



*Put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity. - Colossians 3:15*

The Special General Conference of The United Methodist Church met February 24-26, 2019 and passed the Traditional Plan for the United Methodist way forward concerning human sexuality. This plan affirms the present policies in The Book of Discipline which does not allow same gender weddings and the ordination of gays and lesbians and stiffens the penalties for those who violate these policies.

The legislation has been sent to the Judicial Council, the “supreme court” of The United Methodist Church, where it is anticipated that key parts of the plan will be ruled unconstitutional. We most likely will not receive final rulings for several months.

We are a deeply divided denomination with less than 30 votes out of 864 delegates from around the world, making the difference between passing the Traditional Plan or passing the One Church plan which would have allowed individual conferences and churches to determine their own policy on this issue.

United Methodists in Greater New Jersey are a model for our church for how to honor difference and, in the midst of difference, to respect one another. We are one of the most diverse annual conferences and we will continue to honor that diversity.

I want to take this opportunity to speak to our gay and lesbian sisters and brothers and to the family members of gays and lesbians. You are welcomed and accepted by me and most of the people of GNJ. We welcome you with the arms of grace found through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. You are of sacred worth to God and me and I pledge to create space for you to worship, serve and engage with United Methodists in GNJ.

I will lead our congregations, who each have different expressions and ministries, to serve one God, one Lord Jesus Christ and one mission – to transform the world as we make disciples and grow vital congregations. I will be a bishop of the whole church and all of our people.

I call upon you to dedicate yourself to a season of prayer and to be the welcoming congregation that I have experienced you to be. Thank you for your continued example of Christ-like love and grace in the midst of difference. You make me proud to be your bishop.

Keep the faith!

John Schol, Bishop  
United Methodists of Greater New Jersey



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