



DAVIDSON COLLEGE
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

100 N. Main St † PO Box 337 † Davidson, NC 28036

From the Session: [The Presbyterian Church \(USA\)](#), our denomination, has been on a long journey of affirmation and inclusion of our LGBTQIA+ siblings, including the 2010 decision of the General Assembly (GA), the highest governing council of the PC(USA), to give presbyteries and churches the flexibility to ordain LGBTQIA+ ministers of word and sacrament, ruling elders and deacons. DCPC has been part of that journey, with the Session (our governing board) voting in 2015 to perform same-gender marriages (following 2014 GA action permitting this) and in 2019 adopting the statement “We are a welcoming, affirming and inclusive community of faith where all are one in Christ.” As a next step in our own journey, the Session of DCPC, at the request of the Social Justice Committee, voted to affiliate with the [Covenant Network of Presbyterians](#), a network of Presbyterian churches committed to engaging, educating and equipping the wider church in its ministries of welcome of our LGBTQIA+ siblings. You can check out this set of FAQs to learn more about the Covenant Network and the decision of the Session. More specific questions can be directed to the clerk of Session, Larry Cain (lacain@davidson.edu) or the moderator of Session, Peter Henry (pHenry@dcpc.org).

Some Questions and Answers

Who? This decision to affiliate with the [Covenant Network of Presbyterians](#) was taken by the Session, the body of elected members and installed pastors charged with leadership decisions on behalf of DCPC. [A list of our current elders is at our website.](#)

Why? DCPC has been on a journey of welcome and inclusion for many years now, which has included approving same-gender marriages (2015) and adopting a welcoming, affirming and inclusive statement (2019). Another part of that journey has been a growing awareness of the number of our members who are themselves LGBTQIA+ or who are parents or grandparents to LGBTQIA+ relatives. As part of ministering to them and to all of us, we want to be aware of best-practices and the Covenant Network helps us, individually and collectively, learn from churches with a similarly welcoming position. We also hope that our own journey and resources can be helpful to other Presbyterians and communities of faith. This sharing of resources and experiences is included in the following mission and vision statement of the Covenant Network:

Confident in God’s hopeful future and grateful for the ever-widening welcome of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Covenant Network of Presbyterians seeks an equity still not fully realized for LGBTQIA+ people in church and society, by

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Engaging the church to invite all of God's children into safe and welcoming congregational spaces of affirmation, healing, dignity and purpose;

Educating the church to expand our welcome of LGBTQIA+ people, to affirm their gifts for ordained office, and to uphold marriage equality for all; and

Equipping the church to bear witness to justice through advocacy and activism at the international, national, and local church levels; speaking a prophetic word in anxious and divided times; and standing with others in fighting hate and oppression against any of God's children.

Why now? The Social Justice Committee brought this recommendation to the December 2022 meeting of Session. With a few other matters to consider, it just took the Session a few months to get to a vote.

What process? At the December 2022 meeting, the Social Justice Committee presented some rationales for the affiliation. Session members were invited to ask follow-up questions as part of their discernment process. With new elders coming on Session in January, Social Justice was asked to re-present the motion in February, with more questions and answers. A follow up call with the executive director of Covenant Network was held by Zoom in March. A final vote was held in April, after all elders had sufficient time to ask questions, learn more and pray about the decision.

What cost? There are no dues to be part of the Covenant Network of Presbyterians. Most churches give some sort of financial support and our Social Justice Committee has budgeted \$1000 in 2023 as a contribution to the ministries of the Covenant Network.

Who else? The PCUSA and the Presbytery of Charlotte are both involved in providing education and resources for congregations like DCPC. Our denomination has an [Office of Gender, Racial and Intercultural Justice](#) that [shares resources](#) with PCUSA churches. The Presbytery of Charlotte has an [LGBTQ+ Ministry Team](#).

What next? That is up to the Social Justice Committee and Session. How we live into the call to embody the ministries of engaging, educating and equipping in relation to this ministry is up to us. What we do know from our Session conversations is that even those of us who desire to be welcoming, affirming and inclusive have a lot to learn as we seek to be one in Christ.

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