

West Charlton United Presbyterian Church
1331 Sacandaga Road, Amsterdam, NY 12010



The Beacon

January

WEST CHARLTON UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH 882-9874 www.westcharltonupc.org

2015

Reading the Bible in the Same-Sex Marriage Debate

On January 24th the Albany Presbytery will vote on amending the PCUSA Directory for Worship—14-F. Marriage

What is the actual language of the proposed amendment?

“Marriage is a gift God has given to all humankind for the well-being of the entire human family. Marriage involves a unique commitment between two people (traditionally a man and a woman) to love and support each other for the rest of their lives. The sacrificial love that unites the couple sustains them as faithful and responsible members of the church and the wider community.

“In civil law, marriage is a contract that recognizes the rights and obligations of the married couple in society. In the Reformed tradition, marriage is also a covenant in which God has an active part, and which the community of faith publicly witnesses and acknowledges.

“If they meet the requirements of the civil jurisdiction in which they intend to marry, a couple may request that a service of Christian marriage be conducted by a teaching elder in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), who is authorized, though not required, to act as an agent of the civil jurisdiction in recording the marriage contract. A couple requesting a service of Christian marriage shall receive instruction from the teaching elder, who may agree to the couple’s request only if, in the judgment of the teaching elder, the couple demonstrate sufficient understanding of the nature of the marriage covenant and commitment to living their lives together according to its values. In making this decision, the teaching elder may seek the counsel of the session, which has authority to permit or deny the use of church property for a marriage service.

“The marriage service shall be conducted in a manner appropriate to this covenant and to the forms of Reformed worship, under the direction of the teaching elder and the supervision of the session (W-1.4004–4006). In a service of marriage, the couple marry each other by exchanging mutual promises. The teaching elder witnesses the couple’s promises and pronounces God’s blessing upon their union. The community of faith pledges to support the couple in upholding their promises; prayers may be offered for the couple, for the communities that support them, and for all who seek to live in faithfulness.

“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 statements made shall reflect the fact that the couple is already married to one another according to the laws of the civil jurisdiction.

“Nothing herein shall compel a teaching elder to perform nor compel a session to authorize the use of church property for a marriage service that the teaching elder or the session believes is contrary to the teaching elder’s or the session’s discernment of the Holy Spirit and their understanding of the Word of God.”

On January 18th immediately following worship—discussion concerning Civil Union & Marriage Issues.

After discussion of the Bible passages below we will take our own vote at WCUPC. We won’t be able to cover all of the passages, but Pastor Tom wants to begin with the passages of your choice.

Genesis 1:27-28 KJV

27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

28 And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, ...

Genesis 2:18, 22-24 KJV

18 And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.

22 And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man.

23 And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.

24 Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.

Genesis 19:4-5 KJV

4 But before they lay down, the men of the city, even the men of Sodom, compassed the house round, both old and young, all the people from every quarter:

5 And they called unto Lot, and said unto him, Where are the men which came in to thee this night? bring them out unto us, that we may know them.

Leviticus 18:22 KJV

22 Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination.

Leviticus 20:13 KJV

13 If a man also lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them.

Deuteronomy 23:17-18 KJV

17 There shall be no whore of the daughters of Israel, nor a sodomite of the sons of Israel.

18 Thou shalt not bring the hire of a whore, or the price of a dog, into the house of the LORD thy God for any vow: for even both these are abomination unto the LORD thy God.

Judges 19:22-25 KJV

22 Now as they were making their hearts merry, behold, the men of the city, certain sons of Belial, beset the house round about, and beat at the door, and spake to the master of the house, the old man, saying, Bring forth the man that came into thine house, that we may know him.

23 And the man, the master of the house, went out unto them, and said unto them, Nay, my brethren, nay, I pray you, do not so wickedly; seeing that this man is come into mine house, do not this folly.

24 Behold, here is my daughter a maiden, and his concubine; them I will bring out now, and humble ye them, and do with them what seemeth good unto you: but unto this man do not so vile a thing.

25 But the men would not hearken to him: so the man took his concubine, and brought her forth unto them; and they knew her, and abused her all the night until the morning: and when the day began to spring, they let her go.

