

Human Sexuality and The United Methodist Church: Timeline 1964-2014

1964: Council on Religion and the Homosexual, an ecumenical organization founded by Glide Memorial Methodist and Rev. Ted McIlvenna, formed in San Francisco, CA: “Ministers acknowledged the role that religion played in the persecution of gays and promised to initiate dialogue in their denominations on the churches’ stand toward same-gender sexuality.”¹

1967: *Good News* founded, Rev. Charles Keysor is president and editor, in hopes of bringing Methodism back to “orthodox Wesleyanism.”

1968:

- Evangelical United Brethren and The Methodist Church unite to form The United Methodist Church
- Journal of the General Conference reports on the recent World Family Life Conference held in Birmingham, AL and London, England in August of 1966. This conference claimed a universal family crisis around the world and suggested that the only way to solve such deterioration of familial values is via Christian families. It proposed holding another WFL Conference in Washington DC in 1971 which would discuss “the impact of changing society and the growing life, the responsibilities of parenthood to the growing person, the growing person and sex education, youth and the new morality, the widening gap between youth and the adult society, and the church’s ministry to the growing person.”
- Journal of the General Conference acknowledged the ongoing sexual revolution:
 - “We bring to this situation openness and encouragement to research in the biological, psycho-sexual and socio-cultural dimensions of human sexuality.” The Church’s job is to add the theological dimension.
 - “We view our sexuality in light of the goodness of this creation...intended for the fulfillment of personality as well as for procreation...within the marriage covenant.”
 - “We recognize that much of our program of sex education is ineffectual, and resolve to bring all resources available to us into study and development of new programs.”
 - “We recognize that many persons who are troubled and broken by sexual problems, such as homosexuality, suffer from discriminatory practices arising from traditional attitudes and from outmoded legal practices...[they] should be brought under the care of our health and human development services rather than

¹ MEA, p. 468

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under panel and correctional services...[and they] should find forgiveness and redemption within [our] fellowship.”

- Approved birth control or “responsible parenthood” and “favor legislation on abortion” as approved by the American Medical Association.

1970: Journal of the 1970 Special Session of the General Conference of the UMC recognizes a growing population problem and yearns for “responsible parenthood.” Report of the Social Principles Study commission provides historical context of the EUB and TMC’s stance on social concerns

1971: Pastor Gene Leggett, an openly gay clergyman, fights in Southwest Texas to retain his ordination credentials after coming out. In a vote of 144 to 117, the Annual Conference voted to suspend him. He was deemed unacceptable for the ministry because of his sexual orientation.

1972: “INCOMPATIBILITY CLAUSE” INSTATED, CIVIL RIGHTS ENSURED.

- Engage Magazine publishes the report of the social principles study commission.
- Social Principles Study Commission, headed by Bishop James Thomas, drafts their report for General Conference, which states, “We declare our acceptance of homosexuals as persons of sacred worth, and we welcome them into the fellowship of the church. Further, we insist that society ensure their human and civil rights.”
- *Motive Magazine*—published two successive issues, which dealt with gay/lesbian rights. These issues were the last two issues for the UMC because it was pulled after their explicit advocacy.
- General Conference—Rev. Gene Leggett, an openly gay clergyman and former clergy of the East Texas Conference, spoke to the legislative committee about homosexuality and inspired them to include the following in their petition to GC: “Homosexuals no less than heterosexuals are persons of sacred worth, who need the ministry and guidance of the church in their struggles for human fulfillment. Further, we insist that all persons are entitled to have their human and civil rights ensured.”²
- Committee later changed wording to read, “Homosexuals...fulfillment, as well as the spiritual and emotional care of a fellowship which enables reconciling relationships with God, with others, and with self...ensured.”
- General Conference→Don Hand, attorney and lay representative of Southwest Texas, voted to add “though we do not condone the practice of homosexuality and consider this practice incompatible with Christian teaching.”

² MEA, p. 469

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1973: UM Council on Youth Ministries announced it intended to petition 1976 GC and challenge the incompatibility clause and to affirm that homosexuals would not be barred from ordination and that homosexuality was not synonymous with immorality.

1975:

- January→Council calls for church wide study of human sexuality and requests that GCOM face human sexuality “head-on” as a petition to GC 1976. This petition would mandate all UM “persons, groups, boards, and agencies” to study human sexuality in a “Wesleyan manner” which drew on the Wesleyan quadrilateral. Due to criticism from the church it abandoned this petition but did write a 700-word position paper on human sexuality stating that the incompatibility clause should be removed and the church should have an ‘objective atmosphere’ in order to ensure a church wide study.
- July→United Methodist Gay Caucus formed at Wheadon UMC in Evanston, IL. Later renamed Gay United Methodists and then Affirmation in 1977 and would lead to the creation of the Reconciling Congregation Project in the 1980s.

1976: INCOMPATIBILITY UPHELD, FUNDING RESTRICTIONS ENSTATED.

- Recommended petition by the Board of Church and Society for 1976 changes to the 1972 SP.
 - Petition to delete “Although men and women are sexual beings whether or not they are married, sex between a man and a woman is only to be clearly affirmed in the marriage bond.”
 - Add “We believe human sexuality is fulfilled in enduring mutually supportive relationships.”
 - Delete “Homosexuals no less than heterosexuals are persons of sacred worth, who need the ministry and guidance of the church in their struggles for human fulfillment, as a well as the spiritual and emotional care of a fellowship which enables reconciling relationships with God, with others and with self. Further we insist that all persons are entitled have their human and civil rights insured, though we do not condone the practice of homosexuality and consider this practice incompatible with Christian teaching.”
 - Add “We welcome all persons regardless of sexual orientation into the fellowship and membership of the UMC; and, we insist that all persons are entitled to have their human and civil rights insured.”
- Approved petition regarding a Study on the Christian Faith and Human Sexuality, Committee on Council on Ministries, Report no. 38; Vote: 39 for, 34 against. “The study

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will seek to interpret the theological, biblical, ethical, and scientific bases for an adequate understanding of human sexuality as a significant dimension of personhood. This shall include: the needs of single persons, including single parents and the elderly; changes facing the family unit; male/female role stereotyping; and such other concerns as may be appropriate to Christian understanding of human sexuality.” Majority report puts this study in the hands of the GCM while the minority reports places it in the hands of the local church.

- Funds withheld from agencies advocating homosexual rights; 39 for, 33 against. “No board, agency, committee, commission, or council shall give United Methodist funds to any ‘gay caucus’ or group or otherwise use such funds to promote the acceptance of homosexuality.”
- Oppose Church Membership to Homosexuals; committee recommends non-concurrence
- Oppose the Study on Human Sexuality by CSRW; committee recommends non-concurrence
- Oppose to any Study on Human Sexuality; committee recommends non-concurrence
- Oppose the Study on Human Sexuality by BCS; committee recommends non-concurrence
- Oppose using Homosexuals as Counselors and Church School Workers; non-concurrence.

1977: Affirmation and Paul Abels, homosexual clergyman in New York Conference at Washington Square UMC, and 100 others, met for an “Education Conference on Homosexuality and the UMC.” Diversity was applauded as one of the strengths of the UMC. LGBTQ Methodists envisioned full inclusion in church, ordination, and official ceremonies.

1980: INCOMPATIBILITY UPHELD,

- March edition of *Engage/Social Action* (publication of the Board of Church and Society) published a forum on homosexuality, which featured articles on the subject by lay and clergy. This forum offered a petition to 1980 GC to replace the incompatibility clause with “While over the centuries Christian tradition and teaching have condemned homosexual practice, today some biblical scholars, theologians, and ethicists are critically reexamining and questioning this teaching. In faithfulness to Jesus Christ we are seeking the truth as we take seriously both the witness of our heritage and of the Spirit who is leading us.”³

