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For Immediate Release

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Foundry UMC laments ruling by Bishop Easterling, church member not advanced as candidate for Commissioning

Baltimore – Late this evening, Bishop LaTrelle Miller Easterling, Baltimore Washington Conference of The United Methodist Church ruled that Foundry member T.C. Morrow and another candidate are not eligible to be voted at today's Clergy Session of the Baltimore-Washington Annual Conference. The BWC Board of Ordained Ministry had put forth Morrow's name to be voted upon for commissioning as a Deacon. Morrow remains in the candidacy process.

We have said this before and will continue to do so. Until all of God's children are deemed compatible by our denomination, we name as incompatible with Christian teaching the discriminatory policies which criminalize ministry with LGBTQ persons and their families including the denial of Holy Marriage, and rejects LGBTQ persons who are called and gifted for ordained ministry.

We rejoice with many across our Conference that 16 individuals will be commissioned and 13 ordained during Thursday's ordination service. And yet, we are disappointed and saddened that the clergy session did not support the entirety of the Board of Ordained Ministry's recommendation.

We mourn. As T.C. Morrow's home church, we witness her faithfulness and her gifts and graces for ministry. We affirm that T.C. is called by our Creator into ordained ministry. We firmly stand by her as she continues to faithfully respond and serve.

As we lament, we witness hope within the church and those stepping into leadership roles within it. During the Service of Ordination, Foundry's Deaconess Irene DeMaris will be commissioned at our annual conference. Hers is another voice advocating for full inclusion. There are countless other voices speaking up in our congregation, within our annual conference and around the broad connection of the church. Our work is not done. We will not tire. We continue to persist for justice within our denomination.

Rev. Ginger Gaines-Cirelli, Senior Pastor, said:

“As a colleague and trusted confidant, our clergy team proudly welcomes T.C. in worship, teaching, and pastoral care leadership roles in the church. We value her giftedness for ministry. We pray for the day when our clergy colleagues will be bold in their witness and strong support of LGBTQ people. We continue to call on our denomination to stop the damage being done to LGBTQ people and our church.

Gwen Williamson, President of Foundry’s Management Board (church council), said:
“We at Foundry UMC see and are blessed by T.C.’s gifts for ministry. Yet, as a congregation, we also see the ongoing harm caused by The United Methodist Church’s discriminatory policies that prevent LGBTQ people from full inclusion in the life of the church. We know that, as is oft quoted, justice delayed is justice denied. That is why Foundry UMC will continue its efforts pushing for The United Methodist Church to fully include all people, including LGBTQ persons, in the life and ministry of the church.”

Ann Brown Birkel, chair of Foundry’s LGBTQ Inclusion Advocacy Ministry Team, said:
“Foundry UMC continues its strong advocacy for full inclusion of LGBTQ persons in the life and ministry of The United Methodist Church. The Spirit continues to move in our historic church, where we are grounded in our commitment to follow Jesus Christ wherever he leads, including to the 2019 Special General Conference where Foundry will have a large presence witnessing to the gospel message that God loves all people and calls us end all discrimination of any kind.”

T.C. Morrow, Foundry member and certified candidate for ordained ministry in the Baltimore-Washington Conference, said:
“I am as convicted now as ever that God is calling me to continue to put myself forward as a candidate for ordained ministry in The United Methodist Church. I pray above all else for grace and fortitude to be faithful as a disciple of my Savior, Jesus Christ. For any who would ask how they can support me, lifting me in prayer is foremost. Then consider whether you are responding as fully as you can to love God and love your neighbor.”

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