

frequently

asked questions

2019 General Conference

Because there are many questions among our members and those outside First Broad Street following the 2019 General Conference vote, we wanted to address some of the issues that continue to arise.

Definitions

- **General Conference:** This refers to the recent gathering of delegates (lay and clergy) in St. Louis to decide if and how the United Methodist Church as a denomination would change the long-standing prohibition on gay marriage and the ordination of LGBTQ+ individuals.
- **LGBTQIA:** This acronym stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and asexual. Collectively, these letters represent a group of people who identify in one or more of these categories. The acronym is often shortened to LGBTQ+.
- **One Church Plan:** A plan that would have allowed local churches to decide whether to perform gay marriages. The delegates rejected this plan.
- **Traditional Plan:** A majority of delegates voted in favor of this plan, which strengthened the prohibitions on gay marriage by implementing consequences for clergy who defy the ban and for clergy who are LGBTQ+ and choose not to remain celibate. However, the denomination's judicial body will decide what parts, if any, of the Traditional Plan are not invalid under our denomination's constitution.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. How does the decision to adopt the Traditional Plan at General Conference impact FBS?

A. First Broad Street is the same loving and welcoming congregation it was before the General Conference. Because the plan adopted during General Conference (known as the Traditional Plan) is going before the United Methodist Church's judicial committee for review, the prohibitions that have been in effect since 1972 remain in place. They prevent our church from doing the following: hosting weddings for LGBTQ+ individuals and having our pastors perform weddings for LGBTQ+ couples. There also remains in place a ban on the ordination of LGBTQ+ individuals, a process overseen by the denomination's Board of Ordained Ministry, not local churches.

Q. Will there be any action taken at the Holston Annual Conference as a result of this decision?

A. No one from First Broad Street is on the Annual Conference Planning Team nor have we received the pre-conference information packet so we do not know at this time what, if any, action will be taken.

Q. Does this decision at the February, 2019 General Conference end the debate on LGBTQ+ issues?

A. No. Each General Conference, held every 4 years, may open any issues that are properly brought before the body.

Q. Does FBS plan to stay in the denomination?

A. Yes. First Broad Street plans to stay in full connection with the United Methodist Church. As a result, we agree to abide by the Book of Discipline and its ban on using the church for same-sex weddings and preventing our pastors from performing same-sex wedding ceremonies.

Q. Why does FBS say it welcomes LGBTQ+ individuals and families but adheres to the denomination's ban on gay marriage?

A. First Broad Street wholeheartedly affirms and lives out these words from our Book of Discipline: "The United Methodist Church acknowledges that all persons are of sacred worth." We invite all people to attend our church, become members of FBS, partake in the sacraments of Holy Baptism and Holy Communion, and use their God-given gifts in the ministries of the church. Though we aren't able to perform weddings for same-sex couples, those in the LGBTQ+ are welcome to become a part of our faith family and participate in a variety of ways.

Q. How do you respond to the statement in the Book of Discipline that homosexuality is incompatible with a Christian life?

A. At FBS, we wholeheartedly affirm and live out these words from our Book of Discipline: "The United Methodist Church acknowledges that all persons are of sacred worth." Scripture tells us that all people stand in need of God's grace, and we invite all people to experience God's grace here at First Broad Street.

Facts about General Conference 2019

- Our denomination is global, meaning every United Methodist conference is allowed to send delegates to General Conference. The number of delegates is determined by the church membership within each conference.
- At General Conference, many delegates who live in countries where the government actively persecutes LGBTQ+ individuals supported the Traditional Plan.
- For the 2019 General Conference, 864 delegates were chosen to attend. However, only 822 voted due to visa and other travel issues that prevented some delegates from being present. The final vote that went to the Traditional Plan was 438 to 384, a difference of 54 votes.

