

Debbie Givan on behalf of the Everyone Means Everyone group

Proposed Motion:

A Welcoming Task Force (or Welcoming Exploratory Committee) will be established to carry out a process of study and discernment regarding inclusion of LGBTQ+ persons at FUMC. The task force will consist of members of the Everyone Means Everyone class, as well as other congregational members who are supporters and proponents of the process. The task force will write a Welcoming Statement to show others that we as a congregation have committed to being truly welcoming to the LGBTQ+ community. Once the task force has confirmed broad congregational support for formally adopting the Welcoming Statement, a congregational vote to do so will be proposed to the Governance Board by the task force.

Background:

The United Methodist Book of Discipline states that "The practice of homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching" (Paragraph 304.3). Many United Methodist congregations are choosing to disagree by formally adopting statements of nonjudgmental inclusion of LGBTQ+ persons. The Reconciling Ministries Network is the umbrella organization for this movement within the United Methodist Church.

Everyone Means Everyone:

Here at FUMC, a grassroots group ("Everyone Means Everyone") has been opening this conversation within our congregation. The guidance for this effort is the process detailed in the publication [Building an Inclusive Church: A Welcoming Toolkit](#) (attached, and/or see link), recommended by the Reconciling Ministries Network. One-on-one conversations, discussion forums, and educational opportunities have been held in an effort to begin to hear the thoughts and concerns of our congregation on the idea of LGBTQ+ inclusion.

Official recognition of an exploratory Welcoming Task Force is a key step in bringing this heretofore grass roots inquiry fully into the consciousness and current life of the congregation, as an officially sanctioned process of study and discernment.

Looking Ahead:

The task force will provide a variety of educational opportunities and forums for dialogue. The goal will be to connect with, hear from, and address the concerns of all segments of the congregation. The task force will write a Welcoming Statement to show others that we as a congregation have committed to being fully welcoming to the LGBTQ+ community. Eventually, an exploratory survey will be conducted to ascertain whether the congregation is ready to formally adopt the Welcoming Statement. A vote will be proposed to the Governance Board once the task force has confirmed broad congregational support for formally adopting the Welcoming Statement. Should the Welcoming Statement be adopted, further work will continue as we then live out our joint vision.