

Presbyterian Promise News

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Ananias' Risk

[Heather Reichgott's reflection on Acts 9.10-18 at Presbyterian Promise's annual meeting on January 25 called on us to be ready to play a daring and active role in the conversion of the church to justice. ed.]

God said to Ananias, "Get up and go pay a visit to your worst enemy."

When someone tells you to go and present yourself to an enemy who is best known for putting your friends and loved ones in prison and throwing them to the lions, you might protest a bit. Even if it was God who told you to go. Ananias protests.

Perhaps he thought God wanted to make a martyr of him. Martyrdom was so common, so cruel and yet so glorious in its way. Perhaps it was Ananias' turn to stand before the persecutor in the purity of his faith, to speak the words of Jesus before the cruel man and probably get imprisoned or killed. Deep down inside, Ananias is arming himself for spiritual battle. He prepares to hold fast to Jesus' word against all comers. He frantically shushes the part of himself that is afraid.

But God has planned something for Ananias even holier than martyrdom. God tells Ananias only, "I will show him how much he must suffer for my name's sake."

What Ananias doesn't know is that God has already exploded into Saul's life like lightning. Just three days ago, Jesus appeared to Saul on the road to Damascus, Ananias' home city. In one stroke Jesus changed Saul's life. He turned him from a destroyer of Christians into a champion of Christians. But news traveled more slowly back then, and no one had told Ananias of the work God was doing long before his arrival.

Ananias also doesn't know that Saul has been blinded by the good Lord. The vision of Jesus left Saul in need of the help of others, perhaps for the first time in his whole life. Saul, the Roman citizen of privilege and intellect, is suddenly

weak and in need and disoriented. He knows only that whatever new direction he finds must come from God. God has chosen Ananias to deliver the message.

When Ananias walks into that house on the street called Straight, he sees a broken Saul. The Scripture doesn't say how Ananias figures out what happened. I think he recognizes the brokenness and the radiance upon Saul that comes from a moment of conversion. I think he saw God's transformation clearly in that moment, and that was what inspired him to lay hands upon his enemy and call him "brother." And so it was that Ananias the Syrian layman baptized Saul, soon to be called Paul, the tireless preacher, writer and apostle. God had been there ahead of time, sending Saul visions and converting his heart – but it isn't until Ananias touches him that the scales fall away from his eyes and he can see again.

Maybe the church today is sitting in a house on the street called Straight. The church has been struck once more with a vision of God. The church needs us to come and take a risk, to lay hands and say to people who have mercilessly hurt us over and over again: "Brother, sister."

You all in Presbyterian Promise know that this moment of change in the church has been a long time coming. People like Terry Davis and Lois Maxwell and Dick Hasbany have been doing this work with profound commitment year-in and year-out. You have given of your time, energy and resources. You have been criticized, ostracized, patronized and trivialized for what you do, and yet you

keep doing it. You were there when LGBT equality in the church was a new and radical idea, and you are here today.

Today is a new day. Since the last time we tried to repair our ordination standards, the world has moved. We have an African-American president for the first time in history. We had an election in which the voices of young people really counted. We had a General Assembly in which the voices of young people really counted. Same-sex civil unions, a controversial idea in 2001, are now the middle-of-the-road compromise position in politics. Same-sex marriage, a pipe



Heather Reichgott

Terry Davis

dream in 2001, is now legal here in Connecticut and normal in Massachusetts. Now is the right time for change.

Sometimes when it comes to lifting our voices among a diverse group of Christians, we are afraid. Rightly so. Just as surely as Ananias had a right to be afraid of Saul. Allies of LGBT people share the vulnerability and suffering of LGBT people in many ways, and so it is with very good reason that these debates and votes can be frightening for allies. Thankfully, unlike Ananias, no one has to worry about getting killed.

