

SEPTEMBER 24, SUNDAY

CHURCH CONFERENCE AND VOTE ON MARRIAGE EQUALITY RESOLUTION



FOLLOWING 11:00 A.M. SERVICE
SANCTUARY

The Administrative Board voted unanimously on August 27 to schedule a church-wide vote on a resolution for marriage equality at FUMC Austin. The resolution recognizes God’s blessing of both same-sex and opposite-sex marriages, treats all couples equally, and does not violate the *Book of Discipline*. The Board asks church members to consider and adopt the resolution at a Church Conference on September 24 following the 11:00 a.m. worship service. District Superintendent Teresa Welborn will preside. Professing members of FUMC will be able to vote. Approval requires a 75% affirmative vote of members present.

- The Discernment Committee concluded, “a significant majority is committed to supporting and honoring all legal marriages, including same-sex marriages, equally. That includes a fervent desire to make FUMC’s sanctuary and other property available for ceremonies of all legal marriages, including same-sex marriages.”
- The Committee also concluded, “our clergy do not want to violate their vows to uphold the *Book of Discipline*, or face possible sanctions...if they were to allow same-sex weddings at our facilities.”
- Therefore, the resolution provided on the reverse proposes a policy that provides equal treatment for all couples who wish to marry, while not violating the *Book of Discipline*.
- No weddings would occur on FUMC Austin property.
- FUMC clergy can assist with many aspects of the wedding, but not officiate.
- Our clergy may partner with non-FUMC clergy who are allowed to officiate same-sex weddings.

The full text of the resolution is on the back of this insert. Background documents are available in the foyer and at fumcaustin.org/discernment.

SEPTEMBER 10, 17, AND 24, SUNDAYS
Q & A SESSIONS FOR
MARRIAGE EQUALITY RESOLUTION

Learn more and ask questions about the proposed Marriage Equality Resolution at FUMC. Prior to attending one of these sessions, all are asked to review the findings from the Discernment Committee and the Marriage Equality Resolution as approved by the Administrative Board.

10:00-10:45 A.M.
MURCHISON CHAPEL

FOR CONSIDERATION ON SEPTEMBER 24: RESOLUTION FOR MARRIAGE EQUALITY AT FUMC - AUSTIN

The members of First United Methodist Church – Austin, assembled in a Church Conference on September 24, 2017, hereby adopt a policy that treats weddings of opposite-sex and same-sex couples equally but does not violate the *Book of Discipline*.

The policy includes the following provisions:

- We ask that our assigned pastors agree to abide by the adopted wedding policy.
- Our assigned pastors may offer premarital counseling to all couples who may legally be married.
- Our assigned pastors may assist any couple that wishes to be married in a church sanctuary to identify a church and congregation which welcomes all couples regardless of sexual orientation. They may also coordinate with clergy of other denominations who are permitted to conduct weddings for all couples in order to facilitate a church wedding.
- Our assigned pastors *may participate* in any same-sex or opposite-sex marriage ceremony by offering a blessing, prayer, or homily, but *may not officiate* at a marriage ceremony by presiding over the exchange of vows or rings, by delivering the declaration and pronouncement of the marriage, or by signing the marriage license.
- No marriage ceremonies will be performed on our church property after December 31, 2017 (excluding those currently scheduled).
- If adopted, this policy will be reviewed by the Administrative Board no later than two months after the called General Conference of the United Methodist Church of February 23-26, 2019.
- If so desired, FUMC will recognize all recently married couples within our congregation with a litany of blessing during regularly scheduled worship services.