

Lull before another Presbyterian storm?

By [John Dart](#)

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It's been rather quiet on the Presbyterian battlefield since May 10, when the Twin Cities presbytery in Minnesota became the 87th to vote to lift the ban on LGBT ministers, elders and deacons. That was the decisive vote, and by July 10 the historic change was official.

The high court for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) early this month cleared the way for a re-ordination ceremony for Scott Anderson, who is executive director of the Wisconsin Council of Churches (and held a similar post in California). Anderson set aside his ordination in 1990 when a congregation revealed that he was a partnered gay man.

However, no flood of gay and lesbian ministers is forthcoming because of the multi-year process before ordination. "I believe [pastoral ordinations] will happen a few at a time for this first year," said Michael Adey, spokesperson for the pro-LGBT [More Light Presbyterians](#), in an e-mail.

What are likely to be more numerous in the near future--according to Jerry Van Marter, coordinator of the Presbyterian News Service--are ordinations of gay and lesbian Presbyterians as elders and deacons. That process occurs within a congregation--"a matter of a few months or even less," Van Marter said in a telephone interview.

Meanwhile, a countersurge by conservative churches and clergy is in the offing. The Fellowship of Presbyterians, formed last winter and led initially by several big-church pastors whose manifesto termed the PCUSA "deathly ill," expects over

1,900 attendees at its gathering later this month (which will also take place in Minneapolis-St. Paul).

Van Marter observed

that "the overall landscape of the PCUSA in the wake of Amendment 10-A [the new ordination standards replacing the 'chastity and fidelity' requirements] may be somewhat clearer after this major gathering of Presbyterians."

When the *Century* reported [in March](#) on the Presbyterian Fellowship's plans to explore alternative havens, it was unclear whether the group would support a schism or somehow form a church-within-a-church. Writing this week on the Fellowship's website, administrative consultant Paul Detterman [says](#) that there is "increasing interest in the creation of a 'new Reformed body'" distinct from any existing denomination.