



Spirit of Grace

A Lutheran-Methodist Cooperative Church

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March 2019



"Since, then, we have such a hope, we act with great boldness... Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And all of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit." 2 Cor. 3:12, 16-18

Dear Friends of the Columbia District:

Today, I grieve with all those who are grieving the adoption of the Traditional Plan at the Special General Conference 2019. It has been an intense and difficult past few days for all of us, and the outcome was not what I, nor the Western Jurisdiction had hoped it would be. For me, it was particularly painful to see the absence of real dialogue and honest exchange. It seemed to me that as Paul wrote of the Israelites in the wilderness in 2 Cor. 3, "hearts were hardened" on the traditionalist side and agendas were set before the sessions even began. We failed to give unity even a chance.

At the same time, much happens on the floor of General Conference that we cannot see from the live stream, and testimony from members of our delegation that were present indicate that there is still much to be encouraged about. The Western Jurisdiction has reaffirmed our commitment to One Church that includes people from across the nations and across the theological spectrum. Now, preparations for GC 2020 begin.

In the meantime, this Sunday is Transfiguration Sunday. The occasion when Jesus is transfigured (becomes dazzling) in front of his closest disciples. Despite God's command from the cloud to listen to Jesus, the disciples fail to comprehend Jesus' insistence when they descend the mountain that he is to be crucified and on the third day, rise again. Friends, on this threshold of Lent, we have much to repent of, and the journey ahead will be by way of the cross. There is no other way forward, but resurrection always awaits us. New life Christ is our destination, and we are all being transformed.

I give thanks to my LGBTQIA siblings, clergy and laity, who have reflected Jesus' glory to me through their lives and witness. They have mirrored the radiance of Jesus to me, and as a result, I have been changed. I remain committed to a fully inclusive church, a church open to people of all nations, races, ages, sexual orientations and gender identities. I commit to act with boldness in the light of Christ to transform the church from one degree of glory to another, and I look forward to our upcoming Table Talk 3.0 conversations (<https://umoi-reg.brtaapp.com/TableTalks3>) as we resolve to be shining light to each other in these dark days.

Grace and peace to you all, Erin

Dear Friends,

Even if you're not the sort of person who follows church polity news, you may still have heard reports about the recent action of **The United Methodist Church** at its General Conference this week in St. Louis. It made the national news in a number of prominent outlets. The headline in the *New York Times* read "United Methodists Tighten Ban on Same-Sex Marriage and Gay Clergy." I know that many of you have questions about what this means and how it might effect the operation of Spirit of Grace. I'm going to address some of the technical matters in this article and give you some more personal reflections in the sermon on Sunday.



It was 1972 when language condemning homosexuality was first added to the *Book of Discipline*, the rulebook of **The UMC**. It has been a topic of conversation and controversy ever since. Every four years, the General Conference, the highest-level gathering of United Methodists meets, and every time there are new petitions regarding human sexuality. For quite some time now, the official UM position has been that gays and lesbians are "people of sacred worth," but that "the practice of homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching." The *Discipline* has banned the performance of same-sex weddings by UM clergy or in UM churches. Furthermore, the official stand is that ordination is not open to "self-avowed, practicing homosexuals." Despite widespread efforts to move toward greater inclusion of LGBTQ persons, the official stand of the global UMC has not softened in the past decade, but has gotten marginally more exclusionary.

At the same time, many United Methodists have taken a conscious stand against the official UMC position, insisting that Christ's church is open to all people and that members of the LGBTQ community are loved by God and called into ministry in the church. Leading this effort have been the churches of the Western Jurisdiction, that is, churches in the western United States. Both the **Western Jurisdiction** and our **Oregon-Idaho Annual Conference** have taken stands in defiance of the official UMC position. We are blessed by the ministry of many openly gay clergy in our conference and throughout the rest of the jurisdiction. In 2016, the **Western Jurisdiction** elected the first openly gay bishop in The UMC, Rev. Karen Oliveto, who currently serves as bishop of the Yellowstone and Rocky Mountain Annual Conferences, headquartered in Denver.

