

April 8, 2018

To the Moderator of the 2017 General Assembly, the Presbyterian Church in Canada, and the LGBTQI community

Response to the Letter of Repentance dated February 12, 2018

We thank the Reverend Peter Bush, moderator of the 2017 General Assembly, for the thoughtful, prayerful and comprehensive letter of repentance to the LGBTQI community. It is with a mix of sadness and hope that we acknowledge this gesture as being long overdue, yet at the same time still only representing one step along the way.

As members of the session of St. Columba-by-the-Lake in Pointe Claire Quebec and as part of the Presbyterian Church in Canada we wish to extend our full acknowledgement of our role in the harm, hurt and abandonment experienced by the LGBTQI community perpetuated by the Church in the past and present. We wish to state our fervent prayer and support for creating a welcoming and safe faith community.

We too repent for the violence, abuse and suffering that this community has lived and is living, both from direct action by the Church and from inaction in the face of injustice. We especially repent for our lack of leadership and our lack of action in a world of intolerance.

We call upon the larger faith community to follow the living example of Christ as He welcomed all members of the community, no matter their social, moral or political standing. Christ's message of love is for all people. Christ led by example and so must we as we break bread with those who have not been welcomed because of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Our youth and young adults look to their church and their leaders for guidance and a model of Christian living in today's modern world. We welcome any and all efforts to set an example of acceptance, inclusion, and celebration of peoples of minority sexual and gender identities within the Church for our young people.

In order to lead by example to the world we must first lead by example amongst ourselves. This can be difficult or uncomfortable when we move out of long standing comfort zones, but when those comfort zones establish an environment of exclusion it is imperative to push beyond in order to truly follow Christ's welcoming example.

We fully support the work of the Rainbow Communion and all other endeavors and opportunities for us to better know and appreciate each other in our desire to express our identity in Christ. Let us begin by praying together and journeying together so that the Holy Spirit can guide us towards what it truly means to recognize Christ in one another.

Sarah Dupont and Birgit Ritzhaupt
on behalf of St Columba-by-the-Lake Session
Pointe-Claire, QC