

## **Blessings of same-sex unions approved**

*St. Clare-in-the-Cove Anglican Church in Deep Cove now waits for permission from its diocese.*

The Anglican Church of St Clare-in-the-Cove (the little blue church) has voted to begin offering blessings of same-sex unions as soon as it is given permission to do so by its diocese.

The Anglican Church of St Clare-in-the-Cove voted on the offering of same-sex blessings on Sunday March 16, 2008. The vote was unanimously in favor of the motion. The desire to offer same-sex blessings arises from the church's identity as a fully inclusive community, a place where all are given welcome and recognition.

Church members also passed a unanimous motion affirming support of Bishop Michael Ingham, their leader who has initiated much of the movement in developing a fully inclusive stance.

The church members rejoice that they are part of a community that advocates and practices the full welcome that is so deeply embedded in its faith tradition. At the same time the members of St Clare are eager to point out that they are involved in many other activities that foster and stimulate a spirit of inclusion. Community members offered a Winter Solstice Event in December 2007, attended by over 100 local people and in March 2008 hosted the first Deep Cove Community Philosophers' Café event where the practice and work of restorative justice was explored. Later this year a second Philosophers' Café will be offered centered on the topic of the environment. Last summer St. Clare-in-the-Cove Church created a labyrinth in its parking area. This labyrinth is fully available to the public and is well used. This spring and summer the St Clare community plans to install seating, a picnic table and some plants in the labyrinth area to make it more inviting to the wider community. They are also planning to invite the public to special candlelight labyrinth evenings during the summer months.

“There are many ways of being inclusive,” says Rector Carla McGhie, “and we are delighted to be taking another step towards being fully inclusive and welcoming to all people.”

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