



# Overture 11-13



## SUMMARY OF OVERTURE

This overture invites the 223rd General Assembly to affirm its commitment to the full welcome, acceptance, and inclusion of transgender people, people who identify as gender non-binary, and people of all gender identities within the full life of the church and the world. It also asks the church to stand for the rights of people of all gender identities to live free from discrimination and violence, while acknowledging that the church has fallen short in these commitments in the past. It directs the Stated Clerk and the Office of Public Witness to advocate for the rights and legal protections to ensure and protect the full humanity and dignity of transgender people and people of all gender identities. Lastly, it encourages congregations of the Presbyterian Church (USA) to welcome transgender and gender non-binary people into the life of the church and to continue to grow in compassion and knowledge about the full expression of our individual and respective gender identities, particularly through educational opportunities.

## QUESTIONS

### What do you mean by transgender and non-binary persons?

The terms to describe and define sexual orientation, gender identity, and expression evolve as individuals name the nuances of who they are created to be. While language is inadequate to keep up with the depth of human experience, the Directory for Worship also reminds us, “the church is committed to using language in such a way that all members of the community of faith, may recognize themselves to be included, addressed, and equally cherished before God” (W-1.2006b). For the purpose of this overture, we use the following description of the terms to describe transgender and gender non-binary experiences:

**Transgender:** an intentionally broad term that can be used to describe people whose gender identity is different from the gender they were assigned when they were born.

**Gender Non-Binary:** a term that is often used to describe people whose gender identity is not exclusively male or female, including those who identify with no gender, with a gender other than male or female, or as more than one gender.

### What has the PCUSA said about transgender or non-binary persons in the past?

The Presbyterian Church (USA) has previously affirmed the need for the church to stand for the dignity and worth of “homosexual persons” (the term used at the time of passage). Given the disproportionate rates of discrimination and harassment faced by transgender and non-binary persons, the church is called to expand its affirmation of the dignity and worth to specifically include transgender and non-binary people. As we continue building a church that reflect God’s heart, we must reflect on the language that we use to describe God’s children.



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# Overture 11-12



## Why is this overture important to support?

In the world and in the Church, transgender people, and those who are gender non-binary, too often experience and suffer discrimination and violence. The findings of the 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey, the largest survey examining the experiences of transgender and gender non-binary people from all fifty states, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, Puerto Rico, and U.S. military bases overseas “reveal disturbing patterns of mistreatment and discrimination and startling disparities between transgender people in the survey and the U.S. population when it comes to the most basic elements of life, such as finding a job, having a place to live, accessing medical care, and enjoying the support of family and community.”<sup>1</sup>

1 National Coalition for Trans Equality, <http://www.ustranssurvey.org/reports>



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