



Bookwalter United Methodist Church

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June 2024

Reverend Stephen K. Doyal, Pastor

Bailey Hueser, Choir Director
Todd Spangler, Pianist

Edie Jo Hall, Children's Director
Taylor Stephens, Youth Director

*Sharing God's love with our neighbors,
inviting them to share in the joy of Jesus Christ.*

ARTICLE

The following is what I shared from the pulpit on May 5th and I thought you might find it helpful in print:

The 2024 General Conference neutralized language about weddings and ordination by removing sections in The Book of Discipline that prohibit persons in same-gender relationships from being ordained and same-gender weddings from taking place in our churches or being officiated by United Methodist clergy. This takes us back to pre-1972 language in The Book of Discipline.

The conference additionally added protective language, ensuring no clergy can be compelled to perform or prohibited from performing any marriage.

Bishop Debra Wallace-Padgett Note: These changes in our Book of Discipline do not signal that we are suddenly all on the same page in our understandings about human sexuality. Nor do the changes erase the pain that people across the theological spectrum and our LGBTQ brothers and sisters have experienced in our 50+ years of conflict.

However, it provides space in The United Methodist Church for persons with differing experiences and theological convictions to stand.

What does this mean for the Holston Conference?

- Pastors will have the right to choose what weddings to perform.
- Local church Boards of Trustees will have the right to determine which weddings to host.
- Persons are not prohibited from ordination solely due to being in a same-gender relationship.
- The Conference Board of Ordained Ministries and District Committees on Ministry will continue to have authority to recruit, examine, confirm the calling of and discern the qualifications of those to be credentialed into licensed and ordained ministry.

- The Bishop and Cabinet will continue to use careful and prayerful consultation in the appointment process, with the goal of clergy/church matches that result in effective ministry.

I will add my own summary of that:

Pastors can decide on their own whether or not they want to perform or supervise a same sex wedding. No one will be compelled to do so but if they do, they will not face losing their credentials or being ousted from the church any longer.

Churches will not be forced to host same-sex weddings. They will not be forced to accept a gay clergy person. They will have the opportunity to welcome these if they collectively decide together that's what they want to do.

From a personal standpoint, I think most of you know my circumstances. If this had happened two years ago, I would have been able to perform the ceremony for my daughter. I've never tried to force my opinion on anyone else but that's where I am. I am thankful for this change so that no one else will have to experience the kind of pain I felt for being unable to be there for my daughter as she wished.

Steve

OUTREACH MEETING

The Outreach Team will meet on Thursday evening, June 13 at 6:30 PM. We will meet in person in the Chapel Class as well as offer an online Zoom option.

COFFEE HOUSE CHURCH

We will have worship in the Fellowship Hall on Sunday, June 30th at 11:00 a.m. Our guest speaker has yet to be determined.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Please be in prayer for all the pastors and delegates to Holston Annual Conference at Lake Junaluska from June 9-12.

HANDS ON MISSION

Both the Smoky Mountain and Tennessee Valley Districts were asked to put together 400 Food Buckets from each District for the 2024 Holston Annual Conference Hands-On Mission Project to Zimbabwe. Bookwalter collected enough to send 12 buckets to Africa. Thank you!

YOUTH FUNDRAISER THANK YOU'S

The young people had two fundraisers last month and both were successful. Between the Bake Sale, Spaghetti Lunch, and sponsorships they collected \$2,450. This all goes towards the goal of sending seven youth to Senior High Assembly at the end of June. THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!



Youth Bake Sale



Some satisfied diners at the Spaghetti Lunch