Complicating the debate over LGBTQ inclusion is the usual nature of organization of The UMC. Most denominations are organized nationally or regionally. For example, there are Lutherans all over the world, but the **ELCA** is separate from the Lutheran church in Canada, the Lutheran church in Tanzania, and the Lutheran church in Germany. The UMC, on the other hand, is a global denomination. It does not include Methodists from every part of the world—for example, the Methodist churches in Latin America, Korea, and Great Britain are all separate from The UMC—but it is much bigger than just the US. About 30% of the UMC is in Africa, and there are many UM churches in the Philippines, Russia, and parts of Europe. While church membership is declining in the US, Methodism is growing rapidly in Africa and other parts of the world. Obviously, cultural understandings of homosexuality are very different in Africa than in the US. In many African nations, homosexuality is illegal and in some places is punishable by death.

In light of the growing disagreement in the denomination, the Council of Bishops chartered a global Commission on the Way Forward to try to find a way for a diverse, global church to continue to be in ministry together. They were charged to bring a plan to a special General Conference to be held in 2019, the meeting that just finished in St. Louis. Over 800 delegates from around the world gathered.

The Commission on the Way Forward and the Council of Bishops recommended a plan called the **One Church Plan**. It would have done basically what the ELCA did in 2009: allow for regional difference in how the church understands and legislates human sexuality. Three other plans were also on consideration by the General Conference. The Connectional Plan would have created a complicated reorganization of the denomination into three different connected but autonomous groups organized by affinity. It received little support. The Simple Plan, presented by LGBTQ advocates, would have removed every reference to homosexuality in the *Book of Discipline*, thereby leaving regional church organizations to act according to their conscience. Finally, the **Traditional Plan**, presented by a coalition of conservative groups, sought to increase restrictions on homosexuality and punish regions of the church that refused to enforce rules against homosexuality. Before it was even voted on, several key provisions of the Traditional Plan were ruled unconstitutional by The UMC's highest legal authority, the Judicial Council. Despite the fact that the **Traditional Plan** violates the UMC Constitution, it is the plan that was passed by the General Conference on Tuesday, with the support of 53% of the delegates.

So, what is the effect of the adoption of the **Traditional Plan**? That is yet to be seen. Since its enforcement provisions are unconstitutional, the adoption of the Traditional Plan seems unlikely to change the status quo of on-the-ground practice. There is likely still no way for the more conservative regions of the church to force the **Oregon-Idaho Annual Conference** or the **Western Jurisdiction** to crack down on LGBTQ clergy or the celebration of same-sex weddings.

Will there be a schism in the church? It's not a foregone conclusion. The General Conference did take several actions to try to ease the way for conferences that might seek to leave The UMC. And it is clear that many of the conservative voices in the church would like for the Western Jurisdiction and other progressive regions to leave The UMC. However, I have not seen a great movement among progressive Methodists to try to leave the denomination. Most progressives seem to want to stay and continue the struggle for LGBTQ inclusion. In fact, Rev. Donna Pritchard of the Western Jurisdiction Leadership Team made this statement on the floor of General Conference following the vote to adopt the Traditional Plan:

We have long appreciated the richness of the global diversity of our United Methodist Church and have embraced opportunities to join with you all in the work of making disciples for the transformation of the world.

We also understand the purpose of the Church to be in mission and ministry. Consequently, we in the West have been functioning for years as One Church committed to full inclusion, seeking to be a home for all God's people.

Today we acknowledge the fracture of this body, yet we worship a God who tells us that the body of Christ has many parts, all equally valued. Rooted in Wesleyan tradition, grounded in Scripture and committed to mission and ministry, the Western Jurisdiction intends to continue to be one church, fully inclusive and open to all God's children, across the theological and social spectrum.

We know from experience we are stronger when we live together as progressives, traditionalists, and centrists in our Church. Many times during this Conference we have sung or prayed or blessed each other with the reminder that we need each other.

We also know there are others who feel the same way today, so we invite you to be in dialogue with us as we move forward together into a future with hope.

May God continue to bless us for the sake of the world. Thank you.

The most significant impact of the decision in St. Louis will likely be the message that it has sent to the greater world outside the church, and particularly to LGBTQ persons. I am disappointed by the stand the General Conference has taken. I grieve that we continue to give the message that LGBTQ Christians are inferior or unwelcome. I pray that you will join me in doing all we can to extend God's limitedness love and grace to all people and to recognize the great gifts that our LGBTQ sisters and brothers bring to God's church.

