

**A motion to request that National Capital Presbytery respectfully overture the 219<sup>th</sup> General Assembly (2010)**

**On revising the Directory of Worship and Rules of Discipline**

The National Capital Presbytery respectfully overtures the 219<sup>th</sup> General Assembly (2010) to do the following:

Direct the Stated Clerk to send the following proposed amendment to the presbyteries for their affirmative or negative votes:

To revise Book of Order provisions W-4.9000-9006 and D-14.0200 to change all references to marriage between a man and woman to marriage between “two people” or “couple” as follows:

**W-4.9000:** Marriage is a gift God has given to all humankind for the well-being of the entire human family. Marriage is a civil contract between ~~a woman and a man~~ two people. For Christians marriage is a covenant through which ~~a man and a woman~~ two people are called to live out together before God their lives of discipleship. In a service of Christian marriage, a lifelong commitment is made by ~~a woman and a man~~ two people to each other, publicly witnessed and acknowledged by the community of faith.

**W-4.9002:** a. In preparation for the marriage service, the minister shall provide for a discussion with the ~~man and the woman~~ couple to be married concerning . . . .

**W-4.9004:** The service begins with scriptural sentences and a brief statement of purpose. The ~~man and the woman~~ couple to be married shall declare their intention to enter into Christian marriage and shall exchange vows of love and faithfulness. . . .

**W-4.9006:** A service of worship recognizing a civil marriage and confirming it in the community of faith may be appropriate when requested by the couple. The service will be similar to the marriage service except that the opening statement, the declaration of intention, the exchange of vows by the ~~husband and wife~~ couple, and the public declaration by the minister reflect the fact that the ~~woman and the man~~ two people are already married to one another according to the laws of the state.

**D-140202** A ~~husband or wife~~, married person, otherwise competent to testify, may be a witness for or against ~~the other~~ his or her spouse, but neither shall be compelled to testify against the other.

**RATIONALE**

God is love, and love is God’s gift for everyone. In the story of creation God declares that it is not good for human beings to be alone. In marriage, two people discover the depth of God’s gift of one another. God has given us the capacity to love one another. The ability of two people to enter into relationships, form families and care for them is an expression of God’s gift. It is holy and good. This gift is not limited to heterosexual couples and the blessing of the church should not be limited either.

Moreover, civil law in numerous states allows for the civil marriage of same sex couples. Many of these couples are members of our congregations and are coming to the church to celebrate the gift of marriage in services of worship. The proposed changes to the Worship Directory reflect this reality.