



Reflecting the Path

Reflections on Amendment 10-A

My dear Riviera Family and friends,

Ten years ago, begrudgingly, I walked through the doors of Riviera Presbyterian Church and was transformed by the graceful and powerful witness of Riviera's people and Pastor, Laurie Kraus. Shortly after, I became a faithful member in the Presbyterian church USA; A miracle within itself. God opened my eyes to people who cared, not because I was gay, but cared genuinely for who I was as a person of faith. Patiently, you all waited for my wall to fall, and when it did, you embraced me with open arms and treated me like family. To me, this is what reflecting the path of Christ is all about. Accepting each other, despite our differences, our faults and our views on faith.

Love your neighbor as you love yourself. A golden rule to live by and one that I feel we as a small church in south Miami try to practice daily and, so far, have succeeded. Something so simple yet frightening for many.

This week, PC USA presbyteries passed amendment 10-A that will change the ordination standards for candidates of the offices of Minister, Elder and Deacon. No more are the words "fidelity in marriage between a man and a woman and chastity in singleness" going to cause faithful LGBT persons a denial of their calling to preach the word and sacrament. Instead, each candidate will be faithfully considered regardless of orientation, or marriage status. While it brings me joy to have witnessed God's grace in the hearts of my fellow Presbyterian brothers and sisters, I cannot deny the hurt those must feel who genuinely regard this vote as the wrong choice. My heart breaks at the thought of the possibility of churches and people leaving our denomination over this. So now is the time I call upon you, my Riviera family, to help heal those wounds, and prayerfully and gracefully, find a way to rebuild bridges that were burned. We must now heal the hearts of those who were hurt by the old standards and help heal the hearts of those who do not agree. This, I believe is our calling; our time to show we are truly a church that accepts ALL of Gods children. We must reach out to those who are strangers to us, and welcome them as family, our family under one God. We must open our hearts to those who distance themselves out of faith and fear and together find the peace in the chaos, find the hope in the heartache and walk our paths hand in hand as one church and as brothers and sisters in Christ.

Thanks be to God and to all God's children.
Respectfully and with love,

Allison Anderson



Ordinary time

A Pastoral Letter for Riviera Presbyterian, Miami from
the Rev. Dr. Laurie A. Kraus and clerk of session, Michele Ready

May 10, 2011

Dear Riviera family of faith,

This evening, the Presbytery of Twin Cities became the 87th presbytery of the PCUSA to adopt Amendment 10-A into the Book of Order, making it church law. With several presbyteries still scheduled to vote, it is likely that the final margin of the passage of 10-A will put the number of presbyteries affirming this language well into the nineties. As we here at Riviera experience a sense of relief and deep gratitude for this long-awaited change in the Book of Order, we know that the PCUSA and its congregations have very mixed feelings. Our congregation has been, and continues to be, in prayer with all our neighbors for the fidelity of our shared mission through Jesus Christ in the PCUSA, as the Church begins to live into a different season of life together.

Central Florida Presbytery offered this analysis, which I found helpful, and reproduce with their permission:

Here is what the new language of the book of order says:

"Standards for ordained service reflect the church's desire to submit joyfully to the Lordship of Jesus Christ in all aspects of life (G-1.0000). The governing body responsible for ordination and/or installation (G.14.0240; G-14.0450) shall examine each candidate's calling, gifts, preparation, and suitability for the responsibilities of office. The examination shall include, but not be limited to, a determination of the candidate's ability and commitment to fulfill all requirements as expressed in the constitutional questions for ordination and installation (W-4.4003). Governing bodies shall be guided by Scripture and the confessions in applying standards to individual candidates."

Here is what it DOESN'T say:

10-A eliminates the mandates on who should/should not be considered for ordination that are present in the current language. [The wording previously said that *"Those who are called to office in the church are to lead a life in obedience to Scripture and in conformity to the historic confessional standards of the church. Among these standards is the requirement to live either in fidelity within the covenant of marriage between a man and a woman (W-4.9001), or chastity in singleness...."*] Instead, the new language re-focuses the discussion of ordination on who examines (presbytery or session) and on what basis (joyful obedience to the Lordship of Christ, gifts, preparation and suitability for office, and commitment to fulfill the ordination vows).

This new standard reminds us that all areas of a person's life including, but not limited to, sexual behavior are subject to the Lordship of Christ. Ever since the current language was adopted in 1996, sessions and presbyteries have disagreed about whether the Scripture precludes ordination for homosexual persons. The revised language will lay on sessions and presbyteries the responsibility to answer that question for themselves and to take seriously their responsibility to prepare and examine those who are called to church office in their context.