Your servant in Christ,

+Pastor David





February 27, 2019

Dear Oregon Synod Rostered Leaders, Administrators and Synod Council Members,

The United Methodist Church (UMC) has just completed a Special Session of their General Conference held in St. Louis, Missouri February 23-26, 2019. The UMC is a broader communion than the ELCA so this meeting included churches from Africa, the United States and beyond. The purpose of the Special Session was to receive and act on a report from the UMC [Commission on a Way Forward](#), authorized to examine paragraphs in the The Book of Discipline concerning [human sexuality](#) and to explore options to strengthen church unity.

Central to the Commission's work was the possible acceptance of LGBTQ pastors in the life of the church and the practice of marriage for same gender couples. Many had hoped that what has been referred to as the "One Church Plan" would allow for regional differences in practice around these issues, both respecting the sensitivities of some UMC churches while allowing for a more open practice in others. This plan was rejected and the UMC has voted to continue its historic practice of denying married LGBTQ pastors the rite of ordination and not offering marriage as a rite of the church to those in same gender relationships.

First of all, I ask for prayers for all in the LGBTQ Community. Such church actions can trigger experiences of exclusion, abuse and abandonment both inside and outside the UMC. Please know your church stands with you.

Secondly, I share my sorrow at this decision. Many of our UMC sisters and brothers in Oregon were hoping for a different outcome. They see it as important to the ministry they offer here in the Pacific Northwest and will have difficult decisions ahead of them.

We in the ELCA extended welcome to pastors who identify as LGBTQ a decade ago, but not without disruption in our fellowship as well. As a church we seek to honor all people and as a synod we identified ourselves as "Reconciling in Christ" even before our church as a whole did. On the question of marriage we do, still, recognize that congregations minister differently. With this understanding and history I hope we can be of assistance and support to our UMC partners.

It is possible that some of our UMC sisters and brothers may come to your congregation. If so, please welcome them with open arms and invite them to sojourn with you for a time. Our goal would be to give them a healing place to be, while encouraging their ongoing work with their own church.

Nothing in this UMC action affects our Full Communion Agreement, and our Methodist/Lutheran shared ministries are in no way in question. Special prayers for the McMinnville Coop, Spirit of Grace in Hood River, Story Dwelling in Bend and others involved in less formal partnerships. You are well placed to offer care and concern directly. As the dust settles I will reach out to Bp. Stanovsky of the Greater Northwest Area of the Western Jurisdiction of the UMC. Others of your Oregon Synod staff and I will connect with our Oregon based UMC juridical leaders. We are close and work with them on a regular basis. I ask that rostered leaders of the Oregon Synod likewise be proactive in supporting your local UMC pastor and deacon partners.

The Western Jurisdiction of the UMC encompasses congregations in Alaska, Canada, Washington, Oregon, Idaho and a small piece of Montana. [During the course of this General Conference they stated:](#)

"Today we acknowledge the fracture of this body, yet we worship a God who tells us that the body of Christ has many parts, all equally valued. Rooted in Wesleyan tradition, grounded in Scripture and committed to mission and ministry, the Western Jurisdiction intends to continue to be one church, fully inclusive and open to all God's children, across the theological and social spectrum."

We in the Oregon Synod will do all we can to support our UMC sisters and brothers as they continue to seek the most faithful way forward for their church.

Thank you for your prayers, conversations and support.

Bp. Dave Brauer-Rieke
Oregon Synod - ELCA

Weekly Reflections

Mar 3 Exodus 34:29

When have you had a mountaintop experience of God that left you metaphorically shining in response?

Mar 10 Luke 4:1

Where is the Spirit guiding you to stretch your spiritual muscles this Lent?

Mar 17 Philippians 3:17

Who's someone who's been an important spiritual role-model for you? What did you learn from them?

Mar 24 1 Corinthians 10:13

Has God ever showed you a surprising way out of a difficult situation?

Mar 31 Luke 15:31-32

In the Parable of the Prodigal Son, which character do you identify with most? Why?

SPRING FORWARD



Congratulations!

Members **Erica & Pepi Gerald** on gracing the cover of Hood River's Who's Who 2019. They always give back to our community!

HRVHS Boy's Nordic Team on placing 4th out of the 10 teams competing at OR State Races! **Ethan F.** received a varsity letter for his participation these 3 years.



