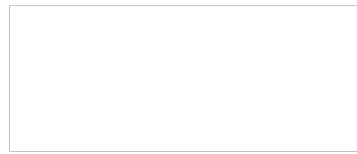


Heisler Memorial United Methodist Church

238 Main Street Heislerville, New Jersey 08324 856-785-0432
Pastor: Raymond W. Schmeling Parsonage Telephone: 856-785-1432

March 10, 2016



RE: 2016 General Conference

Dear Pastor and Lay Leader,

The 2015 NJ Annual Conference passed six pieces of legislation regarding human sexuality. This is the first time a Bishop has allowed a challenge to the Book of Discipline regarding this issue. We are writing to ask you to make this decision by the Annual Conference known to your church council and congregation. We are also asking that you provide them with a copy of the enclosed synopsis which describes the legislation and the outcome of the vote. You will notice that the margins for these votes are relatively close.

Please note that the first four pieces of legislation will be presented at the upcoming 2016 General Conference for a vote. We are asking your church to write individual letters to your delegates to defeat this legislation for changes to the Book of Discipline. We are providing sample letters and information that might assist members in composing their letters.

We urge you to emphasize that, as in the case of Madalyn Murray O'Hair, no one believed she could have prayer removed from the American public schools. But she passionately fought while Christians were silent and now classrooms are no longer allowed to pray corporately in public school. In 2015 the groundwork is being laid to change the course of the UM Church. We believe that scripture clearly states that homosexuality is a sin (no better or worse than other sins). God has not changed his mind about sin—it cost the life of His Son. We must alert people that they must face this issue or we will allow those who are proposing these changes to ultimately change our doctrines.

We believe that many delegates at Annual Conference were blindsided and possibly ill-prepared to represent their churches for this vote. Human sexuality is a very sensitive issue, but we cannot be afraid to face it. We must inform our delegates of the gravity of this proposed legislation and the need to defeat it.

Some pastors believe that this legislation will not pass in 2016 and thus have not even mentioned this to their congregations. We are asking that your congregation be made aware of this important vote. We alone are a small congregation with one voice. We wish to encourage all fellow UM members to join us in defeating this legislation. If this proposed legislation passes, division of the UMC is imminent. Please encourage your members to write to the delegates as soon as possible to make our collective voices heard to prevent irreparable harm to our denomination.

Prayerfully,
Heisler Memorial UMC
Church Council

Enc. Delegates Contact Information

Your Name
Your Address
City, State, Zip

Sample #1

Date

Delegate's Name
Delegate's Address
City, State, Zip

RE: 2016 General Conference

Dear Delegates,

I am deeply troubled and concerned that some individuals with leadership positions within the United Methodist Church have chosen to depart from scripture in order to promote a philosophy that they feel is more attractive to some sectors of today's generation. Specifically, I am highly disturbed by the six resolutions that were marginally approved at the 2015 New Jersey Annual Conference regarding Human Sexuality. In particular, I strongly object to the first four resolutions that propose to change the Book of Discipline that makes acceptable the practice of homosexuality, that give permission for UM clergy to perform homosexual unions or weddings within the church and allow the use of UM funds to support ministries that promote the acceptance of homosexuality. These changes to the Book of Discipline are contrary to God's law and must not be allowed to pass at the upcoming 2016 General Conference.

As United Methodists and, more importantly, as followers of Jesus Christ, it is our obligation to spread God's love to all individuals, including homosexuals. Christian homosexuals know that Jesus died for their sins, however Satan has deceived them to believe that God's love will overlook this sin. However, we cannot condone the active practice of homosexuality or the false teaching that homosexuality is acceptable. People trapped in sexual sin need extra care and grace. To condone their sin only allows their sin to continue. . The UM Church must not allow practicing homosexuals to take active leadership rolls within the Church. The Bible is very clear on this topic.

As a leader in the Greater New Jersey Conference and an appointed representative to the May 2016 General Conference, I sincerely hope and pray that you will stand up for the biblical teachings on homosexuality and insure that these resolutions to change the UM Book of Discipline do not pass at General Conference by voting against them. I will continue to pray that God will give you the wisdom and understanding to make this very important decision that will have tremendous impact within the UM Church, now and in the future.

Prayerfully,

Your Signature

Your Address
Date

Delegate's Name
Delegate's Address

Sample #2

Dear Delegate,

I am writing to express my deep concerns with the results on legislation changes regarding human sexuality passed at the 2015 NJ Annual Conference. As a member of the United Methodist Church, I am writing to ask you, as my representative, to vote against the changes put forth by this action at the upcoming 2016 General Conference for the following reasons:

As Christians we are called by Jesus to be salt and light in our world. America has declared that homosexuality is legal, however God has declared it to be sinful. The Book of Discipline states, "Homosexual persons no less than heterosexual persons are individuals of sacred worth.... Although we do not condone the practice of homosexuality and consider the practice incompatible with Christian teaching, we affirm that God's grace is available to all. We commit ourselves to be in ministry for and with all persons." We are to welcome all to the throne of grace and to teach all what God's Word clearly states as truth regarding sexuality. How can we do this if the church accepts and condones what the scriptures declares sinful? Jesus said that if we lose our saltiness or hide our light, we fail to bring Glory to God and will be held accountable for leading others into unrighteousness. (Matthew 5:13-20)

The issue of this vote regarding human sexuality has already created turmoil and division among members of the church. It is necessary to maintain our unity for the sake of His name and a watching lost world. Why should the UM church change its doctrines for the sake of those who wish to live life against the will of God?

