

FOUNDRY'S SUMMER OF GREAT DISCERNMENT

Voter Guide

The Foundry Voter Guide
on Marriage Equality Proposal

In keeping with Foundry's call to deepen faith through challenging study, to create an inclusive and caring community, and to transform the world through prophetic leadership, our congregation has spent the summer of 2010 engaged in a period of discernment. Through study, prayer, reflection, conversation, and worship, we have considered the implications of a congregational decision to support marriage equality. We have examined the many facets of this issue, including its history, legal context, spiritual aspects, and personal stories.

The conclusion of our discernment process will be a Church Conference on Sunday, September 26 at which all present and professing members of Foundry will be given the opportunity to vote on the proposed policy.

Proposed Policy for Marriage Equality

After much prayer and deliberation, the Congregational Council proposes the following policy for marriage equality at Foundry United Methodist Church:

AS A COMMUNITY OF FAITH, we recognize God's profound blessing of committed life partnerships, including same-gender couples. Furthermore, we affirm that the celebration of committed same-gender relationships is an important part of the ministry of our church, and is a witness to the joyous gift of God's love. Our commitment to celebrating the blessing of all committed life partnerships is deeply rooted in our commitment to social justice and our mission to make disciples for Jesus Christ.

CURRENTLY, OUR SENIOR PASTOR makes himself available to lead services in our building that recognize and honor gay and lesbian committed relationships, however, our clergy do not conduct or fully celebrate same-gender marriages. This current practice is inconsistent with our commitment to social justice, and results in discriminatory treatment among us.

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH states that "in The United Methodist Church no conference or other organizational unit of 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." We believe that social prejudices added to the *Book of Discipline* that exclude gay and lesbian members from the full life of the church contravene this basic Constitutional principle of the Church. Specifically, paragraph 341.6 of the *Discipline*, which states that "...ceremonies that celebrate homosexual unions shall not be conducted by our ministers and shall not be conducted in our churches...", discriminates against same-gender couples and is inconsistent with the teachings of Jesus Christ, as well as the Constitution. We recognize that United Methodists are not in agreement on these matters, and that celebration of same-gender

marriage is a decision of individual clergy. We also recognize and support the right of clergy to act in differing ways with respect to this issue. However, we believe that it is appropriate for our clergy to know the mind of their congregation on this matter.

WE THEREFORE RECOMMIT to working within the denomination to change the *Discipline* of the United Methodist Church so that it may be consistent with the teachings of Jesus Christ. We also commit to supporting and honoring same-gender marriages in the same way that we support and honor other marriages. We fully recognize and assume the risks associated with these commitments, because we are called upon by God, through Jesus Christ, to resist injustice and oppression in whatever forms they present themselves.

WE THEREFORE RESOLVE that the congregation of Foundry United Methodist Church will support and honor the marriages of couples licensed to be married in the District of Columbia equally, regardless of the couple's gender. We offer and approve the use of our sanctuary equally for all marriage ceremonies, including same-gender marriages, and we affirm that any of our clergy who choose to minister fully to "all persons without regard to race, color, national origin, status, or economic condition" by celebrating such marriages may do so knowing that we pledge to them our full support.

WE ASK that God guide our decisions and our prophetic leadership, so that we might bring the light of God's unconditional love to all.

When is the vote?

On Sunday, September 26, 2010, a Church Conference will be convened at 1 PM by District Superintendent David Argo of the Baltimore-Washington Conference of the United Methodist Church. The sole purpose of this Church Conference is to vote on the proposed policy.

The Conference will be convened in the sanctuary after the conclusion of the 11 AM worship service and a time for refreshments/light lunch in Fellowship Hall. Ballots will be distributed after the 11 AM worship service. There will be a sign-language interpreter and child care available. Overflow will be managed in the Chapel similar to our practice at Easter.

If you would like to request transportation to the Conference, you can email church.conference@foundryumc.org or call the church office (202-332-4010).

Who can vote?