We can trust that God has been there ahead of us. We can trust that God has been working. We can't see the work that God has been doing in a person until we enter the person's house and greet him, laying shaking hands on him and saying "Brother." So until we see we walk in faith, and we keep walking to the street called Straight, instead of cowering in our own rooms in the quiet side streets of Damascus.

Now is the time when the church really needs an Ananias. A lot of Ananiases. The church has been rocked by change. It has been broken and blinded in some ways. Let us enter this season of change in Ananias' spirit. The church needs us to help it along in the hard work of conversion. Let us be ready to take the risk. Let us go into the house on the street called Straight, not as people ready for spiritual battle, not as people ready for martyrdom, but as people ready to see an enemy changing before our eyes. Let us lay hands and say, "Brother, Sister," for God is counting on us to lay a tender hand and brush away the scales.

Heather W. Reichgott

A Toast to Happiness

"The third time is a charm" – the saying goes – so maybe this time when Bill and I tie the knot it'll stick. The first time Bill and I got "hitched" was in July 2003, and it was called a "civil union." It happened in Vermont in a grove of evergreens in the backyard of a friend of ours who is an Episcopal priest. We forewent the required Episcopal pre-marital counseling that our friend would have been required to complete with us and instead were married by a Justice of the Peace. The liturgy was, shall we say, what you might expect for a lesbian JP from Vermont – brief and sprinkled with New Age metaphors. Brittany carried our two Pomeranians and the wedding rings on a tufted pillow down the imaginary aisle; our friend poured the celebratory champagne. One thing I know, God was present and blessed our relationship.

A month later, Bill and I tied the knot again in our own backyard in Connecticut, surrounded by family and friends. Technically not a wedding: Our Vermont Episcopal priest friend and a New York City UCC minister friend "blessed" our Vermont civil union in a hybrid of Episcopal-UCC

liturgy. The Episcopal prayers were out of the Book of Common Prayer, the UCC sermonette was more like a roast. But all the guests considered it the wedding our embossed invitations proclaimed it to be. It had no legal standing in the state; no licenses were secured from town hall to be signed and sent away to be filed in the vital records department. It was not recognized as a wedding by the denominations of the two co-officiants; more painfully, it was not recognized as a wedding by my own denomination. Still, like all weddings it was a memorable affair: our daughter Brittany played the violin, our first dance was to Etta James singing "At Last" and the champagne flowed freely among our eighty-five guests under the twinkling stars. God was present and blessed our relationship again.

Two years later, on October 1, 2005 the State of Connecticut began issuing civil unions and our Vermont CU was seamlessly recognized. No papers needed to be completed to have us recognized as "unionized" in our home state. Since that time our family has been profiled in the *Hartford Courant* and we have participated in Love Makes A Family's video called "Marriage Makes A Word of Difference." Because of our involvement with the video we landed on the cover of the monthly local paper "Simsbury LIFE" and we were interviewed by an Italian "60 Minutes" television show. We were "married" in our eyes, in the eyes of all our friends, family, neighbors, co-workers – indeed, in the eyes of everyone we knew... in everyone's eyes except those of the law.

On October 28, 2008, the ruling of Connecticut's Supreme Court allowing same-sex marriage went into effect and licenses would be issued at local town halls. We were ecstatic for our friends who chose to wait for the full legal recognition of their relationships. Given what we had already done, we didn't think the ruling affected us personally. But before the confetti over the ruling landed on the stairs of the Supreme Court, we learned that it remains in the hands of Connecticut Legislature whether civil unions would be allowed to continue to be performed and/or whether previous civil unions (and those like ours from other states) would continue to be recognized by our state. The ruling that civil unions are not equal to marriage may end up being interpreted by the courts that civil unions are unconstitutional and should be dissolved. Marriage would be the only option for both gay and straight couples.