We are aware that many of our neighboring congregations and their leadership are grieving and anxious as this change comes to the Church. As a congregation which has found itself, for the past 16



years, in a similar position of grief and dissent from stated PCUSA policies, we understand how it feels to be in theological dissent from the majority position of the Church. Like some of our neighboring congregations are doing presently, we struggled, in these years of dissent, with how to maintain faithful relationship with the PCUSA. We experienced congregational anxiety as we pondered the risk of being under judicial action or of leaving our denomination, our church buildings, and our treasured history and relationships behind.

After prayerful discernment, we turned away from anxiety and towards hopeful engagement. We intentionally sought conversation and wisdom from our brothers and sisters in faith, and from our own session and congregation members, especially our LGBT members and friends, whose lives in church have borne the brunt of these hurtful and exclusionary policies. As a result, clerk of Session, Michele Ready, and I served for three years on a presbytery commission for the Peace, Unity, and Purity of the Church, which was formed explicitly for discussion, study, and prayer around these matters. We read the bible, continued to study reformed theology, prayed without ceasing, and above all, sought to live, day by day and season by season, faithful to our congregation's mission and calling, to reflect the path of Christ here in Miami. We tried to exercise our responsibility as presbyters, in Tropical Florida and in the national PCUSA, with openness and grace, despite painful conflicts.

Our national leadership's efforts with regard to changes in denominational polity has striven for a high standard of ordination which respects the conscience and calling of our diverse faith communities, a standard which compels no one to act or ordain outside of God's call in each congregation's life and mission.

While we welcome 10-A as a grace-filled reframing of our national ordination standards, we are aware that many, if not most, in our presbytery disagree. We believe we, as a congregation, are stronger and wiser because of the challenges and blessings of living these past years within a larger community of faith that did not share our perspective. Now that church polity has provided a more gracious space in which Riviera can discern God's call and mission, we recall the lessons learned over the past 16 years. We understand that God is calling us toward renewed relationship with our neighbors in faith, and to the important witness that is being the face of Christ for one another, especially as we disagree. This will be hard work drawing deep from our (mutually) depleted energies for more patience, more forbearance with the hope that there will ultimately be healing and reconciliation.

We hope that those of our neighbors who now find themselves in a similar circumstance will continue in prayer and common mission with us, just as we have done these past 16 years, and we will continue to work, along with you all, for the peace, unity, and purity of our Church, the many "nations, tribes, and languages" who together seek to serve God and honor Christ here in South Florida.

I hope we will find, in this new moment, a renewed sense of congregational freedom and commitment to our worship and work, finding a place for all of us who call this congregation "home" to become more actively engaged and deeply connected to a shared life in faith and service. Please know how deeply grateful and proud we are to serve alongside you at RPC.

With love and gratitude,
Laurie & Michele



"Arturo's Maintenance Memos"

This new section of the newsletter will be used to keep you, our church members, aware of the maintenance work that has been done in the past month. Thanks to Arturo for all his hard work!

- ⇒ Maintenance on all a/c units on site.
 - ⇒ Repaired the north gate leading to the stairs in the education building.
 - ⇒ Installed door leading to storage area in sanctuary.
 - ⇒ Inspected all emergency lights on site.
 - ⇒ Repaired west gate leading from parking lot into education building.
 - ⇒ Installed new lock in SERRV shop.
 - ⇒ Changed light bulbs as needed.
-just to name a few.

Barbie's Buzz



The Presbyterian Planning Calendars are in! We have 12 calendars available - first come, first serve. The cost is \$7 per calendar. Please call the church office if you are interested in picking up a calendar.

Please remember that Per Capita is due by June 30th. Per Capita is \$31.30 per church member. If your teen has been confirmed at RPC he/she are members. Any questions, please contact me.

The Greater Miami Youth Symphony



Starting June 1 the Greater Miami Youth Symphony will be sharing space in the education building for their administration office. We thank Karen Picciano for bringing RPC and GMYS together. Also some of our youth, Leah Picciano and Nicole Prieto, have performed with the GMYS in the South Florida community.

Founded as the All-Miami Youth Symphony by Robert Strassburg in 1958, the Greater Miami Youth Symphony was created to foster a love of music in young people and to enrich the cultural life of the community. GMYS is an independent five-level orchestra program dedicated to training young musicians between 5 and 18 years of age. Conceived as a complementary facet to musical instruction in the schools, GMYS has continuously succeeded in presenting high caliber performances to South Florida audiences. The mission of the Greater Miami Youth Symphony "GMYS" is 1) to instill life-long values of discipline, teamwork, responsibility, respect, and cultural appreciation in young musicians, ages five through eighteen, through learning, rehearsing, and performing in a professional, positive environment. 2) to enrich the cultural foundation of our community by reaching out to and recruiting young musicians from different cultural, ethnic and economic backgrounds. 3) to train young people through teaching, rehearsals, and performances to function together as first rate orchestras, and ensembles that bring the communities together in outstanding music performances. Today, GMYS serves over 600 students in seven beginning instrument classes, four orchestras, and concert/jazz band, and over 300 students in the GMYS Summer Music Camp. GMYS is also the Youth Artist in Residence at the Deering Estate at Cutler and was a finalist in 2009, 2010, and 2011 for a National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Award from the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities. For more information about GMYS, see our website at www.gmys.org.



