

Desert Southwest Conference Board of Church and Society

Whereas the overarching message of the scriptures of the Judeo-Christian tradition is God's love for all people, and God's desire that all people would come to have a full relationship with God (Genesis 1:26-31, John 3:16, others);

Whereas from its earliest Wesleyan roots, the United Methodist Church has sought to welcome and be in ministry with all people (Kenneth L. Carder, *Who Are We? Doctrine, Ministry, and the Mission of The United Methodist Church*, Revised Leader's Guide (Cokesbury, 2001), p. 46);

Whereas In the history of our denomination, during the times of slavery, the civil rights movement and others, specific conferences or the Denomination as a whole maintained traditional policies and positions that later proved regrettable, in which groups of people were excluded, marginalized, or denied basic human rights;

Whereas many persons of all sexual orientations and gender identities have a profound Christian faith. Yet, many are rejected or marginalized by their faith communities, including the congregations and denominational structure of the United Methodist Church, because of exclusionary policies; and

Whereas many United Methodist Christians have gifts and graces for ministry, yet are unable to receive ordination in the United Methodist Church solely because of committed relationships with other persons, which they are unwilling to disavow or avoid acknowledging publically; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, that the Desert Southwest Conference (DSC) shall

1. affirm that the foundations of the Judeo-Christian and Wesleyan traditions encourage God's people to welcome all people into the full life and ministry of the Church, and that the history of our faith teaches that God's grace is shown when the excluded or marginalized are welcomed and accepted fully into the Body of Christ;
2. petition the 2016 General Conference of the United Methodist church to change the *Book of Discipline*, ¶ 161, Section F, *Human Sexuality*, to read:
...Although all persons are sexual beings whether or not they are married, sexual relations are affirmed only with the covenant of monogamous, ~~heterosexual~~ marriage...
...~~Homosexual~~ All persons no less than heterosexual persons are individuals of sacred worth. All persons need the ministry and guidance of the church in the struggle for human fulfillment, as well as the spiritual and emotional care of a fellowship that enables reconciling relationships with God, with others, and with self. ~~The United Methodist Church does not condone the practice of homosexuality and considers this practice incompatible with Christian teaching.~~ We affirm that God's grace is available to all. We will seek to live together in Christian community, welcoming, forgiving, and loving one another, as Christ has loved and accepted us. We implore families and churches not to reject or condemn ~~lesbian and gay~~ members

1 *and friends based on their sexual orientation and / or gender identity. We commit*
2 *ourselves to be in ministry for and with all persons;*

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4 3. petition the 2016 General Conference of the United Methodist Church to change the
5 *Book of Discipline, ¶ 304, Qualifications for Ordination, Part 3, to read:*

6 • *While persons set apart by the Church for ordained ministry are*
7 *subject to all the frailties of the human condition and the pressures of society,*
8 *they required to maintain the highest standards of holy living in the world.*
9 ~~*The practice of homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching.*~~
10 ~~*Therefore self-avowed practicing homosexuals are not to be certified as*~~
11 ~~*candidates, ordained as ministers, or appointed to serve in the united*~~
12 ~~*Methodist church.*~~

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14 4. petition the 2016 General Conference of the United Methodist Church to remove
15 from the *Book of Discipline* ¶ 341, *Unauthorized Conduct, Part 6:*

16 ~~*Ceremonies that celebrate homosexual unions shall not be conducted by our*~~
17 ~~*ministers, and shall not be conducted in our churches.*~~

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19 5. petition the 2016 General Conference of the United Methodist Church to change the
20 *Book of Discipline* ¶ 806, *Fiscal Responsibilities, Part 9* to read:

21 *It shall be responsible for ensuring that no board, agency, committee,*
22 *commission, or council shall give United Methodist funds to ~~any gay caucus~~*
23 ~~*or group, or otherwise use such funds to promote acceptance of*~~
24 ~~*homosexuality or violate the expressed commitment of the United Methodist*~~
25 *Church “not to reject or condemn lesbian and gay members and friends”*
26 *(Par. 161F). The council shall have the right to stop such expenditures. It*
27 *shall not limit the church’s ministry in response to the HIV epidemic.*