

October 2, 2015

Dear Colleagues,

This letter and attachments are intended to provide you with updated materials regarding human sexuality.

Earlier this year the Council of superintendents, Covenant Offices Leadership Team, Board of the Ordered Ministry, and Covenant Executive Board each endorsed three reference points moving forward. The first attachment is the letter that was sent to the ministerium and congregational leaders at that time outlining those principles.

At the Covenant Annual Meeting in June, President Walter elaborated on those principles as well as gave an update on developments to that point in time, and a preview of developments to come. Here is the [video link](#) to view his presentation in its entirety.

The Board of the Ordered Ministry and the Council of Superintendents have finalized jointly-updated and approved *Guidelines for Covenant Pastors and Congregations Regarding Human Sexuality*. It is attached by that title. We are not interested in developing an unwieldy document that attempts to anticipate every scenario. Rather, the guidelines highlight key practices consistent with our position, leaving good discretion within those markers.

Additionally, those two bodies have developed a reference paper entitled *Freedom and Responsibility: Dissent and Covenant Clergy*. It seeks to articulate principles relating our affirmation of Covenant freedom to the responsibilities and obligations of credentialed ministry. It is important to remember that it relates to more than any single issue.

These materials are being distributed now to make sure they are available by the time regional conferences host events to review them with you and your colleagues in your area. Check with your conference. For several conferences the fall retreat will be the setting.

Finally, there is an attachment, used by permission, from Church Law and Tax regarding the US Supreme Court decision to legalize same sex marriage. Our legal counsel finds it to be a good overview of issues that may or may not arise in US law regarding congregations and clergy.

If you have comments or questions we invite you to contact your conference superintendent, or submit them to the following email and we will do our best to respond in a timely manner:  
[OrderedMinistryCommentsQuestions@covchurch.org](mailto:OrderedMinistryCommentsQuestions@covchurch.org).

We all humbly acknowledge these are complex days. But our heart to be people of gracious conviction remains, engaging from the deep desire to pastorally care for all who come in our doors. Please know these materials are written and presented with deep humility.

In Prayer,

Mark Novak

Executive Minister/Ordered Ministry