

# Faith Church Statement on the Resolution of Clarification on Mennonite Church USA Polity and the Role of the Membership Guidelines of Mennonite Church USA

Faith Mennonite Church in Minneapolis Minnesota is an LGBTQIA affirming church since August 1996.

Our statement of inclusion says, in part,

“We are a Christ-centered community that seeks to be a place of welcome and nurture for all. Our lives are guided by the life of Jesus and the historic peace position of the Mennonite church. Our members are people from varied religious backgrounds and diverse cultures, gay and straight, young and old...”

Faith is a member of the Supportive Communities Network, a group of LGBTQIA affirming congregations, both Mennonite and Church of the Brethren. This is a program of the Brethren Mennonite Council for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Interests.

As an affirming community, Faith did not agree with church doctrine regarding same sex marriage and whether our pastor could perform such a service. Faith was put on probation by the former Mennonite Church for several years until the new church, MC USA, emerged. Three pastors subsequently had their credentials reviewed. The Central Plains Conference held a series of conference-wide meetings using the Circle process, which proved to be an excellent forum for communicating amongst churches in the conference. After these events were completed Central Plains decided to reinstate Faith and to take no disciplinary action against our pastor at the time.

In 2012, during the time of reflection within our church, Faith created a formal statement entitled Statement on Family, Singleness, and Marriage. We state, “we believe that Paul’s declaration that, in Christ we are “neither male nor female” (Gal 3:27-28) breaks down the traditional gendered exclusivity of marriage.” In conclusion the Church declared that “As we strive to faithfully follow Jesus, we feel called to clarify that our welcome to LGBTQ members includes the blessing of marriage for those who seek it.”

Given our history of affirming and welcoming members of the LGBTQIA community, we support this resolution though we feel it does not go far enough. Faith hopes to see further change towards inclusiveness at all three levels: churches, conferences, and the national organization and its agencies. We also hope for continuing reflections on how the Church has mistreated former and current LGBTQIA individuals and their collective communities.

Thank you for your time.

Faith Mennonite Church Minneapolis