

With God's Help...

The mission of More Light Presbyterians is to work for the full participation of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people of faith in the life, ministry, and witness of the Presbyterian Church (USA).



Q: How does the Presbyterian Church (USA) discriminate against God's LGBT children?

A: The Book of Order, section G.6.0106b, requires that elders, deacons, and ministers of Word and Sacrament be either married heterosexuals or unmarried and chaste.

Q: Where did the phrase "more light" come from?

A: The phrase is adapted from the words of the Rev. John Robinson, who in 1620 said, "We limit not the truth of God to our poor reach of mind ~ by notions of our day and sect ~ crude, partial and confined. No, let a new and better hope within our hearts be stirred, for God hath yet *more light* and truth to break forth from the Word through the [Holy] Spirit."

Background History

In 1994, after more than a decade of discernment led by the Peacemaking Committee and interested members of our church, the Session appointed a 14-member Committee for Dialogue on Sexuality. At about the same time, the Rev. Robert Conover conducted a 6-session study series that included brief presentations by members who spoke during worship services regarding their faith perspectives and thoughts on ordination of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people. In 1995 the Session adopted a short "Statement of Inclusiveness", which was included on the cover of Sunday worship bulletins.

In 1996, shortly after a congregational meeting held for the purpose of discussing whether we should become a More Light Church, the Session adopted a statement clarifying that First Presbyterian Church would work to eliminate policies of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) that discriminate against LGBT people who are called to membership and ordained office through their faith in Jesus as their Lord and Savior. This decision to become a More Light Church was recorded on March 19, 1996.



Shower of Stoles on display

Highlights of our 10 years

- 97 Albany Presbytery concurred with the Presbytery of Northern New England overture to General Assembly to delete G.6.0106b from the Book of Order.
- 00 The More Light Committee was formed by Session to work on issues related to inclusiveness and justice for LGBT people in our church, the Presbyterian Church (USA) and the community.
- 03 Began annual participation in the Pride Parade with rainbow flags on the steeple.
- 03 Began annual display of stoles from the Shower of Stoles collection on ordination Sunday.
- 03 Session requested that Albany Presbytery concur with the Baltimore Presbytery overture to General Assembly to delete G.6.0106b from the Book of Order.
- 04 Organized a roundtable with area churches and synagogues to support efforts to increase inclusiveness of LGBT people in our faith communities. Established a listserve called "welcoming congregations".
- 04 Dr. Virginia Mollenkott gave the Lamar Lecture on gender variance.
- 05 Offered an ecumenical LGBT-affirming Pentecost Service.
- 05 Supported civil marriage rights for LGBT people and legal protections for gender variant people.
- 05 Observed National More Light Sunday, with video and discussion at Adult Ed.
- 05 Joined Pride-in-the-Pulpit, a multi-faith group bringing clergy and people of faith together to advocate for justice and meeting the spiritual needs of LGBT people, their friends and families.
- 06 Session requested Albany Presbytery concur with the Heartland Presbytery overture to General Assembly to delete G.6.0106b from the Book of Order.

MORE LIGHT STATEMENT OF INCLUSIVENESS

First Presbyterian Church, Albany, NY
Adopted by the Session on March 19, 1996, revised August 2005

"The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) shall give full expression to the rich diversity within its membership and shall provide means which will insure greater inclusiveness leading to wholeness in its emerging life." (*Book of Order*, G-4.0403)

"One becomes an active member of the Church through faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and acceptance of his Lordship in all of life. An active member is entitled to the rights and privileges of the Church...including the right to hold office." (*Book of Order*, G-5.0101 & 5.0202)

In harmony with the *Book of Order* of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), we welcome all persons, regardless of sexual orientation, into the full life and service of the church. The apostle Paul writes, "As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male or female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus." (Galatians 3:27-28) We affirm that in Christ the barriers that separate us from one another have been destroyed, and we commit ourselves to work for the day when all people in church and society are free to fully share in the oneness of God's reign.

Therefore, we do not select one particular element from a person's total humanity as a basis for denying full participation in the body of Christ; and all persons who choose to unite as members of First Presbyterian Church of Albany, New York have extended to them the full privileges and responsibilities of membership. We align ourselves with other congregations who have taken similar stands; and we will work within the Presbytery, the Synod and the General Assembly to make the appropriate changes to include gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgendered people in the full life of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).



BUILDING A CHURCH FOR ALL GOD'S PEOPLE



**In Celebration
of the**

**First Presbyterian
Church
Albany, New York**

**10th Anniversary as
a More Light Church**

1996 - 2006



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worship on Sundays at 8:30 and 10:45

