



Dear NC Conference Officials,

This year, in response to the unjust discrimination enacted against our LGBTQ+ siblings at the General Conference of The United Methodist Church, our congregation embarked upon a self-study and discernment process around issues of inclusion of LGBTQ+ persons. Church Council formed a Task Force on Full Inclusion, and this task force affirmed four realities present in our congregation:

1. First, Duke Memorial is United Methodist, shaped and formed by a United Methodist heritage. As such, we long to be passionate followers of Jesus Christ, committed to a Wesleyan vision of Christianity, anchored in scripture and informed by tradition, experience, and reason as we live lives of personal piety and social holiness.
2. Second, Duke Memorial UMC is committed to the inclusion and welcome of all. We recognize our baptismal vow to resist evil, injustice, and oppression in whatever forms they present themselves. The prevailing sentiment in the congregation, expressed in our welcome statement, is that we resist this injustice in all forms and toward all people and build a church which affirms the full participation of all ages, nations, races, classes, cultures, gender identities, sexual orientations, and abilities.
3. Third, the commitments of Church Council and the results of our congregational survey indicate deep dissatisfaction with the traditional plan enacted at General Conference 2019. While acknowledging individuals among us who disagree, the congregational responses indicate that we reject the Traditional Plan approved at General Conference 2019 as inconsistent with the gospel of Jesus Christ and wish to resist its implementation by working towards full inclusion in our local context and to the extent of our influence.
4. Finally, our congregation is concerned that current policies of the United Methodist Church are harming LGBTQ+ persons. A majority (81%) of our congregation sees these policies as harmful. Therefore, we will work to eliminate discriminatory language and the restrictions and penalties in the Discipline regarding LGBTQ persons. We affirm the sacred worth of LGBTQ persons, celebrate their gifts, and commit to being in ministry together.

As a result of these commitments, our Church Council adopted a resolution to pay apportionments in full at the end of the calendar year in which they are due (rather than in quarterly installments) and to include a letter of protest against discriminatory policies with the payment. The Council also resolved that apportionment funds would be placed in an interest-bearing checking account and interest on this account would be used to fund LGBTQ+ missions for the 2020 calendar year.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Frank Brown in black ink.

Frank Brown  
Chair, Church Council  
Duke Memorial UMC

Handwritten signature of Rev. Stuart Harrell in black ink.

Rev. Stuart Harrell  
Chair, Full Inclusion Task Force  
Duke Memorial UMC

Handwritten signature of Rev. Heather Rodrigues in black ink.

Rev. Heather Rodrigues  
Lead Pastor  
Duke Memorial UMC