

PATHWAY B: INCLUSION

This pathway proposes to change The Presbyterian Church in Canada's definition of marriage to be a committed/covenanted relationship between two persons (adults). Clergy would be permitted to conduct such marriages. LGBTQI persons in married relationships would be eligible for ordination. This pathway affirms that the context for sexual intimacy is within the vows of marriage.

Implications

For Congregations

Congregations would be free to call as ministers and elect as ruling elders LGBTQI persons in married relationships.

For Sessions

Sessions would be free to approve same-sex weddings. Sessions would be free to approve the election of LGBTQI persons in married relationships to the eldership.

For Clergy

Should the PCC adopt this pathway, all clergy ordained after that time would be expected to affirm same-sex marriage and to participate in the ordinations and inductions of LGBTQI clergy who are in same-sex marriages. Clergy ordained prior to that decision would have liberty of conscience and action regarding the ordination and induction of LGBTQI clergy in married relationships.

For Presbyteries

Presbyteries would support married LGBTQI persons within their bounds who are exercising their calls as ruling elders and teaching elders. Presbyteries would support the liberty of conscience and action of congregations and sessions which are not affirming and would support the liberty of conscience and action of clergy ordained prior to the adoption of inclusion.

Next Steps

If the Assembly were to choose this pathway forward, a remit under the Barrier Act would be required. Only after passing through that Barrier Act process would Inclusion be implemented.

Questions Still Remaining

The sexuality overtures, in general, have focused on ordination and same sex marriage that have shaped this pathway. We recognize that this does not address all issues of LGBTQI inclusivity.

Guidelines will need to be developed ensuring presbyteries sustain calls to married same-sex clergy and support married same-sex elders.

How this Pathway moves forward the Mission and Ministry of The Presbyterian Church in Canada?

This pathway provides a way forward on this matter, ending uncertainty and speculation concerning the church's doctrine and practice of same sex marriage and ordination. This will allow energy to be put into other tasks requiring the church's attention. This pathway brings The Presbyterian Church in Canada into line with a number of mainline ecumenical partners in North America with whom the denomination has close working relationships.