Genesis 1:27-28 The Message

God created human beings; he created them godlike, Reflecting God's nature. He created them male and female. God blessed them: "Prosper! Reproduce! Fill Earth!"

Genesis 2:18-25 The Message

God said, "It's not good for the Man to be alone; I'll make him a helper, a companion."

God put the Man into a deep sleep. As he slept he removed one of his ribs and replaced it with flesh. God then used the rib that he had taken from the Man to make Woman and presented her to the Man. The Man said, "Finally! Bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh! Name her Woman for she was made from Man." Therefore a man leaves his father and mother and embraces his wife. They become one flesh.

Genesis 19:4-5 The Message

Before they went to bed men from all over the city of Sodom, young and old, descended on the house from all sides and boxed them in.

They yelled to Lot, "Where are the men who are staying with you for the night? Bring them out so we can have our sport with them!"

Leviticus 18:22 The Message

22 "Don't have sex with a man as one does with a woman. That is abhorrent.

Leviticus 20:13 The Message

"If a man has sex with a man as one does with a woman, both of them have done what is abhorrent. They must be put to death; they are responsible for their own deaths.

Deuteronomy 23:17-18 The Message

No daughter of Israel is to become a sacred prostitute; and no son of Israel is to become a sacred prostitute. And don't bring the fee of a sacred whore or the earnings of a priest-pimp to the house of God, your God, to pay for any vow—they are both an abomination to God, your God.

Judges 19:22-25 The Message

They were relaxed and enjoying themselves when the men of the city, a gang of local hell-raisers all, surrounded the house and started pounding on the door. They yelled for the owner of the house, the old man, "Bring out the man who came to your house. We want to have sex with him."

He went out and told them, "No, brothers! Don't be obscene—this man is my guest. Don't commit this outrage. Look, my virgin daughter and his concubine are here. I'll bring them out for you. Abuse them if you must, but don't do anything so senselessly vile to this man."

But the men wouldn't listen to him. Finally, the Levite pushed his concubine out the door to them. They raped her repeatedly all night long. Just before dawn they let her go.

1 Kings 14:22&24 KJV

22 And Judah did evil in the sight of the LORD, and they provoked him to jealousy with their sins which they had committed, above all that their fathers had done.

24 And there were also sodomites in the land: and they did according to all the abominations of the nations which the LORD cast out before the children of Israel.

1 Kings 15:11-12 KJV

11 And Asa did that which was right in the eyes of the LORD, as did David his father.

12 And he took away the sodomites out of the land, and removed all the idols that his fathers had made.

1 Kings 22:46 KJV

46 And the remnant of the sodomites, which remained in the days of his father Asa, he took out of the land.

2 Kings 23:7 KJV

7 And he brake down the houses of the sodomites, that were by the house of the LORD, where the women wove hangings for the grove.

Matthew 19:4-6 KJV

4 And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female,

5 And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh?

6 Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

Matthew 19:11-12 KJV

11 But he said unto them, All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given.

12 For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother's womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it.

Mark 10:6-9 KJV

6 But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female.

7 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife;

8 And they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh.

9 What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

Romans 1:26-27 KJV

26 For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature:

27 And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet.

1 Kings 14:22&24 The Message

Judah was openly wicked before God, making him very angry. They set new records in sin, surpassing anything their ancestors had done.

Worse, they had male sacred prostitutes, polluting the country outrageously—all the stuff that God had gotten rid of when he brought Israel into the land.

1 Kings 15:11-12 The Message

Asa conducted himself well before God, reviving the ways of his ancestor David. He cleaned house: He got rid of the sacred prostitutes and threw out all the idols his predecessors had made.

1 Kings 22:42-46 The Message

Also, he got rid of the sacred prostitutes left over from the days of his father Asa.

2 Kings 23:7 The Message

He tore out the rooms of the male sacred prostitutes that had been set up in The Temple of God; women also used these rooms for weavings for Asherah.

