

Building Bridges

Thoughts growing out of a discussion between Stan Culy, Nat Woodruff, Steve and Sylvia Yoder.

We are a United Methodist congregation of many individuals who come from different backgrounds and beliefs and yet have stuck together over the years in spite of the differences which could have separated us. As a result of the General Conference of United Methodism held in February of this year, new attention has been brought to a controversial statement in our book of rules called the Discipline which has been buried there since 1972. It is the statement that “we believe that homosexuality is incompatible with the Christian Faith.” The voting at that conference, of about 1000 clergy and lay delegates from all over the world continued to endorse these 1972 words.

However, there are some in our congregation who feel that love is the cornerstone of our faith and that love leads us into a deeper acceptance of LGBT people. Others feel that there is a standard set forth in the Bible which should be followed that restricts the privileges of those who want to continue as LGBT.

We have only been aware of this conflict within our congregation less than three months and yet it has stirred up a lot of feeling, some of which has been channeled into constructive discussion and some of which has caused individuals to leave our church. However, we don't think it is too late to build bridges of understanding that will allow us to worship, fellowship and serve together while we continue to explore peacefully our differences.

It is toward this end that we will work as we gather together this Wednesday evening at the church in a discussion led by Nat Woodruff and Stan Culy.