

We have heard Jesus say – to all persons without exception – “follow me.”
We are part of God’s living body in today’s world, but our United Methodist Church
refuses to accept what God has done,
refuses to keep covenant with its own words in the baptismal promise,
refuses to honor God’s call to professional ministry,
refuses to do no harm,
refuses to open its hearts, minds, and doors.

The unchurched notice. They notice the church
cruelly scapegoating lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people
on the altar of so-called unity

The young notice. They notice the church
denying, refusing, threatening, removing, closeting
the lgbt people who faithfully serve the church.

The world notices.

We notice.

God notices.

The United Methodist baptismal liturgy calls all of us to
accept the freedom and power God gives us
to resist evil, injustice, and oppression
in *whatever* forms they present themselves.

It is our *duty* – our baptismal *covenant* – to stand *against* the sin of the church,
to stand *for* God’s freedom and power,
to *affirm* God’s *entire* body of Christ that *is* the church.

We are God’s children,
here ... now.

Today we boldly declare by standing here
that our church’s doors and our ministries will radically obey the Gospel
that we defy bigotry and ignorance,
that the anti-gay policies and practices of The United Methodist Church are wrong.

By human means we cannot stand
but by the grace of God we can.

By standing
we reject the idea that homosexuality is a sin

By standing
we affirm that sexuality *is* a good gift of God

By standing
we affirm our intent to spread God’s love and grace

By standing
we bless and celebrate families, all families.

We do not stand alone.

We stand in solidarity with all those
who are *not* here,
who are *not* in our congregations.

We stand with those who’ve been *forced* out and who’ve *never* come in,
who *already* affirm one another as beloved children of God,
regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity.

We stand with holy boldness
to *welcome* LGBT laity and clergy into our churches and pulpits, **NOW**;
to *keep* baptismal promises for all, **NOW**;
to affirm calls to ministries for *all* people, **NOW**;
to bless covenant relationships *in* our churches *by* our clergy, **NOW**;
to assure *membership for all*, **NOW**;
to provide *hospitality for all*, **NOW**.

Join us. Stand now. Build our future with hope and trust in God.