



SUNNYVALE

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

More Light Presbyterians Exploratory Committee Report December 2020

Sunnyvale Presbyterian Church is a welcoming and affirming church for queer people and their families. We seek to include LGBTQIA+ people in all aspects of church activities and leadership. Currently, the Mission & Service and Discipleship ministry areas are educating the congregation and community about how we can become an affirming church through their monthly “Affirming Series,” while ministry areas (including Youth, Children, and Personnel) are exploring ways to be inclusive and recognize the input and guidance of queer people in the church. Book groups are exploring the few apparently anti-queer scriptures in the Bible, recognizing that both popular writers and biblical scholars have challenged the traditional interpretation and assumed meanings of those scripture passages. To further the affirming stance of the church the Session voted to explore whether or not SVPC should join More Light Presbyterians.

Terminology:

- The term “*queer*” was once considered derogatory but is now the preferred term used by members of the LGBTQIA+ community.
- The term “*cisgender*” refers to a person whose gender identity matches the sex they were assigned at birth.

On May 21, 2020, the session of Sunnyvale Presbyterian Church called a committee to investigate how and whether the church should join More Light Presbyterians. The specific language from Session was:

Session authorizes the Clerk of Session to appoint a committee to study the process and implications for SVPC to become a More Light Church and submit a report with recommendations for action by the Session no later than the December Session meeting.

What is More Light Presbyterians? More Light Presbyterians is a nonprofit organization that serves Presbyterian churches and supports the full participation of LGBTQIA+ people in all areas of church life. Its stated purpose and history is provided on their website (MLP.org):

Who We Are:

More Light Presbyterians engages over 230 congregations and thousands of individuals in the Presbyterian Church (USA), enabling Presbyterians to lead LGBTQIA+ service and advocacy in communities nationwide. More Light's mission has always been to empower and equip individuals and congregations to live into their welcome for LGBTQIA+ people.

Our Mission Statement:

Following the risen Christ, and seeking to make the Church a true community of hospitality, the mission of More Light Presbyterians is to work for the full participation of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and asexual (LGBTQIA+) people in the life, ministry and witness of the Presbyterian Church (USA) and in society.

More Light Presbyterians traces its history through two distinct pathways, the earliest is through a sign held up at Presbyterian General Assembly in 1974 by the Rev. David Sindt "is anyone else out there gay?" That sign led to the formation of Presbyterians for Gay Concerns, which later became Presbyterians for Lesbian and Gay Concerns. The second is after the 1978 Presbyterian ruling that openly LGBTQIA+ people could join and participate in Presbyterian churches, but not serve in official leadership of the church. Several Presbyterian churches took issue with this ruling and declared themselves to be "More Light" Churches because there was "yet more light to shine forth on the scriptures" on, at the time, homosexuality. These churches formally joined together as the More Light Churches Network in 1992. Several years later, Presbyterians for Lesbian and Gay Concerns and the More Light Churches Network merged to form More Light Presbyterians as a non-profit organization in 1999.

Jess Cook, Program and Communications Manager with More Light Presbyterians, added, "I would say from the get-go there has been an assertion that it is God's light, not ours, that is shining. We will often talk about shining more light in the context that it can really only happen in community. Also, I'd say that at the core of much of what we are about is the belief that we all have a light to shine."

What is the process for joining More Light Presbyterians?

To join More Light Presbyterians, the session would need to approve a motion to do so and complete a form. It would then arrange for at least the minimum annual membership fee. In addition to the affirming church motion passed in May 2020, the More Light Presbyterians Exploratory Committee recommends a more thorough statement of affirmation and inclusion.

Following is information obtained from the More Light Presbyterians website:

Cost: Just as the impact of your congregation is measured in more than the number of folks who show up on Sunday morning or can be counted on the rolls, More Light Presbyterians shines more light into more communities nationwide than our small, but mighty structure would seem to make possible.

*Truth is, you make it possible with us. Your contributions keep lights on and shining far and wide. We suggest a **minimum annual contribution of \$200 and consider the following suggestions for calculating your annual contributions.** [For a congregation our size, the suggested annual donation is \$2000.]*

CONGREGATIONAL BUDGET SIZE	SUGGESTED DONATION
UNDER \$49,999	\$250
\$50,000 - \$149,000	\$500
\$150,000 - \$249,000	\$750
\$250,000 - \$500,000	\$1,000
ABOVE \$500,000	\$2,000

These contributions:

- 1. Help support a movement*
- 2. Give to a campus ministry, local group, or national network*
- 3. Support the creation of education and worship resources for individuals and congregations*
- 3. Adopt a More Light Ambassador (or six!)*
- 4. Enhance our technology so we can continue our ministry of presence, even from a distance*

What kinds of resources would More Light Presbyterians provide to our church?

