**More Light Presbyterians appoints openly transgender man as new executive director**

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 Alex McNeill

MINNETONKA, Mn. – More Light Presbyterians (MLP) today announced the appointment of Alex McNeill as their new executive director. McNeill is an openly transgender man, and a nationally known educator and advocate for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) Christians. As executive director, he will help MLP chart a new strategic direction to help empower individuals to become advocates for LGBTQ inclusion and equality in their own congregations and communities.

More Light Presbyterians is an organization dedicated to promoting acceptance and inclusion of LGBTQ people in the Presbyterian Church (USA) and wider society. McNeill is the first transgender person to lead a mainline Protestant faith-based organization. A transgender person is someone whose sex at birth is opposite from who they know they are on the inside. Many transgender people are prescribed hormones by their doctors to change their bodies. Some undergo surgery as well.

“I’m honored to join More Light, which has always been on the forefront of the Christian tradition of fostering acceptance for the most vulnerable among us. I look forward to building on this proud tradition to create a fully welcoming church,” said Alex McNeill.

McNeill has personally trained hundreds of Christians to become community leaders through the Institute for Welcoming Resources and the Reconciling Ministries Network. He has also led departments, managed programs, and raised funds at Equality Maryland and the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice. He also played a key role organizing faith communities for the passage of Amendment 10A in the PC(USA) and of marriage equality legislation in Maryland.

“Our search committee unanimously chose Alex because he has a proven track record of leading and growing organizations. We believe that he is uniquely qualified to lead MLP during this important moment in the church,” said Nathan Sobers, co-moderator of MLP.

McNeill has also campaigned for ballot measures and legislation to promote LGBTQ rights. He helped win ordination equality for LGBTQ Presbyterians in 2011, and celebrated that success by becoming the first openly transgender ministry candidate from his home presbytery in Western North Carolina. His journey to ordination is currently being chronicled in the documentary,*Out of Order.*

“We are excited about Alex offering his experience and gifts for leadership to MLP and the PC(USA), and about this opportunity to model the open welcome of all who are called to serve.” said Heidi Peterson, co-moderator of MLP.

Leadership training will be the cornerstone of McNeill’s work with MLP. “The more we encourage our supporters to share their knowledge, skills and calling, the more our denomination and community will look like God’s kin-dom,” he said. Alex will lead workshops and have a vital presence at the MLP National Conference Sept. 27-29 in Tucson, AZ.

Alex holds a Master of Divinity from Harvard Divinity School, and a Bachelor’s degree from the University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill. He currently resides just outside of Washington, DC with his wife and three dogs.