Given this uncertainty the October ruling cast on our current legal status, we chose the only option we had: get hitched a third time! We went to our local town clerk's office and received a marriage license. With a twinkle in her eye, the clerk suggested we might want to learn a little more about each other before going through with the service, given how ignorant we played at being when each of us gave our basic information like mother's maiden name and our date of birth ("Really, you're that old?! Never mind..."). She stayed a few minutes late to complete the process and sincerely wished us luck. And yes she assured us, we were the first to request the new license in our sleepy little town. So, on January 8th in our

Special Section: Amendment 08-B

General Assembly Asks Us to Reclaim our Heritage

Last June's General Assembly called on the denomination to consider once again our embattled ordination standards, and by doing so the place of LGBT people in its life. Presbyterian Promise believes that the proposed amendment should be adopted. It returns Christ to the center of our faith and reclaims our reformed heritage. By doing so, it creates a situation where all those called by God to ministries of the word and sacrament and as ruling elders and deacons may enter those ministries without arcane and unjust barriers. **The vote in the Presbytery of Southern New England will be held on May 2 at the New Haven Korean Presbyterian Church in Hamden.** The presbytery is preparing carefully and responsibly for its deliberation and vote. We urge you to be sure your church has a full complement of elders and pastors present to engage in the discernment and vote.

Comparison of present and proposed G-6.0106

Proposed Amendment 08-B does not change G-6.0106a but will replace G-6.0106b. It also makes additions to the provisions in Chapter 14 concerning "Preparation and Examination for Office" [G-14.0240] and "Final Assessment of Readiness to Begin Ordained Ministry" [G-14.0450]. See below for a comparison of the current and proposed language.

G-6.0106a To those called to exercise special functions in the church – deacons, elders, and ministers of the Word and Sacrament – God gives suitable gifts for their various duties. In addition to possessing the necessary gifts and abilities, natural and acquired, those who undertake particular ministries should be persons of strong faith, dedicated discipleship, and love of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. Their manner of life should be a demonstration of the Christian gospel in the church and in the world. They must have the approval of God's people and the concurring judgment of a governing body of the church.

Current G-6.0106b

Those who are called to office in the church are to lead a life

in obedience to Scripture

and in conformity to the historic confessional standards of the church.

Among these standards is the requirement to live either in fidelity within the covenant of marriage between a man and a woman (W-4.9001), or chastity in singleness.

Persons refusing to repent of any self-acknowledged practice which the confessions call sin shall not be ordained and/or installed as deacons, elders, or ministers of the Word and Sacrament.

Proposed G-6.0106b

Those who are called to ordained service in the church,

by their assent to the constitutional questions for ordination and installation (W-4.4003),

pledge themselves to live lives obedient to Jesus Christ the Head of the Church,

striving to follow where he leads through the witness of the Scriptures,

and to understand the Scriptures through the instruction of the Confessions.

In so doing, they declare their fidelity to the standards of the Church.

Each governing body charged with examination for ordination and/or installation (G-14.0240 and G-14.0450) establishes the candidate's sincere efforts to adhere to these standards.

The process for examining elected elders and deacons would be revised by adding the italicized phrase in G-14.0240:

The session shall provide for a period of study and preparation, after which the session shall examine the officers elect as to their personal faith; knowledge of the doctrine, government, and discipline contained in the Constitution of the church; the duties of the office; and readiness to assent to the constitutional questions for ordination and installation.

The final examination of candidates for ordained ministry would be expanded from the present four specifications in G-14.0450 to include:

b. demonstration of readiness to assent to the constitutional questions for ordination and installation:

still decorated from Christmas living room, surrounded by members of our church “covenant group” (a church-fellowship group) Bill and I were wed a third time. This time it was a legal marriage, recognized by the state of Connecticut and officiated by two faithful Christian ministers. And it was Presbyterian. The liturgy was Presbyterian. The witnesses were Presbyterian. The two grooms were Presbyterian (Bill became a new member and deacon of our church in 2008). Everything was Presbyterian about it except that it will not be a marriage that is recognized by the Presbyterian denomination. All those present agreed that God was surely in our midst that evening and God once again blessed our relationship.

