

Progressive Pathways Fellowship ordains openly gay man as first new clergyman.  
Louisville, KY.

Surrounded by friends and members of the congregation of Progressive Pathways Fellowship, Jim Hensley was ordained and matriculated as a clergyman. Hensley is an openly gay man and has a long history of involvement in local faith groups. "On November 13<sup>th</sup>, 2005, PPF decided to make a public commitment to diversity, inclusivity, and future growth," said Rev. Hensley after the ceremony.

A number of Christian denominations are embroiled in controversy regarding the place of lesbians and gay men in those churches and communities. "Those controversies aren't about morality," Rev. Hensley asserted, "they're about control. Some churches are simply obsessed with coercion and preoccupied with their own supposed uniqueness. A theology rooted in universal damnation and anchored to a selectively literalistic reading of Christian and Hebrew scriptures is bound to lead to rigidity, autocracy and paranoia. It's inexcusable and a deep betrayal of the Christ's practice of ministry to the least, last and condemned while challenging the religious martinets of 1<sup>st</sup> century Palestine."

Progressive Pathways Fellowship is a small ecumenical and interdenominational ministry that incorporated in 2005 and has been worshipping at the Spring Street Meeting House on Sundays and meeting at The Alternative on Wednesday nights for book discussions. In addition to welcoming gay men, lesbians, transfolk, bisexuals and intersexual people into their congregation, PPF would probably raise hackles among conservative Christians by insisting that each person has the God-given ability to find their own way into a proper relationship with the Divine. "A few of our members have no desire to be Christian. They are walking another path. That doesn't mean we can't walk together." Sunday worship services at PPF are brief and varied. "We've had Mass, a Wiccan sabbat, a Shinto meditation service and we're planning a Reiki service and an advent meditation for December."