

# LGBT+ Inclusion in the Episcopal Church

Session 4 Notes – The gift of inclusion in Episcopal Church

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## Background Reading:

- Celebrating LGBTQ+ inclusion in the Episcopal Church  
<https://www.episcopalchurch.org/who-we-are/lgbtq/>
- Episcopal News Service, March 17, 2021 – “Episcopalians rally support for LGBTQ community after Vatican refuses same-sex blessings.”  
<https://www.episcopalnewsservice.org/2021/03/17/episcopalians-rally-support-for-lgbtq-community-after-vatican-refuses-same-sex-blessings/>
- Episcopal News Service, - “Pauli Murray inspires a new generation of ‘firebrand’ Black queer Episcopal leaders”  
<https://www.episcopalnewsservice.org/2020/12/09/pauli-murray-inspires-new-generation-of-firebrand-black-queer-episcopal-leaders/>

## Notes

- Divide in the Anglican Communion -
  - Much focus has been placed on the pain of these divisions, broken relationships, “walking apart”.
  - We have come so far since 2003!
  - This issue has forced us to have difficult and meaningful conversations across cultural divides, leading often to deeper more truthful global partnerships.
  - Hopeful signs:
    - Continuing relationships and connections around the world
    - LGBTQ bishops invited to Lambeth 2020 (postponed 2022).
- Divide in The Episcopal Church
  - Much pain has been experienced in divided churches and long legal battles over property. In a community's experience, it feels like a “divorce” of the community.
  - Because we were one of the first, we pioneered this discussion which all denominations will need to have (including ACNA)
  - I am hopeful that there will be reconciliation one day. More unites us than divides us.
- Celebrating Inclusion
  - Our denomination was ready to respond wholeheartedly in 2015 after the Supreme Court affirmed same-sex marriage. (Having already spent 12 years discerning and taking more and more significant steps toward inclusion).
  - Rainbow flags, inclusive stances, LGBTQ outreach and ministry, and community work have raised the profile of TEC and brought in new members.
- Episcopalian LGBT leaders
  - Pauli Murray was the first African American woman ordained an Episcopal priest. She was a civil rights icon of the US, an influential activist in law and politics over many decades, and is celebrated as a saint in The Episcopal Church.
  - There are currently at least six openly LGBTQ bishops in the US Episcopal Church.

- Current Politicians: The Rev. Kim Jackson was elected in 2020 as the first out LGBTQ state senator in Georgia. The current US Secretary of Transportation, Pete Buttigieg, is the first out LGBTQ member of the cabinet, and an active Episcopalian.
- We are stronger
  - Our struggle has made us better at: recognizing the power of diversity, interpreting scripture, listening to the marginalized, celebrating love, discerning the movement of the Spirit, and making space for those who disagree.
  - The work is not done, it is not just achieving legislative reform, it is throwing wide the doors of our churches and our hearts, to meet God in one another.