

Update

Number 16

Sunday, September 19, 2010

A revised proposal for performing all marriages at Foundry includes language from the United Methodist Church Constitution that Foundry leaders believe trumps the UMC *Book of Discipline* ban on same-gender ceremonies.

The new "Proposed Policy for Marriage Equality" quotes the UMC Constitution as saying that no conference or other organizational unit in the church "shall be structured so as to exclude any member or any constituent body of the Church because of race, color, national origin, status or economic condition."

The key part of the passage is the

UMC Constitution reference in the marriage equality proposal to put Foundry on solid ground.

"I wanted us to be in the best position to respond to any challenge," Kirk said. Banning same-gender marriage "is not only unethical, it's unconstitutional. You are violating the church Constitution and the public policy of the jurisdiction where the church is located."

Todd Mullins, facilitator of the Foundry Congregational Council, said that citing the *Book of Discipline* without also referencing the UMC Constitution was "kind of leading with our chin. We were making a statement of princi-

Foundry Ties Marriage Vote to UMC Constitution

reference to "status," a term whose meaning seems rather broad.

Foundry member Bill Kirk, who suggested the addition of this language, said that the *Discipline's* prohibition against clergy conducting same-gender marriage vows and hosting the ceremonies in church sanctuaries violates the UMC Constitution because it denies a ministry to some church members.

He said that "status" can apply to sexual orientation, a point he maintains would influence how matters unfold.

"I hope all can agree 'status' covers sexual orientation," Kirk said. "But, this is new ground."

Foundry membership will vote on the marriage policy proposal on Sept. 26 following the 11 AM service. The vote comes after weeks of consideration deemed the Summer of Great Discernment. Last year, the District of Columbia City Council approved same-gender marriages.

Kirk led the effort to include the

ple and leaving out one of the most important principles."

The change to the marriage-equality proposal strengthens the document. "It does recognize that, in fact, what we're doing is consistent with the most controlling legislative material in the church body," Mullins said.

The battle for sexual-identity equality echoes the fight that Kirk, 88, helped lead in the 1960s to integrate African Americans into the Methodist Church. In that effort, Kirk formulated the successful argument that the General Conference had the authority to end church segregation because it was a "distinctly connectional matter."

By 1968, the Methodist Church welcomed African Americans in its pews just before merging with the Evangelical United Brethren Church to become the United Methodist Church.

Achieving sexual-identity rights is another milestone that Kirk wants to
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help the church reach. "We're gradually getting there, but it's a struggle," Kirk said.

By Mark Schoeff Jr., member of Foundry's Resources Council.

News + Events

7 days until the church conference

Next Sunday



Next Sunday, September 26th, the Foundry Congregation will gather for the Church Conference where all present full members will vote on the proposed Policy for Marriage Equality. The Church Conference culminates the Summer of Great Discernment, which has included forums, information and discussions starting in May with the release of a draft policy. The Conference will start at 1 PM with ballot distribution beginning at 12:30 PM. District Superintendent David Argo will convene the Conference, which is expected to last one hour with the vote outcome announced at the conclusion of the Conference. The parking garage will allow Foundry parking pass holders to park until 3 PM.

Listening for God

Foundry will hold a prayer vigil to close its Summer of Great Discernment on Saturday, September 25 at 1 PM, with Dean Snyder preaching, and will conclude when the Church Conference begins. You are invited to participate at Foundry in our chapel, or pray at another location that be suits your needs.

We urge participants to commit to praying for at least 30 minutes, although

you are welcome to sign up for extended periods. A member of Foundry staff will be present at the church throughout the vigil.

If you are interested, register online at www.foundryumc.org or in Fellowship Hall this weekend. If you have additional questions, please email Dee Lowman at dlowman@foundryumc.org or call 202-332-4010.

Food for Discernment

Since many of us will need a snack to make it through the lunch hour Church Conference, a light lunch will be hosted after the 11:00 service in the

Fellowship Hall. Please bring sandwiches, wraps, cookies and fruit to share. When you arrive next Sunday, take your food to the Fellowship Hall.

External Communications After The Vote

The Congregational Council, responsible under our governance for the public face of Foundry, is preparing to manage and respond to any media interest in the Church Conference and the immedi-

ate aftermath of the vote. While we are not courting publicity, the Congregational Council has designated Nancy Groth and David Lanford to speak on behalf of the congregation.

During Summer 2010, the Congregational Council is leading the Foundry community through a Summer of Great Discernment as a time for the Foundry congregation to prayerfully discuss and consider our church's marriage policy. The policy will be decided at a Church Conference on September 26, 2010. For more information about the Summer and related resources, visit: foundryumc.ning.com or email church.conference@foundryumc.org.
