



Presbytery of Plains and Peaks

7257 W. 4th St. ~ Unit 4 ~ Greeley, Colorado 80634
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On Tuesday, May 10, it was reported that the Presbytery of Twin Cities cast the decisive 87th affirmative vote on Amendment 10-A, thereby establishing with certainty that the “fidelity and chastity” provision (G-6.0106b) which has been part of our *Book of Order* since 1997 will be replaced by new language approved by the 219th General Assembly last July. The new language will have the effect of returning to presbyteries and sessions the right to determine the suitability for ordained office those elected by congregations to serve as ministers, elders and deacons, including those who may be living in same-sex relationships. Both the current provision and the new language may be found on the attached FAQ sheet. Interpretative material from the Office of the General Assembly is also attached.

Our Historic Principles of Church Order affirm that God alone is Lord of the conscience (G-1.0301) and people of good character and principles may differ (G-1.0305). With this change to the Constitution, some might feel that they no longer have a place in the church, and that their views and understanding of human life and obedience to divine commands have not been honored. Others will feel that, at last, they truly belong to the church that baptized them into Christ and celebrate that those previously unable to be considered for ordination now can be offered that privilege and opportunity. With the passage of 10-A, this is an important time to recall these guiding principles as we continue to move forward as a community.

Our Reformed faith reminds us that no one is part of the church by accident. We believe that each person has been called into the Presbyterian Church by God. Each is an integral part of a congregation, and each congregation is an irreplaceable component of the network of churches that is the presbytery. Together we are part of a family – a tradition of faith, hope, mission and courageous witness that is the Presbyterian Church (USA). In that family, we have committed ourselves to one another as sisters and brothers, all grounded in the grace, love and peace of Jesus Christ.

Recalling our principles and mutual commitments, we ask that as we in the Presbytery of Plains and Peaks work to understand the implications and effects of this change in our Constitution, and how God may be at work in our church, that we do three very simple, but critical, things:

Pray for the church and all our members; that we may “keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace,” “humbly and gently bearing one another patiently in love” (Ephesians 4:2-3).

Read what the amendment actually says, and not merely rely on hearsay or the opinions of others. Study its words. Discuss its meaning with those you trust. Speak and share with others who may have a different opinion about their meaning and listen carefully to them. Participate in presbytery events to help us understand how we can remain in community while respecting each other’s rights of conscience.



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Wait until we understand more clearly the requirements and ramifications of the change before taking action. The new language does not take effect until July 10, and it may be even later until we have a clear understanding of how to apply the new language to the processes of examination, ordination, and installation of persons previously excluded from ordained office. Similarly, those who may be inclined to react negatively to this change should take time to assess the real impact of the change, and explore all options with the presbytery and sister churches, with whom we are all in covenant connection.

It is our honor to serve with you in the Presbytery of Plains and Peaks in this time. We trust that in all we do together we also will bring honor and glory to God and share the peace and grace of Jesus Christ with one another, our churches, our communities and the world.

In Christ,

The Rev. Susan Spencer, Moderator, Presbytery of Plains and Peaks

Elder Lynn Smit, Stated Clerk

The Rev. Daniel M. Saperstein, Executive Presbyter