More Light Presbyterians offers a wide range of direct consultation, webinars, church services, information guides, and training materials addressing the following topics:

- LGBTQIA+ inclusion in all areas of church life
- Racial Justice
- LGBTQIA+ Refugees and Asylum seekers
- LGBTQIA+ Youth
- Gender Justice

- Bible Study
- LGBTQIA+ language and terminology
- Biblical Interpretation
- Marriage
- Trans Inclusion
- Worship and Prayer

Thus far, national staff from More Light Presbyterians has met with our session to speak about More Light Presbyterians and becoming an affirming church. They were invited to meet with us following our session's decision to become an affirming church. More Light staff participated in our "Affirming Church Series" in a live Zoom meeting for our congregation and community.

Other ways More Light Presbyterians could support our ministry areas:

- **Discipleship:** courses, library and book sale offerings, speakers, small group focus topics
- **Worship:** explore ways to affirm LGBTQIA+ folks in worship services, including special services
- **Mission & Service:** supporting those who have been marginalized and rejected because they are LGBTQIA+
- **Childrens' and Youth ministries:** curriculum and resources for raising children and youth to be affirming within the practice of their faith
- **Ministry Resources:** information to engage in discussion about non-gender defined uses of our resources
- **Caring and Deacons:** learning about how to be more sensitive to ways of caring for LGBTQIA+ members of our community
- **Welcome & Hospitality:** developing welcoming practices specific to LGBTQIA+ individuals and families
- **Personnel:** reviewing policies and procedures related to non-discriminatory hiring and personnel practices

What does our church say that would address joining More Light Presbyterians?

On May 19, 2020, the session of Sunnyvale Presbyterian Church unanimously approved the following motion:

Following the risen Christ, and seeking to make our church a true community of hospitality, Sunnyvale Presbyterian Church works for the full participation of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) people in the life, ministry and witness of our church and society.

From the SVPC Mission Study Report Update (February 2019):

Our Hopes for the Future

Our congregation puts hope in a future that shows us to be a growing, thriving community—in spirituality, mission, and membership. As our surrounding community and world evolve and change, we ask ourselves how to listen for God’s call. As we discern that call, we desire to strengthen our existing ministries, move in new directions, and respond in our individual and collective lives. We listen and respond to local and global needs related to hunger, poverty, and homelessness. This committee senses an emerging focus on local and global needs related to hunger and homelessness, striving to respond to calls for social justice, including racism, concerns of the LGBTQ community, refugees, the environment, and conditions affecting the elderly.

As we seek to discern God’s call for our future, we want to continue to celebrate who we are, acknowledging our successes, strengths, and traditions. Building on a solid foundation of discipleship and spiritual growth will allow us to reach outside our walls to deepen connections within our community and expand our ministry. We desire transformation, guidance, inspiration, and mentoring to grow in our understanding of what it means to follow Christ. As we stay rooted in our traditions, we also know that we must step up and out to respond to God’s calls for us. The changing dynamics of our community and world feed our desire to be better able to connect with others of diverse backgrounds, traditions, and needs. We seek to be equipped to take risks to share God’s love generously with our neighbors. We wish to be rooted in Christ and reaching out in love.

What does our denomination, PC(USA) say that would address joining More Light Presbyterians?

At the 223rd General Assembly in St. Louis in June 2018, the Presbyterian Church voted unanimously to pass three overtures:

Overture 11-04, On Clarifying the Position of the PC(USA) Regarding Appropriate Boundaries of Religious Liberty: Acknowledges the misuse of the term “religious freedom” in denying basic human rights, and reaffirms that faith and religious liberty cannot be used to discriminate against anyone simply because of who they are.

Overture 11-12, On Affirming and Celebrating the Full Dignity and Humanity of People of All Gender Identities: Acknowledges the church’s past mistake in being unwelcoming to transgender and non-binary individuals, encourages the welcoming and acceptance of all gender identities, and affirms their right to live free from discrimination in any arena. This overture also specifically mentioned the rights of transgender students.