Matthew 19:4-6 The Message

He answered, "Haven't you read in your Bible that the Creator originally made man and woman for each other, male and female? And because of this, a man leaves father and mother and is firmly bonded to his wife, becoming one flesh—no longer two bodies but one. Because God created this organic union of the two sexes, no one should desecrate his art by cutting them apart."

Matthew 19:11-12 The Message

But Jesus said, "Not everyone is mature enough to live a married life. It requires a certain aptitude and grace. Marriage isn't for everyone. Some, from birth seemingly, never give marriage a thought. Others never get asked—or accepted. And some decide not to get married for kingdom reasons. But if you're capable of growing into the largeness of marriage, do it."

Mark 10:6-9 The Message

In the original creation, God made male and female to be together. Because of this, a man leaves father and mother, and in marriage he becomes one flesh with a woman—no longer two individuals, but forming a new unity. Because God created this organic union of the two sexes, no one should desecrate his art by cutting them apart."

Romans 1:26-27 The Message

Worse followed. Refusing to know God, they soon didn't know how to be human either—women didn't know how to be women, men didn't know how to be men. Sexually confused, they abused and defiled one another, women with women, men with men—all lust, no love. And then they paid for it, oh, how they paid for it—emptied of God and love, godless and loveless wretches.

1 Corinthians 6:9 KJV

9 Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind,

1 Corinthians 7:2-9 KJV

2 Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.
 3 Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband.
 4 The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife.
 5 Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.
 6 But I speak this by permission, and not of commandment.
 7 For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that.
 8 I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if they abide even as I.
 9 But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn.

Ephesians 5:31 KJV

31 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.

1 Timothy 1:9-10 KJV

9 Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers,
 10 For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for men stealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine;

Jude 1:7 KJV

7 Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

1 Corinthians 6:9 The Message

Do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived! Fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, male prostitutes, sodomites,

1 Corinthians 7:2-9 The Message

Certainly—but only within a certain context. It's good for a man to have a wife, and for a woman to have a husband. Sexual drives are strong, but marriage is strong enough to contain them and provide for a balanced and fulfilling sexual life in a world of sexual disorder. The marriage bed must be a place of mutuality—the husband seeking to satisfy his wife, the wife seeking to satisfy her husband. Marriage is not a place to “stand up for your rights.” Marriage is a decision to serve the other, whether in bed or out. Abstaining from sex is permissible for a period of time if you both agree to it, and if it's for the purposes of prayer and fasting—but only for such times. Then come back together again. Satan has an ingenious way of tempting us when we least expect it. I'm not, understand, commanding these periods of abstinence—only providing my best counsel if you should choose them. Sometimes I wish everyone were single like me—a simpler life in many ways! But celibacy is not for everyone any more than marriage is. God gives the gift of the single life to some, the gift of the married life to others. I do, though, tell the unmarried and widows that singleness might well be the best thing for them, as it has been for me. But if they can't manage their desires and emotions, they should by all means go ahead and get married. The difficulties of marriage are preferable by far to a sexually tortured life as a single.

Ephesians 5:31 The Message

And this is why a man leaves father and mother and cherishes his wife. No longer two, they become “one flesh.”

1 Timothy 1:9-10 The Message

It's obvious, isn't it, that the law code isn't primarily for people who live responsibly, but for the irresponsible, who defy all authority, riding roughshod over God, life, sex, truth, whatever!

Jude 1:7 The Message

Sodom and Gomorrah, which went to sexual rack and ruin along with the surrounding cities that acted just like them, are another example. Burning and burning and never burning up, they serve still as a stock warning.

Four major historic changes to marriage in North America—each of which required marriage be redefined:

Polygamous marriages—the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, first introduced the concept of polygyny—one man married to multiple spiritual wives—in the early 1840s. The practice has been variously called the Law of Abraham, or the Patriarchal Order of Marriage, and Celestial Plural Marriage. The associated Law of Sarah stated that women must stoically accept plural marriages. In 1890, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the federal government could take away citizenships from all members of the church as long as they continued practice of polygyny. Later, the government announced that they would start to seize the church's temples and other assets.