Following the ceremony, a glass was raised: A toast to happiness and a long and health-filled relationship for the thrice-joined couple. A toast to hope for the Presbyterian Church (USA) that it will one day (soon) recognize this marriage (and others like it) as one of its own.

Rev. John Merz

Our Eighth Annual Meeting

So now we’re nine years into this effort for love and justice. On Sunday, January 25th, the Presbyterian Promise faithful gathered at First Presbyterian in Hartford for our eighth annual meeting. Candidate Heather Reichgott led in worship [see her meditation in this issue]. We thanked retiring board members Terry Davis, Mary-Starke Wilson and Meg Nosenzo for their years of service. We reelected Dan Blackford and elected Jane Hindenlang to our board. Elder Lois Maxwell will succeed Terry as board liaison from the Hartford congregation.



Goettler, Davis, Stanback

Dick Hasbany

In addition to worship, Anne Stanback and Bill Goettler keynoted a panel on civil marriage for same-gender couples in Connecticut from political, historical, pastoral perspectives. Anne is Executive Director of Love Makes A Family CT and an exceptional voice for marriage reform. Bill is Co-pastor of First Presbyterian in New Haven and a strong advocate for justice.

Our Board – 2009

Dan Blackford (Providence, Co-moderator)
 Rev. Anne Fuhrmeister (Waterford, Secretary)
 Dick Hasbany (New Haven)
 Jane Hindenlang (New Haven, Treasurer)
 Ralph Jones (New Haven, Asst. Treasurer)
 Lois Maxwell (Hartford)
 Wayne Osborne (Stamford)
 Geralyn Plomitello (Stamford)
 Keith Rhoden (Hartford)
 Janet Wade-Utay (West Hartford)
 Pat Wales (New Haven, Co-moderator)

Reflections

Back last August Dick Hasbany asked me to write a reflection piece on my involvement with LGBT issues. Since my tenure with First Presbyterian Church ended February 1, I guess I cannot delay much longer. I am optimistic about passing the overture in this Presbytery since we were only one vote short of passing a motion to send a similar overture to the General Assembly. We will need to be much more diligent in contacting allies and stressing the importance of attending the meeting and staying until the vote is taken.

I think that we have an additional argument to make for the passage of this particular overture. We have always argued first that homosexual relations within the context of a committed relation are not sinful. We have also argued that even if others consider homosexual practice sinful it remains clear discrimination and theologically unsound to set up one practice as a worse sin than others. The third and new argument is that this overture does not just correct past injustices but sets the right priority for obedience. The reformed faith has always regarded Jesus Christ as our highest authority in faith and practice. The scriptures are secondary, bearing witness to Jesus Christ, and we are instructed by the confessions as we read the scripture to discover Jesus. The present G-6.0106b gives priority to the confessions and this needs correcting.

When I went to Florida in 1990 I was already firmly committed to full equality for GLBT people in the Church and in society. I knew this was not a widely shared commitment in a Presbyterian church in a small town in north Florida and decided that support for this issue would not be a part of my ministry. I felt I had been called to grow this church located in an area with booming population growth and that is what I did. Before the end of my tenure at this church my views had been revealed in a number of ways including the fact that I spoke and voted against the adoption of the original ‘b’ overture. The last year of my ministry in that place was a very unpleasant experience. As I was seeking a new call I discovered this church in Hartford that said on its Church Informa-

Looking toward May 2

Some steps to success:

