

Redemption appears as the liberty to interpret in trust ... all that happens to us and to which we react as occurring in a final context of life giving rather than death-dealing." H. Richard Niebuhr, *The Responsible Self*

We convey to you the request of Rev. Marc Benton for forgiveness in bringing forth the charges and legislation that produced Benton v. Hudson River, et al. We also refer to newly stated support for same gender marriage. In so doing, we acknowledge Rev. Benton's courage and commitment in taking responsibility for his role in the pain and suffering that has been produced by his earlier actions.

We also acknowledge South Presbyterian Church's Session and pastors, Joe Gilmore and Susan De George, for their ongoing commitment to the LGBTQ/Q community when Rev. Benton insisted that they be investigated and charged for doing same-gender commitment services. It is this faithful perseverance by these folks and others that are at the heart of the changes we are witnessing today. We are deeply indebted and thankful to everyone who has ever been hurt, harmed, punished or pushed away because of Benton v. Hudson River, et al or any of the other charges, hearing, rulings and deep anguish caused by such actions.

We pray that Rev. Benton's decision and forthrightness will prompt others to step up, acknowledging their roles and seeking amends for their participation in these decades of marginalization and exclusion of Christian sisters and brothers. We encourage and support all who seek help in moving on forward on this justice path, and we will never forget the suffering and pain of others whose lives are the foundation for these changes.

The toughest road, though, is ahead. This journey for healing can not be complete until the church accepts its responsibility, admits the harms it has done, and apologizes for the teachings and prohibitions it has supported and allowed in the discrimination of our Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender community. With recent changes to the constitution and those under consideration, the church is charged with taking an active and corporate role in this change, and we are ready to help there, as well

Only then can we say to one another and witness to the world our faithfulness to the Gospel and all it call us to be. It is then that the redemption Then redemption to which we are called will achieve its life-giving purpose.