

April 29, 2011

Dear Integrity friend,

Change has come. The members of Integrity Vancouver attending our annual meeting April 17 approved a resolution that noted the significant success achieved over the last 30 years in fulfilling Integrity's mission locally and, consequently, called for the dissolution of Integrity's formal, legal structure.

The vote followed six years of conversation and discernment about Integrity's mission in a landscape significantly changed since our founding 30 years ago. Integrity's primary purpose then was to create a safe worship space for lesbian and gay Anglicans in our diocese. Thanks to the determined effort of GLBT pioneers and champions over the years, there are now many parishes in which gay Christians can worship and participate openly and honestly. Integrity's bold and holy witness has been effective, thanks be to God!

At the same time our members recognize that GLBT inclusion in the Church is not yet complete. Locally, nationally, and certainly internationally, work remains to be done to help the Church express its stated belief about our equality more fully. GLBT advocacy remains important.

Fortunately, by God's grace, Integrity Vancouver is no longer "a voice calling in the wilderness" – in large measure our parishes and Diocese share our concerns. The voices of gay and lesbian Anglicans are heard, and our participation is welcomed. It is widely felt among our members that the movement no longer requires a separate, legal entity to organize on its behalf. In an era of social media and online communities, we recognize that provincial incorporation, CRA chartering, and the time-consuming requirements mandated by them are not the only means of affecting institutional change. Many of our members believe we can now best support the Church in this cause as individuals within our parishes rather than as an outside organization.

So Integrity Vancouver Friendship Society will be dissolved, while Integrity as a movement – as a grassroots community of shared values committed to the full inclusion of GLBT Anglicans in the life of the Church – continues.

Toward that end, over the next few weeks an interim board will oversee the disbursement of the society's few assets. We're also encouraging our friends to join Integrity Vancouver's facebook group to connect, keep informed, and organize for events as the Spirit leads us forward.

Lastly, I wish to thank the many people who helped Integrity Vancouver accomplish so much of its mission over the last 30 years. We've been supported by generous donors and a legion of volunteer leaders (I especially mention Don Meen, our secretary, and Jim Nesbitt, our treasurer, who have served with me as officers for all of the past 10 years, plus some). Integrity has also been blessed by the gracious hospitality of parishes (especially St. Paul's in the West End) and by the ministry of our chaplains, clergy friends, and our bishop, Michael Ingham. Thank you!

If "the arc of history bends toward justice," then Integrity Vancouver was – and continues to be – part of a historic movement in the unfolding of the reign of God in this place. May God continue to bless us!

Grace and peace, with open hands,

Steve Schuh
President