



The Flash

Summit United Methodist Church

May 3, 2024



A Message From our Bishop

5/1/2024

Siblings in Christ,

After years of intensive and prayerful debate, the General Conference delegates from all over the world voted to remove language that prohibited United Methodist clergy from performing weddings for same-gender couples. **This change allows churches and clergy to operate according to their conscience, without consequence.**

There are some important things about this decision that I want you to know. First, **pastors have always decided who they will marry.** This is based on several factors including the couples' preparation for the marriage covenant. This has not changed. **Pastors will continue to decide who they will marry.** No one will force a pastor to officiate a marriage ceremony for any couple.

Second, **churches will continue to determine what weddings are held in their church buildings.** This is the decision of the local church's Board of Trustees. Further, the desires of all clergy and congregations in this matter are to be honored and not judged by others.

Specifically, the change will include new language in ¶ 419.12 Book of Discipline that states:

13. The superintendent shall not penalize any clergy from performing, or refraining from performing, a same-sex marriage service.

14. The superintendent shall neither require any local church to hold or prohibit a local church from holding a same-sex marriage service on property owned by a local church.

We know that different people have different opinions on these matters and the diversity of perspectives needs to be respected.

The delegates of the General Conference also voted to remove prohibitions that prevented a Board of Ordained Ministry from recommending a gay or lesbian person for ordination. Gay persons may enter the process to become candidates for ministry, and if approved by the Board of Ordained Ministry, can now be licensed, commissioned, and ordained.

Please be assured that the Bishop and Cabinet will continue to work with churches and clergy to ensure we have the best match possible when making appointments.

We want everyone to have a **VITAL** ministry, not a ministry defined by conflict. We have always worked to place all pastors in appointments where they will be accepted and will be able to work in partnership with the laity to further the mission of Jesus Christ. **Our commitment to the local church and the mission of Christ has not changed.** Your district superintendent will continue to be your primary contact on appointment related issues.

These recent decisions at the General Conference, reinforce the primacy of God's love in our lives and the world, and add complexity to our life together as United Methodists.

I realize this General Conference decision may bring about various emotions and reactions within our congregations and the broader denomination. There will no doubt be some who are disheartened and pained by this decision as well as some who welcome it. As we collaborate and work together, I feel sure that we can navigate the complexity and respect one another.

The removal of the language around human sexuality returns us to the Book of Discipline that we have had from the founding of the church in 1784 until 1972 when the General Conference first added the restrictive measures into the Book of Discipline.

As United Methodists in Western Pennsylvania, **we remain committed to upholding our Wesleyan values of love, grace, and inclusivity.** While we may not all agree on every issue, we are called to continue embodying the love of Christ in our interactions with one another. I invite you to strive to maintain a spirit of unity. Our unity is in Christ and therefore, it is more important than ever to engage in respectful dialogue, compassionate listening, and prayerful practice with one another.

The church is the only institution that exists for those who are not yet a part of it. It exists so others can come to know Christ. It exists to make disciples. Our communion table is open, and so are our hearts. We have important work to do -- together. Without fear, and with the joy of the Lord, let's get to the work Jesus calls us to do. Let us be people who share the transforming power of Christ with the world.

Peace and blessings,
Bishop Cynthia Moore-Koikoi

Knowing Who We Are, Multiplying Love, and General Conference

As you may be aware, the General Conference of the United Methodist Church takes place from April 23 through May 3. This quadrennial conference is the legislative body of our denomination, the body that speaks for the United Methodist Church. To understand what happens at the General Conference and the decisions made there, we first need to know who we are as United Methodists. We need to be aware of our background as Wesleyans.

Pastor Tom is organizing a two-week small group study, 'Knowing Who We Are, Multiplying Love, and General Conference,' designed to deepen our understanding of our Methodist identity and the significance of the General Conference. The discussion will be held on Tuesday May 7 and Tuesday May 14 at 7 PM. If you are interested, please sign up in the Café Area.

Pentecost will be on May 19th, so it's time to order **geraniums!!!** The geraniums will beautify our sanctuary for Pentecost and then be planted in our church yard for the spring and summer. If you would like to place an order contact Barb Caldwell, or there are order forms in the welcome center, or use the one below. Deadline to order is May 6th.



Geranium Order

I would like to order geraniums at \$3.25 each to be placed in the Sanctuary on Pentecost Sunday, May 19. I understand that this is a donation to the Church and the geraniums will be planted throughout the Church yard.

Put cash or check payable to Barb Caldwell with order blank in the geranium envelope located on the bulletin board or mail to Barb, 12634 Smedley Rd., Waterford, PA 16441. Deadline for ordering is May 6. Any questions call or text 814-403-5388. Thank you.

Name _____
Phone _____ .

Number of Geraniums _____ @ \$3.25 each. Total Enclosed \$ _____.

Graduation Recognition is scheduled for Sunday, June 9th. If you know of high school or college graduates, please notify the church office.

Updating the church Directory and adding photos in the coming weeks I would like to update the current church directory and add photos of our members to the database to help with the transition for our new pastor. If you could please check the Church Directory in the welcome center in the binder and make any address, email or phone number changes that would be appreciated. Photos will be gathered in the coming weeks or you can choose to email a current photo to the church office at sumc-office@verizon.net. Thanks!

New Nametags here! In preparing for our new pastor we have made all new nametags and will start getting in the habit of wearing themlook for your name tag in the welcome center! If you need a nametag and one is not on the rack please sign the sheet in the welcome center and one will be made for the following week.

<https://summitumc.net/calendar/>



Knowing Who We Are, Multiplying Love, and General Conference

Discussion Books Available

Contact Lori if you would like either
or both books

Pastor Tom will be using for this study.

They are available for purchase through
Cokesbury for about \$14 a piece.

