



May 1, 2024

The postponed 2020 General Conference voted May 1 to remove The United Methodist Church’s ban on the ordination of clergy who are “self-avowed practicing homosexuals” — a prohibition that dates to 1984.

The vote on the consent calendar was 692-51, with approval at 93%. Also on the consent calendar, delegates voted that superintendents are not to penalize clergy or churches for holding— or refraining from holding — same-sex weddings. [Learn more in this UM News article...](#)

Following the vote, Bishop Sue said, “I am grateful that The United Methodist Church has removed provisions from church law that have done great harm to a group of people made in the image of God and called by God to ministry. I am also grateful that our *Book of Discipline* is now written in a way that includes and welcomes all people, whether they characterize themselves as progressive, centrist, or traditionalist. We remain one in service to Christ, sent forth in mission in his name, as agents of his amazing grace and sacrificial love.”

Here are talking points from the VAUMC to assist you in your communications about this General Conference action:

- This is a historic change in The United Methodist Church that allows the Church to be a more welcoming space. **All are welcome.**

- This change allows clergy and local churches the freedom of conscience. A clergyperson can choose whether or not to perform any wedding. Local church trustees will be given authority to decide about whether or not their building can be used for weddings on a case by case basis. **All are welcome.**
- It is significant that 93% of the body approved this change as a part of a consent calendar that had no debate in plenary session. This vote means that differing opinions within The United Methodist Church feel comfortable making this choice for the Church. This provides latitude around the world for space for individuals called to ministry. **All are welcome.**
- The United Methodist Church is made up of progressive, moderate, and traditionalist viewpoints, with many people not living in one space exclusively. **All are welcome.**
- United Methodists leaders and United Methodists realize this news brings great joy to persons and groups who have been greatly harmed by the Church for decades and with the passing of the Traditional Plan at the 2019 Special Session of General Conference. There is also a recognition that United Methodists who hold more traditionalist viewpoints of Scripture may be experiencing some uncertainty right now. **All are welcome.**
- This change will not make local churches or clergy go against their conscience or understanding of Scripture. **All are welcome.**

- This does not change the mission of the local church that is serving the needs of their communities. This change allows the Church to live more fully into its mission of welcoming all people. **All are welcome.**
- This is not the last piece of legislation related to human sexuality that the General Conference will consider this week. **All are welcome.**

If you take nothing else away from this day, please take this: In The United Methodist Church, all are welcome.