

## Handout 3b

### Matthews United Methodist Church A Way Forward/One Church Plan (pp 11-25 of UMC Report)

August 2018

#### Theological and Biblical Foundations- (pp 12-15)

- unity (John 17:20-26, I Corinthians 12-13)
- grace and holiness (Romans 5, Mark 12)
- connection and mission (Philippians 2, Matthew 28)
- convicted humility (1 Corinthians 12-14)

#### Summary

- creates space to annual conferences in various parts of the world to practice ministry according to their national or regional contexts with the connectional autonomy of the adaptable portions of *The Book of Discipline*
- removes the language from *The Book of Discipline* used in the United States that restricts pastors and churches from conducting same gender weddings and annual conferences from ordaining self-avowed practicing homosexual persons
- provides generous unity...gives conferences, local churches and pastors the flexibility to uniquely reach their missional context without disbanding the connectional nature of the United Methodist Church
- no requirement for local churches, annual conferences, or pastors to participate in a vote that divides, segments or separates
- no annual conference, bishops, congregations or pastors are compelled to act contrary to their convictions
- maintains current leadership structure of the UMC
- offers greater freedom to many who desire change, but do not want to violate *The Book of Discipline*
- grants space for traditionalists to continue as they currently do, space for progressives to exercise freely a more complete ministry with LGBTQ persons, and space for all United Methodists to continue to coexist without disrupting their ministries

The One Church Model honors the perspective of United Methodists who believe that our current impasse over marriage and ordination of homosexual persons does not rise to the level of a church dividing issue.

While some may see dividing the church as a function of greater holiness or righteousness, others see it as a sign of the brokenness of the body of Christ.

Those who support the One Church Plan...hold their convictions deeply, but are open to the possibility that God is doing something new in our midst. While all may not exercise new practices allowed by this plan related to marriage and ordination, they acknowledge that they share in common a sexual ethic framed by celibacy in singleness and faithfulness in marriage. They do not wish to stand in the way of the prompting of the Holy Spirit found in so many of their brothers and sisters in Christ who will embrace these opportunities.

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### Local Churches

- not required to vote
- some may need to rewrite their wedding policies to either explicitly allow or explicitly prohibit same gender weddings in their facility
- could continue current practice
- pastors who want to perform a same gender wedding outside of church property could do so based on their own conscience and in consultation with church leaders...does not require a vote
- in annual conferences where the ordination of practicing homosexuals is allowed, local churches may indicate their preference to receive or not receive these clergy through the use of a covenant established with their Bishop

### Clergy

- freedom to exercise individual conscience...Bishop/Cabinet could take those convictions into account throughout the appointment and transfer process
- those who are uncomfortable with the new policies of their current annual conference will be supported in their desire to transfer
- LGBTQ candidates who are in an annual conference that does not ordain self-avowed practicing homosexuals could request a transfer to another annual conference

### Annual Conferences

- no annual conference would have to vote on this matter
- allows for the greatest level of continued connection among annual conferences
- Boards of Ordained Ministry or annual conference clergy sessions who wish to ordain LGBTQ clergy or wish to add language to their Standing Rules to restrict ordination could enter into a discernment process with the Board of Ordained Ministry in consultation with the bishop and Cabinet
- the bishop and Cabinet could continue to use clergy and church profiles to understand the context of the local church in making appropriate appointments

### Other

- does not appear to require changes in the UMC constitution
- if passed, it can take effect on January 1, 2020
- to allow annual conferences, central conferences, pastors, congregations and other connected bodies the opportunity to acclimate to the nuances of this plan, it is recommended that the UMC take until December 31, 2020 to fully implement this plan
- if there are local churches and clergy who wish to leave the United Methodist Church, they could do so through the current *Book of Discipline* processes with grace