Overture 11-13, On Celebrating the Gifts of People of Diverse Sexual Orientations and Gender Identities in the Life of the Church: Apologizes for the church’s previous unwelcoming

stance on LGBTQ parishioners, celebrates LGBTQ church pioneers, and states the church will welcome, lift up, and fight for the human rights of all people created in the eyes of God.

What does scripture tell us as we consider joining More Light Presbyterians?

The SVPC More Light Presbyterians Exploratory Committee did not directly address scripture. However, on their website More Light Presbyterians includes references to books and resources that document modern biblical scholarship addressing the specific passages related to interpretation and misinterpretation of scripture in this area. There are significant voices challenging earlier interpretations of these passages by reflecting on the cultural milieu of the time in which they were written. We encourage our church to listen to these voices.

How would joining More Light Presbyterians help our church and our congregation? How would it help people in the LGBTQIA+ community?

Our affiliation with More Light Presbyterians would communicate to both LGBTQIA+ and cisgender individuals and families that we are consciously and actively working to be affirming. More Light Presbyterians provides educational and training materials useful to a wide range of church activities and ministry areas. It provides direct support from More Light Presbyterians staff, as well as More Light Presbyterians virtual church services that model language and messages helpful to supporting members of the LGBTQIA+ community.

More Light Presbyterians helps churches as they address the intersectionality of the needs of many people who have suffered from systemic exclusion. Race, disability, age, class, physical appearance, and gender are among the social and political identities that combine to create unique modes of discrimination and privilege. Intersectionality identifies advantages and disadvantages that are felt by people due to a combination of factors. More Light Presbyterians recognizes the complexity of this issue with its broad range of materials and programs.

By joining More Light Presbyterians, we maintain a focus on full inclusion for our church over time. Our committee believes it is crucial that we receive input from the LGBTQIA+ community as represented by More Light Presbyterians to gain awareness of and sensitivity to the concerns, needs, and joys of LGBTQIA+ individuals and families. We considered our church 5, 10, 20 and more years in the future. We do not anticipate that all issues of inclusion, caring, and love for our LGBTQIA+ community will be resolved in that time. As our denomination and Christians in general evolve in their thinking about LGBTQIA+ individuals and families, More Light Presbyterians would be a resource for maintaining our involvement with and knowledge of these changes. Our session, ministry areas, and congregation will have the option of exploring new resources as they become available. The More Light Presbyterians staff has already provided church leadership with consultation, staff time, and support as we have decided to be an affirming church.

A formal relationship with More Light Presbyterians would mean that we have a connection where we acknowledge the leadership of queer people in the church, especially queer folks who

have been ordained in their ministries at More Light Presbyterians. Through experiences such as the Affirming Series, consultation with various ministry groups in our church, and invitations to participate in More Light Presbyterians occasional online church services, our church members would have an opportunity to hear from pastors who are queer. As ordination of queer pastors has been a relatively recent change in our denomination's practices, it is likely that most in our congregation have not had such an experience. Furthermore, we anticipate that future nominating committees will benefit from familiarity with queer pastors and other queer folks as they seek to fill positions.

The committee discussed the consequences of Christian rejection of LGBTQIA+ people. These consequences include murder, suicide, family rejection, loss of employment, loss of medical care, incarceration, expulsion from Christian fellowship, and many other kinds of suffering. We lament the cruelty with which Christians have dealt with LGBTQIA+ people over the millennia and continue to do so within the broader community, nation, and world. We recognize the need to create an explicitly welcoming, affirming, and loving environment for those who have been explicitly called out and rejected by our faith.

From the More Light Presbyterians website:

A welcoming congregation is just the beginning of abundant inclusion. With your help we can ensure every congregation is a welcoming place for LGBTQIA+ people and that we live out our faith in action in our communities and world. You can get involved by joining with More Light Presbyterians, engaging with us on Facebook or Twitter, attending a More Light event, finding a welcoming church or starting a More Light process in your congregation, and sharing your gifts for the furthering of our ministry.

Visible, tangible welcome for LGBTQIA+ persons isn't just a Gospel imperative, it's an incredible tool for evangelism. There has never been a better time to become a More Light church. While many strides have been made for LGBTQIA+ inclusion and rights, too many LGBTQIA+ people do not feel they have a place to worship. Though welcome for all God's children might seem obvious within your congregation, do others outside of your walls know of your commitment and support for LGBTQ persons in the church? Becoming More Light is a great way to ensure people in your community know your congregation or group is a welcoming and affirming place to encounter God.

