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**March 28, 2019**

**A Statement from our Church Council**

**General Conference  
2019 Overview**

February 23-26, General Conference 2019, the worldwide legislative body of the United Methodist Church, gathered in St. Louis to determine if we could hold together as a denomination with such differing views within the Church about the ordination and marriage of people who are LGBTQ+.

The General Conference passed a few legislative items including the “Traditional Plan” in a 53% to 47% vote (438 - 384). This plan still faces a hurdle as it has been referred to the Judicial Council to declare its constitutionality according to the UMC constitution. If deemed constitutional, this plan would strengthen the enforcement of current bans on ordination and marriage of LGBTQ persons.

Recognizing the hurt and pain inflicted by the decisions of the 2019 General Conference, the Church Council of First United Methodist Church of Festus/ Crystal City has issued the following statement:

**General Conference  
Response from our Church Council**

In light of the decision of the 2019 General Conference having a negative impact upon the roles of the LGBTQ+ community within the church, First United Methodist Church of Festus/Crystal City re-affirms our commitment to be in ministry with all people - reaching, forming, and sending disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. We believe God has called us to relentlessly love one another amidst our differences and that upholding this unity is the indisputable witness of God at work among us. We, therefore, welcome all persons into the full life of First United Methodist Church. Jesus said, “By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another” (John 13:35).

We believe this statement of inclusion is consistent with our Methodist way of faith in Christ. John Wesley, founder of Methodism wrote, “The distinguishing marks of a Methodist are not his opinion of any sort...as to all opinions which do not strike at the root of Christianity, we think and let think.” We will adhere to the rules of our denomination, respecting progressive and traditional views, while working toward a full expression of God’s love in and through us. We encourage each one at First UMC to remain focused on the mission of sharing the love of Jesus Christ with the world and to remain committed to one another in Christian love.

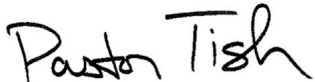
The Church Council of First United Methodist Church of Festus/Crystal City  
March 19, 2019

**General Conference  
Our Pastor's Response (over)**

As your Pastor, I fully support the statement of our Church Council. I believe it is a reflection of how our congregation currently operates in the love of Jesus Christ. Sadly, the actions of General Conference 2019 have caused some to question our congregation's welcome for all people. The Council has responded with a unifying statement that reflects the overwhelming sentiment of our congregation - to remain united as an unapologetically welcoming congregation, while allowing for differing theological views.

Through this encouraging statement from our Church Council, I pray all people, especially our LGBTQ+ friends and family, will see First UMC as a safe place to find Christian friendship and to grow in faith. Without a doubt, our congregation will continue in the ministry God has called us to right here in this place, loving all people and doing the work of Christ in our community.

**First United,**

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Pastor Tish". The word "Pastor" is written in a cursive style, and "Tish" is written in a more casual, slightly slanted cursive.

**Rev. Tish Green**