

**Reverend E. Russell Lynn, Jr. (Hon. Ret.)
3969 South Woodrow Street
Arlington, Virginia 22206**



Aug. 12, 2019

National Capital Presbytery

Dear Friends:

I composed this letter originally to be sent to McCormick Theological Seminary to mark the 50th anniversary of my ordination to the Ministry of Word and Sacrament on June 20, 1969, shortly after receiving my divinity degree from McCormick. I am happy to share this with all my fellows in ministry in NCP.

My career in ministry has been eventful and filled with change and surprise. After graduating from McCormick, I was called to the position of Assistant Director for the Arts at Market Place Ministries in Northern Virginia, to which I was ordained. Market Place Ministries was disbanded soon after, and I wrestled with whether to stay in ministry or go back to school in landscape design. I chose to stay in ministry and found a position as assistant pastor at Old First Presbyterian Church in Newark, New Jersey. After three years there I returned to the Washington, D.C., area and had a series of positions in Christian Education and leadership training. Then I was called to three years as assistant pastor at The New York Avenue Presbyterian Church in Washington. Part of these three years coincided with the period when Dr. Art McKay, president at McCormick during my years there, was interim pastor.

I then decided to attend Catholic University to work toward a Master's in Social Work, which I received in May of 1980. After working as a psychotherapist and management trainer, I felt called back to ministry. I began working in 1983 at the Falls Church Presbyterian Church in Virginia as an interim assistant minister, and then for a period as Interim Associate for Mission and Witness for NCP, where I worked with LaJuan Quander. The Rev. Ed White was Presbytery Executive at that time. I also continued to see clients in my developing counseling-psychotherapy practice.

Then, as the AIDS crisis emerged in the 1980s, I sought ways to be more involved helping persons with HIV. I was offered a position in 1986 as a social worker in the growing AIDS Services Program at the Whitman-Walker Clinic in Washington, D.C. And then after a year as one of the social workers, I became Director of AIDS Services at Whitman-Walker. And after three difficult years, left that position very burned out.

I returned to full-time private practice in 1989, and soon realized that the kind of counseling I was practicing is called pastoral counseling. In 1998, I joined the Centers for Pastoral Counseling of Virginia and saw clients as part of that group until I retired in March 2008. Over these years I maintained my connection with The Falls Church Presbyterian Church as a parish associate, and I am still there today.

I am a gay man and coming to acceptance of myself and my gifts has been part of my journey in ministry. There were several men at McCormick who were very instrumental in my progress toward self-acceptance. And coming out in the church has been part of my journey as well. The people at Falls Church Presbyterian have been accepting of and celebrating my full humanity from the very first of our ministry together in 1983. I am extremely grateful for them and for Ed, my partner since 1984 and husband since 2015.

Gratefully,

Rev. E. Russell "Rusty" Lynn, (Hon. Ret.)