What happens when my congregation or campus group becomes More Light?

- *Your church becomes part of a national community of hope and equality.*
- *We'll post an announcement and celebration of your new More Light status on our blog and social media.*
- *One of our staff-members will follow up about additional resources you might need.*
- *We list your church on our map and directory of More Light Churches.*
- *You may use More Light Presbyterians logos and banners as part of your congregation communications.*

What have we learned from other churches about their joining More Light Presbyterians?

The following churches responded to our invitation to share their experience of being in a church affiliated with More Light Presbyterians. Their narrative responses are in the attachment:

- Redwoods Presbyterian Church, Larkspur, California
- Saint Philips Presbyterian Church, Houston, Texas
- First Presbyterian Church in the City of New York
- Valley Presbyterian Church, Portola Valley, California

How has the committee sought input from our current church community?

The More Light Church Exploratory Committee contacted 24 SVPC members to elicit their views, concerns, and/or encouragements. We have included their comments in an attachment.

There are mixed opinions and comments regarding More Light Presbyterians from the members we contacted. Some expressed feelings of discomfort with the idea of More Light Presbyterians. While almost all interviewees support our church joining More Light Presbyterians, some comments suggested ambivalence about focusing on and recognizing the needs of queer people. We also note that responses from the youth members of our church were universally supportive of both our being an affirming church and joining More Light Presbyterians. We feel that, in this case, our youth members are leaders in this area of church growth as queer youth are integrated more fully in their social milieu.

Following session's review of this report our committee will post this report on the SVPC website and mail copies to members who do not use or have access to the internet, inviting comments. These comments will be compiled and shared with session.

What is the committee's recommendation regarding joining More Light Presbyterians?

The More Light Presbyterians Exploratory Committee recommends that our church join More Light Presbyterians because it will help us live out the commitments session has already made. We believe that joining More Light Presbyterians is consistent with our being an affirming church and specifically supports all elements of our affirming statement from session's May 19, 2020, meeting. We believe our church and our community will benefit in at least the following four ways:

- *Identification:* Communicating to LGBTQIA+ and cisgender individuals and families that we are affirming and seek to support and encourage their participation in all areas of our church life.
- *Longevity:* Joining More Light Presbyterians will provide the church with ongoing input, ideas, curriculum, and guidance in being welcoming and affirming for many years to come. Future sessions, pastors, congregation members, and staff will have access to

materials that respond to LGBTQIA+ community needs, updated scholarship in the area, and new approaches for being an affirming church.

- *Advocacy*: More Light Presbyterians advocates on behalf of the LGBTQIA+ community in More Light Presbyterians churches, in our PC(USA) denomination, and in the broader Christian faith community.
- *Resources*: More Light Presbyterians develops resource media, curricula, promotional materials, books, church services, and other support for our various ministry areas.

In summary, our church's affiliation with More Light Presbyterians will further our goals in affirming, loving, and integrating LGBTQIA+ individuals and families in all aspects of church life.

Respectfully submitted,
Betsy Brittle
Bill Coleman
Nancy Ewing
Mary McLeod
Suzi Sohn
Hardy Kim (ex-officio member)

Attachment A: Church Interviews

Redwoods Presbyterian Church, Larkspur, *Stephanie Ryder, Pastor*

“Our mission outreach committee reviews our memberships each year and this is one we continue to claim. It is still meaningful to us because we believe the church is for all people and that God does not exclude. Personally, I know that the church at large has done great harm to the LGBTQ+ community and I feel it is necessary to right our wrongs as we learn more about ourselves, our world, and God’s people. We are followers of Jesus and he called us to love God and love one another as ourselves. I don’t recall him naming any exceptions. By being a More Light Church, we affirm our love and welcome to all people.”

Saint Philips Presbyterian Church, Houston, Texas, *Omar Rouchon, Associate Pastor*

Saint Philips Church has been an affirming church for several decades and has contributed financially to More Light Presbyterians for most of that time. They only recently (2018) joined MLP after a period of educating the congregation. During the period of discernment, two of the 21 elders were opposed to joining, although they eventually voted to support the motion. Pastor Omar began attending the church about 20 years ago after seeing the church referenced on the MLP website. He has since gone to seminary and is now Associate Pastor at the church. He said that while he cannot recall any specific members who have joined due to MLP membership, the church has a long-term and strong commitment to being actively affirming of LGBTQIA+ people in all areas of the church. He said the church is near a major thoroughfare and they have installed a large digital sign in front of the church. The More Light Presbyterians logo and welcoming messages come up on the sign regularly.

