

Selected Rainbow Events in the U.S

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

1974 American Psychiatric Association removes homo-sexuality from its official manual of mental disorders

1978 Civil Service Reform Act prohibits discrimin-ation 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 thou-sands 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/les-bian rights law

1983 First U.S. Congressman comes out as gays/lesbians

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 consen-sual homosexual sex legal in all 50 states

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

2010 “Don’t ask, don’t tell” military policy that allowed LGB individuals to serve as long as they didn’t disclose repealed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. (2025: LGBTQ on Natl. Park Service website for Stonewall National Monument drops “T” and “Q” leaving LGB)

2020 Sarah McBride, an out transgender person, elected to the Delaware State Senate. McBride attended West-minster Presbyterian Church, Wilmington, DE

2024 Sarah McBride is elected to the US House of Representatives becoming the first out transgender person in Congress

2025 New administration removes all LGBTQ references; freezes passport applications seeking use of gender-neu-tral X; declares federal government recognizes only two immutable sexes; bans transgender military service persons; ends DEI programs

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 discrimi-nation based on sexual orientation

1974 During GA, Rev. David Sindt asks “is 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 recommenda-tion 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 “homosex-uality”

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 Presby-terians (MLP), national group working for full participa-tion of LGBTQIA+ people in the life, ministry and witness of PC (USA) and in society

1993 GA calls for 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

2008 GA votes to remove the words “homosexual perversions” from a key church document. Full accep-tance of the change requires votes at 2010, 2012 GA meetings

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

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

2014 GA approves change in the wording of its constitu-tion 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 now clergy allowed

2014 Betram Johnson became the first openly gay African American man to be ordained as a pastor

2016 Out of Order documentary released about the stories and struggles of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgen-der and queer Presbyterians

2018 223rd GA approves sweeping statements calling all churches to welcome and to celebrate LGBTQIA+ persons, and to advocate especially on behalf of trans-gender people

2019 Ordination of first openly transgender as pastor and of first known non-binary person as pastor

2024 GA approves officially recognizing March 31st as Transgender Visibility Day

2025 So-called Protection for Women and Girls bill excluding transgender women and girls in sport opposed by PC(USA) Advocacy Committee for LGBTQIA+ Equity

Rainbow History of SPC: Shining More Light

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 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 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

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 Eastern Panhandle Youth Alliance (EPYA) launched to provide resources and a safe and welcoming space for LGBTQIA youth and allies

2019 Inaugural Interfaith Pride Service kicks off local Gay Pride weekend festivities; rainbow flag representing an external symbol of SPC’s welcome unfurled, information-al Rainbow History brochure created

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

2022 SPC, EPYA, More Light Presbyterians host booth at local Pride celebration

2023 Progress flag raised to replace traditional (but faded) Pride flag

2024 SPC Social Justice cosponsors with Shepherd University’s Social Equity and Multicultural Student Affairs the documentary Momma Bears, a story of primarily Christian conservative mothers who fully accept their LGBTQ+ children. EPYA leaders participate in panel discussion

2025 With the unprecedented attacks by the new administration, the SPC LGBTQIA+ community redoubles its efforts to remain visible and provide a welcoming space