



First United Methodist Church Points to Ponder **Welcoming Enough?**

As the Reconciling Team moves forward, some have shared their confusion as to why we seek to become a more welcoming church: *“after all, aren't we welcoming enough?”* This seems like a way to ignore the issue, which strikes me as odd because one of the core tenets of Christianity is not to stand idle in the face of adversity and wrongdoing. The Methodist church has stood stock still on one side of this issue, and as things now finally seem to be moving towards impactful, positive change, suddenly we're hesitant and seem to want to settle for *“good enough”*— that is, accepting and loving our LGBTQ+ siblings in Christ, but not allowing them to marry or serve in ordained ministry. Those who oppose full inclusion can often be *“welcoming enough”* to *“hate the sin/love the sinner”* while ignoring the harm this inaccurate mindset has caused for both the LGBTQ+ community and the church as a whole.

Is saying we're *“welcoming enough”* really good enough? As long as we are not actively trying to harm someone by holding a picket sign, by using discriminatory or cruel language — or even just by closing the door and locking it behind us — can we justify ourselves with God by pointing out what we are not doing? Would a kind, loving Christian trying to share God's love call that *“good enough”*, or would they take the extra step and acknowledge the centuries of hurt the church has caused? When those who say the church is *“welcoming enough”* and that they do love LGBTQ+ people but that they should not be permitted to get married or serve as a pastor, they are directly or indirectly adding an asterisk to the love of Christ and continuing to harshly judge the LGBTQ+ community. Isn't Jesus's whole point telling us not to do that, but to love them as you would yourself, unconditionally?

It doesn't seem to me that the church was created to settle for *“good enough.”* After all, do we go on missions and put our time, money, and efforts into our ministries because we think the state of the world is *“good enough?”* No— we do these things to make the world a better, more loving place. Why shouldn't the same be true within our own church walls?

- Abby McGrath