

Presbyterian activist affiliates with MCC: Chris Glaser ordained

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Chris Glaser, a longtime advocate in Presbyterian circles for ordination of openly gay and lesbian pastors, was ordained this month in Decatur, Georgia, as interim pastor of a congregation affiliated with the gay-oriented Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches.

Glaser was the only openly gay member of the Presbyterian Task Force to Study Homosexuality, whose report recommending gay ordinations was rejected by the United Presbyterian Church, the so-called northern Presbyterians, in 1978.

He has been director of the Lazarus Project, a gay outreach program at West Hollywood (California) Presbyterian Church, and coordinator of Presbyterians for Lesbian & Gay Concerns.

Glaser recently edited a book of tributes to Troy Perry, the retiring founder of the UFMCC, which allowed him to enter as “a transfer clergy,” he said, “without jumping through so many hoops.” Moderator-elect Nancy Wilson, Perry’s successor, preached at his ordination October 2 in Georgia.

The MCC allows dual affiliation, so Glaser said he will remain a Presbyterian. “I do hope that I can apply these new skills [as an interim minister] plus my years of experience in nonordained ministry to similar interim pastorates someday also in the Presbyterian Church,” he told the Century.

A special PCUSA task force on sexuality and church unity recently announced that it is recommending that the denomination keep its ban on noncelibate gay clergy, but that local congregations may determine when to apply or bypass that standard. “I believe this is the report we should have had in the late '70s before the Book of Order was amended to exclude the ordination of gay people,” said Glaser, adding that it may mean that “lesbians and gay men may have to wait yet longer.”