

Scotland to legalize gay marriage by 2015

by [Trevor Grundy](#)

July 30, 2012

c. 2012 Religion News Service (RNS/ENInews) Scotland has announced it will allow same-sex weddings as early as 2015, becoming the first country in the United Kingdom to do so.

"We are committed to a Scotland that is fair and equal, and that is why we intend to proceed with plans to allow same sex marriage and religious ceremonies for civil partnerships," said Deputy First Minister Nicola Sturgeon, who made the announcement on Wednesday (July 25).

The Church of Scotland and the Roman Catholic Church were against the move, but gay-friendly Christian groups said they were "relieved" by the announcement.

The Rev. Fiona Bennett, minister of Augustine United Reform Church (Protestant) in Edinburgh, said, "We're delighted. It's been some time coming."

Sturgeon said that religious groups and individuals opposed to same-sex marriage will not be punished for not performing them.

"The Scottish government," she said, "will take all necessary steps to protect churches and individuals within those churches who do not wish to conduct same sex weddings if they do not agree with them."

A spokesman for the Roman Catholic Church said: "The Scottish government is embarking on a dangerous social experiment on a massive scale."

The Rev. Rod Thomas, chairman of Reform, a conservative evangelical network within the Church of England, said, "God designed marriage to be the union of one man and one woman, reflecting the union of Christ as bridegroom and the Church his bride. God is not a person with whom even U.K. prime ministers can negotiate a more congenial set of commands."

The announcement came as British Prime Minister David Cameron hosted a meeting of prominent gay leaders at his London home, 10 Downing Street.

"I am absolutely determined that this coalition government will follow in that tradition by legalizing gay marriage in this Parliament," he said.