage will enable workers to live with dignity and to participate as active citizens in society. We call upon the Government, employers and society as a whole, to strive for a living wage for all households as a necessary and important step in the reduction of poverty in New Zealand.”

- ii. That the PCANZ encourages congregations, church schools, and social service agencies with a connection to the PCANZ to examine their employee remuneration packages and work towards payment of a living wage.

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These press releases will give you a feel for the depth of passion St Andrew's holds for ensuring justice for lgbtqi people.

Progress in Living Wage

In 2016, at the General Assembly, as part of unanimously supported Beneficiary Fund changes, the General Assembly encouraged churches to pay their workers the Living Wage.

In 2017, St Andrew's became an accredited Living Wage employer having completed negotiations with our contracted cleaning company.



As well as lgbtqi issues and the Living Wage, several members of the St Andrew's community are keen advocates in other areas of social justice.

- At the moment the development of a community garden is being led by Sonia Groes-Petrie as a practical response to climate change.
- Submissions have been made to Parliament opposing the Trans Pacific Partnership Agreement by individual members.
- The Social Security Amendment Bill was also an occasion when individuals and the Parish Council made submissions to the appropriate Select Committee
- We work in partnership with Peace Movement Aotearoa, the Wellington Inter Faith Council, St Andrews Trust for the Study of Religion and Society and the Changemakers Refugee Forum.
- We are a Fair Trade church, serving Fair Trade tea and coffee

Spirited Conversations

Spirited Conversations which meets monthly, usually on the 4th Tuesday of the month (May-October), often has social justice issues as the focus of the 'spirited conversation'. This begins with an inexpensive catered meal in the St Andrew's Centre at 6.15pm and finishes by 9pm. All are welcome.

Social Justice Group

A Social Justice group meets on the third Sunday of the month after the Sunday morning Gathering in one of the rooms in the Centre. All welcome.