

## **A Message of Love and Solidarity from the Bishops and Spouses to The Episcopal Church**

For many bishops and bishops' spouses of The Episcopal Church, next summer's Lambeth Conference has become the occasion for a mixture of joy and sorrow, hope and disappointment. We cherish the bonds of affection that we enjoy with our Anglican siblings around the world. Gathering in prayer, study, and fellowship with our spiritual family is a gift for which we are profoundly grateful.

We, bishops and spouses choose to remain in community with each other as we navigate this passage in our common journey. We choose to remain one in the love of Jesus.

Our hearts are, however, troubled. The Lambeth Conference 2020 intentionally recognizes and underscores the important role bishops' spouses play in the ministry of the episcopate. And yet, spouses of bishops in same-gender marriages have received no invitation to participate. Their exclusion wounds those who are excluded, their spouses, and their friends within and beyond the House of Bishops.

After faithful soul-searching, each bishop and spouse will arrive at a decision about how best to respond in the name of Christ. Some will attend and offer loving witness. Some will opt to stay at home as a different way to offer loving witness. Some will dedicate the resources not spent for Lambeth attendance to on-the-ground partnership projects as an alternative manifestation of our commitment to the Anglican Communion. Others will find different avenues to express the unwavering love of Jesus Christ.

The community of bishops and spouses supports and stands together in solidarity with each of our brothers and sisters in this Episcopal Church as they make these decisions according to their conscience and through prayerful discernment and invite the siblings of The Episcopal Church to join us in that solidarity.