³ MEA, p. 474

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- Charles Keysor, editor of Good News, publishes *What you Should Know about Homosexuality*, which states that homosexuals are sinners who need to be saved.
- General Conference:
 - Bishop W. McFerrin Stowe denounces homosexuality in his opening Episcopal Address
 - Hazel Decker indirectly condemned homosexuality in the opening Laity Address
 - Bishop Melvin Wheatley, only bishop to denounce the anti-gay statements, publicly stated that he did not consider homosexuality a sin
 - petition to ban the ordination and appointment of self-avowed homosexuals was narrowly defeated.
 - conference approved a church wide study of human sexuality to be carried out over the next quaddrennium. (published in 1983)
- Report No. 31—Study Document on Human Sexuality; 64 for, 16 against. Petition to receive and distribute the attached document to annual conferences, boards, agencies as a guide for study during the 1981-1984 quadrennium. Available to local churches by request.
- Higher Education and Ministry Committee—New Paragraph on Call and Candidacy, Report No. 1; 99 for, 0 against. Paragraph 404. Adds a reference to the SP’s incompatibility clause and affirms the marriage covenant as between man and woman
- Higher Education and Ministry—Prohibition of Ordination and Appointment of Homosexuals, Report No. 2; 103 for, 1 against. Non-concurrence because “The intention of the legislative committee was to affirm the seriousness with which we take the issue of homosexuality without singling out one facet or moral character for greater attention in the *Discipline* itself.”
- Report No. 3 “Erect No Barriers to Ordination of Homosexuals.” Non-concurrence
- Report No. 4 “Ordination, Conference Membership, Consecration and Appointment of Homosexuals.” Non-concurrence
- Report No. 82 “Remove Homosexuals from Appointment.” Non-concurrence
- Report No. 84 “Prohibiting Homosexual Ministers.” Non-concurrence
- Report No. 21 “Prohibit Homosexuals from Church Participation.” Non-concurrence in favor of 1976 position
- Report No. 22 “Oppose Homosexual Holding Office in UMC” non-concurrence

1981: Formation of the Institute on Religion and Democracy with UMAAction as its Methodist branch. IRD’s purpose was to “illuminate the relationship between Christian faith and

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democratic governance...to oppose policies and programs in the churches which ignore or deny that relationship.”⁴

1982: California/Nevada Annual Conference funded their own three-year study on causes of homophobia after deciding that funding restrictions applied only to the national church. The Judicial Council ruled that there was nothing in the UMC standards that would prevent the ordination of an openly gay candidate and allowed the ordination of an openly lesbian woman to stand (Joanne Carlson Brown, Rocky Mountain Conference).

1983: Reconciling Congregation Project created.

1984: INCOMPATIBILITY CLAUSE UPHELD, PROHIBITION ON ORDINATION OF LGBTQ

- Reconciling Congregation Program began which sought “1) to identify local churches where we are welcome to participate in the full life of the congregation; 2) to provide a vehicle for ongoing education and ministries involving lesbians and gay men at the local level; and 3) to empower local churches to advocate lesbian and gay concerns in their communities and to work as a network for such advocacy on the national level.”⁵ The first was Washington Square UMC in NYC.
- Human Sexuality, Report No. 4, paragraph 71F; 62 for, 37 against. Amend to “We encourage the medical, theological, and humanistic disciplines to combine in a determined effort to understand human sexuality more completely.”
- Human Sexuality, Report No. 4 (Minority), defeated. Delete incompatibility clause and replace with “We commit ourselves to be in ministry with all persons regardless of sexual orientation, seeing only to support and enable the search for healing grace for all through a relationship with God.”
- Rights of Homosexual Persons, Report No. 5, defeated. Addresses issues of civil, economic, and social discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. Calls for legal sanctions against sexual discrimination.
- Task Force to Study Homosexuality to Provide Study Materials on Homosexuality, Report No. 25. Adopted. 77 for, 23 against (legislative committee)
- Standards for Ordination, Report No. 16; 79 for, 22 against (legislative committee). Adds to paragraph 402.2 “...required to maintain the highest standards represented by the practice of fidelity in marriage and celibacy in singleness. Since the practice of homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching, self-avowed practicing

⁴ MEA, p. 505

⁵ MEA, p. 475

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homosexuals are not to be accepted as candidates, ordained as ministers, or appointed to serve in The United Methodist Church.”

- “fidelity in marriage and celibacy in singleness” is the common new phrase for ordination requirements.
- By the end of 1984, nine congregations had become “reconciling” congregations meaning that they were open and welcoming to the ministry of all.

1988: INCOMPATIBILITY CLAUSE UPHELD BUT SOFTENED

- Petition to delete the incompatibility clause and add to paragraph 71F: “At this point in history, although there are many differing views, we are not prepared to declare that homosexuality is a practice that is or is not compatible with Christian teachings. Because of the despair and self-devaluing attitude of many gay persons, we can no longer afford to make a statement of condemnation. Instead, we need to consistently affirm the sacred worth of all persons.”
- While the “incompatibility clause” was upheld, its language was softened a little: “Although we do not condone the practice of homosexuality and consider this practice incompatible with Christian teaching, we affirm that God’s grace is available to all. We commit ourselves to be in ministry for and with all persons.”
- General Conference, for the second time, commissioned a “Committee to Study Homosexuality” which would examine homosexuality through theological and ethical vantage points. The results of the study to be presented at GC 1992.
- Transforming Congregations founded with the hope of bringing people out of the gay lifestyle

1989: Reconciling Congregations Project was invited to testify before the committee, which was studying homosexuality.

1990-1992: Reconciling Congregations Project formally organized as a non-profit and given a Chicago head office. The General Commission on Christian Unity and Interreligious Concerns became a reconciling agency. At the start of 1992, there were fifty-four reconciling congregations.

1992: INCOMPATIBILITY CLAUSE UPHELD. STUDY COMMISSION REPORT REJECTED.

- Founding of the Confessing Movement, which declared that the UMC had “lost its immune system with regard to false teaching.” It claimed that the UMC was a confessional church in principle.

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- Eighty UMC evangelicals issued the “Memphis Declaration” which upheld the current stance of the Book of Discipline and urged a full rejection of the study committee’s report.
- Committee on the Study of Homosexuality:
 - Majority report—reversal of the Social Principles and adoption of “The present state of knowledge and insight in the biblical, theological, ethical, biological, psychological, and sociological fields does not provide a satisfactory basis upon which the church can responsibly maintain the condemnation of homosexual practice.
 - Minority report—maintain the incompatibility clause as is.
- Protests begin:
 - Various advocacy groups were not allowed booths of any kind during General Conference, nor were they allowed to speak during plenary. In response, thirty members of Affirmation marched through plenary with a banner and singing.

1993: Re-Imagining Conference held which sought to re-imagine various facets of Christianity outside of a male-only view.

1994: Report of the Study Committee on Homosexuality was released as a study guide.

1996: BISHOPS SPEAK OUT, INCOMPATIBILITY UPHELD, PROHIBITION ON SAME-SEX UNIONS ENSTATED.

- Council of Bishops release statement to General Conference; its first paragraph reads, “We, the Council of Bishops of The UMC, acknowledge the serious differences that exist among United Methodists on issues related to homosexuality. These differences are also reflected within the COB. We have been praying together and have been talking with one another in a new spirit of honesty and openness that is both painful and hopeful.”
- Deletion of incompatibility clause defeated by a vote of 378 for, 577 against (plenary vote)
- Statement of ambiguity or “not of one mind” on homosexuality also defeated; it read: “We acknowledge with humility that the church has been unable to arrive at a common mind on the compatibility of homosexual practice with Christian faith. Many consider the practice incompatible with Christian teaching. Others believe it acceptable when practiced in a context of human covenantal faithfulness.”
- At the end of General Conference, a petition was approved which would prohibit homosexual unions to be conducted by UM clergy and in UM churches. It was added to the Social Principles.

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- 11 active and 4 retired bishops released a statement that “affirmed their commitment [to] continue our responsibility to order and discipline of the church” while urging congregations to “open the doors in gracious hospitality to all our brothers and sisters in faith.” They expressed “pain” at “proscriptions” against LGBTQ persons.

1997: Reverend Jimmy Creech performs the marriage ceremony of two lesbian women believing that the prohibition on such unions was merely instructive because of its location in the Social Principles. He was tried and acquitted in 1998.

1998:

- Talk of schism surrounding the continued controversy over homosexuality, the authority of the Bible, and interpretation or applicability of parts of Scripture. Led to the creation of the Diversity Dialogue Team, which sought to keep the UMC united—produced “Guidelines for Civility in the UMC.”⁶
- Reverend Gregory Dell, Broadway UMC in Chicago, convicted of presiding at a same-gender wedding, despite Bishop Sprague’s hesitation. Convicted in 1999 and suspended. He was elected a delegate in 2000.

1999:

- Reverend Jimmy Creech again performs a same-gender wedding and is defrocked. The Judicial Council, this time, ruled that the Social Principles have the effect of church law.
- Soulforce, an interdenominational advocacy group, emerges on to the national scene and coins the phrase “spiritual violence” to describe how mainline denominations hurt LGBTQ persons.
- “The Sacramento 68”—a large group of clergy performed same-gender covenant ceremonies. This act of ecclesiastical disobedience was organized by Pastor Don Faso of St. Mark’s UMC. Fifteen-hundred people attended. Bishop Melvin Talbert was forced to investigate but ultimately no charges were filed. Bishop Talbert stated: “I will uphold the law, but I will not be silenced. I will continue speaking out against the law and will continue working to change the position of the church to be more in keeping with the teachings and compassion of Jesus.”

