

Dakotas Conference  
The United Methodist Church

**For Immediate Release**  
June 11, 2019

### **Dakotas United Methodists affirm resolution regarding LGBTQ persons**

Bismarck: The 26th session of the Dakotas Annual Conference was held June 6-8, 2019, at the Bismarck Event Center in Bismarck, North Dakota. More than 500 attendees, consisting of voting members and guests, considered various items of business including a resolution related to LGBTQ persons.

Richard Wahlstrom, a member of Canyon Lake United Methodist Church in Rapid City, South Dakota, brought forth a resolution to eliminate discriminatory language, restrictions, and penalties in the Book of Discipline regarding LGBTQ persons. Voting members of the 2019 Dakotas Annual Conference affirmed the resolution by a vote of 220 to 136. The resolution states:

*We the members of the Dakotas Annual Conference, come together today in love with God and each other. We pray that the Holy Spirit will guide us to embrace diversity and differences of opinion, while liberating individual members to be fully themselves before God.*

*With that in mind:*

- 1. We affirm the sacred worth of all persons, including our LGBTQ siblings, celebrate their gifts, and commit to being in ministry with them. And therefore,*
- 2. We will work to eliminate all discriminatory language, restrictions, and penalties in the Discipline regarding LGBTQ persons.*

The General Conference, the governing body for the United Methodist denomination, convened in St. Louis in February for a special called session. By a vote of 438 to 384, the General Conference, adopted the Traditional Plan that strengthens enforcement of bans on “self-avowed practicing” gay clergy and same-sex weddings. The decision maintains the current language, in the Book of Discipline, that homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching, while adding further restrictions and penalties related to clergy who violate these restrictions.

Bishop Bruce R. Ough, resident bishop for the Dakotas-Minnesota Area of The United Methodist Church, recognizes that there is hurt and differences among many within the world-wide denomination and the Dakotas Conference.

“For many, the actions of the 2019 General Conference in February, has re-awakened the hurt experienced by those in the LGBTQIA+ community. My heart is heavy as I acknowledge and lament this harm. Others welcomed the affirmation of traditional marriage and current language

related to human sexuality. There are differing responses reflecting the depth of our division as a denomination,” Ough said.

The General Conference of The United Methodist Church will convene in Minneapolis, Minnesota, May 5-15, 2020. Groups have been meeting to discuss the future of The United Methodist Church and possible proposals to the 2020 General Conference.

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