

**Presbytery of Central Carolinas**  
**Ascending Overture**  
**To the 46<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the EPC**  
**February 21, 2026**

**Whereas**, God created Adam and Eve and ordained the first marriage and family consisting of one man and one woman in sexual union, establishing the context for the biblical sexual ethic (Genesis 1:27-28; 2:24; 4:1), and

**Whereas**, God has established the one flesh union between a husband and wife, as a great mystery in reference to Christ and His Church (Ephesians 5:25; 31-32), and

**Whereas**, the Holy Scriptures declare that the sexual union and desire between one man and one woman, in the covenant of marriage, is righteous and holy, and all other sexual activity is condemned by the seventh commandment as unrighteous and sinful including homosexuality (Exodus 20:14; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11,18; Exodus 22:16; Hebrews 13:4, Ephesians 5:3-5; *Westminster Confession of Faith 24:1*; *Westminster Larger Catechism Q138-139*), and

**Whereas**, the Holy Scriptures teach that not all sins are equally heinous, but some carry much greater consequence than others (John 19:11, Ezekiel 8:6, 1 John 5:16, *Westminster Larger Catechism Q150-151*), and

**Whereas**, homosexuality is among those sinful sexual activities uniquely defined as “unnatural”, violating not only the moral law of God but the mandates and fabric of Creation itself (Genesis 1:27-28; Romans 1:26-27) and therefore, as with other unnatural sins such as bestiality (Leviticus 20:15-16) and incest (Leviticus 18:6-20), is of greater heinousness and therefore that which God detests (*Westminster Confession 24:4*, *Westminster Larger Catechism Q139, Q150, Q151*), and

**Whereas** the prohibitions against sinful sexuality include not only deeds but also thoughts and desires (Matthew 5:27-28; 15:19-21; Isaiah 55:7), therefore homosexual desire (now often labeled as “same sex attraction”), is inherently both fully sinful and wholly unnatural, and

**Whereas**, the Christian’s identity is rooted in Christ so that he or she is a “new creation” in Him, his or her identity cannot be defined by sexual and any other experiences, desires or lifestyles that are contrary to the Holy Scriptures; for the Christian there is a clear distinction between self-conception (“this is who I am”) and their remaining indwelling sin (“this is what I must daily mortify”) (Romans 6:1-14; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Colossians 3:1-5); and

**Whereas**, while the Church is to welcome all who desire repentance and relief from their sins, including those whose sins include homosexuality or other unnatural lusts or acts, and offer all new life in Christ with a mind and heart disposed towards sinners and their constant need for grace (1 Corinthians 6:9-11, 2 Corinthians 5:17; 1 John 1:8-9), the biblical qualifications for a church officer are much more demanding, requiring elders and

deacons to be “above reproach” (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9; James 3:1; 1 Timothy 5:20), and

**Whereas** officers and candidates for office must therefore conform their lives to biblical sexual ethics, which include denying and mortifying all sexual passions and desires toward anyone to whom they are not married (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:5-6), and

**Whereas** the Westminster Confession 13.3 teaches: “*Although the old nature temporarily wins battles in this warfare, the continual strengthening of the sanctifying Spirit of Christ enables the regenerate nature in each believer to overcome. And so the saints grow in grace, perfecting holiness in the fear of God,*” indicating that persistent homosexual desire or “same-sex sexual attraction” is inconsistent with a Reformed understanding of the Holy Spirit’s sanctifying work in regeneration and perfecting holiness in a Christian’s life, and

**Whereas**, for two thousand years, the historic orthodox Christian churches have been faithful to Biblical teaching which condemns same-sex sexual desire and practice, and never knowingly allowed for the ordination of homosexual persons to church office<sup>1</sup>, and

**Whereas**, the Evangelical Presbyterian Church has faithfully followed the Bible’s teaching on human sexuality, stating in its’ 1996 *Position Paper on Homosexuality*, “The witness of God’s Word in both the Old and New Testaments is clear, declaring that the practice of homosexuality, including lust, is a grievous sin, and that any who continue to engage in such activity face the consequences of God’s condemning judgment. However, God’s grace offers love, forgiveness, hope and a new life. The necessary response to this offer is true repentance, including turning from homosexual behavior, and commitment to a faithful obedience to the Lord according to His Word”, and

**Whereas** the *Position Paper on Human Sexuality*, adopted by the 37th General Assembly in 2017, declares, “As repentant and forgiven sinners, we in the Evangelical Presbyterian Church resolve to teach the biblical truths of godly sexuality to our members and to all who will listen, with compassion and with courage, regardless of the cost to ourselves”, and

**Whereas** all officers take a vow to “promote the peace, purity, and unity of the church” (*Book of Government* 13-2A.9) and, yet the LGBTQ+ movement has regrettably influenced many quarters of the church, resulting in widespread confusion and controversy, disrupting the peace and unity of the church, and

**Whereas**, in response to the consideration of ordained church office for those experiencing ongoing homosexual desire or “same sex attraction”, the Evangelical Presbyterian Church must take a definitive, constitutional position on this matter.

**Therefore**, be it resolved that Central Carolinas Presbytery overture the 46th General Assembly of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church to amend the Book of Government 9-3A. as follows:

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<sup>1</sup> Unchanging Witness, Dr. Donald S. Fortson and Dr. Rollin Grams; B&H Publishing, 2016.

**Current Book of Government 9-3A.**

According to Scripture, those who bear office in the Church should exhibit certain characteristics of life. This includes being above reproach, sound in the faith, wise in the things of God, and discreet in all things. Persons who fill this office should exhibit a lifestyle that is an example to all, both in and outside the Church. A congregation preparing to elect persons to this holy office should carefully study appropriate passages of Scripture relating to the Ruling Elder and be very prayerful in selecting persons to this office.

**Proposed Book of Government 9-3A.**

“According to Scripture, those who bear office in the church **shall** exhibit certain characteristics of life. This includes being above reproach, sound in the faith, wise in the things of God, and discreet in all things. Persons who fill **these offices shall** exhibit a lifestyle that is an example to all, both in and outside the Church. **Therefore, persons eligible for church office shall conform in heart, mind, and conduct to God’s design for human sexuality, embracing with gratitude the calling of either chastity in singleness or fidelity within marriage between one man and one woman. Those who profess, persist in, or identify with unnatural desires or affections, contrary to God’s created order and condemned by Scripture as against nature, are disqualified from holding office in Christ’s Church.**<sup>2</sup> A presbytery or congregation preparing to elect persons to **these holy offices shall** carefully study appropriate passages of Scripture relating to the **Teaching Elder, Ruling Elder, and Deacon**, and be very prayerful in **electing** persons to these offices.



Enc Batel (Mar 3 2026 20:48 15 EST)

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TE Eric Batel, Moderator




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TE Robert M. Howard, Stated Clerk

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<sup>2</sup> See Romans 1:26–27 on desires contrary to God’s created order; Genesis 1–2 on the creation of male and female; Westminster Larger Catechism Q.139 on

the moral duties of Christians and the proper ordering of affections.