Jennifer & Skip Fowler

11

John Jacobson	1	Besse Asai	13
Frank Moore		Amy Fowler	19
Gladys Edwards	5	Diane Kleinsmith	21
Della Henderson		Scott Murahashi	25
Jennifer Fowler	8	Vicki Wartalski	27
Noah Marcroft	9	Brent Murahashi	30
Nancy Radley		Ruth Turner	
Margaret Godard	10	Melissa Mimier King	
Marv Turner			

PRAYER REQUESTS

Requests can be sent to

Carol Kyger
 cckyer@gmail.com
 or 541-386-6341

Backup for Carol is
 Donna Fitch
 fitcheshr@gmail.com
 541-386-4043

March 2019

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					1	2 9am Women's Spirituality
3 9am Education 10 Traditional 11 Fellowship 6pm Youth Grp	4 9am Happy Hands	5 10am Men's Coffee @ Rosauers	6 <u>Ash Wed</u> 9am Quilting	7 5:30 Worship Practice 6pm Choir Practice	8 Inter-national Women's Day	9
10 LENT 9am Education 10 Traditional 11 Fellowship 6pm Youth Grp	11 9am Happy Hands	12 10am Men's Coffee @ Rosauers	13	14 5:30 Worship Practice 6pm Choir	15	16
17 LENT 9am Education 10 Traditional 11 Fellowship 6pm Youth Grp	18 9am Happy Hands	19 10am Men's Coffee @ Rosauers	20 9am Quilting	21 5:30 Worship Practice 6pm Choir	22	23
24 LENT Food on the 4th 9am Education 10 Traditional 11 Fellowship	25 9am Happy Hands	26 10am Men's Coffee @ Rosauers 2-4pm Women's Bible Study	27	28 5:30 Worship Practice 6pm Choir	29	30
31 LENT 9am Education 10 Traditional 11 Fellowship						

10am Service Worship Duties

March	3	10	17	24	31
 Ushers & Greeters	Barbara Beardsley Kristin Marcroft	Pat & Bill Crompton	Shelley Oates Karthik King	Kathy & Craig Terry	Jack Siekkinen Gwen Richards
 Acolyte	Noah Boris	Kaylah King	Noah Boris	Kaylah King	Kaylah King
 LECTORS	Jill McBee	Tom Hart	Donna Fitch	Shelley Oates	Pat Pettit
 Altar Guild	Stephanie Hepburn Jill McBee		Stephanie Hepburn Jill McBee		
 Fellowship hour	Open	Open	Open	Open	Open



Spirit of Grace

1140 Tucker Road
Hood River, Oregon 97031
Phone: 541-386-3993
Email: office@hoodriverchurch.com
Web site: hoodriverchurch.org

Sunday Worship Times

Worship Service 10:00am
Fellowship 11:00am

Education Times

9:00am Sunday Education for Adults & Children

Office Hours

Pastor Mon-Wed 9-Noon. Or by Appt.

Staff Mon, Wed, Thurs 9am-2:00pm
Tuesdays 9am-1:00pm

Pastor

Rev. David D.M. King

Staff

Jennifer Fowler

Office Manager & Financial Secretary

Linda Boris

Pastoral Assistant



Board of Directors

Pastor David King, ex officio
Michele Sibley (2019)
Bob White (2019)
Shelley Oates (2020)
Gordon Leigh (2020)
Sharon Poynter (2021)
Tom Hart (2021)

Finance Committee

Pastor David King
Debby Chenoweth (2021)
Vicki Wartalski (2019)
Muriel Ishizaka Treasurer
Jennifer Fowler Financial Secretary
Tom Hart Payroll

Ministry Team Leaders

Celebration Worship	Linda Boris
Traditional Worship	Dottie Gilbertson
Children & Youth	Melissa Mimier King
Men's Ministry	Marv Turner
Women's Ministry	Kris White
Outreach	Debby Chenoweth
Prayer Chain	Carol Kyger
Reception	Jill McBee & Pat Crompton
Building	Rick McBee

Music Ministry

Organist/Piano	Dottie Gilbertson & Audrey Bentz
Choir	Audrey Bentz & Sharon Poynter

Staff Parish Relations

Rose Miller	(2019)
Jill McBee	(2020)
Ty Sibley	(2020)
Rick McBee	Board Liaison

Happy Hands

Mondays 9am to 11am
Women's Craft & Fellowship Group in Fellowship Hall

Quilting

1st and 3rd Wednesdays
Quilts for Lutheran World Relief in Fellowship Hall

Men's Group

Tuesday at 10am at Rosauer's Coffee Corner

Women's Bible Study

4th Tuesday of the month 2-4pm at church

Women's Spirituality

1st Saturday of the month Study and fellowship



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