



The Presbyterian Church in Canada's Confession to God and LGBTQI People

The Presbyterian Church in Canada is called to live out this confession as individuals and communities of faith so that harm does not continue.

Funding to access counselling or psychotherapy is available for people who have experienced harm within The Presbyterian Church in Canada due to homophobia, transphobia, racism and/or ethnic marginalization.

To learn more about the denomination's work related to gender, sexuality, and LGBTQI2+ inclusion, visit presbyterian.ca/sexuality. Requests and inquiries about accessing support can be made at any time and are kept strictly confidential.

To learn more, visit presbyterian.ca/counselling.



The Presbyterian Church in Canada

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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.

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.*

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.

[a moment of silence]

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.