2000: INCOMPATIBILITY CLAUSE UPHELD, PROTESTS ENSUE, HINTS OF SCHISM

- Protest in response to the UMC stance on homosexuality at General Conference. Over 300 were involved in the protest including members from Affirmation, MFSA, RMN,

⁶ MEA, pp. 538-39

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Rev. Jimmy Creech, Rev. Greg Dell, Bishop Joseph Sprague. Nine bishops were involved in the protest. One-hundred and eight-five persons were arrested, including Bishop Sprague, charged with ‘aggravated disorderly conduct.’ Bishops believe that the homosexuality issue will ultimately bring the denomination together as a ‘stronger denomination’ as they explore new ways to understand God.

- Vote sustained against Homosexual Transformation Program, a program which sought to transform homosexuals into heterosexuals—741 for, 200 against (plenary vote).
- Attempted amendment to change “although we do not condone...” to “although many do not condone” in paragraph 71F. defeated. 439 for, 507 against (plenary vote).
- Incompatibility clause upheld by a vote of 628 for and 337 against (plenary vote).
- The rule that “self-avowed practicing homosexuals” cannot be accepted into ordained ministry upheld 640 in favor, 317 opposed (plenary vote).
- The paragraph which prohibits pastors from conducting union ceremonies for same-sex partners was moved from the Social Principles (Paragraph 65C) to Paragraph 332 under “Ministry of the Ordained”—vote 670 for, 222 against (plenary vote).
- News articles:
 - <http://gc2000.org/gc2000news/stories/gc066.htm>
 - <http://gc2000.org/gc2000news/stories/gc059.htm>
 - <http://gc2000.org/gc2000news/stories/gc058.htm>
 - <http://gc2000.org/gc2000news/stories/gc050.htm>
 - <http://gc2000.org/gc2000news/stories/gc035.htm>
- During the vote on whether or not LGBTQ persons can be ordained, a protest occurred and a statement was received. They ask for a four-year moratorium on exclusions of LGBTQ in the *Discipline*.
- Prior to General Conference, Good News distributed videos to all delegates coming to GC, which encouraged progressives within the denomination to separate from the denomination.
- Legislative committee recommends non-concurrence; for 114, against 0.⁷ **Petition 30613-FO-66.H-D.** Petition to reject same-sex living arrangement rights and keep those rights reserved to heterosexual marriage.
- Legislative committee recommends non-concurrence; for 114. against 0. **Petition 31064-FO-65.G-D:** Delete current text of 65G and replace with the following new text:
We recognize that God made us male and female, and that sexuality is a good gift of God. Sexuality consists of far more than physical intimacy and is, by God's design,

⁷ A vote for non-concurrence means that the petition is rejected. A vote against non-concurrence is actually a vote for the petition.

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an aspect of one's personality for all persons, young and old, male and female, married and single, and is an aspect of God's creation in which we rejoice.

The physical intimacy of sexual relations is affirmed only in the context of the commitment of marriage between a man and a woman, and then is to be an expression of love for one another for which marriage is intended.

We deplore society's acquiescence to pornography, fornication, exploitation, promiscuity, prostitution, child abuse, perversion and other unholy forms of misuse of sexuality. We call upon the church to oppose such evils and to draw all people to a new life in Jesus Christ which will empower persons to turn away from such misdeeds.

Persons who engage in homosexual conduct, no less than other sinners, are persons made in the image of God and are to be offered a new relationship with Jesus Christ. Homosexual conduct is sin, and the desire to engage in such conduct is usually indicative of a tormented spirit. The church is to call all persons to holiness, which will include the rejection of homosexual conduct, and to seek to lead all persons to spiritual wholeness, dealing with the underlying torment which tends to encourage such conduct.

- Legislative committee recommends non-concurrence; for 115, against 0. **Petition 31072-FO-65.G-D:** Delete fifth paragraph of 65G and replace with the following new text: **We acknowledge with humility and pain that The United Methodist Church has been unable to arrive at a common mind on the compatibility of Christian teaching with the living out of one's homosexual orientation in a sexual relationship. Many consider such to be incompatible with Christian teaching. Many others believe that living out one's homosexual orientation in a sexual relationship is compatible with Christian teaching when done in the context of human covenantal faithfulness. The church seeks further understanding the leading of the Holy Spirit through continued study and prayer on this issue. Every local church is encouraged to study the issue of homosexuality using the denomination's official study materials.**
- Legislative committee recommends non-concurrence; for 115, against 0. **Petition 31075-FO-65.G-D:** Delete the last sentence of fifth paragraph of 65G and replace with the following:
Homosexual persons . . . sacred worth. . . We commit ourselves to be in ministry for and with all persons. **Within our church, the practice of homosexuality is both celebrated and condemned. We affirm that God's grace is available to all. Therefore, we commit ourselves to prayer and conferencing across the church in which we can reflect on the issues of homosexuality and human sexuality in general. We**

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encourage the church's dialogue to be grounded in its understanding of scripture, tradition, reason and experience.

- Legislative committee recommends non-concurrence. **Petition 31665-FO-65-D**: Amend fifth paragraph of 65G:
. . . Although we do not condone the practice of homosexuality and consider this practice incompatible with Christian teaching, **Although many in the Church do not condone the practice of homosexuality and consider this practice incompatible with Christian teaching, many in the Church do not believe that the practice of homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching**, we affirm that God's grace is available to all.
- Legislative committee recommends non-concurrence; for 115, against 0. **Petition 31798-FO-65.G-D**: Delete last two sentences of last paragraph of 65G and add new text:
Although we do not condone the practice of homosexuality and consider this practice incompatible with Christian teaching, we affirm that God's grace is available to all. We commit ourselves to be in ministry for and with all persons. **With humility we acknowledge that the United Methodist Church has been unable to arrive at a common mind on the compatibility of homosexual practice with Christian faith. Some consider this practice incompatible with Christian teaching as they understand scripture, tradition, reason, and experience. Others, appealing to the same sources of authority, believe that homosexuality, like heterosexuality, is a good gift of God and that the equitable application of Christian ethics to both heterosexual and homosexual persons would neither approve nor condemn all homosexual practice, just as it does not approve nor condemn all heterosexual practice.**
The present state of knowledge and insight in the biblical, theological, ethical, biological, psychological and sociological fields does not provide a just basis for the church to pass a negative judgement upon all homosexual practice. The church seeks further understanding through continued prayer, study, and pastoral experience, as it continues to affirm that God's grace is bestowed on all, and that the members of Christ's body are called to be in ministry for and with one another and the world.
- Legislative committee recommends non-concurrence; for 115, against 0. **Petition 31965-FO-65-D**: Amend fifth paragraph of Paragraph 65 G
G) Human Sexuality--
Homosexual persons no less than heterosexual persons are individuals of sacred worth. All persons need the ministry and guidance of the church in their struggles for human fulfillment, as well as the spiritual and emotional care of a fellowship that enables reconciling relationships with God, with others, and with self. Although we do not

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condone the practice of homosexuality and consider this practice incompatible with Christian teaching, **Although faithful Christians disagree on the compatibility of the practice of homosexuality with Christian teaching**, we affirm that God's grace is available to all **persons**. We commit ourselves to be in ministry for and with all persons.

