

Year B Easter 4
Acts 4:5-12
John 10:11-18

Last week
Stories of welcome and warmth
Stories of curiosity and learning
Final story...Mary's comment...proud of this church for being willing to do the hard
work...feeding people, Haiti, welcoming church
This week...turn to welcome, part of our mission
Build on the strength that is here

Since I have arrived members of the congregation have been speaking to me about this desire to be an openly welcoming community to members of the GLTB community. Last September two people told me they wished we had been represented at the local gay pride parade.

Parish profile—out of X respondents 14 indicated that they would not be open to a gay or lesbian pastor. One indicated that they were not personally opposed but that the congregation had not yet had the conversation.

For some this is a natural and anticipated step in our life together.
For some this is a more difficult step.

Maybe you have reservations about
Maybe you just feel, we aren't supposed to talk about such things in church...
Maybe you think, but we already have gay and lesbian members—why do we need to be explicit about it?

For others this is the first you have ever heard about this.

Why this group and not some other?
Persecution of LGBTQ people

People killed because of what is preached in Christian houses of worship
Church has asked people to deny who they are, to lie about themselves
The ways LGBTQ accommodate straight folks

Yes, to others but we take them in turn

In the scripture

Are we afraid of being targeted as that church that welcomes those people? Kind of like Peter and the others having to give an accounting after the man is healed—they do it in the name of Jesus

Laying down our lives for others as Jesus laid down his life...

How have you been welcomed?

When were you last the guest?

At the Eid al Iftar dinner? What would it be like? Would I do something to embarrass myself or the other members of Saint Alban's? Should I pray with them or not?

If nothing changes are we being "welcoming"?

We may need to give some things up in order to live this vision—but do not the scriptures say that Jesus gave up his life for the sheep and has yet other sheep?

From our tradition...Each baptized person has the Holy Spirit...listening to each other

The work of Easter

Hope that we become known a welcoming congregation. Attended "Fish Out of Water." Met three of our young neighbors from across the street. Met a young man who was at Christ Church last weekend when his partner was confirmed.

For my uncle Ray. For our young neighbors. For my friend Scottie. For people who have worshipped here. For people who will. Your auntie or uncle, nieces and nephews, cousins and friends.

It is a brave thing to do...to raise the question of how we might treat one group of human beings with dignity, to stand in solidarity as we strive for justice and peace. It is a courageous thing to raise the question—yes, but and voice your questions and concerns.