



First United Methodist Church

Points to Ponder

Why Now?

The Reconciling Team has heard this question often since initiating a conversation about human sexuality at FUMC several months ago. Those asking the question usually point to the fact that the UMC denomination has a process in progress that will release some findings this spring and then full consideration of the alternatives and a vote will be held at a special conference in 2019. The implication of the question seems to be that this issue will be resolved- one way or the other- no later than 2019, so why even talk about it now.

The main reason for the Reconciling Team's initiative now is to educate the FUMC congregation about the challenges that LGBTQ Christians or seekers face. These challenges include alienation, humiliation and intolerance. These challenges will not be eliminated by any decision that is made in 2019 by the UMC conference. These problems are a result of members of our church family being uninformed about the LGBTQ community.

This lack of understanding produces insensitivity and intolerance, even if unintentional. As we have heard in more than one of our information sessions, you cannot force people to love. This couldn't be more true. And, if the 2019 conference adopts a change in the Book of Discipline, removing the language that restricts practicing homosexuals from full participation in the UMC, many individual members of the UMC will still be uninformed, insensitive and intolerant. If the conference adopts no changes, it is still not acceptable to be intolerant or insensitive to any of God's children. In either event, the purpose of the Reconciling Team is still needed.

That is "why now." Please be watchful for future events planned by the Reconciling Team to help increase your understanding and awareness. Our goal is to help all members of the FUMC family become more comfortable fulfilling their responsibility to love their neighbors- even those who are LGBTQ- as themselves.

- Doug Sell, Sr.