

Horizons Community Church
3200 Grainger Parkway
Lincoln, NE 68516

February 18, 2019

Dear Horizons Life-Changer,

On February 23-26, world-wide United Methodist delegates will gather in St. Louis, MO to discern the "Way Forward" regarding the United Methodist Church's stance on human sexuality. At the conference, delegates will be voting on one of three plans presented by the Way Forward Commission. Horizons is a United Methodist church by tradition and will therefore be affected by this decision, regardless of the plan the delegates select. This is our first statement before any decisions providing insight into Horizons' ministry.

One of the three plans is the One Church Plan, which maintains the unity of the denomination, removes language against LGBTQ persons, ordained ministers, and marriages, and gives individual churches the choice whether to perform marriages or receive an LGBTQ minister.

Another of the three plans is the Connectional Conference Plan, which divides the denomination into three branches—"Traditional," which would not support LGBTQ marriages or ministers, "Unity," which would allow but not require churches to support LGBTQ marriages and ministers, and "Progressive," which would require all churches to support LGBTQ marriages and ministers.

The third of the three plans is the Traditional Plan, which maintains the unity of the denomination, reiterates the traditional view of marriage between man and woman, and prohibits the ordination and appointment of LGBTQ ministers. More information on each plan can be found at www.greatplainsumc.org

The decision of the delegates will be shared with each local church on February 27th. Horizons will respond shortly after and share how we as a ministry will continue to change lives and bring others to life change in Jesus. It is likely the media and various social platforms will be very vocal regarding this story.

In the midst of this, Horizons is a community that exists to make world-transforming followers of Jesus by introducing all to His life-changing grace and truth. Horizons has always been focused on following Jesus and His teachings, welcoming and loving all people regardless of differences, and courageously living according to God's word. The results of the "Way Forward Conference" will not change the fundamental way we choose to serve Jesus and love His people. We will continue to be the church that pours into children and adults and seeks to grow in the Holy Spirit—and tends to have a lot of fun doing so!

Nevertheless, we acknowledge there are sensitivities regarding these decisions that rarely have simple solutions. In light of the church's endeavor to move forward, we offer the following:

We will choose to model Jesus' ministry and life of holy contradiction, as exemplified in His declaration, in Mark 10, that "with man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible;" in His identity of being both fully God and fully human; and in His full embodiment of both truth and grace (John 1:17).

We will continue to insist on knowing and valuing others through relationships, not by labels.

We will encourage others to know us through relationships, not by labels.

We will continue to choose against language that is intentionally hurtful or discriminatory and choose never to intentionally use speech targeting a certain people or group.

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We will continue our pursuit to serve and welcome all people into both Jesus' grace and truth while seeking to honor with integrity God's call to holy living.

We will carefully seek God's will in all circumstances that challenge our integrity to follow His word individually in prayer and within the context of relationships.

We believe that Jesus welcomes all people where they are but does not leave people where they are. The life-change Jesus offers us does not change us from who we were meant to be but changes us further into who we were created to be. In this, we assert that our choice to welcome and love all people does not imply a lack of morals, a break in integrity, or a blanket approval of all behaviors and lifestyles. Likewise, our potential choice not to perform certain services does not imply hate, discrimination, or rejection of an individual, but rather represents a mere difference in conscience of calling.

We realize our choice to live in the tension of seemingly opposing values rather than choosing a "side" may be viewed by some as a lack of conviction. However, we believe living in this tension is one of the most difficult places to live, that this is the very definition of faith, and this is a choice that leads us closest to the place where the Spirit is most actively working.

We want to honor your questions and concerns and be in conversation with you around this topic. Therefore we have set up a "listening" panel at listening@horizonschurch.org. Both pastors, Jason and John, along with each member of the Steering Team will have access to the e-mails sent to this address. We welcome you to share and ask freely, and we will work to respond in due time. Your responses will assist us in learning how we can lead the church best through this important time in the history of the church.

Respectfully in Christ,



Pastor Jason & the Members of the 2019 Horizons Steering Team:

(Amy Lehnert (Chair), Jim Peters (Vice Chair), Lisa Butler (Secretary), Tom Oerter (Treasurer), TJ Schirmer, Dannee Sengdara, Ken Smith, Terri McKinney, Derek Steinacher (ex-officio), Jason Kennedy (ex-officio))

