



# e-News from the Presbytery of Tampa Bay

4704 Kelly Road, Tampa, Florida 33615 March 18, 2015

*The Mission of the Presbytery of Tampa Bay is to identify and strengthen leaders so that every congregation makes new and mature disciples of Jesus Christ.*

## **Proposed Amendment on Marriage passes.**

Dear Presbytery of Tampa Bay,

No doubt by now you know as of last night, the Proposed Amendment to the Constitution regarding Marriage passed. The unofficial vote as of this morning is 87 presbyteries passing it, 41 presbyteries rejecting it, and one tie. Proposed Amendments to the Book of Order need a majority to pass, and that is 86 presbyteries. There are many presbyteries that have yet to vote.

This is no ordinary time for us as a church seeking God's perfect wisdom about many things. May we resist distraction from our charge to make new and mature disciples for Jesus Christ. This is the great commission and we should push on because that IS THE PRIZE, friends. I believe the Holy Spirit is not done with us yet. Be committed to the church for the long haul, and believe that there is more truth than any of us possess. I encourage you to get out your Bibles right now and read the Apostle's letter to the Ephesians where, in chapter 4, he admonished the believers to 'make every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.'

I know many of our church offices have received requests for comment by various local news media and I am sorry for that. Some in our congregations are disappointed in the passage of the amendment and others are happy with it. Others have no strong opinion at all. There has not been and will not be a requirement to perform wedding ceremonies for couples which the minister discerns are not appropriate. There is now no prohibition to perform same gender marriage and there is no requirement to perform them, either. The amendment does nothing to change the right of a teaching elder to decline to perform a marriage which the teaching elder believes not to be blessed by God. Likewise, the session retains full authority as to what worship services it will approve to be held in the church's facilities.

By way of balanced instruction on the marriage amendment, I offer some views from The Fellowship Community and the Covenant Network of Presbyterians with their responses to the news. From the Office of General Assembly, attached are an advisory opinion (FAQs), a letter from the Moderator and Vice Moderator, and a video clip from the Stated Clerk.

*Direct us, O Lord, in all our doings with your grace. Give us continual help that in all our works we may glorify your holy name. May we by your mercy realize everlasting life through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let it be so. Amen*  
Peace of Christ be with you all,  
Patrice Hatley

Gradye Parsons, Stated Clerk, PCUSA <http://www.pcusa.org/news/2015/3/17/amendment-14-f-approved/>

Letter from the Moderator and Vice-Moderation of the PC(USA)  
[http://www.pcusa.org/site\\_media/media/uploads/oga/pdf/mod-vice-mod-marriage-passage.pdf](http://www.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/oga/pdf/mod-vice-mod-marriage-passage.pdf)

Advisory Opinion  
[http://oga.pcusa.org/site\\_media/media/uploads/oga/pdf/advisory\\_opinion\\_marriage\\_passage.pdf](http://oga.pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/oga/pdf/advisory_opinion_marriage_passage.pdf)

The Fellowship Community <http://www.fellowship.community/>  
The Covenant Network <http://covnetpres.org/2015/03/approval14f/>

