

## **SURVEY RESULTS AND ANSWERS TO YOUR QUESTIONS ABOUT THE CONGREGATIONAL VOTE ON WELCOMING THE LGBTQ+ COMMUNITY:**

### **Proposed Welcoming Statement:**

**We, the people of First United Methodist Church West Lafayette, welcome everyone, through all life's stages, with arms that are open, respectful, and loving. And by everyone, we mean regardless of a person's sexual orientation, gender identity, nationality, race, ability, bank balance, or background. As a Reconciling Congregation, we welcome you into our church family, for it is by joining hands that we support one another and share our faith journey together. Whoever you are, and wherever you are in your spiritual journey, you are welcome here.**

### **Question to be voted on by FUMC members:**

**Should FUMC adopt this Welcoming Statement, and be included on the Reconciling Ministries Network list of LGBTQ+ welcoming congregations?**

### **SURVEY RESULTS (Spring 2018):**

125 survey responses: 27% of members responding      81% yes / lean yes      17.5% no / lean no

- The guidelines we have been following (Building an Inclusive Church: A Welcoming Toolkit, [welcomingresources.org/welcomingtoolkit.pdf](http://welcomingresources.org/welcomingtoolkit.pdf)) suggest that if the exploratory survey results are 75-85% positive or higher, "it is a sign that your Welcoming Process is ready for the formal vote."

### **Why do we need to talk about LGBTQ+ welcoming?**

This conversation is in line with the latest developments in the United Methodist Church (UMC). The UMC is very actively working on this topic. Many do not agree with our Book of Discipline statement that "homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching", and the UMC discrimination against LGBTQ+ people, including our pastors, who may not be gay or conduct same-sex weddings.

### **Why don't we just wait until the UMC decides what is happening denomination-wide?**

**I**f our congregation believes that it is right to accept LGBTQ+ people as not inherently sinful in their homosexuality, then we might like to take that position officially and publicly, thereby implicitly adding our voice to the conversation as to how this topic should be handled by the UMC.

### **We are already welcoming to LGBTQ+ people. Why do we need to adopt a statement about it?**

The position of the UMC (as stated in the Book of Discipline) is that homosexuality is sinful. In that light, the current "welcome" is technically a welcome as sinners. If our congregation wishes to accept LGBTQ+ people as not inherently sinful in their homosexuality, then we might like to state that clearly and publicly. The LGBTQ community generally suffers discrimination from Christians. If we believe this is wrong, then we are called as Christians to actively reach out in love with a clear message of acceptance.

**There are many other people or issues we could focus on and/or include in the Welcoming Statement. Why call out certain groups?**

The Welcoming Statement lists many groups and is intended to include all people. We seek to welcome all, and the list is explicitly just some examples. The idea is to list groups that have historically been marginalized. FUMC could and should do more to embrace other groups, and it is hoped that a new group or task force will address this.

**How can we ensure that people who don't agree with each other on this issue will all feel welcome and be respectful?**

Both those who support adopting the Welcoming Statement, and those who do not, have shared that they would accept those of differing opinions but were concerned about being accepted. It is important to realize that members have always held differing opinions on this matter, and can continue to be together respectfully as we always have, even as we consider taking an action that is supported by the large majority of our members.

**What does it mean to be listed with Reconciling Ministries Network (RMN)?**

RMN maintains a listing of accepting UMC groups and congregations. Being listed with Reconciling Ministries Network is simply a way to reach out to LGBTQ+ people who are seeking an accepting place of worship. We are not obligated to any other actions with RMN.

**Will this adopting the Welcoming Statement and being listed with RMN affect our membership in the UMC?**

No. Adopting the proposed welcoming statement and being listed with Reconciling Ministries Network does not affect our relationship with the Conference or the UMC.

**What will happen after this? How will FUMC be affected?**

We will find our path together as far as how we live this out as a congregation. That includes how we invite and include the LGBTQ+ community, and whether we choose to conduct gay weddings or call gay clergy.