



The Presbyterian Church in Canada's Confession to God and LGBTQI People
Adopted on June 6, 2022

The 2022 General Assembly adopted a confession to God and LGBTQI people, confessing the harm caused by homophobia, transphobia, heterosexism and hypocrisy in The Presbyterian Church in Canada, and committing the church to a true change of heart and behaviour. The whole church is called to live out this confession as individuals and communities of faith so that harm does not continue.

THE MEANING OF CONFESSION

This confession is addressed to God and to each other in the presence of the whole community of believers. It presupposes the existence of a breach, or a falling short, that runs contrary to God's desire for how people live with and treat each other. It calls the church: to acknowledge harms done; to seek forgiveness from God and those who have been harmed; to stop causing harm; to repent of wrongdoing; and to begin a new journey of reparation, restoration, and reconciliation within the community of believers.

OUR CONFESSION TO GOD AND LGBTQI PEOPLE

All: Let us pray.

One: In response to the Holy Spirit's action in its midst
The Presbyterian Church in Canada comes before God
in the presence of one another
to confess its sins to God, and to LGBTQI people.
The church has wounded many
through its practices of exclusion and hurtful treatment.
The church seeks your forgiveness, O God,
and the forgiveness of all whom we have harmed.

All: We offer this confession in humility, desiring to go a new way.

One: Creating and Covenanting God,
you created us in your own image.
In Christ, you call us to be a welcoming and nurturing community,
to love one another as Christ has loved us.
Yet we have ostracized and excluded LGBTQI people

from full life within the body of Christ.
We have often turned the courts of the church into places
where those who are not straight or cisgender
are attacked, shunned and belittled.
We confess that we have failed
to love one another as Christ commanded us
and we have disrupted our covenantal relationship with you.

All: For these wrongful and unjust actions, we ask forgiveness.

One: The church has enacted policies and adopted customs
that have dehumanized and harmed LGBTQI people.
In doing so the church has led many people to believe
they have to choose between
embracing their sexuality and gender identity
or being a part of the church.

All: For these wrongful and unjust actions, we ask forgiveness.

One: The church has often perpetuated
harmful lies that LGBTQI people are dangerous and abusive.
The resulting stigma fosters an environment
where gifted people are discouraged and excluded
from providing leadership in the church.
The church's prejudice contributes to
hatred and neglect of LGBTQI people
making them targets for physical, spiritual and emotional violence.

All: For these unloving and unjust actions, we ask forgiveness.

One: The church has no higher calling
than to offer the worship that belongs to God.
In worship, we find strength and hope
for proclaiming God's reign in the world.
Yet often our language in worship is not inclusive
and renders many people and their families invisible.
This makes worship
a wounding and alienating experience.

All: For these unloving and unjust actions, the church asks forgiveness.

One: The church has been dismissive of and indifferent to

LGBTQI people when they have named
the harm the church has caused
to their mental, physical and spiritual well-being.

All: For these unloving and unjust actions, we ask forgiveness.

One: O God of justice and mercy,
you have called us to love and nurture the vulnerable among us,
yet we have not been loving and supportive role models
to young LGBTQI people.
We have failed to listen to their cries for healthy pastoral support.
Our actions have abandoned them to a future
that often includes internalized homophobia, self-loathing, depression,
substance abuse, self-harm, homelessness, and suicide.

All: For these unloving and unjust actions, we ask forgiveness

One: In this church called home,
some LGBTQI people still long
for the love and security of home.
In this church called home,
some of us have witnessed
demeaning conversations and attitudes
that belittle LGBTQI people.
Yet we choose to be silent in the face of such injustices,
becoming complicit in the resulting oppression.

All: For these unloving and unjust actions, we ask forgiveness.

One: Creating God,
your creation bears witness
to the vastness of your diversity.
In carrying out the mission entrusted to it,
the church has embraced ideologies and narratives
that have normalized the exclusion
of those it deems different.

All: For these unloving and unjust actions, we ask forgiveness.

One: To those of you whom we have harmed
by our unloving and unjust actions,
we confess that we have failed you.

We acknowledge that the church has wounded you deeply.

All: In humility and with sorrow, we ask for your forgiveness.

One: Come Holy Spirit come.
Be present in this time of silence.

(Hold a moment of silence)

One: God of justice and mercy,
we praise you for the presence of the Holy Spirit
prompting us to work
purposefully and compassionately,
to find new and just ways
of living out that larger story
of loving God and neighbour.
Help us to overcome
the pride that covers up wrongdoings,
the indifference that stands in the way of feeling,
and the fear that stalls change.

All: God of justice and mercy, we turn to you.
Only you can help us to do this hard work
of repairing, restoring, reconciling and healing.
Fill us with courage and hope
as we commit to working
for the restoration of your church and
our relationship with one another, and
for the collective flourishing of all people
for your glory.

All: **Amen.**