



Open Letter to Bishop Nunn (2019)

May 1, 2019

Dear Bishop Nunn and Appointive Cabinet:

Greetings in the name of Jesus!

Some of us are straight and cisgender. Some of us are transgender. Some of us are lesbian, gay, or bisexual. Some of us identify as queer. Some of us are intersex or asexual. Some of us are questioning. We are men and women. We are also non-binary and gender nonconforming. We are people of all ages, nationalities, and abilities. We are married, single, and partnered. We are parents and grandparents. We are teenagers and young adults. We are rich and poor and all statuses in-between. We are pastors and we are laity. We are elders, deacons, and diaconal ministers. We are deaconesses and home missionaries. We are lay leaders. We are Oklahomans.

And we are all children of God.

Many of us were born into United Methodist families. Others joined as youth or young adults. Some of us were baptized as infants while others literally do remember our baptisms which may have occurred at confirmation or even as adults! We are people of faith and people of doubt.

And we are all children of God.

We write to you in this season because we are experiencing all the stages of grief due to the actions of the 2019 special called session of the General Conference in St. Louis.

We desperately want the negative language which singles out "homosexuality" (a word we don't use or even like!) and declares that "the practice of homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching" to be deleted from our "Book of Discipline." We are ready for openly LGBTQIA+ persons who are called to ministry to be appointed to serve as elders and deacons in our churches and in places of ministry in the world. We are ready for faithful United Methodists of all sexual orientations to be granted the privilege of being married by their United Methodist pastor and in their United Methodist church where they worship each week.

Put simply: We believe it's time.

Many of us are struggling with our place in The United Methodist Church. We have been waiting for the United Methodist Church to embrace us. We have heard you say you love us. But we also know far too often love comes with conditions or footnotes. We long for a church that not only "welcomes us" but fully affirms and celebrates who we are as LGBTQIA+ persons and as allies -- with no exceptions.

We KNOW we are children of God. But sometimes the institutional church causes us to doubt it.

We commit to praying for our beloved United Methodist Church and for you as our episcopal leader. But we ask that you pray for us. For we are children of God. And most of us are hurting.

We end this letter by claiming the lyrics of the beautiful Mark Miller song, "Child of God":

"No matter what the Church says,
Decisions, pronouncements on you,
You are a child, you are a child of God.
And there is nothing and no one
who can separate, they can't separate
you from the truth that you're someone. You are family.
You are meant to be a child, a child of God."

Bishop Nunn, please help lead the church so that no one ever doubts these words. Speak to us, acknowledge us, and fight for us.

Peace,