

LGBTQ+ Inclusion: Expressing Gratitude and Commitment to Next Steps

Whereas, we take seriously Jesus' teaching and example to love our neighbors as we love ourselves, and

Whereas, we take seriously John Wesley's "Three Simple Rules" calling us to do no harm, to do all the good we can, and to stay in love with God, and

Whereas, we are grateful to the delegates who served at Jurisdictional Conference in 2022 and the delegates who served at General Conference held in 2024, for their combined commitment to Wesley's Three Simple Rules, and for the removal of anti-LGBTQ+ language and policies from *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church*, and

Whereas, paragraph 3120 of *The Book of Resolutions of The United Methodist Church* states "We lament the ways LGBTQ persons have been ostracized from and wounded by the church, and how often Christians have been silent in the face of injustice and discrimination against them", and

Whereas, we wish to further our understanding and increase our capacity to do no harm, do good, and love God, and

Whereas, dismantling discrimination and harm cannot be realized through legislation alone, but requires ongoing engagement in the context of relationship, including but not limited to: policy change, story-sharing and dialogue, education, support, leadership development, solidarity, advocacy, monitoring, accountability, and

Whereas, the Tennessee-Western Kentucky Annual Conference seeks to be proactive in building relationships, learning, and living into all that is now possible for ministry with and for LGBTQ+ persons, and

Whereas, the Tennessee-Western Kentucky Annual Conference is taking committed action to support the mental health and wellbeing of its clergy, laity, leaders, and churches,

Therefore, be it resolved that the Tennessee-Western Kentucky Annual Conference hereby creates a conference-level team for the purpose of:

1. Actively supporting the LGBTQ+ laity, clergy, and candidates for licensed/ordained ministry in the Tennessee-Western Kentucky Conference with community-building, faith and leadership development, solidarity, and advocacy.
2. Recentring and amplifying the voices and experiences of the LGBTQ+ community, especially those who have been marginalized by church and society, most notably, transgender persons and those who are Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC).
3. Monitoring annual conference committees and policies, as well as the status and needs of candidates and clergy under appointment to ensure justice and equity on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, and expression, addressing harm, prejudice, and bias, and to report findings to the Annual Conference.
4. Curating, creating, and sharing resources to equip local churches for:
 - a. relationship building and continuing education.
 - a. meaningful ministry with, for, and by LGBTQ+ church members, clergy, and the larger community.

Be it further resolved that the members of the conference-level LGBTQ+ Ministry Team will be appointed by the Connectional Table within 3 months of annual conference adjournment, and that the LGBTQ+ Ministry Team will hold its first meeting in 2025, and include:

1. LGBTQ+ persons that make up at least 1/2 of the total membership with attention given to LGBTQ+ Clergy
2. Intentional diversity and balance of age
3. Intentional diversity throughout all genders
4. Intentional diversity throughout all races and ethnicities
5. Equal Lay and clergy representatives with representation from each district
6. Members with established leadership in the area of LGBTQ+ justice and inclusion

Be it further resolved that the conference-level LGBTQ+ Ministry Team shall be fully included in all future annual conference processes related to ensuring an appropriate budget, representation on other committees, reporting to the annual conference, and ongoing membership based on the above criteria.

Respectfully submitted by,
Rev. Timothy Holton, clergy, Stones River District
Rev. Brandon Baxter, clergy, Cumberland River District
Rev. Ingrid McIntyre, clergy, Cumberland River District, Urban Cohort
Austin Teegarden, laity, Cumberland River District
Rev. Keller Hawkins, clergy, Cumberland River District
Shelby Ruch-Teegarden, laity, Cumberland River District
Rev. Shelby Slowey, clergy, Cumberland River District
Rev. Dr. Birgitte T. French, clergy, Metro District
Rev. Robert D. Dunbar, clergy, Stones River District
Rev. Stacey Harwell-Dye, clergy, Cumberland River District
Rev. Jim Overcast, clergy, Stones River District
Wendy Knight, laity, Stones River District
Mark Hood, laity, Stones River District
Priscilla Hood, laity, Stones River District
Emily Hood, laity, Stones River District
Steven Hood, laity, Stones River District
Holly Hood, laity, Stones River District
Sam Hood, laity, Stones River District
Rev. Dr. Chris Haynes, clergy, Harpeth River District
Rev. Sarah McCain, clergy, Cumberland River District
Rev. Tory Shane Dillard, Clergy, Harpeth River District
Steven Adair, laity, Cumberland River District
Rev. Steph Dodge, clergy, Cumberland River District
Rev. Dr. Carol Cavin-Dillon, clergy, Cumberland River District
Rev. Jedediah Hanes, clergy, Red River District
Rev. Nicole Poland Nyembo, clergy, Cumberland River District
Rev. Theresa Johnson, clergy, Stones River District
Rev. John Hill, clergy, Cumberland River District
Rev. Darren Mayberry Wright, clergy, Urban Cohort
Rev. Katie Minnis, clergy, Purchase District
Rev. Lora Jean Gowan, Clergy, Urban Cohort
Rebecca Purdue, LLP Clergy, Purchase District
H.G. Stovall, laity, Cumberland River District
Ellie Crain, laity, Red River District
Rev. Melisa Derseweh, Clergy, Caney Fork District
Rev. Connor Williams, clergy, Purchase District
Rev. Barbara E. Blackmon-Fortune, clergy, Purchase District
Tom Lee, laity, Cumberland River District
Charles Uffelman, laity, Red River District
James Poland, laity, Cumberland River District
Rev. Monica Mowdy, clergy, Caney Fork River District
Rev. Heather Harriss, clergy, Cumberland River District
Izzie Zimmerman, laity, Stones River District
Rev. Joanna Cummings, clergy, Cumberland River District
Rev. Chris Cummings, clergy, Cumberland River District
Carol Williams, laity, Stones River District
Gina McKenzie, laity, Stones River District
Melanie Neill, laity, Stones River District
Olivia Neill, laity, Stones River District
Rev. Zach Moffatt, clergy, Urban Cohort
Rev. Lucinda Sharp, clergy, Harpeth River District

Angela Lamb, laity, Stones River District
Joy Rich, laity, Cumberland River District
Rev. Keri Cress, clergy, Cumberland River District
Rev Sharon B Austell, Clergy, Caney Fork District
Lynn Taylor, laity, Cumberland River District
Gratia Strother, laity, Cumberland River District
Lisa Sills, laity, Purchase District
Daron Sills, laity, Purchase District
Rev. Laura K. McMasters, clergy, Urban Cohort & Harpeth River District
Rev. Aimee Baxter, clergy, Cumberland River District
Rev. Neelley Hicks, clergy, Cumberland River District
Rev. John Feldhacker, clergy, Cumberland River District
Mark Lynes, laity, Cumberland River District