



a network of churches and leaders called together
to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ
by growing in Christ's likeness,
living by God's Word, and
joining in God's mission in the world.

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Grace and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

We have reached a moment of change in the PC(USA) which some celebrate and others mourn. The redefinition of marriage has been approved by a majority of the presbyteries. Beginning in June, the Directory for Worship will now permit the marriage of two people of the same gender. This change is both profound and expected.

By approving this change we are disregarding the clear teaching of Scripture, the wisdom of those who have lived and died for the faith before us, and the continuing consensus of the contemporary church around the world. To do this is both disobedient and unwise. We know this particular change was intended by its proponents to extend the grace and the good news of Jesus Christ, and to further the witness of his Kingdom. We believe it accomplishes neither. Our objection to the passage of this redefinition is no way anti-gay. Our concern is that the church is capitulating to the culture and, in doing so, is misrepresenting Scripture.

We reaffirm that the language of this amendment does not require participation in services of marriage with which we disagree. It remains up to each Session and Teaching Elder to determine what is and is not faithful for themselves and for their congregation.

We continue to face great challenges to our witness as a denomination and, more importantly, to our personal faithfulness. It is not enough for us to simply be for or against something. We who believe this change in the definition of marriage does not extend the grace and good news of Jesus Christ, nor further the witness of the Kingdom must now ask: What would, and how can we accomplish this?

Many of our neighbors do not know the Savior. Will we find a way to build relationships with them and introduce them to Jesus without reinterpreting biblical teaching? We believe, by God's grace, we can. But we must be committed to listening carefully and without judgment to their questions and their needs, and to responding with sincerity and with humility as those who have experienced the forgiveness and persistent grace of Jesus.

Our culture is marked by increasing hopelessness and isolation, yet we who follow Jesus are being nurtured daily in the community of the Trinity. Can we find a way to extend this community without compromising its foundational teachings? We believe, by God's grace, we can. But we must be willing to go to the darkest and loneliest places with the compassion, conviction, and hope of the gospel we profess.

Joining in God's mission in this culture and leading others in this time of profound change is difficult. Yet God has called and equipped us for his mission. Accepting that call—growing in Christ's likeness, living by God's Word, and joining in God's mission in the world—cannot be done alone. You are not alone. We have created The Fellowship Community to offer encouragement and accountability; spurring one another on to the type of love and good works that will fulfill our mutual calling.

Find more resources and encouragement at www.fellowship.community, and join us at First Presbyterian Church San Diego August 18-20 and in our regional conversations for a first-hand experience of Community.