

PC(USA) leaders issue pastoral letter to the church on Assembly's marriage actions

June 19, 2014

To congregations of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.):

Grace and peace to you in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Earlier today the 221st General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) approved a recommendation from its Civil Union and Marriage Issues Committee allowing for pastoral discretion to perform “any such marriage they believe the Holy Spirit calls them to perform,” where legal by state law.

They also approved a recommendation to change language in the Book of Order to indicate that “marriage involves a unique commitment between two people, traditionally a man and a woman.”

Both decisions came with much thought, discussion and prayer, and clearly the entire body that is the PC(USA) will be interpreting these actions for some time.

Please know that the same triune God in whom we place our hope, faith and trust in is still in control, and that the Assembly's action today is the result of deep discernment to hear God's voice and discern God's will.

We concur with the feelings expressed by Teaching Elder Commissioner Jeffrey Bridgeman, moderator of the Civil Union and Marriage Issues Committee, during his presentation to the Assembly.

“The apostle Paul tells us that ours is, in fact, ‘the ministry of reconciliation’ as ‘ambassadors of Christ,’ and he died for us so that we might be reconciled, that we might become reconcilers,” Bridgeman said.

In this season of both happiness and sadness over the Assembly's decisions, we call on you to remember the overflowing grace and love God gifts us with, and to take seriously our charge to bestow the same grace and love on one another.

In the name of Jesus Christ our Lord,

Ruling Elder Heath K. Rada
Moderator, 220th General Assembly

The Reverend Gradye Parsons
Stated Clerk of the General Assembly

Ruling Elder Linda Bryant Valentine
Executive Director, Presbyterian Mission Agency