Obituaries

DALE BARKER, 91

'He always loved reading'

Former librarian spent years at Georgia Tech, University of Miami.

By Rick Badie
rbadie@ajc.com

Dr. Dale Barker treated age just like it was a number, and made it his business to keep mentally and physically fit.

He turned to audio books and book clubs when he lost his sight at 85. And he made it a point to join friends at meals so he'd have good conversation. Until a few months ago, at 91, he exercised daily.

"He was a model of how to handle old age," said a daughter, Sybil Susan Barker of Buford. "And he never complained."

Dr. Dale Lockard Barker of Stone Mountain earned an electrical engineering degree at Georgia Tech while he worked in the campus library. With a master's degree and doctorate in library science from the University of Illinois, he spent decades as a librarian at Georgia Tech, the University of Miami and the University of Georgia.

"He had worked in the library that his mother ran in Adairsville," his daughter said. "He always loved reading, particularly nonfiction. We al-



When Dr. Dale Barker lost his vision, he relied on audio books and book clubs to stay current.

Family photo

ways had so many books in the house, I would even play librarian as a kid."

Dr. Barker stayed in Emory Hospital for two weeks after he fell several times and suffered brain injuries, which he died from on April 20. Visitation is set for 10 a.m. Thursday, followed by an 11 a.m. memorial at Park Springs, a retirement community in Stone Mountain where he lived with Caroline Barker, his wife of 61 years. Wages & Sons, Stone Mountain chapel, is in charge of arrangements.

For 16 years, Dr. Barker served as Tech's associate director of libraries. He served in

the same capacity for 23 years at the University of Miami, and did a brief stint at UGA. The librarian played a role in the modernization and adaptation of technology at those facilities.

"He was a good scholar, knew a lot about how to get information and how to help people doing research," said Bob Kyles, who sought Dr. Barker's expertise for research projects while a Tech employee. "As far as I know, everybody loved him."

In early 1990, the librarian retired from the University of Miami, and he and his wife returned to metro Atlanta. They formed a club comprised of Tech colleagues and friends that met regularly for breakfast.

Dr. Barker served with the Marines in the South Pacific during World War II. He was asked to compile and edit "Hitting the Beaches," a memoir about the first armored amphibian battalion from that war.

"He never complained that his world was shrinking," his daughter said. "He just kept going."

Additional survivors include his wife, Caroline Barker of Stone Mountain; another daughter, Cathy Barker Taylor of Greenville, S.C.; and three grandchildren.



Riviera Anniversaries

	<i>Date</i>	<i>Yrs</i>
Jeanine and Randy Hess	June 9	1
Valerie & Belinda Deville	June 9	5
Henry & Sandy Barrow	June 17	49
Eric & Kate Walford	June 28	2
David & Karen Miller	June 30	31

Thank You...

- ♥ Thank you to the Saturday Morning Memorial Garden Volunteers.
- ♥ Thank you to John German and Chuck Hannemann for their leadership.
- ♥ Thank you to Richard Godbeer who made sure that bushes were trimmed before Holy Week and Easter.
- ♥ Thank you to the church office volunteers.
- ♥ Thank you to Henry Barrow for making the announcements while Danny, Karl and Nathan were selecting in.

We're on the Web!
www.rivierachurch.org

Find us on Facebook



GoodSearch.com is a new Yahoo-powered search engine that donates half its advertising revenue, about a penny per search, to the charities its users designate. Use it just as you would any search engine, get quality search results from Yahoo, and watch the donations add up! By simply designating Riviera Presbyterian Church as the charity of your choice, you'll be helping us raise money!

Happy Birthday

Margaret Doswell	June 2
Henry Barrow	June 6
Oscar Posada	June 6
Jose Valdivia	June 14
Lisa Grossman	June 16
Elizabeth Gorgas	June 21
Peggy Kratz	June 21
Steve Padilla	June 21
Jordan Armour	June 26
Debbie Hess	June 29

Be sure to visit our website on a regular basis to see what's new and what's happening with all the ministries at RPC.

www.rivierachurch.org.

