

14 May 2017

### **Pastoral Letter Supporting T.C. Morrow**

Dear Foundry Family,

Many of you know that T.C. Morrow is a faithful member of our beloved Foundry. She has served joyfully and faithfully in various ministries throughout the church and the Baltimore-Washington Annual Conference. T.C. is also a certified candidate for ordination as a Deacon in The United Methodist Church.

On May 10, the Baltimore-Washington Conference of The United Methodist Church Board of Ordained Ministry voted to reverse their previous decision from last year to recommend T.C. Morrow for commissioning as a provisional Deacon. They did affirm T.C.'s faithfulness in serving and fitness for ministry and will continue her as a certified candidate for ordination. What this means is that T.C. will not be presented to the 2017 clergy session by the Board of Ordained Ministry for a vote at this year's Annual Conference. She does retain her current status. The Board has taken this action in response to the recent Judicial Council decision that furthers our denomination's discriminatory law and practice against LGBTQ+ persons. They could have upheld their previous decision to bring T.C. forward this year. They voted not to do so. This decision is a departure from the Board's published policy to recommend candidates regardless of sexual and gender identities and suggests that the Board is not of one mind.

We are deeply saddened and disappointed in this decision. Our sorrow for T.C. and her family extends to our whole church. T.C. and other LGBTQ+ persons, including those living in covenant marriage, have been clearly called and gifted for ordained ministry. In this decision, the Board of Ordained Ministry and the church have refused to accept the gifts and graces clearly evident in T.C. and her ministry. We believe that this decision is profoundly unfair.

We call on the Board of Ordained Ministry to show prophetic leadership by championing the gifts and graces for ministry of LGBTQ+ persons through principled opposition to the discriminatory policies of The United Methodist Church Book of Discipline and we offer our unwavering support as they do so.

We publicly reaffirm our tireless advocacy for full inclusion in The United Methodist Church. We reassert our conviction that The United Methodist Church is on the wrong side of this vital issue. We cannot and will not bend in proclaiming equity and justice for our LGBTQ+ siblings. We accept and celebrate God's call and claim on all of God's beloved people inclusive of gender and sexual identity, culture, race and political persuasions. There is plenty of room at God's table.

We all love our church. It's love that undergirds Foundry's strong advocacy to challenge our denomination's discriminatory laws. We pray for the day The United Methodist Church lives into the full expression of our Baptismal covenantal vow "...to resist evil, injustice, and oppression in whatever forms they present themselves."

As Easter people, trusting in God's timeless will, we know our church will one day embrace the full humanity of our LGBTQ+ siblings. Until that day comes, let us forge ahead confidently and boldly in Biblical Obedience, building up the Kin-dom of God on earth as it is in heaven.

*Beloved, I do not consider that I have made it my own; but this one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus.*

*- Apostle Paul writing to the church in Philippi (Philippians 3: 13-14)*

**Ginger E. Gaines-Cirelli**



Senior Pastor

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