1. PSNE meets on May 2nd to vote on 08-B. Be there! Put it on your calendar - now! Please! Your vote counts. So far, three presbytery votes have been ties, which count as no! The way things are going, even late as PSNE's vote will be, we matter. This issue could be decided by one presbytery.
2. If you are involved with a session, please be sure your session has a full commission elected and going to the May 2nd meeting. If you're not a commissioner, come as an observer! Presence is an important form of witness. Observers are included in small group discussions, so you likely will have a chance to learn and to speak.
3. If your congregation hasn't discussed these issues recently, or even if it has, schedule a study or a forum where people can listen to each other, share experiences and gain understanding. Presbyterian Promise will be glad to help facilitate.
4. Presbyterian Welcome is heading a project called "1000 Conversations." The idea is to encourage and document efforts to reach out to people who don't support GLBT equality for conversation. See the websites: <http://www.presbyterianwelcome.org/> and <http://1000conversations.org/> If you know someone whose opinion differs from yours, reach out to them in faith and friendship. Get something started; then use the links to let the rest of the denomination know it's happening. We in the Synod of the Northeast aren't carrying our share of the 1000!
5. Bruce Hahne is maintaining a blog about the developing vote showing how the results differ from 2001. While we're presently behind, there is an encouraging shift in favor of LGBT equality. See: <http://yeson08b.blogspot.com/> to keep up to the minute.

The Presbytery's Committee on Ecclesiastical Relations has announced plans for helping us discern the will of Christ for 08-B. The details are in the commissioner's materials for the February meeting, and will likely be further refined and publicized. On May 2nd, they recommend that we:

1. Gather for a period of prayer before the meeting comes to order. This shared time for reflection and meditation was initiated yeas ago by Rev. Tom Otte and Elder Shirley Prey for several meetings prior to Tom's death. It was a moving reflection of our shared faith.
2. During the morning section of the meeting, invited speakers will address the amendment from several perspectives.
3. An hour will be devoted to small group sharing and listening.
4. After lunch, the amendment will be debated and voted on by secret ballot.

There has been some discussion of taking no action this year. The thought seems to be that delay is a way to keep the denomination together. There will be a "No Action" option on the PSNE ballot form. Presbyterian Promise opposes this idea for several reasons:

1. No action has the same effect as voting no. The amendment requires a yes from a majority of the presbyteries. A tie means it fails. We need 87 presbyteries to vote yes.
2. It is the right thing to do for many theological, spiritual, justice and polity reasons.
3. A no will be experienced as betrayal by our gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender brothers and sisters in the faith.
4. We are not called to safety but to mission; to finding our life by losing it.

So your presence, your faith, your insight, your willingness to share are all needed on May 2nd. Be there!

Presbyterian Promise Board

tion Form that they had welcomed people who differ by age, race, ethnic background, sexual orientation, family status, economic situation and theological viewpoint. This sounded more like the kind of place I belonged and I determined that I would not ever again try to disguise my views on this issue, or any other issue of importance.

Being in this church and having made this commitment to transparency has made it possible for the Church and I to be partners in the cause of justice for LGBT people, as well as other justice issues. During my tenure here we have brought the Shower of Stoles to our sanctuary twice. We have brought or supported several overtures to the Presbytery to change our ordination standards and to recognize marriage equality. I attended the 2006 General Assembly as an overture advocate to support deleting 'b.' This was an opportunity to meet with leaders in the equality movement from across the country. We were among the first churches to join Presbyterian Promise and the second church in the Presbytery (by one month) to become affiliated with More Light Presbyterians, to which I had belonged for years. Jane Spahr, Michael Adey and Heather Reichgott have all preached in our pulpit at the invitation of session.

I have been part of the steering committee of Connecticut Clergy for Marriage Equality, and have presided at one Civil Union service. Among my closest friends in ministry are the local Metropolitan Community Church pastors.

In many ways my support for these causes has been an extension of the same commitment to equality that led me to Washington in 1963 as a college senior to demonstrate with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and onto the streets of Louisville with his brother A. D. Williams King to march for open housing in 1966. All of us, regardless of race, ethnicity, income, religion, gender orientation or age are children of one loving creator. When one of our brothers and sisters is diminished because of discrimination we are all diminished and I feel we are all called to work for the equality of all people.

