

PRINCIPLE 1

Acknowledge **PREJUDICE**

Because of our understanding that everyone is made in the image of God, we will receive our differences as gift, valuing all people, and seek to see Christ in all our neighbours. To help us do this we will acknowledge and address our prejudices.

We are all conditioned by our experience of life, positively or negatively. All of us must reflect deeply on our attitudes and behaviour. All are loved children of God. The cross of Christ is for all. The journey from **prejudice** to hatred is a short one.

Can it be right that any of us fails to explore our own prejudices?

Something to ponder

Central to our faith is a belief that each of us is unique: we rejoice that we are fearfully and wonderfully made by God. There is a sense of awe and mystery about each one of us – an element of ‘otherness’ – that cannot be reduced to something that we can fully grasp within our finite understanding.

This principle applies to all our relationships with people who are different from us, whether as a result of sexuality, gender identity, ethnicity, age or any other characteristic. We believe that all of us need to reflect deeply on our attitudes and behaviour in order to extend a Christ-like welcome to all people in our midst.

Some questions to explore together

How do we ...

- welcome people as they are, rather than welcoming them in the hope that they will become and behave ‘like us’?
- love people unconditionally with a positive attitude that is without judgement or question?
- find out how the things we do and the language we use affect LGBTI+ people in ways that are harmful and we don’t intend?

Prayers

A prayer to begin

Heavenly Father,
you have called us as the Body of
your Son Jesus Christ
to continue his work of reconciliation
and reveal you to the world:
forgive us the sins which tear us apart;
give us the courage to overcome
our fears
and to seek that unity which is
your gift and your will;
through Jesus Christ your Son
our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Amen.

A prayer to end

Lord of the Church

forgive our failure to acknowledge and address
our prejudices:

open our hearts and minds to value those with whom
we disagree;

forgive the way we collude with silence
and imprison others in it:

give us courage to speak words that liberate and heal;

forgive our reluctance to address our ignorance:
lead us into the truth that will set us free;

forgive the cycles of negativity that trap us in fear:
cast out our fear with your perfect love;

forgive our failure to admit our hypocrisy:
give us grace to grow in self-awareness
and personal integrity;

forgive us when disparities of power undermine trust:
shape our conversations with humility and mutual respect;

that we may live well together
and rejoice to be disciples of your Son, Jesus Christ.

Amen.