

May 20, 2015

Dear Friends,

On Sunday evening, May 17, the Session of Westminster voted 23-4 to allow the facilities of the church to be used for same-sex weddings. This vote was taken after the Presbyterian Church (USA) took action last summer permitting its Teaching Elders to perform same-sex weddings where it is legal, and after a majority of presbyteries across the nation approved a broadened definition of marriage to say Christian marriage involves “two people, traditionally a man and a woman.” Each local congregation was charged with making the facility determination for itself.

At Session’s direction, the worship committee will revise our wedding guidelines in the next month to reflect this decision. As has been the case, all couples to be married at Westminster are to complete pre-marital counseling with a Teaching Elder to ensure their preparation and suitability for this covenant relationship.

Sunday’s vote was taken after significant time spent in thoughtful discussion, study, listening and prayerful discernment. The Session was grateful to hear from nearly 100 community members who wrote or attended one of the small group meetings held in recent weeks where we were reminded of the wide range of opinions, perspectives and life experiences that inform people’s thinking.

While there are those among us who celebrate this decision as another example of Westminster’s openness to all God’s people and inclusiveness of everyone led to be fully a part of this faith community, there are others who see it differently. Some among us feel that such a decision is a failure to give due consideration to Holy Scripture. As has been the case throughout history, people of good faith differ on matters of faith and life, as well as biblical interpretation. These differences surely exist among this thoughtful faith community.

I remain thankful to serve alongside such thoughtful, committed and caring elders and to share in leadership of a congregation that—as demonstrated on this issue—does not shy away from sharing differences of opinion while continuing to love those with whom they disagree. In the coming days and weeks, especially, please join us in nurturing an environment that honors diversity and unity.

Gratefully,



Mark Brainerd  
*Moderator*

Members of Session:

Bert Andia	Jennie Betton	Flay Blalock	JoAnna Bright
Terri Burlseson	Mike Carratello	Melissa Carter	Stephanie Chandler
Seth Coker	Lenwood Collins	Jennifer Cross	Jim Dagenhart
Denise Hill	Chris Marriott	Bill Miller	Phillip Motley
John Morgan	Lee Odom	Jan Parker	Carolyn Plumb
Beth Riddle	Sally Royster	Neil Shoffner	Sandra Sprinkle
Shuford Wall	Jim Wilkie	Paul Wingate	