Rev. Terry Davis

Advocating for the Overture

Rev. Rod MacDonald is the pastor of The Presbyterian Church in Burlington MA, the community that provided Boston Presbytery the overture which General Assembly has sent us as 08-B. He was the advocate for the overture at the Assembly. In a cover note Rod wrote:

I by no means claim that this carried the day in any way! But you will see that my effort (reflecting the overture itself, so well prepared by Elliott Hipp of POB) sought to emphasize the vitality of our constitutional questions for ordination – relegating the issues of “fidelity and chastity” to irrelevance to Reformed standards for officers. The inclusion of reflection on the constitutional questions as part of preparation for candidates for ordination adds further weight to our intention. Only

later, and briefly, did I try to highlight the importance of understanding Christ’s call to be for folks of all orientations.

It’s possible that folks who are tired of this issue, and folks who have slowly recognized that they do not wish to be part of a church with this basic “unfairness” (term I do recall being used in committee discussion) may have received this as a positive solution because it so firmly replaces the confused paragraph ‘b’ with something so clearly Reformed.

Rod’s remarks to the committee:

General Assembly, June 2008

In support of overture from Burlington Presbyterian Church / Boston Presbytery

My name is Rod MacDonald, I’m a pastor from Boston Presbytery, and I’m glad for this chance to speak with you about overture 09. We are asking that you recommend to the GA a new paragraph G-6.0106b. Like those two overtures that will follow, this offers a new way to think about an old struggle in our church. Let me begin this way:

- What did you experience when you answered the constitutional questions at the beginning of your ordained service to our church?
- What is that moment like in an ordination service in your congregation, and presbytery? Aren’t these times of awe, and joy, and promise?

This proposed paragraph gives these moments – these promises – a central and essential place. You see, it isn’t about removing vital standards for ordination, but reclaiming them.

First, it raises up our constitutional questions. When candidates say yes to those vows, they pledge their fidelity to the touchstones of our Reformed tradition. They promise this among the people of the congregation or presbytery who know them – their gifts, and their manner of life, in accordance with the provisions of 6.0106a. And they will answer after required soul-searching about their readiness to assent.

Second, this new paragraph restores the historic order of authority among Presbyterians. First of all, we and all those the Holy Spirit and the Church call to serve, are followers of Jesus Christ. Our obedience is to him, the Head of the Church, and we strive to follow where he leads – illuminated by the witness of Scripture and the guidance of our Confessions.

For 12 years we have struggled over a paragraph that misplaces our obedience, demands an impossible conformity to our Confessions, elevates the fidelity and chastity requirements above others, confuses the nature of ordination – and has withheld from our church the strong and loving service of many of God’s people.

Let us unbind ourselves from a paragraph that has bound us in knots, and replace it. With this, and the rescinding of the relevant authoritative interpretations, let us set our church free to follow Christ as Christ in freedom calls servant leaders from among all who love him, women and men, LGBT

and straight, united by one Lord, one faith, and one baptism.

Yes, let us hold all candidates accountable. But let the measure of their fidelity be their profound and passionate yes to our time-honored Reformed standards, among the fellow believers who know them.

You are in a position to invite our church to loosen these 12-year-old bonds and come together in a new way around our common historic standards.

Beginning here, our church may breathe, and more together, again – striving to follow where Christ leads.

Thank you.

Rev. Rod MacDonald

A CPM Perspective

It just doesn't help; in fact, it mostly hurts. That's the too little mentioned reality created by our present policy, generally known as G-6.0106b, or 'b.' I say that not because of my many theological, scriptural, justice and polity based objections to it. I say it after serving this presbytery's Committee on Preparation for Ministry for six years, three of them as co-chair. My observation is that even if one agreed with the intent of the present paragraph, it doesn't help.

