



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on January 12, 2013

Washington D.C.'s National Cathedral to Permit Same-Sex Weddings

Some say it was inevitable, but to most Americans it is a slap in the face just the same, as officials of Washington D.C.'s National Cathedral, which has hosted funerals for numerous U.S. presidents and notable Americans, and has been designated by Congress as the "National House of Prayer," announced that effective immediately the stately Episcopal church will host homosexual weddings.



Last summer the Episcopal Church, of which the National Cathedral is a member, approved a rite for same-sex unions, and with the legalization of homosexual marriage in nearby Maryland in November, the National Cathedral will be one of the first Episcopal churches to perform the "blessing."

The [Associated Press](#) noted that Episcopal law still officially defines marriage as "between a man and a woman, so the cathedral says it will be performing weddings that combine civil marriage ceremonies under local law with a blessing from the church. They will use the new language approved for same-sex couples instead of the marriage ceremony from the Book of Common Prayer. Only one major U.S. Protestant group, the United Church of Christ, has endorsed same-sex marriage outright."

Nonetheless, the move to break with classic biblical Christianity at the National Cathedral is being done with much fanfare and flourish. "For more than 30 years, the Episcopal Church has prayed and studied to discern the evidence of God's blessing in the lives of same-sex couples," said the Rev. Gary Hall, an advocate of same-sex marriage who took over as dean of the National Cathedral in October. "We enthusiastically affirm each person as a beloved child of God — and doing so means including the full participation of gays and lesbians in the life of this spiritual home for the nation."

Hall said he considered it "a great honor to lead this Cathedral as it takes another historic step toward greater equality — and I am pleased that this step follows the results made clear in this past November's election, when three states voted to allow same-sex marriage."

In December the Episcopal bishop of Maryland and the District of Columbia, Mariann Edgar Budde, authorized nearly 100 churches to perform the new rite for same-sex unions. The many homosexuals who call the National Cathedral their church were eager for someone to take over whose theology embraced the normalization of homosexuality. Hall was that person.

"This was something that was brewing in the cathedral," Budde told the AP. "We were really waiting for him. It would have been inconceivable for the Cathedral to call somebody who was not in favor of full equality for gay and lesbian people."

Hall challenged the age-old notion, taken from Scripture, that homosexuality is a sin, and told the AP that he sees performing same-sex wedding as a way to build a community "that reflects the diversity of God's world." He claimed that he reads the Bible "as seriously as fundamentalists do, and my reading of the Bible leads me to want to do this because I think it's being faithful to the kind of community that Jesus would have us be."



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Homosexual groups were ecstatic with the announcement, with the Human Rights Campaign taking the lead, declaring that “today, the church sent a simple but powerful message to LGBT Episcopalians — you are loved just the way you are, and for that we embrace you.”

The National Organization for Marriage (NOM), one of the leading groups fighting for traditional marriage in the United States, said that the move was “disappointing, but not surprising,” given the incremental slide from the Christian faith that the Episcopal Church has suffered over the past several years. NOM spokesman Thomas Peters said that the “message here is that conservative Episcopalians are being pushed out.” He added that the move provides “an opportunity for people to wake up to what’s happening. It reminds us that marriage is really an all or nothing deal. Does America want to retain its marriage tradition or fundamentally give it up?”

The conservative American Anglican Council also saw the move as “no surprise,” with the group’s communications officer, Robert Lundy, telling the *Christian Post* that “the leadership of the National Cathedral, like the leadership of the Episcopal Church, is progressing further outside the bounds of Biblical Christianity. This move may further a perception that the church and America are leaving our moral foundation. However, the reality is that the National Cathedral’s leadership does not represent the vast majority of Christians in this country.”

Peter Sprigg, vice president of the Family Research Council, agreed, telling the AP that the Episcopal Church “is out of touch with most of the rest of Christianity and, for that matter, with the rest of the Anglican Communion worldwide on this particular issue.” He predicted that the latest move would speed up the long-running exodus of members from the liberal denomination, as congregants search for a more spiritually vital worship experience.

“The Episcopal Church is one of the fastest shrinking denominations in the country,” Sprigg noted, “and their retreat from biblical ethics on this subject of homosexuality is a major part of the reason for that. They may fill their church with same-sex weddings, but it actually would make it less likely that they’ll be able to fill it for worship on Sunday mornings.”



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