

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.

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

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

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

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

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

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 wellbeing. For these unloving and unjust actions, we ask forgiveness.

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

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

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

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

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.

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. **Amen.**



The Presbyterian Church in Canada