



201 S. Skinker Blvd.
St. Louis, MO 63105
314.721.0943
www.memorialpca.org

July 13, 2022

Greg Johnson
Keith Robinson
Sam Dolby
Doug Mendis
Pastors

Dear Church Family,

Gene Campbell
Worship Arts Director

God has continued to bless Memorial as a church family that welcomes fellow sinners and provides a place of healing. Our location in St. Louis gives us a unique opportunity for reaching people that many other churches are not in a position to reach. God has provided for us through dark years of pandemic. During a divisive election season, our unity held across the political divide. God has blessed us.

Cindi Campbell
Operations Manager

Kellen Dolby
Children's Ministry

Katie Kinney
Nursery

On another front, however, we have an ongoing conflict that recently has worsened.

Esha Christie
Internationals

Two weeks ago, the Presbyterian Church in America held its annual General Assembly in Birmingham. We sent five commissioners: Joe, Christian, Sam, Keith and Greg. We confess that we did see some good things this year. Outgoing Moderator Roy Taylor preached a powerful sermon warning against the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees. After years of labor, a report was received on domestic abuse and sexual assault. We also approved changes to help protect abuse victims during church discipline cases. These were good.

But our commissioners were greatly disturbed by other actions of the Assembly.

One year ago, we shared with the congregation that we at Memorial were in conflict with our denomination. At that time, Greg was facing a case before our denominational supreme court seeking his removal from ministry on account of his same-sex orientation—despite his biblical convictions and ongoing chastity. Thankfully, we won the court case by a 16–7 vote.

Also last year, two overtures had been passed to amend our church constitution to add restrictions on ministry for many or all chaste believers who are same-sex oriented. Those amendments required ratification by 66.7% of regional presbyteries. The vote in the presbyteries was very close. Both overtures received a clear majority. One was approved by 62.5% of presbyteries, just shy of the required supermajority.

We hoped this year to see the Assembly express remorse and repentance over such attempts targeting one of our pastors. Sadly, no presbytery was willing to send up such an overture. Many of you have heard what instead just happened.

- A procedurally illegal attempt was made at the Assembly to reopen Greg's case to try him. The attempt was eventually defeated, but by a narrow margin.
- Two more presbyteries sent up overtures—again—this year to put Greg on trial before our denominational supreme court. Those are now before the court. And the makeup of the court has changed this year, moving the court in a less gracious and less gospel-centered direction. Just this week, another presbytery initiated what it hopes will be judicial action against Greg.
- Further, an amendment has now been approved and sent to the presbyteries for ratification, a change that would make it much easier to try a minister before our denominational supreme court. Our local presbytery's ability to defend Greg is threatened, as is our presbyterian form of government.
- In addition, by a vote of 55% to 45%, the Assembly this year approved a constitutional amendment that reads: **“Men who describe themselves as homosexual, even those who describe themselves as homosexual and claim to practice celibacy by refraining from homosexual conduct, are disqualified from holding office in the Presbyterian Church in America.”** This amendment still requires two-thirds approval of the PCA's 88 regional presbyteries to take effect.
- In one very popular speech in favor of the change, a prominent teaching elder spoke of African governments executing gay people, describing killing gays as “a little extreme.”

Our goal is not to alarm you—but to alert you. These are very grave matters.

We, your elders, want you to hear our loudest protest at these actions, which we believe flowed from unholy fear, and not from biblical principle. We denounce them. They do not represent Jesus Christ or his gospel. They do not represent us. The General Assembly alone can speak for the PCA. It has spoken. Tragically, our conflict with our denomination has deepened as a result. This grieves us, as there is much we love about our denomination. Still, we can rejoice that we have been counted worthy to suffer for the gospel. No one can take from us the joy of our salvation in Jesus Christ.

We want to hear from you. How have these events affected you or your family? Please don't hesitate to reach out to any of us. We want to know. There are many wounded and traumatized among us. We will support one other. God sees us. And he delights in us.

What will it look like for us at Memorial both (1) to love our enemies and (2) to protect ourselves and people we love from further abuse?

In the coming months, we, your elders, will be seeking to chart a path forward for us at Memorial. We want to cast a positive vision of emotional and spiritual health for us as a church family. Instead of focusing merely on what is unhealthy, we are asking ourselves, “What would this look like if it was right? If it was healthy?” And, “What steps can we take to get there?” We want the gospel to flourish in and through Memorial. We want to focus on making disciples.

To bring the welcome of Jesus to our friends and neighbors who don't yet know the Lord. We want teammates that support us. We want us at Memorial to get there as a church family together.

As you have perspective, would you please share it with any of us or all of us? We have been fasting and praying weekly now for a year, both for Memorial and for the PCA. Now we are consulting the faithful.

We love you and want to serve you. We would also like to hear from you.

Your servants in Jesus,

The Session of Memorial Presbyterian Church



Eric Kenyon, Clerk of Session



Arun Venkatesan, Ruling Elder



Mark Leary, Ruling Elder



Doug Mendis, Teaching Elder



Christian Madsen, Ruling Elder



Sam Dolby, Teaching Elder



David Risko, Ruling Elder



Keith Robinson, Teaching Elder



Ted Spaid, Ruling Elder



Greg Johnson, Moderator



Joe Thompson, Ruling Elder