African-American marriages—in the mid 19th century, African-American slaves were not free to marry as white couples were. "...marriage could only take place after obtaining permission from the owner. Southern state laws denied the slaves legal marriage contracts." Just as some gay and lesbian couples in recent years have gone through commitment ceremonies at sympathetic churches, "slaves...held ceremonies that revealed the seriousness with which they regarded married life." Restrictions on African-American marriages were lifted after the civil war. Opposite-sex couples of all races were then free to legally marry anywhere in the U.S.—but only as long as both spouses were of the same race.

Inter-racial marriages—until a few decades ago, inter-racial marriage was considered a criminal act in some U.S. states. In 1958, Mildred Jeter, a Black woman, and Richard Loving, a White man, had been legally married in the District of Columbia. When they returned to Virginia, they were arrested because their inter-racial marriage violated Virginia's miscegenation laws. The trial judge, speaking for God, berated the Lovings with a theological speech which seems quaint to many people in the 21st century. He stated in an opinion that: 'Almighty God created the races white, black, yellow, malay and red, and he placed them on separate continents. And but for the interference with his arrangement there would be no cause for such marriages. The fact that he separated the races shows that he did not intend for the races to mix.' The court's 1967 decision was sufficiently broad to overturn as unconstitutional all U.S. miscegenation laws, including the one in Virginia and similar legislation in 15 other states. Inter-racial couples were free to marry anywhere in the U.S. for the first time.

Same-sex marriages—until 2003-JUN-10, same sex couples are not allowed to marry anywhere in North America. On that date, same-sex marriages became legal in Ontario, Canada. They became available in the province of British Columbia, Canada on JUL-8. In these jurisdictions, any two loving, committed couples can now marry, subject only to the consanguinity and age restrictions in the case of opposite-gender couples. Two years later, same-sex marriages were legalized across Canada. The Massachusetts Supreme Court legalized same-sex marriages on 2003-NOV-19 in a ruling on a same-sex marriage case.

These four changes were painful experiences for many North Americans at the time.

If past accommodations to marital changes are any indication, can North Americans accept same-sex marriage in stride?

Eight types of marriages mentioned in the Bible—

Type 1—the standard nuclear family: God is recorded as promoting this type of marriage in Genesis 2:18. The original Hebrew word, when used to refer to humans, implies a partnership of two equals, rather than a relationship between persons of unequal status. There were quite a few differences between the customs and laws of contemporary North Americans and of ancient Israelites.

In ancient Israel: Inter-faith marriages were theoretically forbidden. However, they were sometimes formed most notably by Solomon. Children of inter-faith marriages were considered illegitimate. Marriages were generally arranged by family or friends. They did not result from a gradually evolving, loving relationship that developed during a period of courtship. A bride who had been presented as a virgin and who could not be proven to be one was stoned to death by the men of her village. There appears to have been no similar penalty for men who engaged in consensual pre-marital sexual activity.

Type 2—Levirate Marriage—the name of this type of marriage is derived from the Latin word "levir," which means "brother-in-law." It is called "yibbum" in Hebrew. This involved a woman who was widowed without having borne a son. She would be required to leave her home, marry her brother-in-law, live with him, and engage in sexual relations. If there were feelings of attraction and love between the woman and her new husband, this arrangement could be quite agreeable to both. Otherwise, the woman would have to endure what was essentially serial rapes with her former brother-in-law as perpetrator. Their first-born son was considered to be sired by the deceased husband.

Type 3—A man, one or more wives, and some concubines—a man could keep numerous concubines, in addition to one or more wives. These women held an even lower status than a wife.

Type 4—A male rapist and his victim—Deuteronomy 22:28-29 requires a female virgin who is not engaged to be married and who has been raped must marry her attacker, no matter what her feelings were towards him. A man could then become married by simply sexually attacking a woman that appealed to him, and paying his father-in-law 50 shekels of silver. There is one disadvantage of this approach: he was not allowed to subsequently divorce her.

