

United Methodist Book of Discipline and Book of Resolutions 2008
Statements on Homosexuality

Stephen Griffith, January 2009

- All persons are of sacred worth. (§ 4. Constitution)
- We are in ministry to all persons. (§ 4. Constitution)
- All persons shall be eligible to participate in and be members of the church. (Ibid.)
- A portion of the world's population is gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender. (Res 2046)
- Sexuality is God's good gift to all persons. (§ 161.F)
- All persons are individuals of sacred worth. (§ 161.F)

– *but* –

- The practice of homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching. (§ 161.F)

– *but* –

- We commit ourselves to ministry for and with all persons. (§ 161.F)
- Human rights and civil liberties are due all persons. (§ 162.J)
- We support those rights and liberties for homosexual persons. (§ 162.J)
- All persons, regardless of sexual orientation, are entitled to have their human and civil rights ensured. (§ 161.F)
- We define a family as including “loving care-givers” (§ 161.A)

– *but* –

- Our clergy shall not conduct ceremonies that celebrate homosexual unions. (§ 341.6)
- We will not ordain self-avowed practicing homosexuals or appoint them to serve. (§ 304.3)

– *but* –

- We dedicate ourselves to a ministry of Christ-like hospitality to persons of all sexual orientations. (Res. 2041)
- We welcome sexual minorities into our churches. (Res. 2041)
- We open our hearts to their stories and struggles in our churches. (Res. 2041)

– *but* –

- We will not use General Church funds to promote the acceptance of homosexuality. (§ 806.9)

– *but* –

- We oppose all forms of violence or discrimination based on gender, gender identity, sexual practice, or sexual orientation. (Res 2043)
- We will advocate for civil rights and for legislation ensuring non-discrimination in employment and housing and providing stiffer penalties for hate crimes. (Res. 2046)

– *but* –

... There are no more “buts.”

“Never let it be said that United Methodists were silent during this attack on the rights of all.” (Res. 2046)

§ 4, Constitution Article IV, Inclusiveness of the Church; § 161.A, Social Principles, The Family; § 161.F, Social Principles, Human Sexuality; § 162.J, Social Principles, Equal Rights Regardless of Sexual Orientation; Resolution 2043, Opposition to Homophobia and Heterosexism; Resolution 2046, Rights of All Persons; § 304.3, Qualifications for Ordained Ministry; § 341.6, Unauthorized Conduct; § 806.9, Fiscal Responsibilities of General Council on Finance and Administration

The official position of the UMC is mixed, confused and conflicted.

Homosexual practice incompatible with Christian teaching,
but persons of sacred worth.

All are welcome in membership – all.

but not conduct same sex unions

All entitled to same basic civil and human rights

Urge all UMs to work for civil rights and oppose policies that discriminate

specifically non-discrimination in employment and housing, and DOMA

One resolution specifically states “a certain portion of human population is GLBT.”

I disagree with the parts of UM policy that label gays and lesbians as “incompatible” with Christianity and exclude them from full participation in church and society, and I wholeheartedly support the policies that welcome and advocate for them.

I believe that homosexuality and homosexual practice are not in themselves inherently sinful. Jesus didn't say anything about gays and lesbians at all. The few verses in the rest of the New Testament that are often quoted don't deal with loving, committed relationships. The Bible does condemn sexual relationships that are abusive or violent. The passages usually cited pertain to rape, prostitution, promiscuity, child abuse – none of which is limited to either heterosexuality or homosexuality. Jesus said “Love God with your whole being, and love neighbor as self.”