



First United Methodist Church

Points to Ponder

Reaching Out

There are over 31,000 verses in the Old and New Testaments and most of us agree on the applicability of all but seven passages to our lives as Christians. We have so much in common, including believing that we are all bound to sin and need Christ's redeeming sacrifice in our lives. We also believe that God is the ultimate judge of our sinfulness and that we are to love Him with everything we have and our neighbors as ourselves.

The Reconciling Team seeks first and foremost to have conversation about human sexuality in order to make all of us more sensitive and aware of the challenges faced by those who believe they are born as LGBTQ. Specifically, we hope to improve the treatment and reduce the judgement of these individuals by those of us who profess to be Christian. Whether or not you believe that such behavior is sin, we hope that all of us can understand that these brothers and sisters have gotten a very unloving and intolerant message in their pursuit of Christ in the traditional church.

What does loving them, as Christ instructed us to do, look like in the local congregation? It begins by first acknowledging that they are to be loved, in spite of our judgement as to their "worthiness". Christ did not use any worthiness litmus test for the love He commanded. Second, it requires our acceptance that we have fallen short of Christ's commandment. How have we done this? Our conversations about the inerrancy of the Book of Discipline on human sexuality don't help. If we do nothing to reach out to this community, our inaction communicates our lack of love.

A Reconciling Congregation welcomes, even outreaches, to the LGBTQ community. It makes very clear that these people are loved regardless of what they believe their sexual orientation is. A Reconciling Congregation is content with letting God be the final judge of all of our sinfulness. The truth is that members of the LGBTQ community are sinners -like the rest of us- regardless of whether or not their orientation is sin. They need to hear the Good News of Christ's love and redemption, just like we do.

Will we let our disagreement about this particular issue come in the way of our faith community sharing the love of Jesus Christ with a hurting world through words and actions? Will we let it fracture our church family? I hope and pray not.

- Doug Sell, Sr.