The evil one is the enemy of the body of Christ. He is and always has been a liar and manipulates unsuspecting persons to question, "Can it really be that God has said...?" That is his oldest question to humanity. And we are no different than Eve when we allow doubt to creep in and question God's authority in the scripture regarding human sexuality. The Book of Discipline maintains that the Church offers a unique opportunity to give quality guidance and education in the area of human sexuality.

The evil one hates the family and seeks to destroy it. By condoning homosexuality, the family unit has been defiled. Jesus said, "He Who made them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and shall be united firmly to his wife and the two shall become one flesh...'" This is the basic building family unit. The Book of Discipline states regarding marriage, "We affirm the sanctity of the marriage covenant that is expressed in love, mutual support, personal commitment, and shared fidelity between a man and a woman."

In 1963 atheist Madalyn Murray (O'Hair) wanted prayer to be removed from school. No one thought it could happen. But when 3% of the population petitioned and worked to have it removed and the other 97% did nothing to prevent it, prayer was removed from American schools. I am concerned that if you don't vote to defeat this legislation, the minority will take possession of the values that I and others hold dear and the UM Church, as we know it, will be lost.

Please do not allow the vote on human sexuality at 2016 General Conference to succeed. Please vote to defeat these changes to the Book of Discipline. I pray that you will consider this legislation a serious affront to God's word and vote to represent the views of Bible-believing Christians.

In Christ,

Your Signature

Your Address
City, State, Zip

Date

Delegate Name
Address

Sample #3

RE: 2016 General Conference

Dear Delegate,

I am asking you to vote to defeat the four pieces of legislation coming before the 2016 General Conference regarding human sexuality. I am opposed to this legislation and I do not want these proposed changes to affect the Book of Discipline.

In Christ,

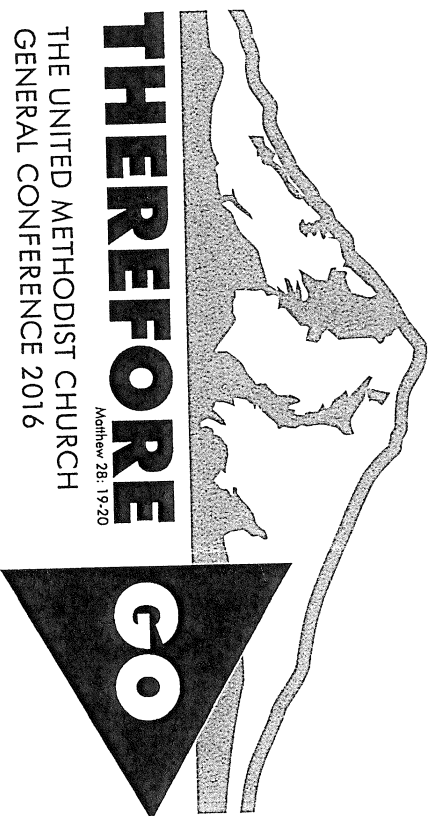
Your Signature

Synopsis of Legislation and Outcome of the Vote

Results on Legislation regarding Human Sexuality

As reported earlier, the legislation on human sexuality passed. The first four pieces of legislation will be sent to General Conference in 2016 for consideration. The following details the vote count for each piece of legislation:

1. Strike from the Book of Discipline the phrase: We do not condone the practice of homosexuality and consider the practice incompatible with Christian teaching.
410 – Yes 339 – No
2. Strike from the Book of Discipline the phrase: Ceremonies that celebrate homosexual unions shall not be conducted by our ministers and shall not be conducted in our churches.
396 – Yes 353 – No
3. Strike from the Book of Discipline that homosexuality and performing homosexual unions or weddings is a chargeable offense.
414 – Yes 336 – No
4. Strike from the Book of Discipline that United Methodist funds cannot support the acceptance of homosexuality or supporting homosexual ministries.
405 – Yes 334 – No
5. The Greater New Jersey Conference work for the full inclusion of all people including lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered persons and that we oppose the continued restrictions of church law that restricts the full inclusion of LGBT people.
389 – Yes 352 – No
6. The Greater New Jersey Conference make a public statement supporting and upholding marriage equality in civil law and that we spiritually, emotionally and prayerfully support clergy who are brought up on charges for performing homosexual unions or performing same-sex wedding ceremonies.
381 – Yes 358 – No



The United Methodist Church's top legislative body will meet at the Oregon Convention Center, in Portland, Oregon, which is the largest convention center in the Pacific Northwest, on May 10-20, 2016.

General Conference is the top policy-making body of The United Methodist Church which meets once every four years. The conference can revise church law, as well as adopt resolutions on current moral, social, public policy and economic issues. It also approves plans and budgets for church-wide programs.

The following delegates have been elected to represent the Greater NJ Annual Conference.

General Conference Clergy Delegates

Rev. Thomas Lank
701 Montgomery Ave
Bryn Mawr, PA 19010-3505
tom.lank@gmail.com

General Conference Clergy Delegates, Continued

Rev Eunice Vega-Perez
134 Winding Hill Dr, Hackettstown, NJ 07840-5658
pastoreunice@vernonmethodist.org

Rev Dr Jisun Kwak
P.O. Box 125, Woodstown, NJ 08098
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Rev Varlyna Wright
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vdwright@gnjumc.org

General Conference Laitly Delegates

Evelyn Catterson
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Bethany Amey
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bethany_amey@yahoo.com

Judy Colorado
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Rosa Williams
34 Washington Pl, Teaneck NJ 07666-6125
rosamw@optonline.net

For up to date information on General Conference, please visit our website: www.UnitedMethodistNJ.com and click on the link at the bottom of our home page.