



St. Mark's Episcopal Church

315 East Pecan Street, San Antonio, TX 78205-1819

Re: Parish Conversations on Same-Sex Marriage Rites

July 1, 2016

Dear People of St. Mark's,

Enclosed in this mailing is a letter from the Vestry of St. Mark's to update you about the discernment process we have been engaged in as a community regarding Same-Sex marriage. The Bishop's policy asks for this petition to come from the Vestry, so it is appropriate that they communicate to the parish as a whole our decision and reflect on our process at arriving at this next step.

However, I also think it is important for you to hear from me as we take this next step as a parish. I am in complete support of the Vestry's decision, as are the other clergy of St. Mark's.

I am so grateful for the faithful and deliberate way we have engaged this question. Many people have been involved and I could not be more grateful to be part of a community that takes our common life together so seriously. I am deeply indebted to the Reverend Dr. John Lewis who played such an important role in the formation process we undertook. The Vestry and your wardens have been faithful in their engagement of this important work, as have our past wardens Carl Leafstedt and Suzy Tackett. Many members of St. Mark's undertook study and preparation to be table facilitators for this process. To each of them and you, I say thank you.

As we knew when we undertook this process, there was not going to be an outcome that would be what every person as an individual might desire. The care that has been taken to give everyone a chance to be heard has been an important formational event in the life of our church. I have been grateful for the broad participation we have had, whether in the parish-wide meetings, private conversations, or ongoing prayer and study with one another. I remain available to anyone in the parish who would like to have further conversation about this process or decision.

As I said in my letter in March, the St. Mark's community is made of leaders who value our diversity of opinion that is firmly rooted in the unity we find in Jesus Christ. I named at that time my confidence that our unity was such that we could undertake a process like this and be strengthened as a community. I am grateful that my confidence was well placed in each of you. I remain profoundly grateful for the generous and discerning spirit of this place. We are centered on our identity as redeemed children of God. I trust in the power of the Spirit to continue to guide us and I encourage all of us to continue to pray for our beloved community.

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Elizabeth C Knowlton" followed by a small cross symbol.

The Reverend Elizabeth C Knowlton
Rector