



Grace United Methodist Church

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Dear members, friends and community of Grace United Methodist Church,

As you know, recent events in the United Methodist Church (UMC) have been in the news. After years of debate over how best to include LGBTQ+ people in the life of the church, delegates at a February global UMC General Conference voted on plans laying out the future policies of the church. There were two main plans under consideration.

- [The Traditional Plan](#) affirms the church's current language that does not allow homosexuals to serve in the ordained ministry or as bishops and does not condone the marriage of same sex individuals, but allows LGBTQ+ persons to participate in worship. It also lays out disciplinary actions that will be taken against a clergy member performing a same sex wedding: he or she would face a one-year unpaid suspension for a first offense, and would lose credentials for a second offense.
- [The One Church Plan](#) lets individual churches decide what their positions would be in these matters.

The [conference vote](#) passed 438 to 384 in favor of the Traditional Plan. In late April, the UMC [Judicial Council](#) evaluated this plan to see if it follows the constitution of the UMC. They upheld it overall, striking down a few related motions. The Judicial Council also ruled as constitutional an exit plan adopted at General Conference that lays out a way for churches to leave the denomination if they choose not to comply with the Book of Discipline. However, the vote on the exit plan was subsequently nullified by the General Conference Commission due to voting irregularities.

Methodists have historically represented a broad range of people across the political and social spectrum. Our unity has come from our common mission to live out God's love in the world, as embodied by his Son, Jesus Christ. As a result of this vote, some churches and individuals may choose to leave the United Methodist Church because they don't agree with the Traditional Plan and feel that LGBTQ+ Methodists are being undervalued. Others are pleased with the decision to adopt the Traditional Plan, and still others prefer to wait and monitor changes in the situation during the coming year. The next General Conference of the church takes place in Minneapolis in May of 2020.

We don't know yet what these votes and rulings mean for our local church in Belleville. We welcome your feedback. Feel free to contact Pastor George Kaminski to share your concerns and comments.

We do know that we are all valued children of God. While this has been a difficult time for many, we want to take this opportunity to say all are welcome to worship with us here at Grace United Methodist Church.

Sincerely,

The Grace United Methodist Church Administrative Council