

Rev. Evans' Opening Remarks at the 2011 Prayer Breakfast for Equality

This prayer emerges from my own heart –
a heart that has not always had clarity about the issue of faith and sexuality;
a heart that has been deeply moved by family members, church members, and others who
have shown me more light and love, and a better way toward God's full inclusion of all
people.

This prayer emerges from my life as a pastor –
pastoral ministry gives us privileged and intimate places with all God's children;
pastoral ministry can be a place of great frustration, especially bumping up against church
structures and policies that go against the gospel of God;
pastoral ministry is a place of growing and learning and I have learned so much about faith
and serving God, especially from gays and lesbians ostracized from the church.

This prayer emerges from my travels – most recently this past summer in Malawi –
which put two men in prison for many months, and inflicted great pain and trauma on them,
for getting married and wanting a life together.

Prayer for February 15, 2011

Living God, our Source, we are all made in your image.
Show us that image in everyone we meet.

Jesus our brother, you call us to be friends and to love all people. Help us to befriend each other, love
one another, and serve you with our lives.

Holy Spirit, our flame of light and hope, inspire us with your joy.
Fire us with the challenge of your call, of welcome, of extravagant hospitality that extends across this
city and the whole world.

May our lives, our city, our Commonwealth reflect more fully your glorious image
of welcome, grace, love, and light.

For the quarter of a million homosexuals murdered in Nazi death camps,
and those who have long lived behind oppressive systems, in history's closets;
We pray, O God, for those who died in closets.
For the millions of lesbians and gays in countries in which there are no support systems,
or groups, in which revelation leads to imprisonment, persecution, castration, and death;
We pray, O God, for those who remain trapped in closets worldwide.
For thousands of gifted people, who feel called to serve in particular churches –
as officers, ministers, servants – but, because of fear, because of church polity,
because of prejudice and meanness, are denied the privilege of serving God's people.
We pray, O God, for those who remain frustrated and alienated in closets.

For all those gathered here, who work elsewhere, who continue to speak up and speak out,
to advocate and bear witness, pushing for legislation and liberation that brings equality, justice, and

hope; for a city, a Commonwealth, a nation, a world that might one day move toward wholeness and light - We pray, O God, for those who liberate from closets.

Move us, God, to new places where we see your presence all around,
where we work for your purposes of inclusion and grace,
where love and possibility blossom for all your children everywhere.

AMEN.

~ Rev. Alex Evans,
Pastor, Second Presbyterian Church, Richmond, VA