

# Civil union and marriage issues questions and answers

By General Assembly Communications Center

A summary of the 219th General Assembly's actions on issues of civil union and Christian marriage:

## **What did the General Assembly do? What has changed?**

The General Assembly approved both the final report and the minority report of the Special Committee to Study Issues of Civil Union and Christian Marriage and ordered they be sent out for study by the wider church. The vote was 439 in favor, 208 against, with 6 abstentions. By this action (sending both reports for study) the Assembly maintained the definition of marriage as between "a man and a woman." With the action to send the reports for study, no change has occurred, or is pending.

## **What does it mean?**

The special committee report provides descriptive material on the historical and theological aspects of marriage, as well as a look at current laws on same-gender partnerships and their children, and the place of same-gender covenanted relationships in the Christian community. They commend to the church their covenant, "Those Whom God Has Joined, Let No One Separate" as a guide for Presbyterians to come together to discuss difficult issues when there is disagreement. The minority report, also approved for study by the Assembly, concludes that Scripture is clear that marriage is between a man and a woman only and does not support any kind of sexual behavior outside heterosexual marriage. The minority report also contains a covenant for the wider church to use.

## **What next?**

The special committee report and the minority report will be prepared for distribution as one document to the wider church. By sending both reports to the wider church, it is the hope of the Assembly that Presbyterians will find helpful background information on civil unions and marriage, as well as material to help individuals and groups remain together as they work through these difficult issues.

## **Where can you learn more?**

[Read the majority report online](#)

[Read the minority report online](#)

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