

Dear Members and Friends of Rose Hill Presbyterian Church,

You have probably heard that a majority of Presbyteries in the PC(USA) approved an amendment to our Book of Order that changes the ordination standards for church leaders. The Seattle Presbytery that Rose Hill belongs to, and indeed all five presbyteries in Washington State, voted against this amendment. Specifically, the amendment removes a clause that states that candidates for ordination must live in “fidelity in marriage or chastity in singleness.” Regardless of what you may read or hear in the popular media, this is what this change means and doesn’t mean for us.

What it doesn’t mean: The new standard does not require that any church or Presbytery ordain practicing homosexuals. It removes a clause that specifically forbids it, but doesn’t require that homosexuals be ordained.

What it does mean: We hold that Scripture teaches that practice as sin, and the standard continues to hold that ordination be guided by Scripture. Some ordaining bodies have, and will continue to turn away from that teaching. We grieve that this change gives the appearance of condoning that practice, but we stand firm in the truth of the Scripture, and will continue to apply it in our own ordination examinations for the offices of Elder, Deacon, and in our representation to Presbytery for examinations for the office of Minister of Word and Sacrament.

The church should be a place for all sinners to come unfettered to seek healing for their brokenness, and we should continue to lovingly open our arms to embrace all and introduce all to God’s healing and saving grace through Jesus Christ. We have never and will never ordain anyone who is not a sinner. However, we hold that Scripture teaches that church leaders are held to higher standards (see I Timothy, Titus, and James) and that leaders, among other qualifications, are not to be unrepentant sinners. Rose Hill Presbyterian Church will continue to hold fast to what Scripture teaches, and in the words of our new mission statement, to “invite, inspire, and ignite all who will come to Christ by holding fast to our core beliefs and by building up the body of believers in reliance on the Word of God and His Holy Spirit.”

Pastors Will and Doug are ready to meet with anyone who has questions on this issue or other spiritual matters. There will be an information meeting on this issue after worship, Sunday, May 22, and Sunday, June 5, 2011. We invite your prayers and your attendance.

In Christ,

The Session of Rose Hill Presbyterian Church