First Presbyterian Church in the City of New York, *Nicole Stansifer, Director of Outreach*

FPCNYC has been an affirming church for decades and has a rich history with their involvement with the queer community. They had openly queer clergy when PC(USA) was not doing that openly, back in the late 1970’s, which was supported by the presbytery which was housed in their buildings on the church campus. The church is situated on Fifth Avenue in Greenwich Village, and the Pride Parade marches past their doors. In the late 1980’s they began to serve water to parade participants as they marched by. Last year was the 50th anniversary of the Stonewall riots and FPCNYC was involved in marking that anniversary. They reviewed their church history to see their progress and to learn where there is room to grow in affirming people in the queer community.

FPCNYC was connected to “Covenant Network” for years and was also a founding member of “Parity,” which had been “Presbyterian Welcome.” When Covenant Network became less active at the congregational level, FPCNYC joined with More Light Presbyterians, approximately 3 to 4 years ago. Nicole stated that with FPCNYC being a leader in this realm, “they needed to become a More Light Church.”

Nicole stated that the benefits of becoming an MLP Church are many. With a larger church, such as SVPC, there are several interests among congregants and MLP offers a variety of programming. MLP helps to meet most people's interests. Their "Facing Racism" programs are "awesome." Nicole stated that larger churches are capable of functioning on their own and often don't feel they need other networks to survive. But she stated that networks are "a two way street"—they help us, we help them. It is a connection within the denomination; we all have a part to play. We're part of a denomination for a reason, "the body as a whole."

Due to FPCNYC being affirming for decades, they haven't really seen an uptick in queer folks serving in leadership, they already were doing that. Usually 30–40 percent of leadership including lay members is queer, sometimes as high as 50 percent. In terms of hearing of people coming to their church due to the MLP membership, Nicole hasn't heard any reference to that specifically. People more often state they saw the water station during the Pride Parade or saw the pride flag outside the church or were invited to their "queer brunch" after church by a friend.

Valley Presbyterian Church, Portola Valley, Former Elder

How did joining MLP help your church and congregation?

It helped me to know that the congregation was willing to support LGBTQ+ people like my son. I didn't really doubt it before—we'd already had a very public set of meetings and discussions around the question of whether we should permit same-sex weddings in our church, which had been very affirming. Nonetheless, it was another opportunity for discussion. I led an adult ed class on the subject before the decision was made, and I think that some people learned from that, and a few may even have shifted in their opinions to being more understanding and accepting.

How did joining MLP help people in the LGBTQIA+ community?

I really don't know that we've done enough to publicize it to make a difference to people in the community. We did have a lovely lesbian couple worship with us for several months, and they may have decided to come because of our actions; I just don't know.

Did joining MLP help your church to support and encourage people in the LGBTQIA+ community take part in all aspects of your church, including all areas of leadership?

I'm only aware of one pretty openly gay long-time member of our congregation, and he has been active in leadership for a long time. So I'm not aware that it has made much difference, although I think that he appreciated the action.

Attachment B: SVPC Individual Interviews

Individual responses were reported in different formats, some with a summary of comments and some with specific statements made by interviewees.

Person 1: “I’m excited and grateful for this opportunity to learn more about the LGBTQIA community. I have long believed that being more loving and more accepting of others is one of the most important parts of my faith. I am hoping that becoming an affirming church and joining MLP will help me to do this more fully.”

Person 2: This person had lots of questions. How will our church look different physically? How do we transform people’s minds? Will people leave our church?

Person 3: It would be good to have access to the resources that MLP provides. Then our church can provide information to our members.

Person 4: Now that SVPC has committed to being an affirming church, we are on a journey. It’s not just a one time thing. Joining More Light Presbyterians will help us continue on this journey. More Light Presbyterians can provide insights, resources and guides as we need them.

Person 5: This person was quite familiar with MLP and had used many of its resources and highly recommended it, especially because the people who run More Light Presbyterians are LGBTQIA and Presbyterian themselves and so have unique insight that would be helpful to our church.

Person 6: “Why wouldn’t we join MLP?” Said in a positive tone of voice, as if it’s obvious. “If we’re on this path, it’s a good way to stay on the path.”

