

DECLARATION OF INCLUSION

We The (insert name of governing body) _____
of (insert name) _____ United Methodist Church
declare that no one will be denied the services of our church because of sexual orientation. This includes
the use of our property for same-sex marriages and holy unions.

This action is in accordance with the United Methodist Book of Discipline which states:

- “inclusiveness denies every semblance of discrimination” (§140)
- “We affirm that all persons are individuals of sacred worth, created in the image of God” (§161f).
- “All persons, regardless of age, gender, marital status or sexual orientation are entitled to have their human and civil rights ensured” (§161f).
- “We implore families and churches not to reject or condemn lesbian and gay members and friends”. (§161f)

Therefore, we commit ourselves to be in ministry for and with all persons because we understand that each individual is of sacred worth. We do this in a spirit of biblical obedience as we practice the radical hospitality of Jesus Christ.

Background: Current United Methodist Church (UMC) policy, as outlined in the *Book of Discipline*, states, “We do not condone the practice of homosexuality and consider this practice incompatible with Christian teaching. (§161.f) “Ceremonies that celebrate homosexual unions shall not be conducted by our ministers and shall not be conducted in our churches. (§341.6)

Following the 2012 General Conference, 15 regional conferences passed resolutions in support of same-sex marriage and against the UMC’s current position on homosexuality and marriage. Others said they would express support for a “statement of gospel obedience” that declares the UMC to be in error for its position against homosexuality.

In July 2012, the Western Jurisdictional Conference affirmed that God’s grace and love is available to all persons and asserted that the UMC is in error on the subject of “homosexuality’s incompatibility with Christian teaching.” The Conferences of the Jurisdiction were invited “to operate as if the ‘incompatible’ statement in ¶161F does not exist.”

Nothing in this declaration shall infringe upon ¶340.3.a of the *Discipline*: “The decision to perform the (marriage) ceremony shall be the right and responsibility of the pastor.”