'b' doesn't help because it isn't needed. Of course there should be high behavioral standards for ministers of Word and Sacrament and for Elders and Deacons. And the process was designed to ensure this before and without 'b.' In addition to insight from the recommendations of and conversations with candidates' home churches, PSNE's CPM has the results of a criminal background check (yes, we do know about those speeding tickets), Career Evaluation (which offers some insight into the likelihood of future issues), reports from Field Education and from Clinical Pastoral Education (which includes how the individual works one-on-one with peers, authorities and with individuals in some degree of crisis). Most presbyteries use many or all of these resources. For all its frustrations, the system does let CPMs get to know those preparing for ministry very well.

During the time I was on the committee ethical behavior was not an issue with any of the people preparing for ministry. I heard no stories of its having been an issue prior to my time, either. We are dealing with good people (if the Presbyterian doctrine of total depravity admits use of such an expression). Of course, on rare occasions, the church has been mistaken about a person. People have been ordained who have gone on to do hurtful, wrong things. It's just that, however well intended, words in our *Constitution* will not protect us. If one can rationalize exploiting pastoral authority, one can rationalize eligibility for pastoral office.

'b' hurts. Of course it particularly hurts LGBT people; my

point here is that it hurts everyone. Its presence has driven numbers of gifted, outstanding people – heterosexual as well as GLBT – to seek other callings or other denominations. We are diminished by their absence. And it hurts the fundamental nature of the preparation process. Nowhere does the system of Presbyterian polity more depend on “trust and love” than in the work of presbyteries with their inquirers and candidates.

CPM's are both to guide and encourage people, and also to serve as gate keepers. There is an inherent tension in any situation where people have that kind of authority over others. Forcing committees to question an individual's moral fitness after the extensive work they have done together just adds fear and mistrust to the relationship.

Incidentally, 'b' hurts CPMs and the people who serve on these committees. We here in Southern New England spent a year and a half in difficult committee discussions and several unnecessary, awkward, embarrassing and even painful moments with our inquirers and candidates as we tried to find our way under this provision.

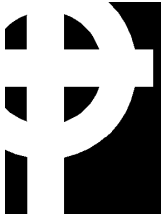
People seeking to serve as Ministers of Word and Sacrament are prepared to commit at least three years to study and many tens of thousands of dollars to preparation. They are spiritually sensitive, generally emotionally intuitive. They are intelligent and know ordination is easier in other denominations. They've heard about our polity wars and about 'b.' They're still here, with us, willing to sign the preparation Covenants. They deserve our respect. What is gained when a presbytery through its committees is forced (by our *Constitution* and judicial decisions) to ask questions to which there can be only one answer?

There is a better way. A great advantage of the proposed replacement amendment is that it shifts us from a narrow focus on one aspect of ordination standards toward the full richness envisioned by our *Constitution*. By adding reference to the existing ordination questions, it directs both inquirers and candidates and Committees on Preparation to take seriously both our theology and our expectations. It provides a meeting ground where useful discussion might occur. It offers a way forward.

Ralph Jones

Calendar

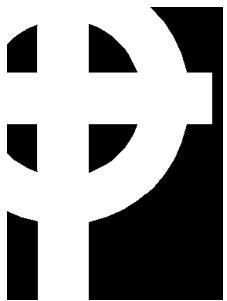
- Mar 30 Western Cluster Conversation with Mark Tammen at Darien: Noroton. 7:30 - 9 PM
- Mar 31 PSNE polity conversation with Mark Tammen.
- May 2 PSNE meeting and VOTE. Hamden: New Haven Korean PC
- June 6 CT Pride at Bushnell Park, Hartford.
- June 20 RI Pride in Providence RI.



Presbyterian Promise News

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Proclaiming God's promise of justice and love in Jesus Christ
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Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender persons,
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More Light Presbyterians

Our ministry is one of reconciliation – introducing GLBT people and families to welcoming congregations even as we educate churches about what it means to be truly welcoming.