Person 7: “Now that SVPC is an affirming church to our LGBTQ+ siblings in Christ, all of us have a great responsibility in educating ourselves in how to reach out and engage with the LGBTQ+ community. More Light Presbyterians exists for this purpose, to engage with churches in guiding them on this journey. Their resources and guidance make them a valuable asset in the Presbyterian network. This connection within the denomination will enrich our work in moving forward, bringing LGBTQ+ members into the full life of the church. For these reasons, I feel very strongly that SVPC should become a More Light Presbyterian church.”

Person 8: “It is hard to understand why our church declined to be an affirming church five years ago. SVPC is a church that seems to be well-integrated into the social fabric of the community, yet for reasons that escape me have not yet fully addressed the unfairness and fundamental meanness of Christian rejection of queer people. I was so excited to hear that things are changing in our church and have really enjoyed the “Affirming Series” presentations.”

Couple 1: This couple had questions about the More Light Presbyterians fee, whether or not we would change our church’s name, and whether or not More Light Presbyterians would gain any

formal leadership role in our church such as being on session. (Answers: \$200 minimum fee per year, no change in name of church, and no formal role of any kind in our church's leadership.) They said that joining MLP is "wonderful" and looked forward to the many areas of growth for our church. They expressed a concern that church members are prepared and educated, particularly those for whom being affirming is a new thing. They said, "We need to have it come from our hearts." They said they are in favor of our joining and have no reluctance in their support.

Couple 2: This couple was supportive of our joining More Light Presbyterians, but were also concerned about how our older members would be supported and communicated with in our transition to being affirming. They were concerned that people who have not had regular contact with queer people in their daily lives might feel excluded. They did not want our joining More Light Presbyterians to be the sole focus of the church. They appreciate the Affirming Series as a way to educate our membership.

Comments from several interviews conducted by one member of our committee:

1. Conflicted.
2. I believe all churches should be affirming and I'm okay with that, but not sure how I feel about becoming More Light Presbyterian.
3. I would be okay with openly LGBTQ+ people as teachers, volunteers, session members but uncomfortable with a gay pastor.
4. Is it beneficial? Isn't being affirming enough?
5. "More Light" conveys a sense of "we know more than you do," kind of judgmental.
6. Being told by Bruce Reyes-Chow during his talk that "I'm surprised that you're just now doing this" felt condemning, judgmental. His promoting More Light Presbyterians then felt unwanted.
7. Being able to have the More Light Presbyterians logo on website topic: having the pride flag at the bottom of home page on SVPC website is enough. You click on that and get our affirming statement, what more do people in the LGBTQ+ community need to know?
8. I don't see a super downside to becoming More Light Presbyterian, just don't see an upside. And I need an upside.
9. Doesn't seem super amazing.
10. Seems too political.
11. "Cultish," "clubby" attitude.
12. We need to focus on anti-racism, greater need there.
13. It's time!
14. More Light Presbyterians will help support the effort with their resources. We'll feel guided and will have a place to turn with questions. We need this connection so that the topic doesn't just fade away and die.
15. One person didn't know, but wanted to know, what was the meaning of the acronym LGBTQA+. They were upset at not having been told by the church its meaning.
16. One person said "I feel dumb not knowing all the new words being used."

17. One person asked, "What about the Bible verses regarding Sodom and Gomorrah??"
18. Will our worship service become like that of First Presbyterian Church of Palo Alto?

YOUTH INPUT

What are your thoughts/feelings on SVPC becoming an affirming church?

Mary: I'm so glad that SVPC decided to become an affirming church. As a queer person myself, I think it would've helped me to not only come to terms with my sexuality when I was younger, but also to be able to celebrate it. I am certain that future youth and the congregation as a whole will benefit from this change.

Person 1: "I think it's great that SVPC voted to become an affirming church, I think that it could've really helped me understand and accept my sexuality growing up."

Person 2: "It's great that SVPC is affirming the LGBTQ+ community, I don't know the church politics of it all, but gay marriage has been allowed in the Presbyterian church since the early 2000s, so I'm a little confused as to why this is only just happening."

Person 3: "I think it's a really good thing. SVPC did support LGBTQ+ people before, but I think that it was super important to recognize that we not only accept LGBTQ+ people, but we celebrate them."

How would you feel about SVPC becoming a More Light Presbyterians church?

Mary: I think that More Light is an excellent resource that would significantly help SVPC move towards our goal of becoming an affirming church.

Person 1: "I would totally support SVPC becoming a More Light Church."

Person 2: "More Light is cool, I think it would be good for SVPC."