

Remarks by Ken Cuthbertson to Santa Fe Presbytery, 8 February 2014

Madam Moderator,

Today I want to speak, not so much as a minister-member of this body, but as a married gay man.

Two years ago, after 25 years as committed lifepartners, Doug Calderwood and I got married. At the time we had to travel to a different state to do so... New York. At the time we also had to turn to a minister of a different denomination to marry us... a wonderful woman from the United Church of Christ.

The PCUSA means so much to me, and also to Doug, who is an ordained ruling elder. It made us sad that we felt we could not ask a Presbyterian minister to officiate at our marriage. But, having seen the emotional cost to both ministers AND couples in cases where charges have been filed, we were unwilling to do so.

It was important to us to get legally married, but it was equally important to be married in the context of Christian worship... with scripture, and prayer, and a recording of the congregation at Las Placitas singing "The King of Love My Shepherd Is."

When we came home, we were overwhelmed by the response of our church family, who blessed us, gifted us, and celebrated with us. The Sunday of our blessing was an amazing day.

We have been surprised what a difference being married has made. It is not a difference in our love and commitment to one another, or to God. But, somehow, our "standing" in both church and society has changed.

It is still not easy to be Lesbian, Gay, Bi-, or Transgender in our culture, and even harder to be so in the church. Our experience of being able to be married, however, has been an experience of grace, healing, and reconciliation.

I deeply want our ministers and churches to be able to offer this ministry of grace to those who seek it. -- Thank you.