- Legislative committee recommends non-concurrence; for 115, against 0. **Petition 31960-FO-65-D**: Amend second sentence of 65A:
. . . We understand the family as encompassing a wider range of options . . . families, and couples without children **and homosexual families**.
- Legislative committee recommends non-concurrence; for 114, against 0, abstain 1. **Petition 30631-FO-66.H-D. *Equal Rights Regardless of Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity***--Certain basic human rights and civil liberties are due all persons. We are committed to supporting those rights and liberties for ~~homosexual persons~~ **all persons, whatever their sexual orientation or gender identity**. We see a clear issue . . . equal protection before the law. **In addition, we oppose heterosexism in all its forms**. Moreover, we support efforts to stop violence and other forms of coercion against ~~gays and lesbians~~ **all persons, whatever their sexual orientation or gender identity**. We also commit ourselves . . .
- Legislative committee recommends non-concurrence; for 114, against 0, abstain 1. **Petition 31084-FO-66.G-D**. subparagraph regarding the transformation of homosexuals. **“All persons, including homosexuals and lesbians, are invited to share God's means of grace in all United Methodist churches: worship, Bible study, prayer, Lord's Supper, counseling, and communications. The Good News that through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior homosexuality can be changed is to be shared by all agencies at all levels of the United Methodist Church by all means.”**
- Legislative committee recommends non-concurrence; for 114, against 0, abstain 1. **Petition 31087-FO-66.H-D**. Amend 66H “Certain basic human . . . due all persons. . . . Moreover, we support efforts to stop **marginalization**, violence and other forms of coercion against gays, and lesbians, **former homosexuals, and transgendered persons**. We also commit . . .”
- Legislative committee recommends concurrence; for 102. against 0, abstain 2. **Petition 31662-FO-66-D**. Add to the end of the first paragraph of 66:
We deplore acts of hate or violence against groups or persons based on race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religious affiliation, or economic status.
- Legislative committee recommends non-concurrence; for 114, against 0, abstain 1. **Petition 31666-FO-66-D**. Delete second and third sentences of 66H and replace with new text:

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Certain basic human rights and civil liberties are due all persons. We are committed to supporting those rights and liberties for homosexual persons. We see a clear issue of simple justice in protecting their rightful claims where they have shared material resources, pensions, guardian relationships, mutual powers of attorney, and other such lawful claims typically attendant to contractual relationships that involve shared contributions, responsibilities, and liabilities, and equal protection before the law. **We support those rights for all persons, but since the practice of homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching, sexual orientation cannot be used to equate the homosexual relationship with the same lawful status enjoyed by male/female married couples.** Moreover, we support efforts to stop violence and other forms of coercion against gays and lesbians. We also commit ourselves to social witness against the coercion and marginalization of former homosexuals.

- Legislative committee recommends non-concurrence; for 114, against 0, abstain 1. **Petition 31669-FO-66-D.** Delete current text of 66H and replace with the following new text:
***Equal Rights Regardless of Sexual Sin*--Certain basic human rights and civil liberties are due all persons, regardless of past or current sexual sins. Grace and mercy are available to all. We deplore any form of hatred or violence directed at persons because of their sexual practices. We also commit ourselves to social witness against the coercion and marginalization of former homosexuals. We reject laws or policies that equate sexual practice with morally neutral characteristics such as race, gender or ethnicity. We affirm the right of organizations, like The United Methodist Church, to expect their employees or members to uphold certain standards of sexual morality.**
- Legislative committee recommends non-concurrence; for 114, against 0, abstain 1. **Petition 30203-FO-117-D.** Add a new, final subparagraph to 117:
While The United Methodist Church believes that Christ's saving grace is available to all persons, we do not, for the sake of inclusiveness and openness, endorse, condone or accept any practice or lifestyle, such as the homosexual lifestyle, which is committed with the belief that such practice or lifestyle is appropriate and not sinful in direct contradiction to The United Methodist Book of Discipline, the Articles of Religion, the Confession of Faith, Wesley's Sermons and the teachings of Christ.
- Legislative committee recommends non-concurrence; for 114, against 0, abstain 1. **Petition 30643-FO-117-D.** Add to the end of second paragraph of 117 the following:
Therefore, no unit of The United Methodist Church shall discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, ethnicity, disability, gender, sexual orientation, social status, or economic condition in employment or volunteer positions in the Church.

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- Legislative committee recommends non-concurrence; for 114, against 0, abstain 1. **Petition 31421-FO-117-D.** Amend 117:
We recognize that God made all creation . . . leadership of the Church at any level and in every place. **No unit of The United Methodist Church may discriminate against laypersons on the basis of race, ethnicity, gender, disability and/or sexual orientation in employment or volunteer positions in the church.**
- Legislative committee recommends non-concurrence; for 76, against 0. **Petition 30056-LC-214-D.** Insert new paragraph after 214:
Christ's Church is, among other characteristics, a body of repentant reformed sinners. Our churches welcome all persons to attend services of worship. However, the following persons shall be ineligible for membership in the United Methodist Church.
 - 1. Persons known to practice sexual immorality such as fornication, adultery or homosexuality. These are explicitly listed by the Apostle Paul as grievous sins resulting in exclusion from the Kingdom of God. (1 Cor. 6:9-10)**
 - 2. Persons having membership and practicing sexual immorality will forfeit their memberships.**
 - 3. Clergy members shall remove from membership rolls persons known to be practicing any of these sins. Failure to do so will be grounds for charging a clergy member with disobedience to the order and discipline of the church.**
 - 4. Those removed from membership for any of these sins may be reinstated upon confession of faith and assurances that none of these sins are being practiced.**
- Legislative committee recommends non-concurrence; for 114, against 0, abstain 1. **Petition 30001-FO-304.3-D** Amend 304.3 as follows:
While such persons set apart by the Church for the ministry of Word, Sacrament, and Order are subject to all the frailties of the human condition and pressures of society, they are required to maintain the highest standards of holy living in the world. Since the practice of homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching, self-avowed practicing homosexuals **persons practicing homosexuality** are not to be accepted as candidates, ordained as ministers, or appointed to serve in The United Methodist Church.
- Legislative committee recommends non-concurrence; for 114, against 0, abstain 1. **Petition 30055-FO-304.3-D.** Amend 304.3:
Since the practice of homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching, self-avowed, practicing homosexuals
- **Petition 30108-FO-304.3-D.** Amend second sentence of 304.3 and delete footnote:
. . . Since the practice of homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching, self-avowed practicing homosexuals **persons who practice homosexuality** are not to be

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accepted as candidates, ordained as ministers, or appointed to serve in The United Methodist Church. **A person who practices homosexuality is understood to mean a person who:**

a. Openly acknowledges to a bishop, district superintendent, district committee on ordained ministry, board of ordained ministry, clergy session, or other person in nonconfidential conversation that the person practices homosexuality; or

b. Has entered into a "holy union" or other covenant resembling marriage with a person of the same sex; or

c. Is found guilty of engaging in homosexual practice by reasonable evidence by an appropriate body of The United Methodist Church.

1. *"Self-avowed practicing homosexual"* is understood to mean that a person openly acknowledges to a bishop, district superintendent, district committee of ordained ministry, board of ordained ministry, or clergy session that the person is a practicing homosexual. *See* Judicial Council Decisions 702, 708, 722, 725, 764.

- Legislative committee recommends non-concurrence; for 64, against 38, abstain 2.

Petition 30146-FO-304.3-D: Delete second sentence of 304.3 and its footnote:

While persons set apart by the Church for ordained ministry are subject to all the frailties of the human condition and the pressures of society, they are required to maintain the highest standards of holy living in the world. Since the practice of homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching, self-avowed practicing homosexuals¹ are not to be accepted as candidates, ordained as ministers, or appointed to serve in The United Methodist Church.

1 *"Self-avowed practicing homosexual"* is understood to mean that a person openly acknowledges to a bishop, district superintendent, district committee of ordained ministry, board of ordained ministry, or clergy session that the person is a practicing homosexual. *See* Judicial Council Decisions 702, 708, 722, 725, 764.

- Legislative committee recommends non-concurrence; for 115, against 0, abstain 1.

Petition 30634-FO-304.2-D: Amend second sentence of 304.2:

To this end, they agree . . . fidelity in marriage and **all covenant relationships**, celibacy in singleness . . .

- Legislative committee recommends non-concurrence; for 115, against 0, abstain 1.

Petition 30900-FO-304.3-D: Amend 304.3:

While persons set apart by the Church for ordained ministry are subject to all the frailties of the human condition and the pressures of society, they are required to maintain the highest standards of holy living in the world. **Since ordained ministers exercise their ministry in covenant with all Christians, especially with those whom they lead and serve in ministry, and since there is general disagreement in the United Methodist**

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Church around issues of sexual orientation; ceremonies that celebrate homosexual unions shall be conducted only in those local churches where there is no objection to the same from the majority of its members and where the ordained minister is also consenting. (At least two-thirds of the members present at the annual charge conference of the local church must support the decision to conduct services that celebrate homosexual unions), and; since the practice of homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching . . .

