

## Statement regarding who we are as a United Methodist Church

In 2024 the General Conference of the United Methodist Church – the governing body that makes changes and adaptations to any rules, structures, and practices – removed from the Church doctrine (found in the Book of Discipline) the restriction of ordaining self-avowed, practicing homosexuals and the restrictions on churches and pastors in regard to hosting or presiding at same-sex weddings. It was also established that both churches and pastors had the right to not host/preside.

In that same vein, the language that explicitly noted that homosexuality was not in keeping with Christian teaching was removed. Still, there was no language included to say the UMC endorsed or approved that type of sexual intimacy. Each person, pastor, church, and Annual Conference (the more local geographical connection of churches) are given the leeway to understand this as they believe is proper and in accordance with Scripture.

The overarching hope of the UMC as of 2024 is that there would be a big enough table for all those who wish to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world regardless of some less essential theological differences. The core of the Christian faith belief remains and will remain as the foundation of the UMC in truth and in practice – the faith we find in Christian historical documents like the Apostle's Creed.

In light of these changes, options, and aspirations, the Board of Stewards (BoS) of Brenham First United Methodist Church has put forth the following statement in regard to how this church will seek to best live into our Christian, United Methodist faith.

*We have come to the determination that the majority of the of the Board of Stewards for 2024 continue to hold a traditional view that God created marriage as a monogamous union between one man and one woman. We also recognize that we are called by God and our Savior Jesus, to love all peoples without discrimination. The changes put in place by the UMC General Conference were intended to allow all of us to come to the same table, love one another as a Church family, and worship together, though we hold different beliefs about this issue. We believe this is possible, and that God is calling us as a Church to follow Him in this direction.*

*We understand that some members of this Church may not believe that this is the best path forward, and that such coexistence with different beliefs is not possible. As we do in all things, we encourage everyone to prayerfully discern their path forward and make the best decision for their walk with Jesus. The BOS believes that the changes made at UMC General Conference do not change who we are as a community of Christ followers at Brenham FUMC, and prayerfully hope that we can continue to love one another and remain united in this sacred Church.*

*It is our hope and prayer that each member of this Church can continue to focus on who we are, and what we have, to continue to all come to the same table, share a meal, share a hug, let love be our first and most powerful guide, and let the Holy Spirit guide us in our mission to know, love and follow Jesus together.*

*Brenham FUMC Board of Stewards*