

**RESOLUTION OF THE NORTH CENTRAL JURISDICTION  
JULY 2016**

WHEREAS, the church, the *ekklesia*, the Body of Christ exists as covenantal relationships of diverse people with various gifts and in unique contexts. We are not a corporation that legislates relationships and divides assets. It is by living and working together that we witness to the redemptive love of Jesus Christ;

WHEREAS, Jesus prayed for us to "be one" with him and with each other so that the world would know him (John 17:20-23). John Wesley reminds us that we may love alike even when we don't think alike, to be of one heart even if we are not of one mind. (sermon on 'Catholic Spirit") We commit to a unity "founded on the theological understanding that through faith in Jesus Christ we are made members-in-common of the one body of Christ. Christian unity is not an option; it is a gift to be received and expressed." (Paragraph 105, The Book of Discipline) The Council of Bishops wrote and the 2016 General Conference approved a call for "unity of our mission...while allowing for differing expressions as a global church";

WHEREAS, the current landscape in the United Methodist church includes a wide range of traditional and evolving Wesleyan theological perspectives around ~~issues of~~ human sexuality and a variety of ways that these perspectives inform contextual ministry with LGBTQ+ people (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer);

WHEREAS, the vast majority of our church deeply longs to remain united amidst these diverse perspectives and practices and to make space for clergy, laity, churches and conferences to live out their call to share the Gospel in ways that are faithful to the leading of the Spirit and their conscience;

WHEREAS our Council of Bishops brought much needed leadership to our denomination during a crucial season through the recommendation and subsequent General Conference approval of a special commission, asking us "to affirm (our) own commitment to maintaining and strengthening the unity of the church" (Council of Bishops Statement approved by 2016 General Conference);

WHEREAS, our theological task calls us to be neither indifferent towards truth nor to indulgently tolerate error, but to be aware of the limitations of our knowledge and fervent in our trust that the Holy Spirit will guide us (Paragraph 105, The Book of Discipline). During this season of discernment, "we will continue to explore options to help the church live in grace with one another - including ways to avoid further complaints, trials, and harm while we uphold the Discipline" (Council of Bishops Statement ratified by 2016 General Conference);

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that during this season of prayer and discernment as a church, we, the laity and clergy of the North Central Jurisdiction, will claim our

theological mandate and in the name of Jesus Christ will prayerfully and actively "work within our diversity while exercising patience and forbearance with one another." (BOD -Para 105) We will live more deeply into our Wesleyan covenantal relationships and practice grace and mercy towards one another. We commit to living out our practices of reconciliation from Matthew 18:15-17 and will seek deeper relationship with those who do not share our perspectives, rather than resorting to complaints as a first or even second response;

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THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that while the special commission is in deliberation, we the laity and clergy of the North Central Jurisdiction call upon the North Central College of Bishops and the Council of Bishops (1) to cultivate a spirit within their cabinets and clergy sessions that treats all clergy respectfully and fairly whether their views are traditional, progressive, or indifferent on matters of human sexuality and (2) to handle human sexuality complaints ~~without further harm or trials.~~

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that we, the laity and clergy of the North Central Jurisdiction, call on the Special Commission to make recommendations to the General Conference that will allow the diversity of theological perspectives to exist in our denomination and make space for a variety of contextually relevant ministries around ~~issues~~ <sup>conversations</sup> of human sexuality in congregations and conferences as the Holy Spirit leads.