

Friends,

Thanks to Mary for sharing concerns she is hearing. I wanted to send everyone some brief info that may be useful in responding to folks' concerns in anticipation of the vote.

It remains to be seen whether the DS will allow discussion and amendments at the time of the vote. We will keep everyone posted on that.

The question to be voted on has been put forth, with only minor clerical clarifications, since the survey early this year. By the time of the last governance board meeting (in July), the vote and question had already been planned and advertised. This was part of the basis for not changing the proposal at that point in time.

The point of this measure, from its conception, is to reach out to the LGBTQ+ community. The original impetus for creating a welcoming statement naming a welcome regardless of "sexual orientation and gender identity" was that adopting such a statement is what is required in order to be listed with RMN as an LGBTQ+ welcoming congregation.

The reason that "sexual orientation and gender identity" is listed in the welcoming statement is that the Methodist Church officially discriminates against THIS GROUP. (Other marginalized groups are welcomed in the statement, but no other group has this claim to fame.) A Methodist church simply stating a welcome to "everyone" would of course be presumed to reflect that discriminatory stance (a "welcome" to gays as sinners).

An amendment removing the list of welcomed groups, and/or removing being listed with RMN, may garner more votes by removing controversy, but at the cost of the actual point of this proposal, which has 82% support of our congregation as it is currently written.

"What will be the position of blessing a commitment to each other--NOT a marriage?" We are all eager to know the answer to this and all other questions about how we would choose to live this out together as a church family!! The current proposal is simply to become officially welcoming and accepting, and intentionally leaves decisions about weddings, gay clergy, etc., for future consideration. The proposal disagrees with the Book of Discipline statement that "homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching", but does not in itself break any current church laws.

*Thanks for your continued support and attention to this matter. **Remember that this vote needs 75% support to pass!!***

Blessings,

Debbie