



CHURCH OF ST. LUKE
The Beloved Physician

December 12, 2018

The Right Reverend William H. Love
Bishop of Albany Diocese
Episcopal Diocese of Albany
580 Burton Road
Greenwich, New York 12834

Dear Bishop Love,

We, the vestry of St. Luke the Beloved Physician, have spent much time in prayer and reflection over your pastoral letter and directive. While we respect your personal beliefs, we are saddened by your stance, and uncomfortable with the tone of your letter. It is our deepest belief that LGBTQ people are God's beloved made in His image, and are our neighbors, friends, clergy, and lay leaders of the Church. As people of God, they too merit our unconditional love, acceptance, and inclusion. We, and many others, believe that the withholding of our acceptance and full access to the sacramental rites of the Church is antithetical to Christ's call to love one another as He loves us.

Furthermore, we are troubled by the process you used to arrive at your position: the lack of representation of laity, and especially church leaders from parishes without a priest, disavows the importance of the laity as ministers of the Church and leaves a number of congregations without a voice. We will be reaching out to congregations across the diocese, our Pastoral Oversight Bishop, and national leaders in the Episcopal Church to explore ways to support one another and constructively work towards fully implementing Resolution B012 of the 79th General Convention.

Most importantly, we are very concerned that the intense focus on the issue of opposing Resolution B012 distracts us all from including one another in our spiritual growth. In so doing, we lose our ability to reach out to others, spread the good news, and reconcile ourselves to God. We want to work toward finding positive ways to spread God's love and Christ's example of love and service to all people. We believe that our collective energy should be focused on your message of "Disciples Making Disciples", and not on labeling and excluding others.

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We also request that you redouble your efforts to assist St Luke's dedicated community of faith, to identify a priest who will join us in our mission. We need a "good shepherd" who will help us grow in faith, embrace the call to serve the Lord, and share the power of Christ's love and redemption. We are motivated by Christ's call in Matthew 25 and wish to focus our efforts to serve the Lord through that call.

Yours in Christ, the Vestry of St. Luke the Beloved Physician,
Saranac Lake, NY

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