



# the **Classis** of **Cascades**

Far West Region • Reformed Church in America

~ ~ ~

## **CLASSIS CASCADES RESOLUTION\*\***

*POLICY STATEMENT: SAME-GENDER MARRIAGE & WEDDINGS*  
*[Application: All Classis Members and Consistories of Member Churches]*

### 1) WHEREAS,

- a) General Synod 1978 voted to make a paper presented by the Commission on Theology available to RCA congregations. The paper stated that: "*Heterosexuality is not only normal; it is normative. Homosexual acts are contrary to the will of God for human sexuality.*"; and
- b) General Synod 1990 voted to adopt an official position on the issue of homosexuality...the advisory committee recommended: *To adopt as the position of the Reformed Church in America that practicing a homosexual lifestyle is contrary to scripture, while at the same [sic] encouraging love and sensitivity towards such persons as fellow human beings.* (MGS 1990:461); and
- c) General Synod 2012 voted: *To reaffirm the official position that homosexual behavior is a sin according to the Holy Scriptures, [and] therefore any person, congregation, or assembly which advocates homosexual behavior or provides leadership for a service of same-sex marriage or a similar celebration has committed a disciplinable offense* [MGS 2012:R-28]... and
- d) General Synod 2013 voted: *To acknowledge that in 2012...General Synod, usurped the constitutional authority reserved for the classes when, in R-28... [it was]... stated that "any person, congregation, or assembly which advocates homosexual behavior or provides leadership for a service of same-sex marriage or a similar celebration has committed a disciplinable offense"* (MGS 2013:179), in effect, compelling the classis to clarify policy regarding supervision of ministers of Word and Sacrament; and
- e) Due to evolving vocabulary and terminology changes over the years, the terms "*homosexual*" and "*homosexuality*" are considered to be included in the more recent acronym, "LGBT" (i.e., Lesbian, Gay, Bi- and Trans-sexual, Cross-dressers, etc.) — a contemporary term used to define people who engage in human sexual relationships associated with non-heterosexual lifestyles; and
- f) General Synod 2014 voted *to instruct the Commission on Church Order to incorporate a definition of Marriage into the Book of Church Order as being between one man and one woman and report back to General Synod 2015,* and
- g) The RCA General Synod has not yet adopted a constitutionally binding policy regarding the officiating of same-gender marriages by RCA Clergy (and other RCA members who may also be qualified and licensed to conduct marriage counseling sessions and officiate church weddings), and has granted such authority to the classes;

2) THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

- a) CLASSIS CASCADES SUBSCRIBES TO THE FOLLOWING BASIC BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES AS THEY RELATE TO HOMOSEXUAL & LGBT LIFESTYLES AND SAME-GENDER MARRIAGE:
  - i) Heterosexuality in marriage is both normal and normative.
  - ii) Christian marriage is a sacred, covenantal relationship between one man and one woman.
  - iii) The practicing of a LGBT lifestyle is contrary to scripture.
  - iv) Same-gender marriages/weddings are not to be performed in Classis Cascades church facilities nor by Classis Cascades ministers.
  - v) The sin associated with the commission of homosexual acts has no higher ranking than any other human sin—all fall short of the glory of God's creative intent and require equal, heartfelt repentance.
  - vi) Member churches, while endeavoring to minister to the spiritual needs of all people in all lifestyles, are at the same time, to affirm through their preaching and pastoral ministry that practicing LGBT behavior is not a biblically acceptable lifestyle.
- b) BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT CLASSIS CASCADES ESTABLISHES THE FOLLOWING POLICIES:
  - i) Each consistory of a member church of Classis Cascades shall establish ministry and facilities-use policies for their church that clearly support the basic principles outlined above; and
  - ii) Ministers of Word and Sacrament, Commissioned Pastors and others who are called or contracted to serve in either a Specialized Ministry under classis jurisdiction or within the RCA family of churches within the Classis of Cascades, and who may from time to time be involved in pre-marriage/marriage counseling and/or, officiate at weddings, will be held accountable by the classis for their full support and compliance with the basic principles set forth above; and
  - iii) Ministers of Word and Sacrament, Commissioned Pastors and other members of Classis Cascades who officiate same-gender weddings and/or publicly advocate for and/or publicly participate in organizations whose primary function is to advocate for same, may subject themselves to an official disciplinary process as defined and provided for in *RCA BCO Chap. 2, Part 1, p.75ff, 2013 ed.*

---

\*\*Reference for WHEREAS statements: *Summaries of General Synod Discussions and Actions on Homosexuality and the Rights of Homosexuals (re: <https://www.rca.org/homosexuality>)*

[NOTE: THE ABOVE RESOLUTION WAS ADOPTED BY VOTE OF THE DELEGATES TO CLASSIS CASCADES STATED SESSION 2014 WHICH CONVENED AT *LIGHTHOUSE KOREAN REFORMED CHURCH*, FEDERAL WAY, WA ON OCTOBER 24 - 25, 2014].