

Selected Rainbow Events in the U.S.

1969 Stonewall Rebellion, a riot beginning on June 28 following an unjustifiable police raid on the gay Stonewall Inn in New York City, begins modern lesbian/gay rights movement

1974 American Psychiatric Association removes homosexuality from its official manual of mental disorders

1978 Civil Service Reform Act prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation for federal civilian workers

1978 Harvey Milk, out gay San Francisco city supervisor, assassinated

1979 First March on Washington brings tens of thousands of lesbians and gays to the nation's capital to demonstrate for equal rights

1981 First cases of a mysterious disease are reported; disease known later as AIDS

1982 Wisconsin becomes the first state to pass a gay/lesbian rights law

1983 First U.S. Congressman comes out as gay

1987 Names Project AIDS Memorial Quilt is displayed in its entirety during the second gay/lesbian March on Washington

1993 The U.S. government's policy on gays/lesbians in the military changes to the still discriminatory "don't ask, don't tell"

1996 U.S. Supreme Court overturns Colorado state provision that would have curtailed the rights of lesbian and gay persons

2003 In Lawrence v. Texas, the U.S. Supreme Court strikes down sodomy laws in fourteen states, making consensual homosexual sex legal in all 50 states

2003 Gene Robinson elected Episcopal Bishop of Diocese of New Hampshire becoming first openly gay, non-celibate priest to be ordained bishop in a major Christian denomination

2010 "Don't ask, don't tell" repealed

2012 U.S. Dept of HUD Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity issues regulation prohibiting discrimination in federally-assisted housing programs

2015 In Obergefell v. Hodges, U.S. Supreme Court rules 5-to-4 that the Constitution requires same-sex couples are allowed to marry no matter where they live in the United States. U.S. becomes 17th country to legalize same-sex marriages

2017 Within hours of taking office, Trump administration removes all mention of LGBTQ issues from official White House webpage. Attacks on progress toward full equality for the LGBTQ community begin

2019 50th anniversary of Stonewall riots celebrated throughout U.S.

2021 The Equality Act, HR 5, reintroduced in the 117th Congress, and approved by the House Feb. 25, would prohibit discrimination against LGBTQ persons in employment, housing, public accommodations, education, federally funded programs, credit, and jury service

Rainbow Events in the Presbyterian Church

1970 General Assembly (GA) of the United Presbyterian Church (UPC) urges decriminalization of private sex acts between consenting adults and calls for ending discrimination based on sexual orientation

1974 During GA, Rev. David Sindt asks "anyone else out there gay?" Leads to forming Presbyterians for Gay Concerns later Presbyterians for Lesbian and Gay Concerns

1976 GA appoints special task force to study, make recommendations about ordaining gay men and lesbians as church leaders

1978 GA rejects the affirmative ordination recommendation from the task force and specifically rules against "homosexual" persons serving in official leadership of the Church though they could join and participate

1978 Several Presbyterian churches object, declare themselves "More Light" churches because there is "yet more light" to shine forth on the scriptures on "homosexuality"

1983 UPC merges with the Presbyterian Church in the U.S. to form Presbyterian Church (USA). Ruling barring gay/lesbian ordination is unchanged

1987 GA commissions task force to study human sexuality

1991 GA approves same sex unions if not called marriage

1991 GA rejects Human Sexuality Report which again recommends gay/lesbian ordination

1992 Presbyterians for Gay and Lesbian Concerns and More Light churches merge forming More Light Presbyterians (MLP), national group working for full participation of LGBTQIA+ people in the life, ministry and witness of PC (USA) and in society

1993 GA declares 3-year study on sexuality

1996-7 GA approves Fidelity and Chastity Amendment to the Book of Order with more stringent prohibitions against gay and lesbian ordination

1998 SPC initiates study around same sex relationships, including science and genetics, and scripture and theology

2001 Nominates, after careful and prayerful deliberation by Session, ordains and installs a long-time member who is a lesbian into church leadership as Deacon. The Presbytery with authority over local churches responds with charges and formally rebukes Session. The Deacon remains in her position

2005 Sponsors "Spirituality, Sexuality and the Church", 6 weeks of storytelling and education

2008 GA votes to remove the words "homosexual perversions" from a key church document. Full acceptance of the change requires votes at 2010, 2012 GA meetings

2010 In a significant turning point for inclusion in the PC (USA), GA votes to amend Book of Order allowing ordination of gay men and lesbians

2011 Book of Order amendment ratified, allowing ordination of gay men and lesbians

2013 Peacefest celebration at SPC for full equality for all persons, in housing, employment and, especially, marriage

2013 "Marriage and the Church", a multi-week SPC Sunday Seminar series

2013 SPC launches new website with rainbow flag image on home page

2014 GA approves change in the wording of its constitution that defined marriage as "between a woman and a man" to "between two people, traditionally a man and a woman." Gay and lesbian weddings in the church and performed by clergy now allowed

2015 Book of Order officially amended to allow same gender marriage

2018 223rd GA approves sweeping statements calling all churches to welcome and to celebrate LGBTQIA+ persons, and to advocate particularly on behalf of transgender people

2019 Ordination of first two openly transgender pastors

2008 Connections, SPC's "campus ministry program" is officially launched. After conferring with SPC leadership a rainbow oriented logo is created

2010 Affiliates with Covenant Network of Presbyterians, a national group of clergy and lay leaders working for unity and inclusion

2011 "The Tremba Letter." Pastor Tremba writes about the positive impacts on SPC as an open and affirming congregation, intending to reassure pastors about the PC (USA) polity changes. Letter travels nationwide and is published in the LA Times

2011 Lovefest at SPC a service of lament and celebration of LGBT persons in church and society

2013 Rainbow decal is added to SPC front sign and is defaced for the first time

2013-4 Rainbow scarf initiative in support of marriage equality in the PC(USA). 200+ scarves knitted for SPC delegation to distribute at General Assembly national meeting

2014 SPC delegation attends 221st GA; marriage equality is endorsed

2014 Session approves affiliation with More Light Presbyterians

2015 Abundance of weddings at SPC after PC(USA) Book of Order officially amended to allow same gender marriage

2017 Trans 101, SPC education forum with trans activist

2018 Welcoming LGBTQ Youth, Sunday Seminar Series

2018 Rainbow decal on front sign is defaced twice. SPC response by Dir. Of Spiritual Formation in social media and local newspapers receives local, state and national attention

2019 Gender Revolution, Sunday Seminar series

2019 Inaugural interfaith service of celebration and blessing hosted by SPC kicks off local Pride celebration

2019 Pride banner celebrating inclusion unfurled on SPC exterior

2020 Session states its support of the WV Fairness Act. The bill seeks to add sexual orientation and gender identity as protected classes in the state's Human Rights Acts and the Fair Housing Act