

The United Methodist Church and Marriage:

Summary: *In The 2008 Book of Discipline, The United Methodist Church both supports equal rights for same-gender couples around sharing property, contractual relationships and mutual care and maintains language defining “marriage as the union of one man and one woman.”*

¶ 161.B) Marriage—We affirm the sanctity of the marriage covenant that is expressed in love, mutual support, personal commitment, and shared fidelity between a man and a woman. We believe that God’s blessing rests upon such marriage, whether or not there are children of the union. We reject social norms that assume different standards for women than for men in marriage. We support laws in civil society that define marriage as the union of one man and one woman.

¶ 162.J) Equal Rights Regardless of Sexual Orientation—Certain basic human rights and civil liberties are due all persons. We are committed to supporting those rights and liberties for all persons, regardless of sexual orientation. We see a clear issue of simple justice in protecting the rightful claims where people have shared material resources, pensions, guardian relationships, mutual powers of attorney, and other such lawful claims typically attendant to contractual relationships that involve shared contributions, responsibilities, and liabilities, and equal protection before the law. Moreover, we support efforts to stop violence and other forms of coercion against all persons, regardless of sexual orientation.

¶ 341.6) in Unauthorized Conduct – Ceremonies that celebrate homosexual unions shall not be conducted by our ministers and shall not be conducted in our churches.

Disciplinary Action in The United Methodist Church – *In the UMC, a clergy person accused of “unauthorized conduct” is subject to disciplinary action by the judicial structure of The UMC. Possible disciplinary consequences include the removal of clergy status, loss of one’s appointment to a church, temporary leave (with or without pay), and other measures.*

¶ 2702.1b) in Chargeable Offenses – A bishop, clergy member of an annual conference, local pastor,¹⁴ clergy on honorable or administrative location, or diaconal minister may be tried when charged (subject to the statute of limitations in ¶ 2702.4) with one or more of the following offenses... (b) practices declared by The United Methodist Church to be incompatible with Christian teachings,^{*} including but not limited to: being a self-avowed practicing homosexual; or conducting ceremonies which celebrate homosexual unions; or performing same-sex wedding ceremonies[†]...

^{*} 15. See Judicial Council Decisions 702, 984, 985

[†] ** The language beginning “including but not limited to . . .” first appeared in the 2004 Book of Discipline, effective January 1, 2005.