- Legislative committee recommends non-concurrence; for 115, against 0, abstain 1.
Petition 30901-FO-304.3-D: Amend 304.3:
While persons set apart . . . Since the practice of homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching, self-avowed practicing homosexuals are not to be accepted as candidates, ordained as ministers, or appointed to serve in The United Methodist Church.
- Legislative committee recommends non-concurrence; for 115, against 0, abstain 1.
Petition 30902-FO-304.3-D: Amend 304.3:
While persons set apart . . . Since the practice of homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching, self-avowed practicing homosexuals are not to be accepted as candidates, ordained as ministers or appointed to serve in The United Methodist Church.
Forbidding ordination to homosexuals, whether avowed practicing or not, puts a limit on the work of the Holy Spirit that is incompatible with the understanding United Methodists have for that Person of the Trinity. We also believe that refusing an appointed pastor for that reason or because he/she supports homosexuals is also incompatible the United Methodist policy on diversity.
- Legislative committee recommends non-concurrence; for 115, against 0, abstain 1.
Petition 30998-FO-304.3-D: Amend 304.3:
Delete: "Since the practice of homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching, self-avowed practicing homosexuals are not to be accepted as candidates, ordained as ministers, or appointed to serve in The United Methodist Church."
And substitute the following: **Since faithful Christians disagree on the compatibility of same-sex unions with Christian teaching, persons of homosexual orientation engaged in committed relationships will not be categorically denied as candidates, but will be evaluated by the same methods and standards that are applied to their heterosexual counterparts in all matters including celibacy in singleness and fidelity in union.**
- Legislative committee recommends non-concurrence; for 115, against 0, abstain 1.
Petition 31894-FO-304.3-D: Add the following as a new paragraph to 304.3:
Any, bishop, agency, pastor or church which teaches, practices, or is an advocate of Homosexuality and/or its' lifestyles and/or practices will be

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censored, defrocked, or penalized by the appropriate church authority after due process, and after an attempt has been made to convince such to conform to the beliefs and policies of the Book of Discipline relative to such matters.

- Legislative committee recommends non-concurrence; for 115, against 0, abstain 1. **Petition 31981-FO-304-D:** Amend paragraph 304 by making the following additions and deletions:
 2. For the sake of the mission of Jesus Christ in the world and the most effective witness to the Christian gospel, and in consideration of the influence an ordained ministry on the lives of other persons both within and outside the Church, the Church expects those who seek ordination to make a complete dedication of themselves to the highest ideals of the Christian life. To this end they agree to exercise responsible self-control by personal habits conducive to bodily health, mental and emotional maturity, integrity **and fidelity** in all personal relationships, fidelity in marriage and celibacy in singleness, social responsibility, and growth in grace and in the knowledge and love of God.
 3. While persons set apart by the Church for ordained ministry are subject to all the frailties of the human condition and the pressures of society, and are required to maintain the highest standards of holy living in the world. Since the practice of homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching, self-avowed practicing homosexuals are not to be accepted as candidates, ordained as ministers, or appointed to serve in The United Methodist Church.
- Legislative committee recommends non-concurrence; for 59, against 13. **Petition 30148-HE-306.4-D:** Amend 306.4 *f*, footnote 2, subsection (8) (page 177), fourth paragraph: In the Social Principles, the General Conference has said that "we do not condone the practice of homosexuality and consider this practice incompatible with Christian teaching." Furthermore, the Principles state that "we affirm the sanctity of the marriage covenant that is expressed love, mutual support, personal commitment, and shared fidelity. between a man and a woman. We believe that God's blessing rests upon such marriage, whether or not **children are part of that union.** there are children of the union. We reject social norms that assume different standards for women than for men in marriage." Also, "we affirm the integrity of single persons, and we reject all social practices that discriminate or social attitudes that are prejudicial against persons because they are single."
- Legislative committee recommends non-concurrence; for 92, against 8, abstain 5. **Petition 30657-HE-328-D:** Amend by adding a new subparagraph to the end of 328:
 - 4. No person shall be entitled to, nor shall receive an appointment under the authority of nor by means of The United Methodist Church nor by any United**

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Methodist bishop who shall not have filed on record with an appropriate annual conference authority a signed statement, available for viewing upon request, affirming the following: "I do not believe that homosexuality is God's perfect will for any person. I will not practice it. I will not promote it. I will not allow its promotion to be encouraged under my authority."

- Legislative committee recommends non-concurrence; for 66, against 30, abstain 6.
Petition 30066-HE-331.1-D: Add new text to the end of 331.1*i*) :
... **No United Methodist clergy shall conduct a homosexual union service, or offer to allow a United Methodist building or house of worship to be used for the conduct of a homosexual union service. "Homosexual union service" includes any ceremony or ritual that blesses, recognizes, or celebrates any relationship resembling marriage with a person of the same sex. Violation of this provision shall make a clergy person liable to complaint and/or chargeable offense (paragraphs 2623-2629). Adoption of a provision for homosexual union or marriage by any state shall not change this standard."**
- Legislative committee recommends non-concurrence; for 90, against 0, abstain 2.
Petition 30168-HE-331.1-D: Add a sentence at the end of 331.1 *i*):
United Methodist clergy are forbidden from conducting same-sex union/marriage services.
- Legislative committee recommends non-concurrence; for 75, against 15, abstain 1.
Petition 30187-HE-331.1-D: Add a sentence to 331.1 *i* :
... Qualifications for performing marriage shall be in accordance with the laws of the state and The United Methodist Church. **Ordained clergy, at his/her discretion, may perform ceremonies which celebrate holy covenants between persons of the same gender.**
- Legislative committee recommends non-concurrence; for 86, against 6. **Petition 30907-HE-331.1-D:** Amend 331.1.i:
To perform the marriage ceremony . . . in accordance with the laws of the state and The United Methodist Church , **with the exception that ceremonies that celebrate homosexual unions may be conducted by consenting clergy, when at least two-thirds of the members present at the annual charge conference have voted to permit such ceremonies.**
- Legislative committee recommends non-concurrence; for 88, against 0, abstain 3.
Petition 30178-HE-340.1-D: Amend 340.1:
A local pastor is approved annually by the district committee on ordained ministry and licensed by the bishop to perform all the duties of a pastor (paragraph 331), including the sacraments of baptism and Holy Communion as well as the service of marriage (where

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state laws allow, **ceremonies that celebrate homosexual (same sex) unions shall not be conducted by our ministers and shall not be conducted in our churches**), burial, confirmation, and membership reception, while appointed to a particular charge.

2004. INCOMPATIBILITY CLAUSE UPHELD, CHARGEABLE OFFENSES ENSTATED

- Rev. Karen Dammann came out as an openly practicing lesbian woman in a covenantal relationship with another woman in 2001. After many years of trials she was acquitted in early 2004. Multiple other trials throughout 2004-05 drove open clergy deeper into the closet.
- **News articles:**
 - <http://gc2004.org/interior.asp?ptid=17&mid=4412>
 - <http://gc2004.org/interior.asp?ptid=17&mid=4507>
 - <http://gc2004.org/interior.asp?ptid=17&mid=4508>
 - <http://gc2004.org/interior.asp?ptid=17&mid=4558>
 - <http://gc2004.org/interior.asp?ptid=17&mid=4557>
 - <http://gc2004.org/interior.asp?ptid=17&mid=4624>
 - <http://gc2004.org/interior.asp?ptid=17&mid=4635>
 - <http://gc2004.org/interior.asp?ptid=17&mid=4686>
- **Major changes:**
 - Vote to change “although we do not condone the practice of homosexuality” to “The United Methodist Church does not condone...”
 - Vote to retain incompatibility clause 579 for, 376 against (plenary vote)
 - Added a clause that states that UMs “will seek to live together in Christian community.”
 - An “agree to disagree” motion from GBCS did not pass.
 - Delegates upheld the clause that bars “self-avowed practicing homosexuals” from ordained ministry. 674 for, 262 against (plenary vote).
 - No changes made to the equal rights clause.
 - New charges for ordained ministers: “unfaithfulness in marriage and not being celibate in singleness.” Delegates added to Paragraph 2702 disciplinary charges for the following: “being a self-avowed practicing homosexual, conducting ceremonies that celebrate homosexual unions, and performing same-sex wedding.” Vote 455 for, 445 against (plenary vote).
- Protests: May 6, more than 500 gathered to protest the petitions voted on the day before.
- Talk of schism begun by Good News and Confessing Movement

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- Plenary vote for non-concurrence: 897 For, 10 against. **Petition 40156. G) Human Sexuality**-We recognize that sexuality is God's good gift to all persons. ~~We believe persons may be fully human only when that gift is acknowledged and affirmed by themselves, the church, and society. We call all persons to the disciplined, responsible fulfillment of themselves, others, and society in the stewardship of this gift. We call all persons to the responsible stewardship of that gift within the boundaries God has established for its enjoyment.~~ We also recognize our limited understanding of this complex gift and encourage the medical, theological, and social science disciplines to combine in a determined effort to understand human sexuality more completely. We call the Church to take the leadership role in bringing together these disciplines to address this most complex issue. Further, within the context of our understanding of this gift of God, we recognize that God challenges us to find responsible, committed, and loving forms of expression.