All full professing members of Foundry UMC physically present at the Church Conference on September 26 are eligible to vote. Affiliate and associate members may not vote. (*i.e. affiliate members have retained their membership at another UMC church; associate members have retained their membership at another church of another denomination.*)

Some clergy members of the Charge Conference are eligible to vote. For clarification, contact Rev. Dee Lowman (202-332-4010).

How can I be sure that I am a full professing member of Foundry?

A complete listing of full members is posted in Fellowship Hall. You can check that listing.

At the end of July, a mailing was sent to all members confirming their membership status.

You can call the church office (202-332-4010) and ask for your membership status.

Should the Foundry Congregation adopt the "Proposed Policy for Marriage Equality" which expands the conduct of marriage ceremonies to include same-gender marriages and supports our clergy in performing such ceremonies?

Yes

No

This is what the ballot will look like.

You can stop by the church office and ask for your membership status.

You can email Robert McDonald, Director of Membership Services (rmcdonald@foundryumc.org).

You must be physically present to vote. There will be no absentee or mail-in votes.

Voter eligibility will be verified at the Conference by reference to the membership list. If you have a question about your membership status at the time of the Conference, you will be directed to volunteers stationed in Helen Harris Parlor. Depending on the situation, you may be eligible to cast a "provisional ballot," which may or may not be counted depending on the outcome of your membership eligibility determination.

What will happen at the conference?

Convened in a spirit of worship, the Church Conference will emphasize our unity as a congregation through prayer and music. The Conference will be convened by the District Superintendent, and there will be time for discussion. Voters will cast their votes during the conference; the count will be tallied immediately and announced before the conference adjourns.

The ministry team organizing and managing the Church Conference is composed of lay members of Foundry. They and other volunteers will be wearing red Foundry shirts.

What is the process for voting?

During the Fellowship time between the 11 AM service and before the convening of the Church Conference, voters will be invited to pick up their ballot. All ballots will be distributed before 1 PM. Voting will occur during the Church Conference and collected by ushers.

Who will count the votes?

The integrity of the ballot count is critical to the outcome of the Church Conference. For this reason, a core team of volunteers comprised of Foundry's offering counters will tally the votes and certify the outcome, which will be announced before the Conference is adjourned.

How will the outcome be announced?

At the Church Conference, on the Foundry website and in the Foundry Forge.

What will the outcome of the vote mean for Foundry?

Approval of the resolution means that the Foundry congregation supports the use of the Foundry sanctuary for same-gender marriages and supports Foundry clergypersons who wish to celebrate same-gender ceremonies.

Disapproval of the resolution leaves the issue unresolved, and would require further decision making on the part of the church leadership. Foundry is committed to these goals:

- **TO REACH MORE PEOPLE** — assess by mid-2011 Foundry's practices in light of the broader religious and civil injustices against lesbian, gay, bi-sexual or transgender (LGBT) persons to determine what barriers may exist to the full inclusion of LGBT persons as well as other persons in the Foundry community.
- **TO TRANSFORM THE WORLD** — transform the United Methodist Church by organizing and acting not later

than the 2012 General Conference to remove from the Church's regulations (the *Discipline*) all statements that single out homosexual persons and practices for derogatory and discriminatory treatment.

Ministry teams are already formed to develop and execute a strategy and an advocacy plan supporting changes in the *Discipline's* policies and practices impacting LGBT individuals by 2012.

What if I need more information?

- You can find a wealth of information, including a list of frequently asked questions — with answers — assembled by Foundry's Congregational Council at foundryumc.ning.com.
- You can attend events including small group meetings and worship services in August and September. They are listed on the website (foundryumc.ning.com/events) and in the weekly updates available at church each week.
- Materials are also available at a table in Fellowship Hall every Sunday.
- You can email the Congregational Council at cong.council@foundryumc.org and ask a question to be added to the FAQ's on the site.
- You can also contact any of the members of the Ministry Team which has worked with the Congregational Council to organize the Church Conference and the events leading up to it. The members are: Candice Autry, Doug Barker, Dan Dodgen, Chris Galanty, Joanne Garlow, Chuck Hilty, Bill Kirk, Krista Mantsch, TC Morrow, Jane Northern, Jane Ross, Larry Slagle, and Elder Wellborn.