



LAKE GROVE

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Real. Active. Faith.

July 1, 2026

Dear Lake Grove Presbyterian Family,

We, the pastors and ruling elders of your Session, write this letter to share with you the outcome of the ongoing conversation and prayerful discernment process we have been navigating regarding same sex marriage and LGPC's ordination standards for church officers. We understand there is a diversity of conviction on homosexuality and same sex marriage throughout the body of Christ. In 2023, the Task Force on Participation and Representation (commonly called the Inclusion Committee) asked Session to revisit this issue and communicate the church's position with greater clarity and transparency. For the past three years, Session has prayerfully studied Scripture, examined biblical teaching, and sought the Holy Spirit as we have shared with one another from our faith-filled perspectives and experience. Throughout all these conversations, and considering our core values and purpose, the leadership of Lake Grove has focused on the following items.

- The Centrality of Jesus Christ, our Savior, Redeemer, and Friend
- Unity in Diversity
- Unity not Uniformity

The Centrality of Jesus Christ, our Savior, Redeemer, and Friend

Of highest importance is the centrality of a **transformational relationship with Jesus Christ**, the importance of being connected in supportive relationships with the people of Jesus Christ, and doing the work of Christ among the least and the lost of this world whom he came to save. Jesus Christ is our center and our focus. To be at work in Christ for our neighbors is our mission.

Unity in Diversity

In Scripture and in the Book of Order (F-1.0403) the primacy of unity in diversity is made clear.

“As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.

There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise” (Gal. 3:27–29).

From the Book of Order (F-1.0403):

The unity of believers in Christ is reflected in the rich diversity of the Church's membership. In Christ, by the power of the Spirit, God unites persons through baptism regardless of race, ethnicity, age, sex, disability, geography, or theological conviction.

In July of 2024 a motion presented to the General Assembly of the PC(USA) recommended a change to our constitution to include “gender identity” and “sexual orientation” in the list of protected classes recognized by the PC(USA) as being guaranteed full participation and representation in the life of the church. This motion passed and has been ratified by a majority of the presbyteries and took effect on July 4, 2025. Along with the request from the Taskforce on Participation and Representation, the enactment of this national policy has led us to revisit our prior decision regarding same-sex marriage and ordination.

Through this biblically informed and prayerful process the Session voted on June 30, 2026 to allow those in covenantal same sex marriages to be considered for ordination as elders and deacons, and to allow same sex

marriages to take place in our facility. This will bring us into conformity with the collective voice and will of the PC(USA) policy as of July 4, 2025. As is already the standard and practice, those who maintain celibacy in singleness continue to be eligible for ordination, and pastors have freedom of conscience regarding weddings they officiate. We wish the congregation to know that this vote was not unanimous.

Note on Scripture

Many of you have asked the Session to discuss how Scripture informed our decision-making process. Please know that each one of us diligently sought the scriptures this past year, earnestly desiring to have them above all else bring us to an understanding of how the Lord would have us make decisions on the proposed policies. Thirteen members of your Session read, studied, and prayed over numerous passages of Scripture pertaining to same sex relationships. Just as you might find in your Bible Study or small group when studying passages of Scripture, God brings to mind something slightly or significantly different for each member. This happened for us as well. We were not in complete agreement. Our vote was not unanimous nor was our reasoning behind each yes or no vote uniform. Simply put, it would be impossible to construct a single scriptural argument that encompasses the range of views held across our differing interpretations of Scripture. Like the letters we received from the congregation, our views and the reasoning behind them are as varied as those held across the many faithful Christian scholars and teachers who have studied this issue in depth. But as we have shared and listened to each other, we have gained deep respect for each of these views, even when they may be different from or even incompatible with our own. We have found that we can disagree and still embrace each other as siblings in Christ. We will provide opportunities for you to discuss further with individual members of Session, and we pray that you will stay open to conversation with each other as well.

Unity not Uniformity

We charge our congregation to hold this decision in the light of these shared values. In John 17, our Lord Jesus prayed for his followers (including all of us) and asked God that we might “all be one, Father, so that the world may believe that You have sent me.” In Ephesians 2, the apostle Paul declared that Christ himself “is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier.” The key word in these verses is “one.” Does this mean we all agree on every issue? No. What Jesus prayed for was not uniformity but unity - unity of faith, hope, and love in the one Lord Jesus Christ.

The vote was not unanimous, but every member agrees to hold the decisions secondary in importance to the unity of the Body.

We further believe that we are called to live out the grace and truth found in Jesus Christ, and to be something different in this culture of polarization and division. Therefore, we take every opportunity to grow in depth and love for one another - even in disagreement. We are a church that has the power through the Spirit (Eph 4:3) to work through issues, allow for legitimate differences, and hold on to each other in love. We humbly pray that all who enter here will be welcomed in the grace and love of our Lord Jesus Christ and by the hospitality of his people.

In Christ,

Your Session Elders:

Susie Crowell	Liz Hartman	Lynne MacMillan
Matt Eckmann	Kelley Knorr	Karen Prigodich
Sharon Evers	Michelle Lantow	Anne-Marie Simpson
Mike Goetze	Ann Lininger	Laurie Washburne
Jay Hamachek		

Pastors (ex officio – without vote):

Susan Graham <i>Moderator</i>	Mark Frey	Conley Zomermaand
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