Although all persons are sexual beings whether or not they are married, sexual relations are only clearly affirmed in the marriage bond. **Sexual relations by unmarried persons can prevent the development of a healthy emotional bond, predispose a couple to a higher rate of relationship failure or divorce, and lead to unwanted pregnancies or sexually transmitted diseases. Adulterous sexual relations carry the additional burdens of the betrayal of trust and the potential disintegration of the family or families involved. Christian teaching upholds the value of celibacy outside marriage and voluntary celibacy for the sake of deeper devotion and service to Christ. Such celibacy is not the denial of the gift of sexuality, but places it within the perspective of God's larger purpose.**

Sex may become exploitative ...

- Plenary vote: 897 For, 10 against. **Petition. A Homosexual Study Committee shall be constituted during 2004 A.D.**

by the Council on Ministries including two former homosexuals (males) and two former lesbians (females) from nominees recommended by local United Methodist Churches. Other members shall be representative of the total membership of The United Methodist Church including proportional distributions of age, geography, education, sex, marriage, parenthood, laity-ministers, etc.

This Homosexual Study Committee of no more than thirty (30) members shall study, hold hearings, and receive UMC members' reports about homosexuality during the 2000-2004 quadrennium and submit a summary report to the 2004 General Conference.

Each member of the Homosexual Study Committee shall state in

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writing to the 2004 General Conference his or her :

1. Personal marital and parental status, sexual preferences and practices.

2. Personally approved and disapproved sexual practices (pedophilia, incest, pre-marital, marital, homosexual, heterosexual, bi-sexual, sado-masochism, bestiality, rape, sex with dead bodies, etc.) for The United Methodist Church's employees, members, officers, delegates and ordained ministers on all levels (local church, district, annual conference, jurisdiction, and general agencies) and why;

3. Proposals of what the United Methodist Church should do about those whose sexual practices are disapproved: accept or reject attendance, employees, members, officers, delegates, and ordained ministers; conversion (by witnessing, preaching, evangelism, counseling, group therapy, aversion therapy, etc.); referral to appropriate government authorities, etc. and why.

4. Proposed sexual education provided about The United Methodist Church's sexual standards to Sunday School classes, prospective church members, employees, members, officers, delegates and ordained ministers. Funding shall be the same as the first study of homosexuality.

- Plenary vote for non-concurrence: 679 for, 249 against. **Petition 41507**. Amend ¶ 161.G as follows:

G) Human Sexuality-We recognize ...

~~Homosexual persons no less than heterosexual~~ **All persons are individuals of sacred worth and we affirm that God's grace is available to all.** All persons need the ministry and guidance of the church in their struggles for human fulfillment, as well as the spiritual and emotional care of a fellowship that enables reconciling relationships with God, with others, and with self. ~~Although we do not condone the practice of homosexuality and consider this practice incompatible with Christian teaching, we affirm that God's grace is available to all.~~ **The church is not of one mind regarding the causes of homosexuality and the moral acceptability of homosexual behavior. We respect each member's right to his or her own views about homosexuality, and our differences must continue to be discussed as we learn from one another and from the movement of God's spirit in our midst.** We implore families and churches not to reject or condemn their lesbian and gay members and friends. We commit ourselves to be in ministry for and with all persons.¹

- Plenary vote for non-concurrence: 679 for, 249 against. **Petition 41514**. Amend ¶ 161.G as follows:

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G) Human Sexuality-We recognize that sexuality ...

Although all persons are sexual beings whether or not they are married, sexual relations are only clearly affirmed in the marriage bond **or in a civil union**. Sex may ...

Homosexual persons no less than heterosexual persons are individuals of sacred worth.

All persons need the ministry and guidance of the church in their struggles for human fulfillment, as well as the spiritual and emotional care of a fellowship that enables

reconciling relationships with God, with others, and with self. ~~Although we do not condone the practice of homosexuality and consider this practice incompatible with~~

~~Christian teaching~~, **the church is of different minds about the practice of**

homosexuality and its compatibility with Christian teaching, we affirm that God's

grace is available to all. We implore families and churches not to reject or condemn their

~~lesbian and gay~~ **lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, and transgendered** members and friends. We commit ourselves to be in ministry for and with all persons.¹

- Plenary vote for non-concurrence: 679 for, 249 against. **Petition 41512**. Amend ¶ 161.G as follows:

G) Human Sexuality-We recognize that sexuality ...

Homosexual persons no less than heterosexual persons are individuals of sacred worth.

All persons need the ministry and guidance of the church in their struggles for human fulfillment, as well as the spiritual and emotional care of a fellowship that enables

reconciling relationships with God, with others, and with self. ~~Although we do not condone the practice of homosexuality and consider this practice incompatible with~~

~~Christian teaching~~, **As a church, we are not of one mind on the origins of sexual**

orientation. Many, through discernment and the study of scripture, understand

homosexuality to be incompatible with Christian teaching. Others, through

discernment and the study of scripture, understand homosexuality to be a core part

of an individual's being, created in the image of God. We are open to the work of the

Holy Spirit to further our understanding of sexual orientation. ~~¶~~ We affirm that

God's grace is available to all. We implore families and churches not to reject or

condemn their lesbian and gay members and friends. We commit ourselves to be in

ministry for and with all persons.

- Plenary vote for non-concurrence: 679 for, 249 against. **Petition 41511**. Amend ¶ 161.G as follows:

G) Human Sexuality-We recognize ...

~~Although we do not condone the practice of homosexuality and consider this practice incompatible with Christian teaching~~, **Although faithful United Methodists hold**

differing opinions regarding sexual orientation, we commit ourselves to continue to

discern God's will in the midst of respectful Christian dialogue. As we study

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Scripture, Tradition, Reason and Experience in order to guide us to greater understanding of one another and of God's gift of sexuality, we affirm that God's grace is available to all. We implore ...

- Plenary vote for non-concurrence: 679 for, 249 against. **Petition 41499**. Amend ¶161.G as follows:

G) Human Sexuality-We recognize ...

With humility we acknowledge that the United Methodist Church has been unable to arrive at a common mind on the compatibility of homosexual practice with Christian teaching.

Some consider this practice incompatible with Christian teaching as they understand scripture, tradition, reason and experience. Others, appealing to the same sources of authority, believe that homosexuality, like heterosexuality, is a good gift of God and that the equitable application of Christian ethics to both heterosexual and homosexual persons would neither approve nor condemn all homosexual practice, just as it does not approve nor condemn all heterosexual practice. The church seeks further understanding, through continued prayer, study and pastoral experience, as it continues to affirm God's grace is bestowed on all, and that the members of Christ's body are called to be in ministry for and with one another and the world. Homosexual persons no less than heterosexual persons are individuals of sacred worth. All persons need the ministry and guidance of the church in their struggles for human fulfillment, as well as the spiritual and emotional care of a fellowship that enables reconciling relationships with God, with others, and with self. ~~Although we do not condone the practice of homosexuality and consider this practice incompatible with Christian teaching, w~~ We affirm that God's grace is available to all. We implore families and churches not to reject or condemn their lesbian and gay members and friends. We commit ourselves to be in ministry for and with all persons.

- Plenary vote for non-concurrence: 679 for, 249 against. **Petition 41496**. Delete all references to homosexuality in the Book of Discipline.
- Plenary vote for non-concurrence: 679 for, 249 against. **Petition 41495**. Amend ¶ 161.G as follows:

Homosexual persons no less than heterosexual persons are individuals of sacred worth. All persons need the ministry and guidance of the church in their struggles for human fulfillment, as well as the spiritual and emotional care of a fellowship that enables reconciling relationships with God, with others, and with self. Although we do not condone the practice of homosexuality **homosexual acts, other than in support of a committed lifetime relationship between persons capable of experiencing the gift of "one flesh" only with members of their own gender**, and consider ~~this practice them~~

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incompatible with Christian teaching, we affirm that God's grace is available to all. We implore families and churches not to reject or condemn their lesbian and gay members and friends. We commit ourselves to be in ministry for and with all persons.

