

Title: Resolution to Stop Clergy Trials

Budget Implications: None

Rationale:

WHEREAS, according to the Constitution of the United Methodist Church, “all persons are of sacred worth.” and,

WHEREAS, according to The Social Principles of the United Methodist Church, “The United Methodist Church does not condone the practice of homosexuality and considers this practice incompatible with Christian teaching” and,

WHEREAS, based on this passage, and notwithstanding principles of full acceptance of the innate worth of those who accept the teachings of Christ, charges have been laid and trials held against ordained clergy for ministering to lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT) brothers and sisters in Christ by conducting marriage ceremonies so that they can participate fully in the life of the Church, and,

WHEREAS, United Methodist Church doctrine calls for inclusiveness in which “all persons are open, welcoming, fully accepting, and supporting of all other persons, enabling them to participate fully in the life of the Church, the community, and the world”; and,

WHEREAS, the Council of Bishops recognized in their report after the November 10 – 13, 2013 Council meeting that “neither they nor the other members of the church they lead are of one mind regarding ministering with gays and lesbians,” and,

WHEREAS, the Book of Discipline encourages “a respectful dialogue with those with whom we disagree, to explore the sources of our differences, to honor the sacred worth of all persons,” and acknowledges that “we do not see the ‘Discipline’ as sacrosanct or infallible”; and,

WHEREAS, Bishops have publicly and privately opposed recommendations for such charges, and spoken out against trials and penalties for ministers officiating at these marriages; and

WHEREAS, ordained clergy seeking to navigate the inconsistencies within United Methodist Church doctrine face extraordinary penalties by ministering fully to the LGBT children of God; and

WHEREAS, by scripture, God’s covenant extends to all persons, as made living by the Christ whose command was to love God and neighbor, teaching radical inclusion, and through our Church mandate to gather all persons of faith into the community of the body of Christ.

Submitted by: Suzanne Forsyth, Chair of Reconciling Ministries Committee and approved by the Church Council of Metropolitan Memorial United Methodist Church (which includes Wesley United Methodist Church, Crossroads, and Metropolitan Memorial.)

Resolution:

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that we implore the Council of Bishops to cease trials of United Methodist Church clergy for same-sex marriage until we as a denomination work through our differences with respect to this matter of conscience.