

Pastor's Letter—July 2018

Dear Members and Friends of Calvary,

I pray that this newsletter finds you well and rejoicing, always, in your salvation. We are all very well aware that there are times when it is very difficult to rejoice. It is important that we remember that those times of hardship are usually where we find our faith growing stronger as we devote more time to the study of God's word. So we are to rejoice always in the Lord.

Most of you are aware that the Baltimore Washington Annual Conference was held in May. During the conference there was much talk regarding LGBTQI. Some of you may not be aware what those letters stand for so I am going to spell them out for you: Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual, Transgender, Queer or Questioning and Inquiring. The United Methodist Church is in the process of discerning whether or not the church will ordain people who are openly professing that they fit into any of these categories.

The pastors of all of the churches were encouraged to have discussions with their congregations regarding the resolutions being presented to the General Conference in February of 2019. Therefore, I am including those two resolutions in this issue of the Calvary Story so you can read them and be informed as to what is happening in your denomination.

I will be holding three meetings regarding the resolutions. The following are the dates and times of these meetings: July 8 at 12:30pm, July 9 at 6:00pm and July 10 at 9:30 am. Each of you will have the opportunity to come and ask questions that may help you to understand the issues a little better. If I don't have an answer for your questions I will certainly find it or instruct you as to how you may find your answer.

Before coming to the meetings I ask you to do three things: 1) Pray for discernment 2) Read the information provided 3) Come remembering that we are all God's children and worthy of His love.

Each of us, individually, make choices in how we respond to our relationship with Jesus. That is what we have to do regarding these issues. Our current discipline says that homosexuality is not compatible with the word of God. The question we have to answer individually is whether or not we agree or disagree with the current book of discipline.

In the book of Joshua 24 the people are being asked to decide whom they will serve and obey. Hanging on the wall beside the door we used to leave our house there hung these words from Joshua 24:15 Choose ye this day whom ye shall serve, as for me and my house I will serve the Lord. This was the last thing I saw every day as I left my house to enter into the world. I still choose to serve the Lord. How I serve the Lord is my personal decision. How you choose to serve is yours. Let us keep in mind that in all things we are to love one another whether we agree or disagree on the issues at hand.

I look forward to seeing each of you at one of the three meetings.

In Christ's service,

Pastor Lynn Rev. Lynn Wilson

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DISCUSSION GROUPS REGARDING THE COMMISSION ON THE “WAY FORWARD”

All are encouraged to participate in at least one of these meetings Sunday, July 8th at 12:30pm, Monday, July 9th at 6pm and Tuesday, July 10th at 9:30am

BISHOPS PROPOSED PLAN FOR THE “WAY FORWARD” May 4, 2018 | CHICAGO (UMNS)

To find a way forward on the denomination’s homosexuality debate, bishops are recommending the church allow more freedom at the conference and local church levels. Under what the Council of Bishops calls the One Church Plan, decisions about whether to ordain LGBTQ clergy or to officiate at same-gender unions would be made closer to the congregational level.

The plan would remove the restrictive language against the practice of homosexuality in the Book of Discipline, the denomination’s policy book. The plan also adds assurances to pastors and conferences, who in good conscience cannot perform same-sex weddings or ordain “self-avowed practicing” gay clergy that they don’t have to do so. Central conferences — church regions in Africa, Asia and Europe — could maintain current restrictions. The plan “encourages a generous unity by giving United Methodists the ability to address different missional contexts in ways that reflect their theological convictions,” said the bishops’ press release.

While the majority of bishops recommend the One Church Plan, the bishops also will submit two additional plans as part of their report to the special General Conference on Feb. 23-26, 2019, in St. Louis. All three possibilities had support among some of the bishops.

The other two plans on the table are:

- The Traditionalist Plan, which would affirm the current language in the denomination’s Book of Discipline, the denomination’s governing document, and seek to strengthen enforcement.
- The Connectional-Conference plan, which would allow conferences to choose among three connectional conferences for affiliation. The connectional conferences would align based on theology or perspective on LGBTQ ministry — be it traditionalist, progressive or allowing for a variety of approaches. This plan would require multiple amendments to the denomination’s constitution.