Amend ¶ 304.3 as follows:

While persons set apart by the Church for ordained ministry are subject to all the frailties of the human condition and the pressures of society, they are required to maintain the highest standards of holy living in the world. ~~Since the practice of homosexuality is~~ **Because homosexual acts, other than in support of a committed lifetime relationship between persons capable of experiencing the gift of "one flesh" only with members of their own gender,** are incompatible with Christian teaching, ~~self-avowed practicing homosexuals~~ **persons avowing or known to engage in these incompatible acts** are not to be accepted as candidates, ordained as ministers, or appointed to serve in The United Methodist Church. **However, a person who appears to have engaged in such an incompatible act shall be judged no more harshly than a person of heterosexual orientation who engages in a similar heterosexual act under similar circumstances.**

Amend ¶ 332.6 as follows:

Ceremonies that celebrate homosexual unions shall not be conducted by our ministers and shall not be conducted in our churches **unless all the following conditions are met:**

- a) At least one of the participants has been a member of the local church for at least one year, or is otherwise well known to the officiating minister.**
 - b) The officiating minister, after due counsel with the parties involved, is reasonably convinced that both of them are of sufficient maturity, and have had sufficient (i) experience with their feelings of attraction, (ii) introspection (iii) and prayer, as well as appropriate counseling, to determine and affirm that they are capable of experiencing God's gift of "one flesh" only with members of their own gender.**
 - c) The officiating minister, after due counsel with the parties involved, believes that they are ready to make a lifetime commitment to one another.**
 - d) In jurisdictions with laws allowing or governing homosexual unions or commitment ceremonies, all applicable requirements have been met.**
 - e) The officiating minister is comfortable with performing the ceremony.**
- Plenary vote for non-concurrence: 630 for, 311 against. **Petition 40576.** Amend ¶162.H as follows:

H) Equal Rights Regardless of Sexual Orientation or Gender Identity - Certain basic human rights and civil liberties are due all persons. We are committed to supporting those rights and liberties for ~~homosexual~~ **all persons whatever their sexual orientation or gender identity.** We see a clear issue of simple justice in protecting their rightful claims where they have shared material resources, pensions, guardian relationships, mutual

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powers of attorney, and other such lawful claims typically attendant to contractual relationships that involve shared contributions, responsibilities, and liabilities, and equal protection before the law. **In addition, we oppose heterosexism in all its forms.** Moreover, we support efforts to stop violence and other forms of coercion against ~~gays and lesbians~~ **all persons whatever their sexual orientation or gender identity.** We also commit ourselves to social witness against the coercion and marginalization of former homosexuals.

- Plenary vote for non-concurrence: 845 for, 43 against. **Petition 41107.** There shall be a call to prayer and study concerning all paragraphs where homosexuality is mentioned. There shall be no changes in any of these paragraphs between the 2000 Discipline and the 2004 Discipline. All paragraphs that deal with homosexuality are to be a subject of study with the burden and costs contained within each jurisdiction or annual conference.
- Plenary vote for non-concurrence: 724 for, 165 against. **Petition 41154.** Amend the second sentence of ¶304.3 to read as follows:
3. While persons ...
Since the practice of homosexuality is ~~incompatible with Christian teaching,~~ **in question within the Church,** self-avowed practicing homosexuals¹ ~~are not to be accepted as candidates, ordained as ministers, or appointed to serve in The United Methodist Church.~~ **seeking ordination shall be affirmed as persons of sacred worth and shall be examined carefully and thoroughly."**
- Plenary vote for non-concurrence: 641 for, 155 against. **Petition 40012.** Delete entire ¶304.3, including footnote:
~~3. While persons set apart by the Church for ordained ministry are subject to all the frailties of the human condition and the pressures of society, they are required to maintain the highest standards of holy living in the world. Since the practice of homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching, self-avowed practicing homosexuals¹ are not to be accepted as candidates, ordained as ministers, or appointed to serve in The United Methodist Church.~~
- Plenary vote for non-concurrence: 756 for, 159 against. **Petition 41298.** Amend ¶ 332.6 as follows:
6. Ceremonies that celebrate homosexual unions ~~shall not be conducted by our ministers and shall not be conducted in our churches.~~ **may be conducted by pastors only when the church in a meeting with two weeks prior notice votes by two-thirds vote of the members present to support celebrating homosexual unions by their pastor in their church.**
- Plenary vote for non-concurrence: 745 for, 163 against. **Petition 41156.** Amend ¶332.6 to read as follows:

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6. ~~Ceremonies that celebrate homosexual unions shall not be conducted by our ministers and shall not be conducted in our churches.~~ **"Marriage ceremonies between persons of the same sex shall not be conducted by our ministers; however, our ministers may conduct holy unions between persons of the same sex in a committed relationship, with the approval of the resident Bishop."**

2008 INCOMPATIBILITY CLAUSE UPHELD

- “A survey conducted by the Connectional Table found that slightly more than half of clergy and laity at least “agree somewhat” with The United Methodist Church’s position that it does not condone the practice of homosexuality, reflecting split public opinion on the issue in the United States. At the same time, a significant minority — 30 percent of clergy and 28 percent of laity “disagree strongly” with the church’s position on the issues...in the Western Jurisdiction only 28 percent of clergy and 26 percent of laity “agree strongly or somewhat” with the church’s position. Fifty-eight percent of clergy and 53 percent of laity in the West “disagree strongly” with the official position. That compares with the Southeastern Jurisdiction where 66 percent of clergy and 67 percent of laity “agree strongly or somewhat.” Only 17 percent of clergy and 18 percent of laity “disagree strongly.” Board of Church and Society directors voted 21-17 to ask General Conference to delete the sentence, “The United Methodist Church does not condone the practice of homosexuality and considers this practice incompatible with Christian teaching” from Paragraph 161G of the 2004 Book of Discipline and replace it with the declaration that “Christians of good faith differ on what Christian teaching reveals regarding homosexuality.” Last quadrennium a similar request from the Washington, D.C.-based agency was defeated.

” (Quote from <http://www.umc.org/who-we-are/general-conference-2008-issues>)

- **Major changes/votes:**
 - upheld incompatibility clause by a vote of 516 for and 416 (plenary vote) against despite a majority report from the legislative committee which sought new language that “all seek a faithful witness.”
 - GBCS was asked to develop resources on the effects of homophobia and heterosexism
 - Upheld the policy to prevent the funding of LGBTQ groups
 - Upheld language that marriage is between one man and one woman
- Protests: 250 advocates for full inclusions marched in silence and covered the altar with a black shroud in mourning.
- News articles:

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- <http://www.umc.org/news-and-media/united-methodists-uphold-homosexuality-stance>
- <http://www.umc.org/news-and-media/same-sex-couple-says-i-do-outside-church-assembly>
- Plenary vote for rejection: for 842, against 24. **Petition 81355. Civil Rights in All Unions (81355-C2-¶161.G)**
Amend ¶ 161G as follows:
We recognize that sexuality is God's good gift to all persons. . . . Although all persons are sexual beings whether or not they are married **in covenant relationships including marriage, we believe** sexual relations are only clearly affirmed in the marriage bond **bond of marriage or committed union**. Sex may become exploitative within as well as outside marriage **or committed union**. We reject all sexual expressions that damage or destroy the humanity God has given us as birthright, and we affirm only that sexual expression that enhances that same humanity. . . . We insist that all persons, regardless of age, gender, marital status, or sexual orientation, are entitled to have their human and civil rights ensured. **We encourage civil authorities to enact laws that will ensure full civil and economic rights for persons in committed unions including marriages without regard to the gender of the partners. . . .**
All persons need the ministry and guidance of the church in their struggles for human fulfillment, as well as the spiritual and emotional care of a fellowship that enables reconciling relationships with God, with others, and with self. The United Methodist Church does not condone the practice of homosexuality and consider this practice incompatible with Christian Teaching. We affirm that God's grace is available to all, and we will seek to live together in Christian community. We implore families and churches not to reject or condemn lesbian and gay members and friends. We commit ourselves to be in ministry for and with all persons.
- Plenary vote for rejection: 763 for, 38 against. **Petition [80028](#), [80029](#), [80039](#), [80055](#), [80056](#), [80072](#), [80454](#), [80797](#), [80842](#), [80846](#), [80901](#), [80999](#), [81030](#), [81031](#), [81033](#), [81053](#), [81075](#), [81094](#), [81123](#), [81325](#), [81356](#), [81357](#), [81358](#), [81381](#), [81496](#), [81532](#).**
Homosexuality (80454-C2-¶161.G)
Amend ¶161.G as follows:
...Homosexual persons no less than heterosexual persons are individuals of sacred worth. All persons need the ministry and guidance of the church in their struggles for human fulfillment, as well as the spiritual and emotional care of a fellowship that enables reconciling relationships with God, with others, and with self. The United Methodist Church does not condone the practice of homosexuality and consider this practice incompatible with Christian teaching. **Many United Methodists consider the practice**

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of homosexuality to be incompatible with Christian teaching. Others do not consider this necessarily incompatible with Christian teaching if practiced in committed monogamous relationships and in conformity with the church's other teachings concerning human sexuality. We affirm that God's grace is available to all, and we will seek to live together in Christian community. We implore families and churches not to reject or condemn lesbian and gay members and friends. We commit ourselves to be in ministry for and with all persons¹....