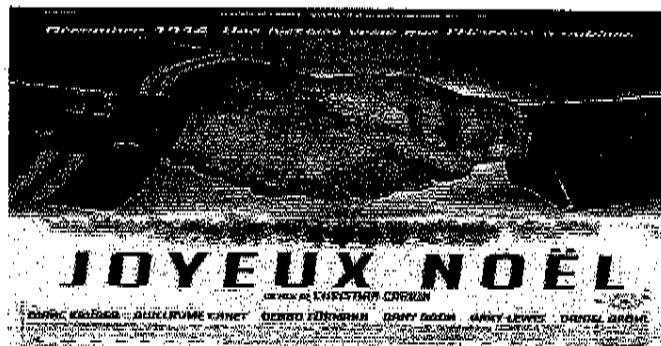
Type 5—A man, a woman and her property—a female slave—as described in Genesis 16, was property and her owner could dispose of her as wished. Sarah gave Hagar to Abram as a type of wife, so that Abram could have an heir.

Type 6—A male soldier and a female prisoner of war—Numbers 31:1-18 describes how the army of the ancient Israelites killed every adult Midianite male in battle. Only the lives of 32,000 women, all virgins—were spared. After a full lunar month had passed—they would be required to submit to their owners sexually, as a wife.

Type 7—Polygynous marriage—a man would leave his family of origin and join with his first wife. Then, as finances allowed, he would marry as many additional women as he desired and could afford.

Type 8—A male and female slave—Exodus 21:4 indicates that a slave owner could assign one of his female slaves to one of his male slaves as a wife. There is no indication that women were consulted during this type of transaction.

FILM & FAITH MINISTRY—*Joyeux Noel*



January 2nd 6pm @ manse

This movie was not shown in December due to weather. Bring: Yourself and a friend

There will be pizza, beverages and dessert for supper and a basket will be passed to defray expenses. Let Tom know that you're coming, so we know how much pizza to order.

With time for discussion afterward, we'll be on our way home no later than 9:00. Come and enjoy this evening with your church family.

It is Christmas Eve, 1914. The Germans face the British and the French in trench warfare. Then there is a spontaneous cease-fire, as the troops on both sides lay down their weapons and observe the birth of the savior in whose name they were killing each other. That Christmas Eve truce actually happened, in what became a lesson in humanity.

January

Lay Worship Leaders

- 4 Lynn Prentice
- 11 Holly McConchie
- 18 Helen King
- 25 Praise Sunday

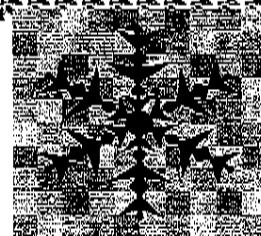


Greeters: Ann Weaver & Darlene Muzzey



Flowers for the Chancel

All Sundays are Open in January as of this printing



~ January 2015 ~

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p>Tom vacation 1/1 and 1/2</p>						
<p>4 9AM Choir Practice 10:30 Worship & Children's SS Fellowship Time after Worship Take down decorations</p>	5	6	7	8	9	10
<p>Flowers: Open</p>		<p>Epiphany of the Lord</p>				
<p>11 WORSHIP IN CHAPEL <i>Baptism of the Lord</i> 9AM Choir Practice 10:30 Worship & Children's SS Fellowship Time after Worship</p>	12	<p>13 Session Meeting 7 PM Louise Smith Circle 9:30 AM</p>	14	15	16	17
<p>Flowers: Open</p>						
<p>18 WORSHIP IN CHAPEL FOOD PANTRY SUNDAY 9AM Choir Practice 10:30 Worship & Children's SS Fellowship Time after Worship Immediately following worship a discussion on Civil Union & marriage issues</p>	19	20	21	22	23	24
<p>Flowers: Open</p>	<p>Martin Luther King Day</p>		<p>Helen Killough Circle 7 PM</p>			<p>Presbytery Meeting New Covenant PC</p>
<p>25 WORSHIP IN CHAPEL PRAISE WORSHIP SUNDAY 9AM Choir Practice 10:30 Worship - No SS Fellowship Time after Worship Deacon's Meeting 11:45</p>	26	27	28	29	30	31
<p>Flowers: Open</p>						
				<p>1 New Year's Day</p>	<p>2 Movie Night at the Manse "Joyeux Noel" 6PM</p>	<p>3</p>