

Title: Inclusive Conference Resolution

Budget Implications: None

Rationale:

The 2012 General Conference of the United Methodist Church retained language in the Book of Discipline (BOD) which continues to discriminate against Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) persons. No other marginalized group is singled out in the BOD for discrimination or specific exclusionary treatment. The discriminatory language in the BOD is itself in conflict with the inclusive language in other parts of the BOD, including ¶ 162 J of the Social Principles, “Equal Rights Regardless of Sexual Orientation:

“Certain basic human rights and civil liberties are due all persons. We are committed to supporting those rights and liberties for all persons, regardless of sexual orientation. We see a clear issue of simple justice in protecting the rightful claims where people have shared material resources, pensions, guardian relationships, mutual powers of attorney, and other such lawful claims typically attendant to contractual relationships that involve shared contributions, responsibilities, and liabilities, and equal protection before the law. Moreover, we support efforts to stop violence and other forms of coercion against all persons, regardless of sexual orientation.”

We believe that LGBT persons should be fully embraced as members of the body of Christ, as United Methodists and gifted children of God entitled equally to all of the ministries, ceremonies, and sacraments of the United Methodist Church. In his “Letter from Birmingham Jail,” Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. wrote “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly”; and our membership vows call us “to resist evil, injustice and oppression in whatever forms they present themselves.” As a Conference, we adopted a resolution that states the Baltimore Washington Conference:

“will model inclusive behavior by expecting and encouraging its congregations and clergy to abide by the principle: Membership in any local church in the Baltimore-Washington Annual Conference shall not be denied on the basis of race, color, national origin, economic condition, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, ability or disability, or any other status.”

The continuing denial of full access to all the rights and privileges of church membership in the United Methodist Church is causing deep spiritual harm to our LGBT brothers and sisters and is a threat to us all. When asked which commandment in the law is the greatest, Jesus said, “‘you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the greatest and first commandment. And the second is like it: ‘you shall love your neighbor as yourself’ (Matthew 22:37-39). The United Methodists Church claims to be a church of open hearts, open minds and open doors and to be a church that practices radical hospitality.

Submitted by: Mittie Quinn, Dumbarton UMC
Wanda Cockrell, North Bethesda UMC
Daniel Fisher, Old Otterbein
Chris Hong, Foundry UMC
Jill Joubert, Dorsey-Emmanuel UMC
George Kahl, Grace Baltimore UMC
T.C. Morrow, Foundry UMC

Co-Sponsors cont.

Kathy VanArnum, Middletown UMC
Rev. Terri Rae Chattin, St. Paul's UMC,
Rev. Nancy Webb, Retired Clergy BWC, Affiliated with Grace Baltimore UMC
Ann Brown Birkel, Foundry UMC, affiliated with Emmanuel UMC
Rev. Kim Capps, Retired Clergy, BWC
Rev. David Carter-Rimbach, Zion UMC
Rev. Joan Carter-Rimbach, First UMC Hyattsville
Eddie Gouge, Foundry UMC
Rev. Ken Hawes, Hughes UMC
Chuck Lisenbee, Foundry UMC
Christian Marble, Foundry UMC
Ellen McDaniel, Emmanuel UMC, Laurel
Jennifer Lamb-Taylor, Emmanuel UMC, Laurel
Greg Taylor, Emmanuel UMC, Laurel
Katie Taylor, Emmanuel UMC, Laurel
Rachel Taylor, Emmanuel UMC, Laurel
Rev. Stephanie Vader, Emmanuel UMC
Sherie Koob, Middletown UMC
Mike Koob, Middletown UMC
Jan Lawrence, Foundry UMC
Lindi Lewis, Foundry UMC
Will Rumble, Foundry UMC
Rebecca Vardiman, Centenary/Zion UMC, Cumberland MD
Ralph Williams, Foundry United Methodist Church
Shelly Williams, Emmanuel UMC, Laurel, MD
The Members of Emmanuel UMC in Laurel MD
The Members of Foundry UMC, Washington, DC
The Members of Grace United Methodist, Baltimore MD
The Members of Grace Baltimore UMC Reconciling Committee
The Members of Metropolitan Memorial UMC Reconciling Ministries Team
The Members of Old Otterbein UMC
The Members of St. Johns Baltimore UMC

Resolution:

Be it resolved that the Baltimore Washington Conference (BWC) declare its opposition to all provisions in the BOD that discriminate against or restrict the participation of LGBT people in The United Methodist Church, and commit itself to work for the full civil and ecclesiastical rights and privileges of all persons, including LGBT persons.

Be it further resolved that the BWC acknowledge that adherence to these provisions of the Book of Discipline requires us to do harm and injustice by discriminating against, diminishing, or demeaning our LGBT brothers and sisters, and places us in an impossible situation of following the Gospels and the Wesley Quadrilateral of Scripture, Tradition, Reason and Experience OR the Book of Discipline.

Be it further resolved, that the BWC work together to build a fully inclusive church by committing to be in ministry with all people, regardless of economic status, race, age, ethnicity, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, disability, or immigration status.

Submitted 5:34 PM, January 17, 2014 M. Quinn