- Plenary vote for rejection: for 763, against 38. **Petition 81030.** [80028](#), [80029](#), [80039](#), [80055](#), [80056](#), [80072](#), [80454](#), [80797](#), [80842](#), [80846](#), [80901](#), [80999](#), [81030](#), [81031](#), [81033](#), [81053](#), [81075](#), [81094](#), [81123](#), [81325](#), [81356](#), [81357](#), [81358](#), [81381](#), [81496](#), [81532](#) .

Sexual Relationships (81030-C2-¶161.G)

Amend ¶161.G as follows:

G) Human Sexuality-We recognize ...

Homosexual persons no less than heterosexual persons are individuals of sacred worth. All persons need the ministry and guidance of the church in their struggles for human fulfillment, as well as the spiritual and emotional care of a fellowship that enables reconciling relationships with God, with others, and with self. The United Methodist Church does not condone sexual relationships outside the bonds of a faithful, loving and committed relationship between two persons; marriage, where legally possible the practice of homosexuality and consider this practice incompatible with Christian teaching. We affirm that God's grace is available to all, and we will seek to live together in Christian community. We implore families and churches not to reject or condemn lesbian and gay members and friends. We commit ourselves to be in ministry for and with all persons.¹

Rationale

- 1. This would make clear we disapprove of all promiscuous relationships, whether between heterosexual or homosexual persons.**
- 2. It would apply to all persons, whether of heterosexual or homosexual orientation, and would lift up how hurtful promiscuous relationships are. It would affirm all of our people in faithful, loving relationships.**

2011:

- Reverend Amy DeLong put on trial for being a “self-avowed practicing homosexual” and for performing a same-gender wedding.
- Between 2008 and 2012, Episcopalians, ELCA, and Presbyterians opened their doors, their ordinations, and their marriage vows to all persons regardless of sexual orientation.

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2012: INCOMPATIBILITY CLAUSE UPHELD, PROTESTS ENSUE

- “More than a dozen U.S. annual conferences are petitioning General Conference on the church’s stance and statements on homosexuality. More than half urge delegates either to remove discriminatory language from or add inclusive language to the Social Principles. Others propose removing bans on clergy performing same-gender marriage or civil unions or holding those ceremonies at United Methodist churches. Some would remove prohibitions against practicing homosexuals being certified as clergy candidates, ordained or appointed in the church. At least one annual conference seeks to uphold the current language regarding homosexuality. The General Board of Church and Society is petitioning to strike two statements from the Social Principles: “The United Methodist Church does not condone the practice of homosexuality and considers this practice incompatible with Christian teaching;” and “Although all persons are sexual beings whether or not they are married, sexual relations are affirmed only with the covenant of monogamous, heterosexual marriage.” The petition seeks to add the statement, “As a denomination, we are conflicted regarding homosexual expressions of human sexuality.”” (Quote from <http://www.umc.org/who-we-are/general-conference-2012-major-legislative-issues>)

- Legislative committee recommends non-concurrence: 63 for, 10 against. 12 abstain. Rejected in favor of ¶341. **Petition 20998. Allow Ceremonies (20998-MH-¶341.6)**

Amend ¶341.6 as follows:

6. Ceremonies that celebrate homosexual unions ~~shall not~~ may be conducted by our ministers and ~~shall not~~ may be conducted in our churches.

- Plenary vote for adoption: 889 for, 20 against. **Petition 21051. Broadening the Circle (21051-CB-¶162)**

Amend ¶ 162 as follows:

¶ 162 Social Principles – The Social Community

The rights and privileges a society bestows upon or withholds from those who comprise it indicate the relative esteem in which that society holds particular persons and groups of persons. We affirm all persons as equally valuable in the sight of God. We therefore work toward societies in which each person’s value is recognized, maintained, and strengthened. We support the basic rights of all persons to equal access to housing, education, communication, employment, medical care, legal redress for grievances, and physical protection. We deplore acts of hate or violence against groups or persons based on race, color, national origin, ethnicity, age, gender, disability, status, economic

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condition, sexual orientation, gender identity, or religious affiliation, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religious affiliation, or economic status. Our respect for the inherent dignity of all persons leads us to call for the recognition, protection, and implementation of the principles of The Universal Declaration of Human Rights so that communities and individuals may claim and enjoy their universal, indivisible, and inalienable rights.

- Legislative committee recommends non-concurrence: 44 for, 34 against. Unsupported in favor of ¶341. **Petition 21112. Celebration of Same Gender Marriage or Civil Union (21112-MH-¶341.6)**

¶ 341.6 is amended as follows:

Ceremonies that celebrate homosexual unions shall not be conducted by our ministers and shall not be conducted in our churches. Notwithstanding the foregoing, in those civil jurisdictions where homosexual persons have been granted the right to same gender marriage or civil union, ceremonies celebrating those marriages or unions may be conducted in our churches and by our ministers, the decision being the right and responsibility of the pastor.

- Legislative committee recommends non-concurrence: 27 for, 20 against, 1 abstain. Recommend to adopt. **Petition 21054. Chargeable Offenses (21054-JA-¶2702.1)** Amend ¶ 2702.1.a and .b as follows:

¶ 2702. 1. A bishop, clergy member of an annual conference (¶ 369), local pastor, clergy on honorable or administrative location, or diaconal minister may be tried when charged (subject to the statute of limitations in (¶ 2702.4)* with one or more of the following offenses:

(a) immorality including but not limited to infidelity in committed, monogamous relationships not being celibate in singleness or not faithful in a heterosexual marriage;**

(b) practices declared by The United Methodist Church to be incompatible with Christian teachings, including but not limited to: being a self-avowed practicing homosexual; or conducting ceremonies which celebrate homosexual unions; or performing same-sex wedding ceremonies;**

- Plenary vote: 368 for-572 against. Petition 21032. **Human Sexuality (21032-CB-¶161.F)**

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Delete current ¶161.F and replace with the following:

We recognize that sexuality is God's good gift to all persons. We believe persons may be fully human only when that gift is acknowledged and affirmed by themselves, the church, and society. We call all persons to the disciplined, responsible fulfillment of themselves, others, and society in the stewardship of this gift. We also recognize our limited understanding of this complex gift and encourage the medical, theological, and social science disciplines to combine in a determined effort to understand human sexuality more completely. United Methodists, along with other Christians, have struggled to find principles for applying traditional teachings to contemporary understandings of human sexuality.

We recognize that sexuality is part of the larger human mystery, to be received and acknowledged in grateful responsibility. We reject all sexual expressions that damage or destroy the humanity God has given us. We deplore all forms of the commercialization and exploitation of sexual relationship, with the consequent cheapening and degradation of human personality. We call for strict global enforcement of laws prohibiting the sexual exploitation or use of children by adults and encourage efforts to hold perpetrators legally and financially responsible. We call for adequate protection, guidance, and counseling for children thus abused. We believe that the Church family should support all families in providing age-appropriate education regarding sexuality to children, youth, and adults. We challenge all members of community of faith to commitment, integrity, and fidelity in their sexual relationships.

We know that all are God's children and are of sacred worth; yet we have been, and remain, divided regarding homosexual expressions of human sexuality. Faithful, thoughtful people who have grappled with this issue deeply disagree with one another; yet all seek a faithful witness. We continue to reason and pray together with faith and hope that the Holy Spirit will soon bring reconciling to our community of faith. The fire in our disagreements points to a deeper human mystery than we knew. We believe that the Spirit has brought our collective conscience to acknowledge this mystery more honestly, and to make our claims with greater humility before God and our neighbors. We therefore ask the Church, United Methodist and others, and the world, to refrain from judgment regarding homosexual persons and practices until the Spirit leads us to new insight. In the meantime, let us seek to welcome, know, forgive, and love one another as Christ has accepted us that God maybe glorified through everything in our lives.

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