

Western District Conference - Procedure regarding credentialed ministers officiating at same-sex weddings

At the Western District Conference annual assembly in 2015 the delegate body approved by a 72% vote a resolution brought by Rainbow Mennonite Church, Kansas City, KS, stating:

Be it resolved that the Western District Conference of the Mennonite Church USA, out of respect for the responsibility and commitment to “seek to understand and interpret Scripture in harmony with Jesus Christ as we are led by the Holy Spirit in the church,” upholds the right of individual congregations to discern how homosexuality will be subject to Biblical interpretation, and

Be it further resolved that pastors, with the affirmation of their congregations, consistent with Mennonite polity, and without fear of censure, may officiate or refuse to officiate ceremonies that consecrate before God monogamous, life-long unions, regardless of the sexual orientation of those being united.

After the resolution was adopted, the WDC Ministerial Leadership Commission (MLC) implemented these procedures to review the credentials of ministers who officiate at same-sex covenant ceremonies:

- The MLC requests that pastors and congregational leadership notify the MLC in advance when a pastor plans to officiate a marriage ceremony for a same-sex couple.
- The MLC will review the discernment process of both the pastor and the congregation that led to the endorsement of officiating such a ceremony. The MLC requests that the pastor and congregational leadership provide a written description of the discernment process, and meet with the MLC for an interview. The MLC will follow the same confidential procedure as with any other credential-related interview.
- If the MLC determines that the pastor and congregation are in agreement after discernment regarding Biblical and theological bases, then the minister’s credential will be found to be in order.
- A note will be put in the minister’s file and MennoData record indicating that the minister has officiated a marriage ceremony for a same-sex couple, and the date of the ceremony.
- If the minister officiates at subsequent ceremonies in the same congregation, the MLC requests that the minister and congregational leadership notify the MLC in advance, and a note will be placed in the minister’s file and MennoData record. No additional review is required.

For more information, contact Heidi Regier Kreider, WDC Conference Minister

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