**A Response to General Assembly 2014**

You may have read about recent actions of the General Assembly of the PCUSA concerning a redefining of marriage. This action by the General Assembly puts the Constitution of the PCUSA in contradiction to itself. The Constitution of the PCUSA is made up of two parts. Part one is The Book of Confessions – a gathering of eleven historical creeds and confessions of the Church including the Apostles Creed and the Nicean Creed. Part two of the Constitution is the Book of Order of the PCUSA. In its guiding principles the Book of Order states:

**F-2.01 THE PURPOSE OF CONFESSIONAL STATEMENTS**

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) states its faith and bears witness to God’s grace in Jesus Christ in the creeds and confessions in *The Book of Confessions*. In these statements the church declares to its members and to the world who and what it is, what it believes, and what it resolves to do. These statements identify the church as a community of people known by its convictions as well as by its actions. They guide the church in its study and interpretation of the Scriptures; they summarize the essence of Reformed Christian tradition; they direct the church in maintaining sound doctrines; they equip the church for its work of proclamation. They serve to strengthen personal commitment and the life and witness of the community of believers.

The creeds and confessions of this church arose in response to particular circumstances within the history of God’s people. They claim the truth of the Gospel at those points where their authors perceived that truth to be at risk. They are the result of prayer, thought, and experience within a living tradition. They appeal to the universal truth of the Gospel while expressing that truth within the social and cultural assumptions of their time. They affirm a common faith tradition, while also from time to time standing in tension with each other.

**F-2.02 THE CONFESSIONS AS SUBORDINATE STANDARDS**

These confessional statements are subordinate standards in the Church, subject to the authority of Jesus Christ, the Word of God, as the Scriptures bear witness to him. While confessional standards are subordinate to the Scriptures, they are, nonetheless, standards. They are not lightly drawn up or subscribed to, nor may they be ignored or dismissed. The church is prepared to instruct, counsel with, or even to discipline one ordained who seriously rejects the faith expressed in the confessions.

**“The Westminster Confession of Faith”** states,

Christian marriage is an institution ordained of God, blessed by our Lord Jesus Christ, established and sanctified for the happiness and welfare of mankind, into which spiritual and physical union one man and one woman enter, cherishing a mutual esteem and love, bearing with each other’s infirmities and weaknesses, comforting each other in trouble, providing in honesty and industry for each other and for their household, praying for each other, and living together the length of their days as heirs of the grace of life. (Book of Confessions PCUSA 6.130-131)

Marriage is a union between one man and one woman, designed of God to last so long as they both shall live. (Book of Confessions PCUSA 6.133)

At Sierra Vista Presbyterian Church, we believe that the Action of the PCUSA General Assembly is contrary to the witness of Scripture and the constitution of the PCUSA, and we will continue to be led by a Scriptural definition of Marriage as between a man and a woman.