

SAME-SEX MARRIAGE AND THE CHURCH

Some resources available from other churches. List compiled by Roberta Rominger with an addition by John Proctor.

Resources for local church and synod discussions

“Dearly Beloved: A Tool-kit for the Study of Marriage”, Episcopal Church USA 2014

This 45-page document focuses on marriage in the broad sense but is commended to local churches as a way of approaching same-sex issues. It offers session outlines and background resources for (a) a discussion group meeting for one 90-minute or three 35-minute sessions; (b) four after-church forum meetings of 45 minutes each; and (c) study groups for those who want to go deeper. It includes comprehensive instructions for leaders and handouts for participants. The “going deeper” section is a 16-page essay on the history of marriage. Would require some homework to provide UK background to supplement the American story. Copyright permission is given.

“Christian Marriage in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.): A Six-Week Study” 2013

43 pages. Intended for local churches and presbyteries. Good instructions for group leaders. Each session begins with prayer and contains Bible readings plus PCUSA policy documents, statements of doctrine, and liturgy. It is about marriage in general; implications for same-sex marriage would need to arise within the wider discussion. The six sessions are The Gift of Marriage, God Created Us, The Expression of Love, The Well-Being of Society, a Holy Mystery, and A New Way of Life. Copyright permission is given.

“Christian Marriage in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.): A Two-Hour Study” 2013

For local churches, arising from a consultation like the URC’s. Great questions. Copyright permission granted.

“Marriage: A United Church of Canada Understanding” 2005

This is presented as a study document in five sections: People in Relationship, Marriage Informed by Scripture, Marriage in History, Marriage Informed by Social Expectations, and Marriage as Sacred Covenant. This material is contained over nine pages with no discussion questions and is followed by several pages of UCC-specific information. One of these UCC documents is a set of nine affirmations about marriage approved by the 1984 Assembly: these could easily be used for a discussion about how understandings of Christian marriage extended to same-sex couples (or not).

“God is still speaking about marriage” United Church of Christ (U.S.A.) 2008

At 150 pages, this is the longest of the discussion resources available. It outlines four sessions: Opening the Conversation, Marriages in the Biblical Story, Marriage yesterday and today, and Equality in Marriage? Excellent background materials including articles by Walter Brueggemann and James B Nelson. Comprehensive advice for group leaders. Superb discussion materials with wide-ranging case studies and varieties of voices, including ten biblical marriages.

“Speaking Out: Why Gay Marriage Would Be Harmful” Christianity Today 2004

\$4.95, 11-page PDF.

Theological Forum Report, Church of Scotland General Assembly, 2014

A serious but not inaccessible assembly paper, exploring the issues around a 'mixed economy' – what it is to live as a church with divided convictions, where some members and congregations think same-sex relationships can be a valid Christian vocation, and some do not.

http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0015/20076/Theological-Forum-report.pdf