

Presbyterian Peace Fellowship

Trusting the Nonviolence of Jesus Christ Today

Dear Committee 10,

When we are honest about marriage, we know that marriage is a peacemaking issue! That two people commit themselves to living together for the rest of their lives is peacemaking up close and personal. And marriage gives hope that human beings can learn to live together.

The Presbyterian Peace Fellowship senses the hand of God moving through our church to extend the gift of marriage to all persons who seek to enter into this commitment, regardless of their sexual orientation.

PPF does not see this transformation as merely conforming to secular social changes. Rather, we recognize the Holy Spirit in many of these changes. We repent that the church was among the last, not the first, to express the love of God equally to all. The consequences of our past policies have lent endorsement to discrimination, to families turning away from their own, to hate crimes and violence against gay and lesbian human beings.

We realize that not everyone agrees with this change. Therefore the actions proposed below honor freedom of conscience and do not compel any pastor or church to bless or participate in same-sex marriage ceremonies. Discernment will continue as we seek to better understand this gift from God.

As for us, the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship is honored to lend its support and respect to those who have labored long to see justice roll down like waters, cleansing us all of discrimination, separation and fear.

If approved, may this historic change be an occasion for us all to re-commit ourselves to our own relationships and to support others in this miraculous, mysterious peacemaking endeavor that we call marriage.

The Presbyterian Peace Fellowship supports these actions:

(10-02) On Amending W-4.9000, Marriage

---The Presbytery of the Cascades

(10-03) On Issuing an Authoritative Interpretation of W-4.9000 to Affirm Pastoral Discretion in Performing Marriage Ceremonies

---The Presbytery of Heartland

(10-04) On Issuing an Authoritative Interpretation of W-4.9000 to Affirm Pastoral Discretion in Performing Marriage Ceremonies

---The Presbytery of East Iowa

(10-06) On Rescinding the 1991 Authoritative Interpretation Concerning Teaching Elders Performing Marriages for Same-Gender Couples and Sessions Permitting Such Ceremonies in their Facilities

---The Presbytery of New Castle

Briefing Paper for GA Committee

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Civil Union & Marriage Issues

Celebrating 70 Years!

Who we are: Founded in 1944, the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship is a national community of over 3200 Presbyterian households who believe that Jesus calls the church to help reduce the level of war and violence in the world. Celebrating our 70th year, we are a non-partisan group, open to all Presbyterians, funded by our members, many of whom have served as mission workers around the world and as activists on war and peace issues in their churches and communities.

Except for a part-time staff, we are volunteers who pay our own way to General Assembly. We do not work for or represent any government or outside lobby group. We are young, we are old, we are conscientious objectors, we are veterans. Together we trust that God calls and empowers human beings to solve our conflicts without war and violence.

Please visit us at **Booth 609/708** or at the GA Peace Breakfast on June 18 or at presbypeacefellowship.org for information on all peacemaking issues facing the 221st General Assembly.

For updates as issues evolve at GA, see www.presbypeacefellowship.org/GA2014

Please help us work for justice in

Israel/Palestine. Your work in the GA plenary may be historic in many ways. For ten years, Presbyterians have painfully debated divestment as a way to help end the Occupation in Israel/Palestine. Having just visited the region, I am more convinced than ever that divestment presents the question: ***What does the Lord require of us?*** Is the issue divisive and hard? Yes. Is divestment the right thing to do? Yes. Do we have the courage to do it? Yes. I live in faith that, with God's help, we can do this.

Enjoy GA and please call on us if we can assist you.

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